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**“If Adam be *Razed* is Our Faith in Vain?”**

**Introduction**

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being…Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man…[[1]](#footnote-1)

…studies of human variation, together with the fossil record, all point to an origin of modern humans approximately a hundred thousand years ago, most likely in East Africa. Genetic analyses suggest that approximately ten thousand ancestors gave rise to the entire population of 6 billion humans on the planet. How then, does one blend these scientific observations with the story of Adam and Eve?[[2]](#footnote-2)

As virtually anyone knows, the Darwinian theory of evolution and the biblical story of creation and fall have had a difficult time trying to sort out their mutual relationship over the past century and one-half.[[3]](#footnote-3) To the surprise of many contemporary observers, many late nineteenth century scientists and theologians tended to find ways to accommodate evolution into their theology which was often marked by a very high view of Scripture.[[4]](#footnote-4) During the twentieth century, however, a suspicion towards the science began to grow in fundamentalist circles, as not a few became convinced that evolution was in actuality, a foe of biblical belief, a sentiment that was no doubt stoked by the media –driven Scopes drama in 1925.[[5]](#footnote-5) One unfortunate consequence of the Dayton, TN spectacle was the still-present notion that biblical belief and science are inherently enemies, requiring one to take a stand in one camp or the other. This has become as much a scientific assumption as a biblical fundamentalist one.[[6]](#footnote-6) The ensuing decades saw conservative Christianity coalesce around three major approaches to negotiate its relationship with evolutionary science:

1. “Young Earth” *Creationism* that advocated a literal reading of the Genesis creation account; i.e., the earth was created fully-functioning in six 24-hour days approximately 6,000 years, thus totally repudiating any evolutionary process which would necessitate a much longer time period;
2. “Old Earth” *Creationism* that largely accepts science’s geological evidence for a very old planet but is skeptical about biological common ancestry (humankind is a *de novum* creation); and
3. Recent “Intelligent Design” movement that endeavors to make peace with science but challenges Darwinian evolution on the notion of natural selection, arguing rather that some “divine” designing force is behind the structure of nature, although this entity is not explicitly identified as the biblical God.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The Collins’ citation, obviously gives evidence of a fourth model of the evolution-creation relationship, a belief in *theistic evolution* that accepts the Darwinian grand scheme of gradual natural selection (which includes all earthly organisms including human) but firmly ascribes this mechanism to the creative hand of God. This approach tends to view the Genesis material in a more figurative than literal sense but is generally unwavering in some key theological convictions: God is the creator and sovereign over nature, human beings are in some unique sense, his “image,” and human sin is a fundamental moral problem.[[8]](#footnote-8) While theistic evolution has not been widely accepted at a popular level, recent surveys have shown that Christian intellectuals are more embracing. Nearly half of evangelical seminary teachers are theologically comfortable with the concept.[[9]](#footnote-9) Furthermore, evangelical physicist, Karl Giberson estimates that “an overwhelming number” of biology departments at Christian colleges would give credence to TE.[[10]](#footnote-10) As noted previously, theistic evolution is not all that radical of an idea among conservative believers. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church has long made peace with Darwin.[[11]](#footnote-11) While believing evolutionists might be more prone to interpret the Adam and Eve narrative in less literal terms than their creationist brethren, one could still maintain a “first pair” of hominids ascending from the common ancestral continuum. A bit of “wiggle room” existed between the biblical and evolutionary models that allowed a literalist to have his Adam and Eve and eat his evolutionary cake too. But that time is now apparently past if one understands the implication of the second part of Collins’ statement. Recent advances in genetic science—*genomics—*have added some new “rules” to the game. Genomic population studies seem to strongly suggest that anatomically modern humans originated from primate ancestors in a number closer to *ten thousand* rather than two which if true, demands we read the creation and fall accounts differently than we have traditionally done. For some scholars, this development entails that it is time to yield on the historicity of the first pair, an actual Garden of Eden and a real space/time fall. [[12]](#footnote-12) Others are a bit more tentative but readily admit that the intellectual future of a historical Adam is dubious.[[13]](#footnote-13) Perhaps, the most important question that needs to be asked is, if the reading of this new genomic evidence is reliable, what does the “razing of Adam” do to the remainder of the biblical faith? More specifically, is Christian orthodoxy dependent upon the existence of an historical Adam and Eve or not?

The purpose of this paper, then, will be to offer a tentative response to this question. The following procedure will be employed: 1) a non-technical review of the genomic findings that have apparently put an historical Adam on notice; 2) a cursory biblical and historical survey that attempts to determine if Adamic literalism is a necessary part of the formulation of Christian orthodoxy: 3) a theological assessment of the stakes involved in a forfeiture of historicity; and 4) a proposal for evangelical scientific and theological rapprochement entitled, “Keeping Adam in his Place.” A concluding section will then summarize the insights derived in this study.

**The Case for Re-visiting Our Understanding of Adam: Contemporary Genomics**

A *non-literal* reading of the Adam and Eve story is not all that much of a novelty in the world of contemporary academic theology. Certainly mainline Protestant biblical scholars and theologians have interpreted the Genesis story in terms legend, myth, and primarily as a “faith message” for nearly a century in no small part because of anti-supernatural tendencies.[[14]](#footnote-14) Due to their general peace with evolution, Catholic scholars have also been inclined to see the creation/sin account as more symbolic than historical, not to mention such Protestant icons such as C.S. Lewis who viewed the *imago dei* as a new kind of consciousness that God brought upon already-existing organisms.[[15]](#footnote-15) Evangelicals, in general, have been a bit more reticent in adopting non-literal readings due to their preference for a kind of *progressive creationism* which while comfortable with a certain amount of evolutionary development, still prefers to view some species as new and distinct “kinds” of creation which were brought into existence by special *de novo* acts of God. In other words, at special creative moments often separated by considerable time, God brought about a unique creature that would mutate and develop over time—but not evolve into a different species.[[16]](#footnote-16) In this scheme, Genesis could be comfortably read alongside evolutionary theory—a non-literal reading of the creation “days,” to be sure—but this process was “interrupted” by these special divine acts that finally led to the radically different creature, *man*. This *macro-evolutionary* understanding allowed conservatives the luxury of appearing open to science but not forfeiting a biblical literalism that could still keep humans separated from the apes. Some more adventurous theologians openly took an explicitly theistic evolutionist approach (e.g., Bernard Ramm). [[17]](#footnote-17) These scholars obviously see more continuity in the process, generally rejecting progressive creation’s *de novo* moments even when it comes to the origins of *homo sapiens*, at least when it comes to physical development. However, like Lewis, they assume that the unique human soul was directly placed into the evolving hominid, which could well have been a literal Adam and Eve.[[18]](#footnote-18) Thus, for many years, an evangelical biblical scholar and theologian could accept a fairly comprehensive evolutionary theory (of course, a theistic one) without having to negotiate away a historic first human *pair*. Indeed, respected evangelical theologian, Millard Erickson—while more a progressive creationist, himself—considered this kind of theistic evolution to be one of two intellectually viable models of creation that thoughtful biblical believers could embrace at the turn of the twentieth century.[[19]](#footnote-19) This was certainly a manageable position for me for two decades of teaching in evangelical colleges and seminaries. While some of my students might have been a bit uneasy about any acceptance of evolution, they were nonetheless reassured that the traditional belief in a historic first pair was in no danger of forfeiture. However, the past few years have not allowed me to reside so comfortably in this position. Works like that of Francis Collins and my associations with BioLogos scientists such as Denis Lamoureux and Darrel Falk have “rocked” my safe little world! [[20]](#footnote-20) I would have a much easier dismissing their brand of evolutionary creationism if they were not devout evangelicals who firmly hold onto historic Christian orthodoxy—but not a historic *Adam*. Recent developments in science brought about by the human genome sequencing project has not only made theistic evolution an even heavier favorite in interpreting the means of creation (and especially human origins) but it now developed a critical blow against a literal first pair of humans. This genomic aspect is largely why the “search for a historical Adam” cannot be simply dismissed as a “liberal endeavor” or something that is merely an intellectual teaser that postmodern evangelical scholars can use to irritate their more fundamentalistic brethren. The *science* genuinely *forces* us to re-examine traditional understandings of Adam and Eve as well as how this new data affects orthodox Christian beliefs. To put it in a wry way: the human has been caught by the ape.

