



James C. Peterson

# Natural Evil and the Love of God

If one is convinced by the extensive evidence that God chose an evolutionary process to create the world, suffering and death have always been part of God’s good creation. But would that be a *good* creation? Would such be consistent with Genesis 3 and Romans 8, to have death precede the presence and sin of human beings? Is suffering from the beginning among God’s creatures consistent with the Apostle John’s proclamation that God loves the cosmos that he has made?

These questions are felt acutely. Readers of this journal saw Wilton Bunch’s article on such challenges last September. Christopher Southgate carried forward the conversation in the December issue, and Denis Lamoureux in the March issue after that, the most recent. Our former ASA president, Keith Miller, published as well in *PSCF*, a trenchant analysis entitled “‘And God Saw That It Was Good’: Death and Pain in the Created Order” (63, no. 2 [2011]: 85–94). Indeed, Miller has continued to pursue this important conversation and recruited James Stump to help. Their encouragement and expert review spurred three articles in this issue. Those are by John Wood, R. J. Berry, and George Murphy.

Specifically, Wood explains how “living systems are animated at every level by mortality.” Death is essential to life and ecology as we know them. With such in mind, Berry walks us through the last one hundred years of how we have read Genesis 3 and Romans 8. Then Bethany Sollereeder argues that death and other evolutionary suffering can actually reveal God’s love, and Murphy that such natural evil is a necessary consequence of the way God has chosen for creation to fulfill his purpose. For Murphy, chaotic phenomena are part of God’s good creation.

Moving on to our Communications section, there we find chronicles of two groups of ASAers, each working to provide a new book to help Christians better understand the best of science and their Christian faith. One introduces astronomy; the other, the formation of the Grand Canyon. This issue closes with our book reviews that, as always, insightfully alert readers to a wide range of new works.

*Tolle lege. Tolle lege.*



**James C. Peterson**, editor

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*“For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.” –1 Cor. 15:53*

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Azusa Pacific University Azusa, California  July 22–25, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justin Barrett</li> <li>• Audrey Bowden</li> <li>• Edward “Ted” Davis</li> <li>• William “Bill” Newsome</li> <li>• Roger Wiens</li> </ul>	Anniversary Celebration Contributed Papers CWIS Events Exhibits Sand Volleyball State of the ASA Student & Early Career Events	Workshops Field Trips  <u>REGISTRATION</u> <b>www.asa3.org</b>