

## Ray L. Winstead Position Statement

### Creationism Is Not An Essential Christian Belief

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I believe that a belief in creationism – or not – does not belong in a list of essential Christian beliefs. I believe this falls into the same category as the “essential” belief by the church long ago that the sun revolved around the earth. Official church doctrine, based on sincere but erroneous interpretation of the Bible at the time, was that the earth was the center of the universe and therefore the sun must revolve around the earth. The church “proved” this concept by their interpretation of the Bible. This concept was considered a fundamental, essential belief, and people who expressed the idea that the earth revolved around the sun were thrown out of the church. Unfortunately, and unnecessarily, the faith of many people depended on this fallacy, since it was considered an essential tenet of the faith. I believe people today who are unaware of or reject current scientific findings are making the same mistake when they define a Christian as one who necessarily must believe in creationism. There are other reasonable, alternative interpretations of the Bible that are consistent with the main points, and I believe, the main goal of the Bible. I take the Bible seriously as the Word of God. I continually try to ask the question of each Bible passage “What’s the point?” and “What is God trying to tell me?” In this case the main point is that God created everything: Heaven, earth, all living organisms, and all the laws of nature. Acknowledging God as the Creator is essential. Period. How He did it is not an essential point of Christianity. I believe no conflict exists between the concept of God being the Creator and the concept of evolution. I believe that God created all natural laws of the universe. There are consistent views expressing this idea of NO CONFLICT. I strongly recommend that you read the book *The Language of God* (2006) by Francis S. Collins. The point is that the two ideas of God being the Creator and evolution need not be thought of as mutually exclusive – as believed, unfortunately, by many Christians AND many scientists. The creationists will claim their revelation is through prayer and a sincere faith and belief that they have the correct interpretation of the Bible. Christians who also believe that evolution has occurred make exactly the same claim. I believe that someone who thinks that a person is not really a Christian if he believes that evolution has occurred is someone who is really expressing the same pious, arrogant, (but sincere) attitude and ignorance expressed by those church

leaders long ago who believed it was essential to believe that the sun revolved around the earth. I fear that people today whose faith depends on a belief on any natural phenomenon are doomed to have their faith unnecessarily shaken when even they are overwhelmed by the scientific evidence about some natural event or process – as occurred with the sun revolving around the earth example.