What has genomics found? To be honest, the discipline can appear to be a bit esoteric to those who are unfamiliar with the science of genetics. Even in a “laymen’s journal’ like the American Scientific Affiliation’s *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith,* a discussion of concepts like single nucleotide polymorphisms, SNP alleles, and recombination frequency overwhelm the non-scientist reader. However, the essential arguments are not difficult to comprehend. In a recent Perspectives article, “Genesis and the Genome,” Trinity Western University biologist, Dennis Venema clearly spells out two major outcomes of this new science:

1. Evolutionary theory’s long-held proposal that humans and other great apes share *common ancestry* is *further established* in its (theory’s) prediction:

…that the genomes we observe in living primates (such as humans and chimpanzees) are, in fact, modified forms of an original genome present in the common ancestor of this species. (Now) This simple hypothesis can be readily tested using several independent lines of evidence derived from comparing the complete genomes of the two species.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Venema then goes on to discuss three lines of evidence that seem to common ancestry a hard to dispute reality: gene sequence similarity, synteny, and pseudogenes.[[22]](#footnote-22) In summary, genomic science has offered the following results for each of these tests respectively:

1. *Gene sequencing*: the vast majority of the human genome matches the chimpanzee genome with a 95% identity. The human genome has approximately 3.0x109 nucleotides; of this number, 2.7 x 109 nucleotides match the genome of the chimpanzee with only a 1.23% difference between species.[[23]](#footnote-23)
2. *Synteny* (spatial organization of genes): In the comparison of complete human and chimpanzee genomes, we can observe overwhelmingly similarity in the spatial organization of genes, with subtle differences arising since speciation.[[24]](#footnote-24) This empirical data confirms what evolutionary theory predicted would be the case given common ancestry.
3. Pseudogenes: Pseudogenes are gene sequences that have been inactivated by mutation that continue in the genome as nonfunctional sequences.[[25]](#footnote-25) Research has shown that:

pseudogenes with identical inactivating mutations , common to humans and gorillas were also present with the identical mutation in chimpanzees; mutations common to humans and orangutans were present in chimpanzees and gorillas.[[26]](#footnote-26)

In short, these three independent lines of genomic research converge to give serious empirical support for the evolutionary conclusion that human beings are not biologically independent, *de novo* creations, but share common ancestry with other life forms. At the very least, *progressive creationism* has become a less tenable option for an evangelical understanding of creation. However, the major “game-changer” is yet to follow.

1. Population genomic studies strongly suggest that *homo sapiens* are descended from an estimated effective population size in the range of 10,000 individuals not a single pair.[[27]](#footnote-27) *This* is the issue that has really brought about the present distress and furor because if this finding is accurate, a literal reading of the Adam and Eve story becomes extremely problematic. Venema offers the following summary of the process that yields this potentially unnerving conclusion:

The process for estimating population sizes from comparative genomics is quantitative in nature, and as such, it is less accessible to a nonspecialist audience. It is, however, possible to appreciate this data qualitatively as well as quantitatively. For example, a small, but significant fraction of the human genome is more similar to the modern gorilla genome than to the chimpanzee genome. ..the reason our genome is overwhelmingly more similar to the chimpanzee genome is that we most recently shared a common ancestor with chimpanzees. Yet, in spite of this, we retain some regions of our genome that are more closely related to gorillas. This situation arises because the population that gave rise to the human-chimpanzee common ancestor was large enough, to transmit this variation to us without passing it on to chimpanzees. Chimpanzees and humans are thus separate genomic samplings of a diverse ancestral population. Had this pool been small, the human-chimpanzee gene trees would match the species tree in almost every case. The proportion of gene trees that do not match the species tree can therefore be used to estimate the population size of the ancestral population.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Venema then goes on to note that early studies, using limited data sets, consistently estimated that the effective ancestral population for *homo sapiens* in the rage of 10,000 individuals.[[29]](#footnote-29) This number was allowed to be as “low” as 6,000 individuals with a 90% degree of confidence. More recent studies using the complete chimpanzee genome as well as extensive sequence available from the ongoing gorilla project, have enabled researchers to move the number upwards again to the 8,000-10,000 range with a greater precision due to much larger data sets.[[30]](#footnote-30) The population estimate science only continues to get more sophisticated. The International Map Project is a large-scale endeavor to map and catalog human single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). According to Venema, when these are examined in groups linked together on the same chromosome (called Linkage Disequilibrium—LD), they can be used to estimate ancestral population dynamics.[[31]](#footnote-31) The SNP/LD approaches have even been able to estimate ancestral populations for specific human groups such as African and non-African groups.[[32]](#footnote-32) These studies continue to support the conclusion that human beings, as a species, are descended from an ancestral population of minimally several thousand individuals. This approach also suggests that there was no appreciable change in human population size between the time that the first modern humans appeared in the fossil record (Less than 200,000 years ago) and the time that significant culture and religious development occurred (less than 50,000 years ago).[[33]](#footnote-33) In short, population genomics has left us with a compelling argument that our common lineage “has not experience an extreme population bottleneck in the last nine million years or more…and that any bottlenecks our lineage did experience were a reduction only to a population of several thousand breeding individuals.”[[34]](#footnote-34) The genomic data forcefully discredits “the hypothesis that humans are derived from a single ancestral pair.”[[35]](#footnote-35) Such a position (i.e., literal Adam and Eve) contends Venema, “has no support from a genomics perspective and indeed, is counter to a large body of evidence.”[[36]](#footnote-36)

To be fair, there have been potential challenges to the “Majority Report” (as narrated by Prof. Venema) that suggest that there may be other mechanisms that bring about increase in relevant kinds of genetic diversity than population studies have shown.[[37]](#footnote-37) Some have also argued that human mitochondrial DNA with its “mitochondrial Eve” and “Y-Chromosomal Adam” stands in opposition to the genomics data presented above. However, as Venema notes, ‘present day variation of human chromosomal DNA indicates that she (Eve) was but one member of a substantial breeding population.”[[38]](#footnote-38)

In summation, contemporary genomics has provided further, substantial support for evolutionary theory’s fundamental tenet of common ancestry and provided strong evidence that our human speciation came as a result of an interbreeding population rather than a single ancestral pair. While one could argue that both of these interpretations are dependent upon an *a prior*i commitment to an evolutionary model—and that is true—one must also recognize that evolutionary biology holds virtual canonical status in the natural sciences, an authority than has been attained by years of careful experimentation.[[39]](#footnote-39) It does evangelical theology little good to continue attempts to cast aspersions on evolutionary theory promulgate popular suspicion about “Darwinism.” We need to make peace with a scientific paradigm that has substantial evidence and overwhelming credibility among the very best practitioners. While evolution and especially its newer progeny, genomics, may bring significant challenge to Christian beliefs we have long held to be true (such as a literal Adam and Eve), it may also give us a needed opportunity to re-examine if we have added some things to the “Christian core” that would go beyond what our ecclesiastical ancestors and more importantly, the biblical writers, themselves, would enumerate as “the faith once delivered.”

