

struck me most, was his emphasis on what Genesis is really about:

... a radical and sweeping affirmation of monotheism vis-a-vis polytheism, syncretism and idolatry. Each day of creation takes on two principal categories of divinity in the pantheons of the day, and declares that these are not gods at all, but creatures—creations of the one true God who is the only one, without a second or third. Each day dismisses an additional cluster of deities, arranged in a cosmological and symmetrical order. (p. 147)

To borrow words from St. Luke, scales fell from my eyes. Suddenly I understood that all the commotion about the day-age theory, the gap theory, and recent creation in six literal days was just so much noise. None of that had anything to do with what God was telling us here.

I still don't know why I hadn't heard that before. Bernard Ramm, whose seminal book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1954), had hitherto been the single most important guide to my thinking about origins, had advocated the "pictorial-day interpretation," a type of "moderate concordism" in which "geology and Genesis tell in broad outline the same story." That's about as close as I could remember to Hyers's view. It's not all that close. For Hyers, Genesis does not even attempt to tell anything remotely like a scientific story: it's about religion, not science.

In nearly forty years since that moment of discovery, I've learned that historical and literary context are crucially important for understanding any text, especially a biblical text. Hyers placed Genesis fully within the worldview of the Ancient Near East. God told the Hebrews exactly what they needed to hear, embedding the crucial message of monotheism in a type of literature they already understood, tweaking elements of existing creation stories to proclaim a profound message that denied the common claims of all those other stories: nothing you see is divine, not even the Sun, the Moon, or the stars overhead. I made them all. Worship me, not them.

What about "dinosaur religion," the words that first got my attention? Here's how Hyers used that term: "When certain scientists suggest that the religious accounts of creation are now outmoded and superceded by modern scientific accounts of things, this is 'dinosaur religion'" (p. 143). He wrote this

before Richard Dawkins became the devil's chaplain, before Stephen Hawking was world famous, and before people started talking about the "New Atheism." Once again, Hyers was spot on target. If dinosaurs evolved into birds, they are in some sense still around. Dinosaur religion certainly is. My debt to Conrad Hyers is ongoing.

*Edward B. Davis, Messiah University, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-23Mann>

## 1985

**COLIN J. HUMPHREYS and W. GRAEME WADDINGTON, "The Date of the Crucifixion," *JASA* 37, no. 1 (1985): 2-10.**

One of the more delightful papers that I encountered in *PSCF*—and one that I still recall from time to time—was a paper by Colin Humphreys and Graeme Waddington on dating the crucifixion of Christ.

This interesting paper made use of celestial mechanics, in conjunction with biblical texts and with what is known as reliable history, to propose that Jesus's crucifixion took place on Friday, 3 April, AD 33. Other dates had been suggested in the past, and (until this paper) there seemed to be no reliable means of further adjudicating between them. What Humphreys and Waddington did was to break this logjam by taking seriously a phrase in the book of Acts quoting the prophet Joel and seeing if our knowledge of celestial mechanics could shed any further light on this issue.

The passage, quoted by Peter at Pentecost, refers to the sun turning to darkness and the moon turning to blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord will come. Rather than interpreting this metaphorically, Humphreys and Waddington note that this is a good description of a lunar eclipse, and that such phraseology (moon turning to blood) appears in other historical documents (for example, after Alexander the Great crossed the Tigris River in 331 BC). The two authors then use celestial mechanics to determine all lunar eclipses between AD 26-33 (the largest range of years during which Jesus could have been crucified) and determined that only one lunar eclipse was visible at Passover time from Jerusalem, and that it occurred on Friday, 3 April, AD 33.

# Article

## *Twenty-Five ASA Fellows and Editors Tell of PSCF Articles That Changed Their Lives*

Why do I like this paper? This novel interdisciplinary conjunction of various lines of research provides us with important additional evidence of the historicity of Jesus's crucifixion. The specificity of the date highlights the reality of the crucifixion, reminding me (and I hope all Christians), that our faith is based not only on abstract ideas, but on actual historical events. It is also a reminder that while the perils of taking scripture too literally are well known, sometimes we perhaps don't take it literally enough!

*Robert Mann, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-23Miller>

## 1990

**GEORGE L. MURPHY, "Chiasmic Cosmology as the Context for Bioethics," *PSCF* 42, no. 2 (1990): 94-99.**

One of the things that I appreciate most about the journal is its breadth of coverage. It provides insight into disciplines outside of my specialization that nonetheless have important bearing on broader theological and philosophical questions. As a paleontologist and evolutionary creationist, my studies raise important questions about the place of suffering and death in the created order, the nature of humanity as God's image bearers, and how we view the lives and bodies of human persons.

I will highlight three individuals whose writings in the journal have been important in my own thinking. Early in my involvement with the ASA, I found the perspectives of George Murphy to be very helpful in providing a theological context for understanding the evolutionary process. His focus on a Christ-centered cosmology provided a very helpful way to understand the ubiquitous presence of death throughout creation. The Creator is the Crucified, and all of creation reflects the pattern of life out of death. This emphasis on the cross also resonates with Murphy's understanding of *creatio ex nihilo*. God brings about new things where there seems to be no possibility — out of nothing.

I have always been very impressed with the honesty and faithfulness with which Gareth Jones has dealt with the very difficult and intensely emotional questions that surround the beginning and end of life. These ethical and theological questions are rooted in

how we understand our humanity and the image of God. Evolution forces us to think more deeply about how humans image God, and the biology of human development and the impairments at the end of life, challenge us to think how to honor that image in individual persons from conception to death.

More recently, the work of Malcolm Jeeves in neuroscience and evolutionary psychology has been very helpful to me in working through the relationship between our "souliness" and our physical bodies. Central to this is the debate between a dualistic or monistic understanding of persons. I have found his "non-reductionist physicalism" provides a way to acknowledge the growing understanding of the role of brain activity in what we perceive as aspects of our souls, while avoiding a reductionist view that our spiritual experience is "nothing but" the firing of neurons.

The writings of these three individuals, with very different disciplinary expertise, have all contributed to my growth as a scientist and as a Christian.

*Keith B. Miller, formerly of Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-23Seifert>

## 1994, 1995

**JAMES PATTON CLARK, "Fact, Faith, and Philosophy: One Step Toward Understanding the Conflict between Science and Christianity," *PSCF* 46, no. 4 (1994): 242-52; and NATE OLSON, "On Clark," *PSCF* 47, no. 2 (1995): 148.**

I began teaching psychological science courses in 1990 at a secular university in Ohio, and then headed over to Malone University as an Assistant Professor in 1994. There, Provost Ronald G. Johnson (who is a physicist by training) was keen to foster my integration of faith with scholarship. So, he introduced me to the American Scientific Affiliation's (ASA) *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith (PSCF)*.

As a research methodologist, my focus has been on helping students and other researchers develop and refine techniques to test predictions. Early in my days as a professor, I commenced by asking them two questions: (1) "What's the research question?" and (2) "What is your hypothesis?"