

Article

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

in the southeast and excessive rain in the northwest (southeast Turkey), the location of the head waters of the Euphrates River. The rising sea level was due to snow melt after the last glacial period. It backed up into the Euphrates from the southeast. Excessive rain fall produced massive flow from the northwest down river. The flood occurred where the two effects met.

The point is that this is a common phenomenon around the world. That explained why flood stories are found globally.

*Jitse M. van der Meer, Redeemer University College,
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada.*

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WALTER BRADLEY, "The Fine Tuning of the Universe: Evidence for the Existence of God?," PSCF 70, no. 3 (2018): 147–60; and TERRY GRAY, "Pronuclear Environmentalists: An Introduction to Ecomodernism," PSCF 73, no. 4 (2021): 195–201.

I have been around the ASA for more than 40 years. I have found the journal to be a very important part of my spiritual and academic walk. The journal has helped me to refine my thinking: sometimes changing it and sometimes reinforcing it.

Two examples illustrate this. The first one is Walter Bradley's article in September 2018, entitled "The Fine Tuning of the Universe: Evidence for the Existence of God?" I largely came to Christian faith through apologetics. This article reminded me again of why I became a Christian. It was encouraging to read of newer developments in this area that was so important to my coming to faith.

Among more recent articles, the one by Terry Gray in December 2021 is particularly important. I have taught engineering ethics for more than thirty years. During the last ten years of my academic career, I have become very interested in sustainable engineering. This article deals with both topics. It is an interesting discussion of how some people who are concerned about the environment have come around to the conclusion that nuclear power may be acceptable after all. It is clear from this discussion that Gray (and myself) tend to be technological optimists, believing that many of our environmental problems

can be helped through the appropriate use of technology. I heartily agree with his conclusion:

When scientists, engineers and technologists use their minds, and the resources found in creation, to accomplish good, it is to the glory of God and to the furthering of his kingdom. Ecomodernists point to a great Anthropocene as the eschatological goal. Christians point to a different eschatological goal brought about by the Second Coming of Christ. Nonetheless, there is overlap between the two, and Christians can partner with ecomodernists to do the work God is calling us to do. (p. 199)

William Jordan, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

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ROY CLOUSER, "Three Theological Arguments in Support of Carol Hill's Reading of the Historicity of Genesis and Original Sin," PSCF 73, no. 3 (2021): 145–51.

I want to highlight Roy Clouser's paper as providing key insights toward solving a major impasse between earth and heaven, science and faith—the nature of Eden.

As Christians who are scientists, we tend to think of the major story of reality as creation—God's providential control of the evolutionary process, the eons-long struggle between competing individuals and cooperative groups, culminating in human societies. Creation within an entropic universe builds complexity through the negentropic collection of energy, even though guided by God's providence. Human intelligence develops "in the flesh," rational and social, "completed" through multiple inflection points in the hominin line as competition (contest) is displaced by cooperation (love).

But as Christians who are theologians, we tend to think of the major story of reality as redemption—through Jesus, God reclaiming and reconciling fallen sinners, societies, and all of creation, ending in the new Jerusalem, in the new heavens, and new earth. As Paul sees it, creation is bound up in resurrection. All creation is from and for the *Telos*, the New Jerusalem. In eternity's endless moment, planning and action are simultaneous, and thus creation unfolds backwards through time, from the future

Telos. The plot of the story is “resurrection,” the transformation from the “fleshly” earth to the “spiritual” earth. N. T. Wright points out that this process has already begun (e.g., *Surprised by Hope* [2008]). It was revealed in Jesus’s resurrection, and continues via the work of the Holy Spirit within God’s people.

The two stories have a foundational difference—one tells the story of the forming of the earth, the other, the story of the transforming of the earth to receive heaven. The essence of the second story is resurrection—and that cannot happen through the “natural” forces that science studies. How do the two stories fit together? I think Eden is a key. But understanding Eden and evolution is a problem. If the fall of humanity is considered the explanation for evil—human sin, animal / human death and natural disasters—the long history of evolution does *not* look like paradise, but rather, business as usual.

The debate over the meaning of Eden is certainly hot. Is an event in “real” history necessary? Or is Eden a “mythic” story representing the plight of *Ha’adam*—of all humanity? Must we go back close to a million years to find a common ancestor, or did Eden happen a few thousand years ago? Do we need a common genetic ancestor, or will a common genealogical ancestor do? Is a Fall in Eden necessary to explain human sin, natural disasters, and the need for salvation? Or could the event have another meaning?

The following insights from Clouser seem particularly important in this debate. First, the word “*neshamah*,” God’s breath into Adam, means the Holy Spirit infilling the mortal flesh—it is God’s Spirit. It is the word used for filling Old Testament prophets and New Testament believers, and thus for filling an already living, but mortal, Adam as well. It is the same Spirit breathed into the disciples by the resurrected Christ.

Second, the apostle Paul says that sin was not imputed before the law, but sin *was* imputed to Adam, to the people in the flood, to those of Sodom and Egypt. All those judgments for sin happen before the Torah which was given on Mount Sinai. Thus, the first “law” was given to Adam, and therefore unimputed sin must have existed before Adam.

Third, Augustine misinterpreted Paul—and Genesis. The first misunderstanding was due to a bad translation of Romans 5:12 from the Greek (yielding

inherited “original sin”), and the second, to his Platonic understanding of the “good” as ultimate perfection, rather than the Hebraic understanding of “*TOV*” as completeness. Hence, Adam was offered redemption, and thus potentially had eternal life. That is what Adam lost in the “Fall.” He became mortal again.

Within this view, Eden becomes the hinge in creation, the first injection of heaven into earth, the physical creation seeded with the life of heaven. Eden was a potential inflection point between creation and consummation. Through creation, *Ha’adam* had become *TOV*, complete, ready to be filled by the Holy Spirit, equipped to be commissioned as God’s agent / image to spread heaven’s life across the earth.

Of course, God was not taken by surprise by Adam’s choice to build the city of man rather than the city of God. Human civilization subsided into the morass of Babylon, enslaved by the earthly authority Adam had ceded to the *Ha’satan*. But God continued divine contact, made covenant, filled the temple with *shekinah* glory, and brought redemption through Jesus the Messiah, the cross, and resurrection. The eternal plan was put back on track—the beautiful but aching old creation could hope to be fulfilled / reborn as the glorious new creation. And we, along with it.

David L. Wilcox, Eastern University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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2022

FRED CANNON, “Acts 17:26: God Made of One [Blood]—Not of One Man—Every Ethnic Group of Humans,” *PSCF* 74, no. 1 (2022): 19–38; and WILLIAM HORST, “From One Person? Exegetical Alternatives to a Monogenetic Reading of Acts 17:26,” *PSCF* 74, no. 2 (2022): 77–91.

Acts 17:26 is often claimed as a key proof text in the New Testament that a person named Adam was the first anatomical human being. In this study, Fred Cannon shows exhaustively that the words “Adam” or “Man” are not even in the original Greek text of Acts 17:26, despite translations such as the NIV, NEB, and ESV that add “Adam” or “Man” to their English versions of the text. KJV, NKJV, RSV ... are all more accurate translations on this point. “One flesh,” “one