**What is the *History* of the “Historical Adam”?**

Many evangelicals would probably assume that belief in a historical Adam and Eve is a “given” as we read the history of the church. Challenges to this notion are thought to be of recent vintage as liberal theology, influenced by Darwinian science, “adjusted” long-cherished dogma to accommodate the modern, anti-supernatural mind. We are not surprised that the “Father of Liberal Theology,” Friedrich Schleiermacher, rejected a literal interpretation of Adam and saw him as an “illustration of the universal process of the rise of sin.”[[40]](#footnote-40) We are well aware that the great Neo-orthodox theologians, Karl Barth and Emil Brunner dismissed the Adam and Eve story as factual, although the latter unlike his better-known disputant, considered the historical issue to be important for Christian theology.[[41]](#footnote-41) Barth was only concerned about the *message* of the serpent not whether such an event actually occurred whereas Brunner, ever the observer of nature, more explicitly recognized the incompatibility that a literal Adam posed for those conversant with modern science.[[42]](#footnote-42) More importantly, Brunner opposed a historical approach to Adam on *theological* grounds, arguing that a focus on two, literal persons caused a reader to miss the larger truth: All human beings are Adam (and Eve) who arrogantly revolt against their Creator.[[43]](#footnote-43) For all of its problems, this “existentialized” interpretation actually has some fairly strong precedence in *orthodox C*hristian history, notably the Fathers and Doctors of the ancient and medieval church.

In his excellent anthology of early Christian writings on the creation narrative, Peter Bouteneff offers this somewhat startling observation, “In Patristic and liturgical expressions alike, ‘Adam,’ as a term taken on its own, primarily signifies fallen humanity redeemed in Christ.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Certainly, Bouteneff is not contending that the Church Fathers doubted the truthfulness of Scripture; there is no evidence that they considered the Bible in any way but the infallible revelation of God. However, he is calling attention to the fact that they employed a sophisticated hermeneutic that in Conor Cunningham’s words “avoid the domestication of the Scriptures and the corruption of their truth.”[[45]](#footnote-45) A cursory examination of some early Christian theologians reveals that indeed, these formative voices of orthodoxy actually eschewed the literalism we assume so often today. Origen (ca. 185-254), admittedly deeply influenced by Philo’s allegorical approach wrote the following words:

To what person of intelligence, I ask, will the account seem logically consistent that says there was a ‘first day” and a “second day” and a ‘third day,” in which also “evening” and “morning” are named without a moon, and without stars, and even in the case of the first day without a heaven? And who will be found simple enough to be believe that like some farmer “God planted trees in the garden of Eden, in the east” and that he planted “the tree of life” in it, that is a visible tree that could be touched, so that someone could eat of this tree with corporeal teeth and gain life, and further, could eat of another tree and receive the knowledge of “good and evil”? Moreover, we find that God is said to stroll in the garden in the afternoon and Adam to hide under a tree. Surely, I think no one doubts that these statements are made by Scripture in the form of a figure by which they point toward certain mysteries.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Origen’s cautionary words in turn, are echoed in both Basil of Caesarea (ca. 328-379) and Gregory of Nyssa who contend that all that really matters is that the mystery of the beginning is revealed “and that only foolish curiosity drives us turn such questions into science.”[[47]](#footnote-47) These sentiments do not suggest that the Fathers were anti-scientific in any way—they were not—but in Boutenteff’s words, this refusal to conflate Gen. 1-3 with science enabled “them [to be] free to enjoy an unprejudiced scientific inquisitiveness.”[[48]](#footnote-48)

This non-literal reading of Genesis was also promulgated in the West by Augustine, who in his work, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, argued that the first two chapters of Genesis were composed to accommodate the finite understanding of its audience:

And it is the same with the words of the Old Testament, which does not teach that God is weak, but which are used in order to flatter our weakness. Nothing, after all, can be said about God that is at all worthy of him. But so that we should be suitably brought up and helped to attain to those things that cannot be uttered by any human speech, things are said in scripture which we are able to grasp.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Not only did he contend that the creation account was fitted to meet the needs of its audience, but in the very first paragraph of his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, Augustine candidly states that “No Christian…will ever say that they [Genesis] should not be taken In a figurative sense, if he pays attention to what the apostle says…”[[50]](#footnote-50) For Augustine, one cannot properly interpret the Old Testament without the New (and its expression in the church’s sacraments).

With a humility that many today in the Adam debate could well emulate, the Bishop of Hippo concurred after a lengthy discussion on the meaning of the six days of creation that “(we should) not commit ourselves rashly to any one opinion on such an some other answer, in case perchance the truth may later on lay bare some other answer…”[[51]](#footnote-51)

The medieval giant, Thomas Aquinas, also was reticent to literalize the opening chapters of Genesis, choosing to remain impartial in a debate sparked by one of Augustine’s interpretations that the six days of creation actually occurred in one single day.[[52]](#footnote-52) Medieval scholar, William Carroll observes:

Aquinas did not think that the opening of Genesis presented any difficulties for the natural sciences, for the Bible is not a textbook in the sciences. What is essential to Christian faith, according to Aquinas, is the “fact of creation,” not the manner or mode of the formation of the world.[[53]](#footnote-53)

As one peruses the literature of the ancient and medieval church, one does not see these theologians openly questioning the historical existence of Adam but one does get the impression that Gen. 1-2 should not be pressed to the kinds of literalism that have marked evangelical interpretation in our day. This “ambivalence” about the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis tends to generally characterize Christian theology at least until the dawn of the nineteenth century.[[54]](#footnote-54) There were of course, some notable exceptions to this (Martin Luther’s insistence that the Genesis genealogies taught a 6000-year-old earth comes to mind), but more typical is the spirit of John Wesley who wrote that:

The inspired penman in this history[Genesis]…[wrote] for the Jews first, and calculating his narratives for the infant state of the church, describes things by their outward sensible appearances, and leaves us, by further discoveries of the divine light, to be led into the understanding of the mysteries couched under them.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Elsewhere, Wesley noted that the Scriptures “were not written to gratify our curiosity [of scientific details] but to lead us to God.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

This cursory survey is important in giving us a framework by which by which we can evaluate the importance to Christian theology of a literal understanding of creation and by implication, the historicity of Adam and Eve. While many evangelicals would probably question the theological agenda of Reinhold Niebuhr, it would be hard to contend against his observation that:

While Augustinian theology abounds in doctrines of original sin which equate it with the idea of an inherited corruption and which frequently makes concupiscence in generation the agent of this inheritance, it is significant that Christian thought has always had some suggestions of the representative rather than the historical character of Adam’ sin. The idea of Adam as representative man allowed it to escape the historical-literalistic allusion.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Thus, evangelical theology should be a bit more cautious about tarring “non-literalists” with a liberal brush in their more figurative readings of the early chapters of Genesis. Certainly, evolutionary biology and its more recent and compelling genomic evidence should prompt the Christian truth-seeker to, like Augustine, re-examine his/her hermeneutical approaches to Scripture. Non-literal approaches are not new nor do they necessarily reflect a weak view of Scripture since they have been employed fairly frequently in the history of the church so that *the integrity of scientific inquiry* might be protected. The lack of historical precision (at least as how we often conceive it today) was in no small part responsible for the development of a “fully-birthed” science that has revolutionized the west.[[58]](#footnote-58) Furthermore, contemporary Near Eastern studies have enabled us to better appreciate the diverse literary genres that constitute the Old Testament, specifically the *creation myths* that seem to lie in the background of the Mosiac author. [[59]](#footnote-59) In particular, we can note how the biblical account of human creation is like—and *very dissimilar* to ancient religion. As conservative scholar Bill T. Arnold notes:

Ancient religion was polytheistic, mythological, and anthropomorphic, describing the gods in human forms and functions, while *Genesis 1* is monotheistic, scornful of mythology, and engages in anthropomorphism only as figures of speech.[[60]](#footnote-60)

