

Common Sense of Life and Living

Chaos, Connection, Continuity

"In the Beginning" [Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created heaven and earth.]

CHAOS - "the formless and disordered state of matter before the creation of the cosmos"

Fr. Richard Rohr has an interesting opening to his Daily Meditation Series, "Living On Our One Earth" *"When did the incarnation begin? It began with the "Big Bang," 14.5 billion years ago, and you're the first generation that's ever known an approximate date for the materialization of the mystery. Our particular "earth" came along around 4-5 billion years ago—much later, it seems. What was God doing 5 billion years ago? What was God doing 10 billion years ago? Was God really waiting for the Pope to appear? Was God waiting for the King James Version of the Bible? All of which happened only in the last nanosecond of geological time. God sure is impractical and terribly inefficient if His or Her goals are the same as ours. Who is this God?" [Adapted from Soul Centering Through Nature: Becoming a True Human Adult (webcast) (CD/DVD/MP3)]*

I choose this quote to demonstrate that the beginning of everything, even at creation, starts in chaos. To ignore this or forget this will cause undue hesitation to begin almost anything we wish to begin. Life, in general, is messy and usually not well organized in any beginning. One of the definitions of organized, *"formed into a structured or coherent whole"*, explains why we need to organize the origin, *"the place where something begins, where it springs into being"*, for whatever that new beginning may be. Life requires continuing attention because of its complexity and its need for constant care.

The wonder of our universe began with chaos. Immediately following the prime event, the Big Bang, was chaos. It took a very long time before all of the essential ingredients from which all that we now see and study began to connect and form. Even now we still see the drama of that chaos as stars end their existence with a dramatic big bang. John Barrow, a research professor of mathematical sciences in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at the University of Cambridge in England, said that "Chaos is ubiquitous" - (*ubiquitous - being present everywhere at once*). Paul Davies, a British-born theoretical physicist, cosmologist, astrobiologist and best-selling author, on page 214 of his book, "God And The New Physics", says, *"The new physics has gone a long way to provide answers we have seen how an initially chaotic state can evolve into a more orderly one provided there is a supply of negative entropy.* We have also seen how that negative entropy can be generated by the expansion of the universe, so that there is no longer any need to assume, as did the scientists of earlier generations, that the universe was somehow created in a highly organized, specially arranged state. The present organization is consistent with a universe that began accidentally in a random state."*

*entropy - *"(communication theory) a numerical measure of the uncertainty of an outcome"*

Realizing these things, a good leader will not fear or shy away from the chaos of starting something new. Knowing these resources of understanding in both religion and science today, people of faith should have little difficulty forming new and creative ways to bring attention and care to needs in our world. Just because entropy exists in any situation today does not mean that an orderly solution is not possible. Good leaders learn to move out of chaos and enjoy moving toward new possibilities that create new ways of life for today. There is no reason to fear chaos when beginning anything new

because our universe demonstrates how beautiful and functional our creative planning can produce indispensable outcomes.

Let There Be: - [Genesis chapter one: vs.2, The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep water. The Spirit of God was hovering over the water. vs.3, Then God said, "Let there be light!" So there was light.] Then, in verses 4 through 31, followed the six days of creation wherein the progress of a variety of "**connections**" was completed.

CONNECTION - "the process of bringing ideas or events together in memory or imagination"

Light seems to be a prime precursor for what developed in the story of creation. Light appears many times within many words in our vocabulary, like enlightenment, to contrast an opposing word like dark, "*lacking enlightenment or knowledge or culture*", or dark, "*stemming from evil characteristics or forces*". Early in the 20th century Albert Einstein developed our current understanding of our universe in which the speed of light is equally significant in the relationship of energy and matter. "Mass–energy equivalence: $E = mc^2$, energy and mass are equivalent and transmutable. Maximum speed is finite: No physical object, message or field line can travel faster than the speed of light in a vacuum."

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_relativity]

At this point I would like to point out the unique relationship between the Genesis accounts of creation to the Theory of Evolution (keep in mind how the scientific community uses the word theory). What Charles Darwin discovered has only grown and been reinforced over the years to our present time. This is another demonstration of how theory works in science. It continues to be a testable model of the manner of interaction of a set of natural phenomena that continues to enhance our understanding of natural selection. When seen with the same open mindedness, the stories of creation in Genesis share with us the same wonder of the inspiration of Scripture. Even in a great Bible Handbook by Henry H. Halley, a rather conservative scholar, he says, "*Whether they were days of 24 hours, or long successive periods, or interludes between periods, we do not know*". And in Psalm 90:4 and II Peter 3:8 "*one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" So perhaps it would be better not to be too dogmatic as to the duration of the Six Days of Creation. Here is a chart that may suggest the harmony of Genesis and Geology:

