

Science vs. the

By Katharine Bird
NC News Service

In the fourth century, the Manichaean believers held an elaborate explanation for the creation of the world. They claimed: "Our universe of discord took its origin and present form from a strife between the father of light and the archons of darkness," writes Father Ernan McMullin in "The Sciences and Theology in the 20th Century." The book, edited by A.R. Peacocke, was published by Notre Dame Press.

Though that particular theory seems incredible by the scientific standards of today, Father McMullin observes that it attracted the attention of many people then, including the young St. Augustine. Ever thirsty to know the reasons for things, Augustine was caught by the Manichaeans' claim that their "doctrine was based on reason and understanding," Father McMullin said. They insisted it didn't rely on faith alone, as did many creation theories.

Later, after being baptized a Christian, Augustine locked horns with the Manichaeans. He tried "to weave the best of the scientific knowledge of his day" into his commentaries on the Genesis stories to provide a coherent account of creation for Christians, the philosopher added.

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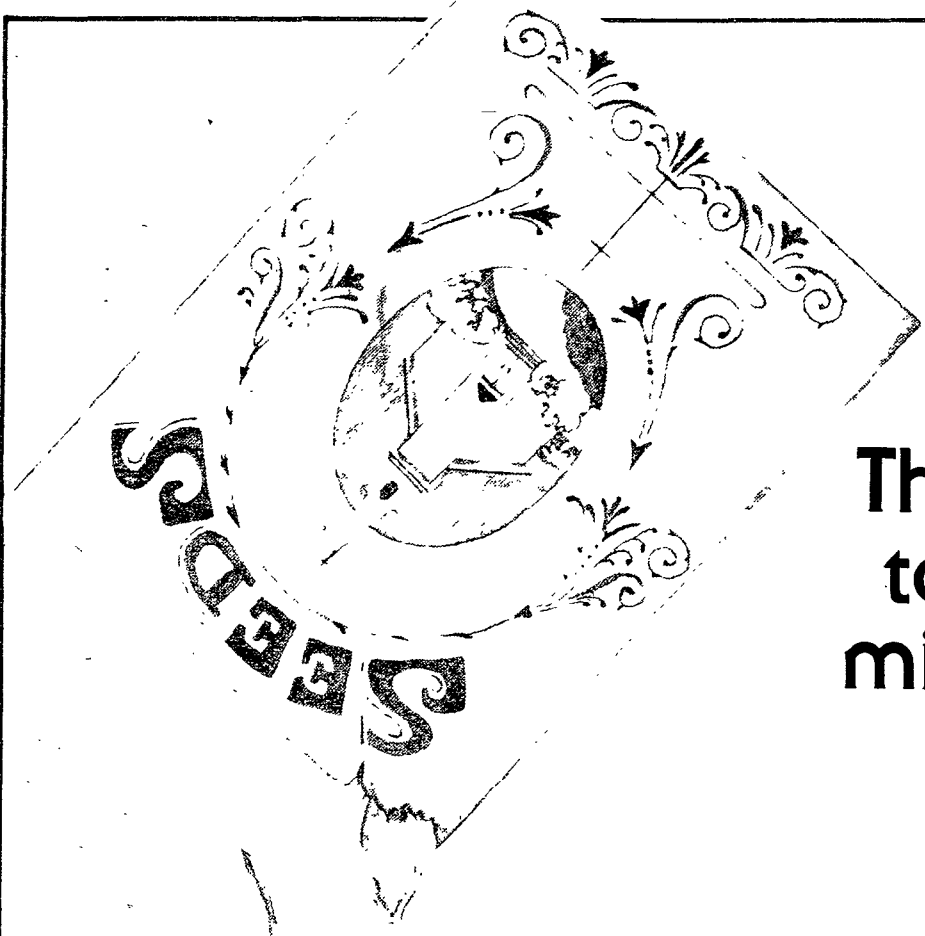
By Father John J. Castelot
NC News Service

The biblical authors of Genesis lived in a distant, prescientific age. Their preoccupations were quite different from those of modern, scientifically oriented people.

These ancient authors were concerned about God and humanity — and their interrelationships. In light of that fact, one of the points they wanted to make concerned humanity's dependence on God. To this end they pictured God as responsible for everything we have.

It was not the style of the biblical authors to deal in abstractions. Rather, pictures and stories were their medium of thought and expression.

There are actually two creation accounts in Genesis. The author of the account of creation that begins in Genesis 2:4b, was masterful. The truth he most wants to tell about, however, is the relationship of God and humanity. The account provides



The capacity to create... mirror images of the Creator

By Cindy Liebhart
NC News Service

One night several years ago a friend and I sat in a dimly lit chapel, alone with a piano and a guitar. She was putting the finishing touches on a simple piece of music she had written for her parish's Lenten liturgies.

She admitted it had been a laborious, energy-consuming experience as she attempted to weave together words and melody in an original, personal way. She struggled with it, sometimes encountering blocks that prevented her from moving forward.

Other times the music just seemed to flow from her imagination as if it had a life of its own. She felt a sense of exhilaration that night as she completed the song.

Her excitement stemmed from the fact that she had unraveled a tangled web of ideas, feelings and images from deep within herself and had found a way to give them expression and form. She had brought something new into existence.

Philosophers and theologians have written for centuries about the nature of creativity and the function of art. The two concepts seem to elude concrete definitions or short, easy explanations. Yet it has been said that the ability to create is at the core of human existence.

Acts of creation occur all around us every day. For a parent, just telling a story to a child can be creative. A group of citizens addressing the problems of homelessness or unemployment in a community can be creative.

But often when we think of creativity our minds leap to people like Beethoven or Shakespeare.

How often do we view ourselves or the people around us as artists?

School Sister of St. Francis Dorothy Bock is program director for a center in Rockford, Ill., that tries to provide opportunities for people to expand an awareness of their creativity.

"An artist dwells in all of us," said Sister Bock, a painter and sculptor. All people "have creative impulses within them, whether we are musicians or dancers or artists; whether we are parents or whether we cook creatively or decorate our home creatively," she added. For her the essence of creativity is being able to take things that already exist and to see them in a new way; to connect them in a different way. In creating something, she said, "the whole person comes into play — mind, heart, soul, guts."

Sister Bock doesn't think people can expect to develop creative abilities in all fields. But she thinks most people are able to find one area to develop. And sometimes this helps them appreciate artistic endeavors in other areas.

Undoubtedly one of the times people would most like to find new ways of tapping their creative potential is whenever they are bored by the routine in their lives. Sister Bock thinks this is one of the times when people might try to look within themselves to find new ways of connecting things, new ways of viewing events.

"Every person is, in his or her roots, an artist," says Father Patrick Collins in his book "More than Meets the Eye: Ritual and Parish Liturgy" (Paulist Press, 1983). Father Collins is director of the Office of Christian Worship for the Diocese of Peoria, Ill.

He writes: "When the person's imagination is engaged in creating or perceiving the creations of others, that person is most like the Creator."

For Father Collins, what makes us like God "is the capacity to create. To create in his image is our human vocation."

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