This literary approach, then, helps us read Gen.1-3 more in terms of a basic *worldview* rather than as a straightforward statement of the mechanics of creation that boldly frames the essence of a biblical storyline (i. e, the independent existence of a singular, personal God who alone creates everything in the world; everything in the world is inherently good, especially humankind; human beings are given a unique role in creation as God’s regents; sadly, each and every person has rebelled against God and the consequences of that rebellion infect the cosmos; and God will provide salvation through the ‘seed of the woman”). Moreover, this “non-literalistic” recognition may help us read Paul’s Adam-Christ treatise (Rom. 5:12-21) more in the spirit of ancient exegetes (Adam as *typology*) and more *Christo-centrically* as Nicholas Cabasilas wrote, “It was not the old Adam who was the model for the new, but the new Adam for the old…To sum it up: the Savior first and alone showed to us the true human being.”[[61]](#footnote-61)

In short, Christian *history* shows us that we should be tolerant towards non-literal approaches to the creation/fall narrative not because we need to escape the difficulties posed by science but rather to enable both disciplines—theology and science—to fully function as living, breathing receptacles of truth.[[62]](#footnote-62)

**Can Christian Orthodoxy Survive with a *Minimalist* Adam**?

There can be very little question that prior to the scientific revolution of the 17th and 18th centuries, the historicity of Adam and Eve was a not really debated in Christianity and particularly its development in western culture.[[63]](#footnote-63)There really was no reason to do so because the historical questions that so provoke us today, were simply not *their* questions. On the other hand, it would be disingenuous to say that our forbears disbelieved in the first pair’s actual existence since they are a staple part in any re-telling of human creation and sin. But *literal* historicity does not seem to be a primary concern in difference to something like the birth, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. And yet, even in the latter, there is a theological reading given of faith’s determinative event, not the somewhat “positivistic” historical approach that largely functions as an apologetic argument in evangelicalism. Furthermore, these earlier believers were not seemingly concerned about the Bible’s truth being challenged by the findings of early science and as in the case of Thomas Aquinas, saw parallel but complementary narratives in the two disciplines. Thus, in determining whether or not the lack of a historical Adam and Eve becomes a serious impediment to Christian doctrine, especially the doctrine of original sin, we might best be served by re-examining ancient and medieval sources. These insights, in turn, might very well enable us to carry on a not-so-contentious dialog with evolutionary science—in a manner not unlike that found in Aquinas’ “comfort” with the science of his day.[[64]](#footnote-64) In short, we may carefully postulate the following:

1. Adam and Eve are key characters in the creation of human beings and the fall into sin. However, they are not more important than the theological notions of *imago dei* and the reality and presence of sin in every human being. While our ecclesiastical ancestors were not simply early versions of neo-orthodoxy, the latter’s understanding of Adam as a kind of “everyman” does have theological precedence and warrant in their writings.
2. Interestingly, the existence of Adam is not a core tenet of the early ecumenical creeds. Certainly, the reality of human sin and its need for divine forgiveness is affirmed, and there is no doubt that the birth, ministry, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ occurred in actual space/time history (i.e., suffered under Pontius Pilate”). [[65]](#footnote-65) The ancient creeds are a helpful reminder to today’s theologically-fragmented world about what constitutes (in C.S. Lewis’ words) a “Mere Christianity.” Evangelical philosopher, Alvin Plantinga seemingly concurs.[[66]](#footnote-66)
3. The historicity of Jesus is not dependent upon a literal, historical Adam and Eve. It is hard to make these two events (i.e., Adam and Christ) equivalent even in the Pauline material. The Apostle‘s resurrection argument (and hence, the Christian Faith) is dependent upon Christ’ actual raising from the dead not Adam’s actual eating of the forbidden fruit.[[67]](#footnote-67)
4. We must admit that there is a relative *paucity* of biblical material about Adam in Scripture, itself. Outside of the first five chapters of Genesis, he appears but twice in the Old Testament and these references are not particularly consequential to doctrinal argument.[[68]](#footnote-68) Jesus does not refer to Adam explicitly and Paul’s use of him is largely *typological* in the Apostle’s two major “First Adam, Second Adam” discourses.[[69]](#footnote-69) There is no reason to believe that Paul did not believe in a historical figure but again, this concern is more one raised by those who shaped by modern historiography rather than the ancients, themselves. We might want to re-visit the entire notion of how Christians do history since it appears that both neo-orthodox and evangelicals have had their approaches significantly shaped in response to positivistic science. Because the supernaturalism of the Bible seemingly contradicted the findings of reductionistic science, the former opted for an ahistorical *heilsgeschichte* to protect the existential values of the Faith. Thus, the historical Adam became inconsequential—but so did the *historical Jesus*. Evangelicals reacted to the challenge from science by becoming obsessed with historical evidence—“facts”—often reducing great theological truths to artifacts from a distant past. In contrast to earlier epochs, both approaches are defective, *theologically* as well as scientifically.
5. A robust doctrine of *human uniqueness* *and dignity* is not dependent upon a literal, historical Adam. For early Christians, the issue was not so much how human beings became the *imago* but the fact that they were. Evolutionary creations F. Collins and K. Giberson are comfortable with the notion that “at a certain point in history, God entered into a special relationship with those who had developed the necessary characteristics, endowing them with the gift of his image.”[[70]](#footnote-70) This rather general observation is a candid acknowledgement that evolutionary biology cannot explain all of the complexities that make us human.
6. A robust doctrine of human sin and depravity is not dependent upon a literal, historical Adam. While the ancient and medieval church assumed his existence, they spent far more time writing on the effects of sin and its transmission through the entire human race. [[71]](#footnote-71)
7. In fact, a strong doctrine of *original* sin may be maintained with or without a literal, historical Adam. Again. Collins and Giberson acknowledge that it is quite possible that the origin of sin is concurrent with the “gift of image”: “With this spiritual gift came the ability to know and experience evil—an opportunity grasped with tragic consequences that have carried through the history of our species.” [[72]](#footnote-72) One can read this contemporary statement in either terms of mediate imputation or an Augustinian-like realist or headship manner. Evolutionary creationism does not necessarily rule out a specific entrance of human sin or its corrupting influence; it simply refuses to equate this with a literal Adam and Eve. Admittedly, most EC advocates tend to be critical of the “traditional doctrine of original” as it was construed by the later Augustine.[[73]](#footnote-73) However, in this they are actually more in line with the Greek Fathers and later, Thomas Aquinas, readings which better preserve the notion of on-going human freedom and choice. In this sense “Adam’ both functions as the origin and representative of human sinfulness.
8. The ancient Fathers, in particular, remind us to read the Adam story, *Christologically.* Conor Cunningham poignantly observes that against our western tendency to view the creation and fall as “stand-alone” events in past history, the Patristics viewed them in the context of Christ and his work. [[74]](#footnote-74) There was a completeness to the biblical drama which would not allow them to fragment the beginning from its end in Christ. Bouteneff aptly comments that for the Fathers, the status of Adam “is a sequence that begins with Christ himself: rather than Adam being a model or image for humanity or even the first real human being; it is Christ who is both. Christ is the first true human being, and Christ is the image of God and the model for Adam.”[[75]](#footnote-75)
9. The generous biblical and historical boundaries we have heretofore described still give us some strong lines in Christian doctrine that must not be crossed. The history of Christian orthodoxy enables us to continually examine and even fine better ways to express traditional beliefs but not reformulate them in such a way that they become unrecognizable. Thus, John Schneider’s recent proposal of an “aesthetic supralapsarianism” becomes problematic in a couple ways: first, it tends to reduce human sin to a common animal trait of selfishness; and second, the Fall is actually not an abnormality at all but rather the working out of the mysterious wisdom of God.[[76]](#footnote-76) While I am reticent to assign Schneider’s proposal to heretical status, such an unconventional rendering of the biblical material (not to mention his slanted reading of the Eastern Fathers to support the former) is at the very least on the “fringes” of orthodoxy. (Schneider’s proposal is quite extreme for an EC proponent). However, I believe it is important not to exile voices like Schneider who seem to be earnest about integrating evolutionary science and biblical faith; we must keep the dialog going until it becomes more apparent that such construals are inconsistent with Christian profession. The recent ETS experience with Open Theism provides some positive (as well as negative) lessons on how this might be done.[[77]](#footnote-77)
10. Schneider’s more “radical” EC scheme does remind us, however, that there is a certain “theological seamlessness” that is forfeited when one takes a non-literal, ahistorical reading of Adam and Eve. There are the issues of an “unfallen” (not *perfect*) creation, not to mention presence of calamity and death that a non-literal model exacerbates.[[78]](#footnote-78) However, apparent theological dissonance should not be the reason to abandon this approach; indeed, ancient church history has not a few instances where biblical truth was counter-intuitive to prevailing philosophical paradigms—and was allowed to stand. [[79]](#footnote-79)

