

## Tanner Revisited

I would like to point out that William F. Tanner's ("How many trees did Noah take on the ark?" vol. 47, December 1995) own assumptions refute his hypothesis. Given (1) his interpretation of Gen. 7:20 that only the lowlands and high hills in Noah's region were covered with water, (2) that trees cannot survive for long under water, and (3) that olive trees do not grow in high altitudes, he should have concluded that the Bible is in error. The dove could not have brought back an olive leaf, since all the places in that area where olive trees could grow would have been covered over.

Yet his hypothesis can still be made consistent with his interpretation of Gen. 7:20 if the reasonable assumption is made that olive tree *seeds* survived the flood, and sprouted quickly in the rich post-deluge mud. Yet again, if this latter assumption is made, then there is no reason that the same thing could not have happened after a world-wide mountain-covering flood, as per the traditional interpretation of the verse.

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## An Answer to Touryan

In answer to Touryan's question whether anyone has considered Schroeder's resolution of the 6 day/15 billion year time difference (*PSCF*, 47:289, December 1995), at least one ASAer has. See my review of Schroeder's book (*PSCF*, 45:66f, March 1993), specifically the second paragraph. But apparently the problem I noted needs to be explicated more precisely.

The relativistic factor,  $[1-(v/c)^2]^{1/2}$ , applies to length, time and mass, that is, to the physical universe. Specifically, on the view underlying Schroeder's argument, space and time are inseparable, as are mass and energy, all four being united in the well-known  $E=mc^2$ . Since Einstein's universe is finite and unbounded, all space and time are within it. Therefore, if God's time is to be slowed by a factor of about 150 billion, he must be part of the universe, necessarily within it.

This cannot be equated to the immanence of God in Christian theology, which holds (1) that God is infinite and transcendent, (2) that he is eternal and timeless, and (3) that his immanence springs from his being the external source, i.e., the Creator, of the universe, making all space and time directly and timelessly open to him. In contrast, Schroeder's approach at most could posit God as the whole universe, or at least its space-time framework if mass-energy can somehow be considered a distinct and separable entity. However, for the divine 6 day-material 15 billion year ratio to work, the deity must be moving about  $1-10^{-26}$  times the velocity of light relative to a universe "at rest." Since it seems impossible for the whole to move relative

to itself, though parts may obviously move relative to the whole, this speeding deity will necessarily be only a part of the universe. Hence this theory not only denies theism but rejects the normal core of pantheism, for his deity is not even immanent.

In addition, an anonymous reviewer, besides helpful analyses and suggestions, has noted that both Schroeder's view and my response are based on special relativity, whereas general relativity is the proper approach.

In sum, Schroeder's "solution" fails as soon as one asks what the collateral consequences are. It "solves" one problem only by producing a number of more serious ones.

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## Whimsy

Re: The inseparability of good and evil in Randy Isaac's "Chronology of The Fall" — which is, of course, after Summer and before Winter (p. 41, March 1996).

Perhaps there is no such thing as evil. We experience dark and cold as conditions, yet they are not real in the same sense as light and heat. Dark and cold are not "things," they are the absence of things.

If there is no evil "thing," then there is no need to postulate an evil force. It also suggests that the only avenue to eliminating evil is to overcome it with good. It makes the phrases "Light of the World" and "Prince of Darkness" more interesting to me.

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## A Proposal

There is an urgent need for evangelical scientists and theologians to respond to the war of words in the Christian community over creation and the age of the earth. Since about 1980, I have closely followed the debate within the *lay* Christian community regarding creation and origins. I have been concerned about the divisiveness among evangelical Christians on this issue. Although there has been a healthy debate among evangelical scientists and theologians on the issue of creation and science,<sup>1</sup> many popular books on this subject have equated a particular exegetical viewpoint with orthodoxy. This is especially true in Christian educational resources. For example, we home school our children, and I have had difficulty finding elementary education materials that present a balanced biblical view