

but not criticize it any more than they criticize other cultures" (p. 63).

Yancey suggests that the origin of the Anglo-conformity model can be found in a famous 1965 report by Daniel P. Moynihan, who proposed government programs for black families to "rescue black subculture from the lasting effects of racial oppression" (p. 43). Yancey, however, believes that the model insists that class issues outweigh race issues and thus fuels the "race versus class" debate.

The flaw of colorblindness is that it assumes that once race is unimportant, then racial inequalities will fade. But ignoring race leads to strife because it minimizes the pain of considering a particular race as inferior. The philosophy that underlies this perspective is one of a political ideology where the best person wins as people of other races compete against one another. Yancey concludes that such a model is built on individualistic ideas of sin and does not address the structural aspects of racism.

The second part of the book attempts to articulate a Christian approach to deal with racism by examining spiritual issues. Yancey describes a "mutual responsibility model" that will help bring about racial reconciliation. Because of our sinful nature and racial mistrust, we need to examine the results of historical and institutional racism. This will include how we have stolen Indian land, fled to the suburbs, and allocated money for education and crime prevention. What follows must be individual and corporate repentance where interracial friendships and racial healing take place. Corporate repentance will assure racial minorities that they will have help in their struggles.

Similarly, minorities must recognize the moral nature of attitudes and actions and not complain that tensions are the result of a power struggle. Yancey cautions minorities not to play the race card. He concludes that the "only way to break the cycle of abuse is to be ready to forgive one's former oppressors" (p. 109).

Jesus, of course, is the "ultimate reconciler" who not only prayed that Christians might be united, but demonstrated (for example, with the "woman at the well") that arrogance and paternalism were not the answers. Yancey reminds us that God has not given us a spirit of fear and yet fear is a powerful factor in race relations today.

Fear prevents European Americans from being willing to enter into genuine dialogue ... because they do not want to say something that will get them categorized as racist. People of color fear being ridiculed and labeled as troublemakers, so the fear of one group plays off the other and a cycle of dysfunctional race relations results.

So, how do we begin to solve the impasse? Yancey suggests that we focus on multiracial churches, social networks, political activism, and a revision of attitudes and practices at Christian academic institutions. If we can put aside group interests, are open to repenting and forgiving, are accountable to other races and have a teachable spirit, we can commence activities that imitate Jesus and make a difference in our own attitudes and ultimately in our society.

*Reviewed by Karl J. Franklin, International Anthropology Consultant, SIL International, 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236. ♦*



## Letters

### A Response to Paul Seely's Response to Carol Hill's Worldview Alternative

I am having a difficult time responding to Paul Seely's communication "Genesis 1-11 in the Light of Its Second Millennial Worldview: A Response to Carol Hill's Worldview Alternative" (*PSCF* 60, no. 1 [2008]: 44-7). I think that my difficulty must stem from a misunderstanding of what Seely means by "accommodation" and "concordism."

In my understanding, "creation science" tries to fit science with the Bible (that is, with one traditional interpretation of the Bible); "concordism," on the other hand, tries to fit the Bible with science. "Accommodation" is the idea that God accommodated his revelation to the knowledge of the biblical writers. Or, as stated by Seely in his Letter (*PSCF* 55, no. 2 [2003]: 138),

God has spoken in Scripture ... as a Father to his little children, as a tutor, accommodating his theological lessons to the mentality and preconceptions of his young children, aware that in time they will learn better of both history and science.

Seely states in his March 2008 communication (p. 46) that I am a concordist. I do not think that I am, and probably neither does Hugh Ross, who is a concordist (see the debate between Paul Seely and Hugh Ross in the March 2007 *PSCF*). For example, in my worldview alternative article that Seely critiques, I go into a lengthy discussion of how Chapter 1 of Genesis does *not* concord with the science of geology. To me, Genesis 1 is not concordist *or* accommodationist. The text merely copied the style in which people wrote such epic narratives in those days. It was in that format, and containing the pre-scientific notions of that day, that the revelation of God was written down. This may go against evangelical hermeneutics and the notion of inerrancy marked by concordism, but then I consider myself to be a "worldviewist," not a concordist.

What I am advocating is a different approach to biblical interpretation. Essentially, the main idea of the worldview approach is that God enters human history as it is being played out in real time and space, so that the "cultural trappings," or worldview, of the biblical authors get incorporated into the text alongside God's revelation. This involves no condescension or accommodation of God to the limited mentality of his children—attributes in my opinion that contradict God's omnipotent and unchanging nature. God simply gave his revelation to people in that age by his Holy Spirit, as he still does to us today. When we are given God's revelation, he does not reveal to us the science of the twenty-second century, and if we write down this revelation, errors in our scientific thinking will be incorporated into the text. Does this mean that God is accommodating our false way of thinking? I do not think so. *We* accommodate his revelation into our way of thinking; he does not accommodate our way of thinking into his.

Denis Lamoureux's article "Lessons from the Heavens: On Scripture, Science and Inerrancy" (*PSCF* 60, no. 1

[2008]: 4–15) offers an approach to inerrancy without concordism, and I think it is commendable that different approaches to biblical interpretation are being considered and discussed. I would encourage others in the ASA and elsewhere to enter into this discussion.