**Can *Evangelicalism* Survive the Adamic Challenge? “Keeping Adam in his Place”: A Common Problem for Scientists and Evangelical Theologians**

As one peruses the *evangelical* literature on this topic –generated by both the scientific and theological communities—one cannot help but be a bit dismayed by the polemic that too often works its way into the discussion.[[80]](#footnote-80) There is a tendency in both communities to offer a “persecuted truth-teller” narrative for their respective views, over-dramatize the scholarly “edginess of their positions and describe the other in terms that minimize the breadth of complexity and diversity that mark scientific and theological construals of creation/fall. Ironically, both sides seem to commit a similar error, something that I would describe as “keeping Adam in his place.” Let me explain. In the case of the believing scientist (most specifically, the evolutionary creationist), the traditional Adam and Eve can become virtually lost in the massive context of contemporary genomics, almost to the point that they become extinct or irrelevant. While we have argued that Adam’s historicity may not be as important to theological formulation as evangelicals have tended to make him, it is problematic to simply absorb him into “everyman.” On the other hand, evangelical theologians (probably more so than biblical scholars) have tended to give Adam a prominence that is unjustified as well. In short, we have become so enmeshed in the details of the creation/fall account (a holdover, I believe from the anti-supernaturalism of liberalism) that Adam receives more of our focus than Jesus Christ. He becomes a “stand alone” theological figure instead of the first man who receives his full significance by virtue of the perfect *Second Adam*. The ancient church reminds us to keep our theology—including humanity and sin—in a *Christological narrative*.

Thus, some cautionary words are in order to both evangelical scientists and theologians about “balancing Adam.” To the scientific community such as that represented by the BioLogos school:

1. Present the science in a less contentious manner that almost appears that one is looking for a fight. In particular, there is a spirit that
2. Avoid caricatures and over-generalizations of young and old earth creationists, especially when it comes to biblical interpretation. There are considerable layers of diversity and even sophistication to these views. Although it appears that the data (including theological construals) is not in their favor, this does not constitute grounds for triumphalism and dismissal; we all only see in part. It is not impossible that God created the universe and human beings in six literal days or in some fashion more along the lines of these groups. Intellectual capacity is not the determinant of the plausibility of an interpretation but rather the strength the intellectual integrity of the data. Encourage especially the ID crowd to continue the discussion—outside of their won sympathetic circles.
3. *Concordism* is not simply the domain of the biblical literalist who attempts to reshape (or eliminate) scientific data that does not fit into the details of an assumed ‘plain reading” of the Bible. It may be in fact be true that the “true concordists” are those in the scientific community who read Scripture in light of the evolutionary data since this approach more accurately fits the general definition of concordism that posits that there is “positive concord between all true statements of science and all data of Scripture, rightly understood.”[[81]](#footnote-81) In actuality, it is the scientific creationists who seek more harmony between science and the Bible—even as they attempt to keep their claims in separated domains—whereas, the Biblical literalists will more willingly “change” the scientific data to fit their received paradigm. In other words, a given reading of the Bible will always trump and modify any competing evidence from the world of science.
4. Evolutionary creationists must be cautious not to allow the biology to become more determinative than it has a right to be; it cannot become reductionistic especially in regards to human beings. There is more to the human obviously than the genome.
5. Evolutionary creationists should not be afraid to admit that evolutionary biology does have areas where its seemingly logical conclusions run counter to prominent biblical themes and what appears to be universal human experience. The “normalizing” of death is one such area where the theory provides a natural explanation that just does not square with the Bible and the human heart that both perceive this dark specter as an unwelcome interloper in the human drama. The death of two very close Christian people this past semester (one being my sister-in-law) as well as John Collins’ poignant ‘Unacademic Anecdote”[[82]](#footnote-82) cause me to question again whether the biology is capable of providing a *humanly coherent* understanding of suffering and physical death. Perhaps, this is a case where it has to plead a certain degree of agnosticism. To wit:

***Sein Zum Tohde*: The Problem of Death for Evolutionary Biology (and the Entire Human Race)**

Martin Heidegger’s famous dictum reminds us that human experience does not readily concur with the evolutionary biologist’s somewhat cold conclusion that suffering and death—selection and survival of the fittest—is a *normal* feature of nature. In any kind of evolutionary scheme, death *preceded* the appearance of the first *homo sapiens*; in fact, their entrance on the cosmic stage was due in part, to already existing cycles of birth, development, decline and death.[[83]](#footnote-83) The fossil record offers serious evidence that physical death has been on earth for hundreds of millions of years before human life as flesh-eating teeth populate the geological strata.[[84]](#footnote-84) Evangelical scientist-theologian Lamoureux unequivocally states that “there is no physical evidence to support the traditional belief in the cosmic fall.”[[85]](#footnote-85) While some might see this as reason to abandon biblical faith, Lamoureux primarily sees it as a conflict created from faulty hermeneutics. In no less explicit and arresting terms, the Canadian declares “The Bible makes statements about the physical world that are false.”[[86]](#footnote-86) Now what this member of the ETS means by “false statements” is not that Scripture deliberately perpetrates wrong or misleading concepts but rather that the inspired writers are accommodating themselves to an ancient, phenomenological perspective of the physical world. Lamoureux contends that:

It is only consistent that biblical statements regarding the origin of death are also a product of this ancient way of conceiving physical reality. In other words, the entrance of mortality into the world, as stated in Gen 3 and then repeated in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15, derives from an incidental ancient science. The implication is clear: the origin of physical death presented in Scripture cannot be true.[[87]](#footnote-87)

If we can get beyond Prof. Lamoureux ‘s employment of “shock” (which probably is not all that helpful), we see that his real issue is with a literalistic reading of the fall account not with the Bible itself. In fact, the Bible’s use of clearly erroneous science is actually kind of a *virtue* for him as it demonstrates Scripture’s intention to communicate infallible theological truth within the limited perspective of the ancient audience.[[88]](#footnote-88) To Lamoureux’s credit, he does not attempt to soften the Bible’s connection of sin with physical death as progressive creationists generally do; i.e., the meaning of Adam’s death is really “spiritual,’ thereby harmonizing evolutionary biology with the biblical account.[[89]](#footnote-89) This theologically-trained scientist understands that while spiritual death is not precluded in the Mosaic and Pauline passages, *physical* death is their primary concern. [[90]](#footnote-90) With characteristic candor, Lamoureux concludes “the traditional belief in an actual causal connection between his (Adam’s) sin and the origin of physical death is false. [Furthermore] Adam is an incidental vessel that delivers inerrant foundations of the Christian faith to remind us: we are created in the Image of God, we are sinful, and God judges us for our sin.”[[91]](#footnote-91) Suffice to say, this is an understanding of biblical inerrancy that few if any of the ETS founding fathers would have ever imagined. So does the believer simply accept that suffering and death are “normal” realities in this universe and abandon what appears to be a consistent record of human struggle against *tohde*? Lamoureux admits that “coming to terms with suffering and death has been one of the greatest challenges faced by men and women in every generation.”[[92]](#footnote-92) In fact, the discovery of biological evolution and its narrative of violence only exacerbate the human angst. [[93]](#footnote-93) His solution to this nagging existential problem (that has no real grounding in reality) is to focus on the historical reality of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.[[94]](#footnote-94) In contrast to a *theodicy* that is largely cast in an ahistorical form, “the fulfillment of these afflictions *occurs in real history.”*[[95]](#footnote-95) In the real, space/time work of Christ, we come to realize that our afflictions have eternal significance. Our ultimate hope is in the new creation (including our physical bodies) promised through Christ’s resurrection while in the immediate present, we are recipients of the Holy Spirit’s transforming power that enables us to view suffering not as primarily a curse but as a vehicle for spiritual maturity and growth.[[96]](#footnote-96)