Events in Scripture	Geological Events	Geological Timetable
1st Day: Light, 1:2-5	Matter: The Universe, Planets, Mists surrounding Earth	Cosmic Era
2nd Day: The Expanse, 1:6-8	Waters collect - Clouds & Oceans	Azoic Era
3rd Day: Land & Vegetation, 1:9-13	Continental shields & beginning of graduation - Algae & Plants	Archaeozoic Era more than 1.5 billion yrs. old
4th Day: Sun, Moon, & Stars, 1:14-19	Cloud envelope breaks so light becomes visible on earth	Proterozoic Era 570m -1 billion yrs. old
5th Day: Sea Animals & Birds, 1:20-25	Invertebrate life, fish, various amphibia & insects, reptiles, etc	Paleozoic Era 225 - 570 million yrs. old

Events in Scripture	Geological Events	Geological Timetable
6th Day: Land Animals & Man, 1:24-31	Mammals of the land, sea and air; true birds	Cenozoic Era 0 - 225 million yrs.old

In the scriptures we are told that, *"God is light, and in God there is no darkness"*. [1 John 1:5] It was after light appeared that all of the continuing activity evolved throughout this event described in Genesis. In the description of the progressive connecting action of the "six days" we are assured that in each day everything was good and going well. In the Genesis story we are told that God was in the beginning and the Psalms tell us that God is our light and the light of life itself, [Psalm 27:1] *"God is my light and my salvation. Who is there to fear? God is my life's fortress. Who is there to be afraid of?"*, [Psalm 36:9] *"Indeed, the fountain of life is with you. In your light we see light"*. In Science we learn that at the beginning of our universe there was a huge light, "The Big Bang" and that the speed of light is an important factor in the equation that $E = mc^2$. Both Genesis and Evolution share the awareness of the chaos and the formless void that was at the beginning of creation. The flow of the story in Genesis and the Geological Timetable coordinate rather well in sharing this information that in Genesis was affirmed as good, very good.

Completion: - [Genesis 2:1-4: 1. Heaven and earth and everything in them were finished. 2. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing. On the seventh day he stopped the work he had been doing. 3. Then God blessed the seventh day and set it apart as holy, because on that day he stopped all his work of creation. 4. This is the account of heaven and earth when they were created, at the time when the Lord God made earth and heaven.]

CONTINUITY - the property of a continuous and connected period of time

So, from chaos and connectivity, we have the opportunity for continuity. Generally speaking, continuity is open and fluid like the term theory in science. While Genesis implies that "heaven and earth and everything in them were finished", we understand that the universe is changing and will continue to change. The creation is in a very real sense alive and, like all living things, there is a great description of life that I love from an old milk commercial, "there's a new you coming every day". In that Big Bang was contained everything necessary to provide for the growth and expansion of our universe and its continuing development in the future. Genesis was correct, but went on to describe how everything that exists, especially human life, is responsible for participating in the continuation of the wonders of our universe and our earth.

We are living in a continuous and connected period of time all of our lives and we are interdependent with others with whom we work and play. The creativity of being alive has many facets and keeps us busy with a variety of people, places, and things so there are many opportunities for productivity and enjoyment. *"That is why my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. My body rests securely"*, the Psalmist tells us. [Psalm 16:9] We are given the opportunity, in body, mind, and soul, to rejoice with all our heart and have a sense of security even in death. Our ancestors spoke of this joy and wonder as they observed that the creation was good even though they experience difficulties along the way. Their hymns declared, *"Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. Let the sea and everything in it roar like thunder. Let the fields and everything in them rejoice. Then all the trees in the forest will sing joyfully"*. [Psalm 96:11-12]

Continuity is both a privilege and a responsibility. Like our universe it is always in flux and changing. We participate and grow together in the chaos, connections, and continuity of living. Our attitude towards life and living is probably a primary resource for participating in interdependence with our world and one another. Our spiritual nature is important to such cooperation and participation. Scripture reminds us of the values of a good spiritual nature, *"But the spiritual nature produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against things like that"*. [Galatians 5:22-23] Laws cannot force us to be spiritual because these gifts come from a higher connection to our Creator and gratitude for gift of creation. May we all become the leaders we are all meant to be.

May the caring peace of God that goes beyond human comprehension, declare God's love for you in your heart and mind as we see it in Jesus Christ; and may the blessing of God, loving Creator, gracious Liberator, and life giving Spirit keep you steadfast now and always. Amen.