Carol A. Hill  
ASA Fellow  
carolannhill@aol.com

## Response to P. G. Nelson's "Numerology in Genesis"

This is in response to P. G. Nelson's letter to the editor entitled "Numerology in Genesis" (*PSCF* 60, no. 1 [2008]: 70–1). Since I am not a mathematician, I have sought the advice of Iain Strachan, a mathematician who works in statistical pattern recognition. I quote Iain (with his permission):

In the first of Nelson's objections, he assumes the formula you used was  $5x + 7y$ —a formula that can represent any number greater than 23, given the correct choices of  $x$  and  $y$ . However, he does not seem to have taken on board the fact that the values of  $y$  in the actual data set are highly constrained. If the numbers ( $A$ ,  $B$ ,  $C$ ) denote age at birth of son, years lived after, and age at death, then for the  $A$  and  $B$  values, the formula is only ever  $5x$  or  $5x + 7$ ; or in other words,  $y$  is only ever zero or one. This allows the possibility that for the  $C$  value which is always  $A + B$ , that one can have  $5x + 14$ , or a value of 2 for  $y$ . This means that all of the numbers can only end in 0, 2, 5, 7, or 9, with 9 only possible as the  $C$  value. Clearly, then, only half of the possible numbers can be represented, not all of them as Nelson claims. As regards the ages of Nahor, I think his point is irrelevant (that you can use multiples of  $6 \times 2$  months to produce any age). He has failed to see that it is part of a constrained pattern involving the number 6.

Iain, however, does point out a mistake in my "Making Sense of the Numbers of Genesis" article (*PSCF* 55, no. 4 [2003]: 239–51, Table 2): my claiming odds of one in a billion for the patriarchal numbers before the Flood. These odds were based on 30 numbers (10 patriarchs, 3 ages for each) ending in only half the digits (no numbers end in 1, 3, 4, 6, or 8). Again, quoting Iain:

The third number of each triplet is entirely determined by the sum of the first two and hence can't be treated as independent. Thus, the truly independent calculation has 20 numbers that end in 0, 2, 5, 7, a probability of 1 in  $0.4^{20}$ , which is around one in 90 million. Ninety million to one are also extremely long odds, and this does not affect the end conclusion.

The end conclusion of my Numbers article is that *it is inconceivable that these are real ages*. Surely, if all of the ages listed in Table 2 of my Numbers article are statistically random numbers, as should be expected for real ages, such numerical improbabilities would not exist. The patriarchal ages of Genesis are *not* real numerical ages. They are *sacred* numerological ages, the purpose of which was to impart a spiritual or historical truth to the text, one

that to the ancients surpassed the meaning of pure rational numbers. Thus, these ages cannot be used to construct a 6,000-year-old universe or planet Earth.

Carol A. Hill  
ASA Fellow  
carolannhill@aol.com

## Comments on Ackerman's and Swartzendruber's Articles

The articles by Ackerman and Swartzendruber (*PSCF* 59, no. 4 [2007]: 250–64; 265–7) address the issue of global warming and Christian responses to this subject. Ackerman first admits that controversy on this subject exists among evangelical Christians. Later he labels all who differ from his position on global warming with different names, but asserts that they are "opponents of the science of global warming." In fact, many evangelicals are scientists who are skeptics of the position adopted by Ackerman—for example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) position. Ackerman labels such people as "denialists," a term with negative associations ever since Ellen Goodman, a *Boston Globe* journalist, first coined the term "denier." She applied the term to global warming skeptics, with an analogy to the holocaust deniers. (This prompted some bloggers to propose Nürnberg-type trials and penalties for the leading deniers on global warming.)

Fair-minded Christians should refrain from such name-calling. Even the popular media and some who agree with the IPCC position have reflected this spirit in recent events. An international conference on climate change was held in New York City in March, resulting in a report of the views of skeptics on global warming—the Non-Governmental International Panel on Climate Change or NIPCC. The distinguished scientist, Frederick Seitz, wrote the foreword in the NIPCC report before he passed away. Obituaries, e.g., in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Associated Press* described Seitz as a long-time "skeptical" on global warming and refrained from using terms such as "denialists."

The media also noted the participation in the NIPCC conference by celebrities like John Stossel of ABC-TV and Vaclav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, without applying any labels like "denialist." In much the same spirit, the magazine *Skeptical Inquirer* (which is in general agreement with the views of Ackerman on global warming) moved away from name-calling by publishing an article by a prominent skeptic, Bjorn Lomborg, entitled "Let's Keep Our Cool about Global Warming" (vol. 37, no. 2 [Mar/Apr 2008]: 42–6).

The article by Swartzendruber is friendlier toward skeptics. His position is basically one of "better safe than sorry" (that is, described by the modern equivalent, the "Precautionary Principle"). Missing, however, is the recognition that overreaction via the precautionary principle to the global warming problem could consume resources better expended elsewhere for the benefit of the poor and underdeveloped countries in the world—compare the writings of Lomborg, for example.

John M. Osepechuk  
ASA Fellow