One can hardly argue with the *logic* of Prof. Lamoureux’s interpretation of the biblical material on death, at least from the basis of evolutionary biology. Physical death in this scheme appears to be a normal part of the organic cycle. While we may find this notion repulsive and a cruel repudiation of all that we hope to be true, it is reality and we must dutifully accept it. Much as Heidegger and the secular existentialists, we must admit that all beings are death-bound. However, as human beings, we have the capacity to forge meaning for ourselves rather than simply resign to the inevitable. For the Christian Lamoureux, on the other hand, the source of this meaning is Jesus Christ, who he clearly believes is real and whose triumph over death occurred in the real physical world. This is certainly a great improvement to the atheistic version of existentialism but it is still constructed on a premise about death that cannot be easily squared with the biblical narrative, historic Christian understanding, and the universal human conviction that the cessation of physical life is *not normal*. The incarnate Christ wept at the death of his friend Lazarus, a “grief observed” by “the Jews” who were gathered in Bethany.[[97]](#footnote-97) Even though Jesus would soon demonstrate his mastery over death (something Prof. Lamoureux readily accepts as historical), he responded to this “normal” human phenomenon in a manner that either was simply an accommodation to the limited worldview of his audience or was a true expression of a core human belief that something is wrong in this universe. Perhaps, evolutionary creationists should recognize that their very logical understanding of death theory encounters incredible human difficulties, and concede that this is a legitimate anomaly. After all, believing evolutionists have themselves cautioned against comprehending the complex human being at merely the biological level. It seems that the universal human struggle with physical death is one such anomaly that should caution the scientist against a totalizing mechanical scheme. A humble recognition of evolution’s incapacity to adequately explain the “intrusiveness” of death might facilitate the kind of respect and dialogue evangelical scientists seek.

Evangelical Theology also can be seen to have an “Adamic obsession” that borders on the unhealthy, as well. Evolutionary creationists as well as ancient theologians (not to mention neo-orthodox voices) should seriously cause us to inquire if we have let our concern for Adam’s historicity overwhelm what should be our primary focus, the person and work of Christ. Thus, some words of caution must be directed towards my own discipline:

1. Be willing to admit that evolutionary biology is essentially indisputable dogma in the world of science and it is probably a waste of energy not to mention a forfeiture of intellectual credibility to continually find means to diminish and/or explain away its descriptive power. On the other hand, we must keep up a vigilant challenge to reductive naturalism (which can subtly creep into the work of our believing friends in the sciences).
2. Be willing to admit that the case for a literal, historic Adam and Eve is not a simple, uncomplicated one –even in the pages of Scripture, as well as in the testimony of the ancient church and more recent theologies. While we are rightly suspicious of some of the presuppositions that drove neo-orthodoxy in its ahistorical directions, its assignment of Adam and Eve to a tertiary role may not be all that erroneous, and may be a bit instructive to evangelicals. We have been known to become almost more obsessed about the Bible than its central character. This is not simply a non-inerrantist observation but a recognition from one “within the conservative camp” that we may have let our concern for responding to modernity’s anti-supernaturalism overwhelm our primary, Christological and missiological concerns.
3. Avoid the tendency to construct polarities that do not really exist; i.e., BioLogos members and sympathizers are necessarily threats to evangelical orthodoxy. This “either/or” reading of the creation/evolution issue already is the dominant narrative in popular circles, both ecclesiastical and media. It does not need to be further “sensationalized” and evangelical scholars—especially theologians—are necessary to keeping this and its more recent historical Adam tributary in proper perspective as a relatively small concern in the panoply of Christian orthodoxy. We hold the key in many respects, to diffusing the hysteria that our sound-bit culture loves to bathe in.
4. Be willing to admit that the Bible does not tell a neat, unambiguous story—at least given our limited human knowledge—but this does not have to leave us in perpetual frustration. The Christ advent does bring resolution to the difficulties of human existence—certainly in its final eschatological form—and this hope from the end of the story at least reminds that there is a satisfactory conclusion to every seeming biblical –and experiential—“incoherency.”
5. Do not “marginalize” the biblical literalists but respectfully work to keep them in the academic discussion. We have an obligation to mitigate against “cartoonish” demagoguery be it of the evolutionary scientist or young earth creationist. In the end, our “foe” is *naturalism* not fellow *theists*, and I would hope that we would even treat our secular critics with the respect due the *imago dei.* (Sadly, in academic circles, we tend to be less charitable to our evangelical colleagues that differ with us than scholars who have no faith commitment. Biblically, we are called to be “neighbor” to both (cf. Luke 10:36-37).

**Conclusion**

“If Adam be razed is our faith in vain?” What has the above discussion yielded in answer to this question? Several concluding observations are in order:

1. First of all, the question itself is a bit overstated in that it suggests that the Adam and Eve story has essentially been dismantled as time/space history. While it should be readily admitted that a more literal reading of the Gen. 1-3 narrative appears to be in conflict with the general canons of evolutionary science (and particularly human genome sequencing), the history of science should make one a bit tentative in making dogmatic assertions. The historical Adam might be in serious doubt but it is far too premature to pronounce something as final as his “razing.” The conversation is far from over.
2. Contemporary genetics seems to validate long-held evolutionary theory that humans and other great apes share common ancestry. The recent availability of complete genome sequences for both humans and chimpanzees (comparing homology, synteny, and shared pseudogenes at a genome wide level) provide multiple independent lines for this Darwinian (not *Darwinist*!) belief. While common ancestry is still challenged by prominent evangelical apologists, it must be conceded that the scientific data strongly points in this direction. However, *common ancestry* by itself, is not a warrant for dismissing an historical Adam and Eve, for the creation narrative can be read in a “shared species” type of literalism advocated in early Christian interpretations such as that offered by Basil of Caesarea. The Roman Catholic Church has long made peace with common ancestry.
3. The real challenge to an historical “first human pair” comes from the use of genomics to estimate effective human population sizes at several time points along evolutionary history. This application of the science is much more difficult for the non-specialist to understand. In essence, population genomics asserts that our “lineage” (chimpanzees and/or gorillas) has not undergone an *extreme* population bottleneck over the last nine million years, and what bottlenecks did occur only reduced the numbers of breeding individuals to several thousand. When the first hominids appeared (less than 200,000 years ago according to the fossil record, or less than 50,000 years ago if one locates such in the context of significant cultural and religious development), *homo sapiens* appeared in a group of at least *several thousand* individuals rather than a single male and female. While there have been some studies done that suggest that there may be mechanisms that affect the rate change of genetic diversity in a more rapid manner that that calculated in population size models, it has to be admitted that the scientific evidence does not support the contention that human beings are genetically derived from a single pair. This issue—*population genomics*—appears to be the most significant challenge yet, to a literal reading of the biblical account from the sciences, and has to be squarely faced by evangelical theologians rather than dismissed or demonized.
4. Genomics (and evolutionary biology) are not in themselves, sufficient explanations of what it means to be human; i.e., *homo sapiens* cannot be reduced to scientific description. The biblical notion of *imago dei* (as well as human experience) presents a human being that is far more complex than any biological—or even theological—analysis can yield. The scientist must continually be reminded that genomics is but a small piece of the human puzzle.
5. The historicity of Adam (and Eve) seems to be assumed by Jesus and Paul, as well as the major theological voices of the Church until the Enlightenment and Modern periods. There appears to be little argument about the human race –and sin—arising from a first male and female. On the other hand, given the science of the day, why should there be?
6. It should also be noted that in the grand scheme of the biblical story, Adam is not a major figure. There is a relative paucity of biblical material about Adam. On the other hand, the words of Jesus and Paul give Adam a significant place in the scriptural drama, and this should caution us against assigning the historicity of the creation/fall narrative to a Barthian-like “irrelevance.”
7. Important Christian doctrinal commitments are associated with the “Adam story;”e.g., unity of the human race, human beings as the unique “image of God,” original sin and universal human corruption, human death, futility in creation, the necessity of a divine salvific answer to remedy and restore broken humanity and nature. The biblical narrative as well as Christian history demonstrates that these beliefs (and a “Christian worldview”) can be articulated apart from the specifics of Gen.1-3. Cautiously, we might state that an historical Adam is not necessary in order to maintain these tenets of orthodoxy. On the other hand, the space/time historical nature of Jesus’ death and resurrection is inseparable from the Christian Faith (cf. 1 Cor. 15); in fact the latter would have no real basis for existence without the former.
8. While contemporary science may cause us to *nuance* our understanding of historic Christian doctrine, it cannot be allowed to radically reinterpret or even abandon these beliefs. Constructive efforts such as John Schneider “aesthetic supralapsarianism”--while laudable in its attempt to harmonize original sin with evolutionary selfishness’s to minimize the *aberration* of human sin –nonetheless, goes beyond legitimate theological boundaries. Original sin and human corruption are essential components of the Christian story and worldview; to incorporate sin into some “common ancestral selfism” is to forfeit the “bad news” that is necessary to the gospel truly being “good news.” Once again, Christian tradition (e.g., ecumenical creeds) can help us establish the basic theological boundaries that are at the same time, more flexible than many contemporary evangelical faith statements but also very restrictive, at least in terms of “updating” the faith.
9. The absence of a literal, historical Adam does not necessarily count against belief in biblical authority. Scholars such as Lamoureux contend that the Scriptural authors accommodated themselves to the “science” of the day in order to tell God’s “inerrant message of salvation.” Literary parallels to other Near Eastern cosmologies have long been noted—as well as the Bible’s polemical inversions. One can read the Scriptures in a *non-concordist* fashion and disengage the creation accounts from the findings of modern science and hold to a strong notion of biblical truth. However, one must be cautious about this move in order to not fall into Neo-orthodoxy’s radical *de-historicization* of the Bible which tended to sever much of the scriptural story from real human history.
10. The seemingly foreign and unwelcome intrusion of *suffering and death*—especially in humans but also in the cosmos at large—is actually the way things are meant to be in evolutionary biology. Scripture consistently views these as abnormalities and aberrations to the created order which corresponds to what appears to be a general human response. At this point, it must be admitted that evolutionary creation is *existentially* deficient and hard to fit in our human experience. It is very difficult if nigh impossible, to get beyond a strong conviction that death is not the way things were meant to be.
11. The recent “genomic challenge” to Adamic historicity at the very least presents those who hold a high view of Scripture to carefully review their application of biblical hermeneutics; i.e. have we forced a literalism/historical assessment on the text that is more a product of modernity than warranted by the words, themselves—or even church tradition?
12. Evangelical scientists and scholars need to spend less time authoring polemical articles, books, and websites, and more time in charitable discussion with each other. Even in some of the most competent literature on the historical Adam issue, there are tendencies to caricature positions in monolithic and pejorative ways; e.g., “biblical literalist,” “concordist,” “Darwinist,” etc. If we do not improve the level of scholarly dialogue, we do immeasurable pastoral harm to the church.
13. The local church is going to be exposed and brought into this discussion one way or another. It behooves congregational and denominational leaders to be become conversant with the “problem of the historical Adam” so that their parishioners not be goaded into the “all-or-nothing” polarizations that dominate the media (and often, para-church) presentations. While one does not need to take the somewhat “agnostic” stand of this paper—one can enthusiastically hold to a literal, historical Adam and Eve—a Christian leader should at least be aware that the available scientific evidence today does not point in that direction. That in itself, does not make the “traditional” belief wrong (today’s science “truth” could be overturned n the future, although this is probably less likely today than in previous centuries), but intellectual honesty requires us to admit a minority view without demonizing the opposing position. The “Adam Quest” actually provides the twenty-first century church an opportune moment to “do things right” in the often awkward faith-science dance. Rather than repeat twentieth-century Fundamentalism’s anti-intellectual response to Darwinian evolution, evangelicals can seize the present moment to accurately inform God’s People about the science (genomics), the core doctrines of the Christian Faith, the story of the Bible and its diverse literary forms, Christian history (especially how modern science finds its origins in a Christian worldview). Congregants can be made aware that scholars who have high views of Scripture contend both for an historical Adam and also against him—without forfeiting a strong belief in original sin and or the historicity of Christ’s death and resurrection. One can be an evolutionist without being a naturalist; in fact many Christian thinkers have been and currently are. On the other hand, one can also be an intellectually-responsible youth-earth creationist; obviously, the God we meet in Scripture could create this universe in six nano-seconds if he chose. The important issue is that science and theology are not mortal enemies and we must resist the tendency of the past 150 years to assume that biblical belief is somehow in great jeopardy when new (especially, biological) findings are released. What must be challenged is any attempt to make the sciences a comprehensive explanation for all reality, more specifically, human beings. *Naturalistic reductionism* is the real “enemy” of the Christian worldview, not believing scientists comprising the BioLogos organization. And hopefully, we treat adamant atheists with respect and decency as we argue against their governing presuppositions.
14. Above all, let us not forget that the center of the Christian Faith is not Adam but *Jesus Christ*. This is not simply an intellectual “cop-out” clothed in a pious-sounding platitude but rather a serious theological truth and warning. We evangelicals can very easily become obsessed with biblical matters—important as they might be—and let these take precedent over the consummate Word who demands our devotion and energies.

*A bit of a confessional*: Strangely, and with a degree of discomfort, I find myself at times sounding a bit like Barth, Niebuhr and the Neo-orthodox theologians of the past century in reciting this Christological credo: my early theological education taught me to be suspect and even dismissive of such persons who abandoned literal biblical history. In my later years, however, I have come to appreciate the wisdom of their Christo-centric, kerygmatic focus—it is the right one, I believe—although such afaith seems to more plausibly arisen out of time/space history than in reaction to it. Nonetheless, the more human elements in Scripture seem to demand less of an apologetic response than they used to (admittedly, forced in a few cases), and I am a bit more willing to accept Scripture as the Church’s Book which is fundamentally about Jesus Christ. I have come to appreciate how the Church Fathers and medieval theologians read Scripture and offered theological reason; what was important and what was not. There is something very instructive in this and it perhaps can guard us against our modern-/post-modern tendencies to integrate the Christian Faith into our present-day concerns—rather than allow our concerns to be integrated and even exorcised by biblical belief. In relation to this study, it can be said that *tradition* treats Adam as an historical figure but that is relatively incidental to the treatises on the effects of sin and its resolution in Christ. In short, *ecclesiastical history* has been an eloquent narration of more basic theological truths than where recent evangelicalism has put down its stakes. This is not to minimize our concern for the Bible’s inerrancy and infallibility; there are, of course, good (recent) *historical* reasons for the primary affirmations of the ETS Statement of Faith. Nor is it to pretend that we can contend for an historic orthodoxy in some fideistic manner that keeps the faith separate from human disciplines like science; this, I believe, was the real failure of Neo-Orthodoxy. But the Ancient Church’s “mere Christianity” (to use Lewis’ expression) –and its more debatable echo in Barth, et al.—has become a helpful heuristic to me in these latter years of Christian pilgrimage. In short, the doctrine of original sin is worth “the fight,” the literal, historicity of Adam, probably not. However, most important to our theological galaxy is the redemptive work of Jesus as articulated in one of the earliest extant confessionals: “For what I received I passed on to you as of *first importance*: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.”[[98]](#footnote-98)

For the Apostle Paul—and for every Christian—the “razing” of Adam (which is hardly a *fait accompli*) is not of first consequence. The *raising* of Jesus Christ makes all the difference in the world.

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1. Gen. 2:7,22a (TNIV). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Richard N. Ostling, “The Search for the Historical Adam,” *Christianity Today* 55:6 (June 2011):22-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. David Livingstone reminds us that many of Darwin’s scientific defenders were actually American evangelicals. See his *Darwin’s Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought* (Vancouver: Regent University Press, 1997). In addition to conservatives in science, evolution was embraced by the champion of biblical inerrancy, B.B. Warfield and eminent Reformed theologian, Charles Hodge. Evolution, for them, did not carry the unfortunate baggage of naturalism that so characterizes the discussion today. For these evangelicals, evolution was simply the scientific language for God’s creative work. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America,1870-190* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 75-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Collins, *The Language of God*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ostling, “The Search for the Historical Adam,” 24-25. Interestingly, noted historian of science, Ronald Numbers, observes that during the century that followed the publication of *On* *the Origin of the Species*, most conservative *anti*-*evolutionists* “accepted the antiquity of life on earth” even “while rejecting the transmutation of species and any relationship between apes and humans.” Those who insisted on a “young earth” (as well as a special creation of all life forms) were but a small minority in these conservative circles, primarily coming from the ranks of Ellen G. White’s Seventh-day Adventist movement. See Ronald Numbers, “Myth 24: That Creationism is a Uniquely American Phenomenon,” in *Galileo Goes to Jail and Other Myths about Science and Christianity*,” ed. R. Numbers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 215-223 (216). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Collins, *The Language of God*, 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ostling, “The Search for the Historical Adam,” 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. In his 1996 message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the late Pope John Paul II stated that “new findings lead us toward the recognition of evolution as more than a hypothesis” (cited in Collins, *The Language of God*, 202). While there have been some episodes in Catholic history that have notably adversarial to science (e.g., Galileo), the Church has largely been accepting of scientific perspectives, a “tradition” that is certainly traceable to the writings of Thomas Aquinas. See also Stanley Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, 36-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See for example, Daniel C. Harlow, “After Adam: Reading Genesis in an Age of Evolutionary Science,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 62:3 (September 2010):179-195. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See for example, Joshua M. Moritz, “The Search for Adam Revisited: Evolution, Biblical Literalism and the Question of Human Uniqueness,” Theology and Science 9: 4 (2011): 367-376. Moritz, too, believes that the traditional view of Adam needs to be adjusted in light of contemporary science but believes that can be done with a ‘literalistic” approach that is akin to what he perceives in some of the Patristics; e.g., Basil of Caesarea who saw in God’s command, “Let the land produce…” (Gen 1:11), a recognition of earth as a kind of “common mother.” A literal reading of this manner is actually quite compatible with evolutionary science. It also demonstrates that a biblical literalism does not have to mean “young earth creationism” which Moritz does not subscribe to and considers to be a fairly new reading of the data, largely spawned by Henry Morris and John Whitcomb. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See the discussion in Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 498-506. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (San Francisco: Harper/San Francisco, 1996), 72-76. A few sentences earlier, Lewis candidly states that “for long centuries, God perfected the animal form which was to become the vehicle of humanity and the image of himself …the creature may have existed in this state for ages before it became man.” Also, in this same discussion, Lewis admits that we really do not know how many of these creatures God made, hardly a literalist reading of Adam and Eve. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 505-506. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954). Interestingly Ramm’s theistic evolution caused comparatively little concern at the time of its publication. A decade later the works of the young earth creationists would create suspicions about anyone who would hold evolutionary views, and this distrust has been further acerbated by Intelligent Design spokesperson, Phillip Johnson. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., 504-505. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid., 506. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. I have presented workshops at two conferences with Lamoureux and have had email correspondence with Falk. I have lectured on the history of science, demonstrating that the modern discipline is deeply rooted in Christian presuppositions about reality and developed as a discipline among persons of faith. Lamoureux was rather surprised to find an evangelical who was conversant with the history of science as well as theologically critical of ID. I was a “safe evolutionist” (i.e., I still tentatively held on to a historical Adam and Eve) until he started pressing the consequences of the evolutionary data). Hence, my introduction to BioLogos. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Dennis Venema, “Genesis and the Genome: Genomics Evidence for Human-Ape Ancestry and the Ancestral Hominid Population Sizes,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 62:3 (September 2010), 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid., 166-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid., 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid., 173-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid., 173-174. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid., 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Venema, “Genesis and the Genome,” 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See the very brief discussion in C. John Collins, *Did Adam* *and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why Should* *Care* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 118-119. He cites two published online studies in a footnote but does not provide a helpful summary of the major findings of either work. This omission demands more research on my part to more accurately assess if these articles actually mount much of a challenge to the “received view” enumerated in Prof. Venema’s work. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Venema, “Genesis and the Genome,” 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. As Denis Lamoureux notes, “Modern science is unified by the theory that the universe and life evolved through natural processes…Modern science concludes that the origin of the world only makes sense in light of evolutionary theory.” See Denis Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (New York: Harper Torch, 1966), 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Karl Barth, *Credo* (New York: Scribner, 1962, 105; and Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 85-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid., 86-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Peter C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings:* *Ancient Christian Readings of the Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Conor Cunningham, *Darwin’s Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 381. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Origen, *On First Principles* 4:3.1. Cited in Cunningham, *Darwin’s Pious Idea*, 381-382. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius* 1:13. Cited in Bouteneff, *Beginnings*, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Bouteneff, *Beginnings*, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Augustine, *On Genesis*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2002), 8:14 (48). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ibid., 1.1 (168). All through this work, Augustine suggests numerous possibilities for interpretation, frequently raising them in a series of questions that would be posed by believer and unbeliever alike. In his introduction on Hill’s translation of *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Michael Fiedrowicz makes the following observation on Augustine’s understanding of the relationship between Genesis and science: “Augustine showed a really modern awareness of problems when he rejected interpretations of the Bible that encroached on the realm of the sciences and tried to challenge that which was established by ‘experiment or the surest calculations.’ To his mind the Bible was not a manual on the natural sciences. He interpreted the account of creation in such a way that even when the biblical text raised questions proper to the natural sciences, he always focused his answers on theological aspects of the matter” (156). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid., II:18:38 (215). While other interpretations were possible, none could conflict with the “clear” (not obscure) cardinal doctrines of Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Thomas Aquinas, “Question 74: All the Seven Days in Common,” in *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas* *Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 2nd. Ed. (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1920. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. William E. Carroll, “Aquinas and the Big Bang,” *First Things* 97 (1999); 18-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Giberson and Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. John Wesley, *Wesley’s Notes on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), 22.Cited in Giberson and Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith*, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. John Wesley, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, Or, a Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (London: J. Fry, 1777), 2:463. Cited in Giberson and Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith*, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Vol. 1: *Human Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1964), 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Jaki comments on the Christian “birth” of science: “The ultimate in intelligibility was first placed firmly on a level transcending both man and nature during the Middle Ages and in a way that constituted a cultural matrix. It manifested a broadly shared conviction that a personal, rational, and providential Being, absolute and eternal, is the ultimate source of intelligibility insofar as he is the Creator of all things visible and invisible…Its most articulate spokesmen were medicant friars committed to an evangelical vision of man and world, a vision in which order, beauty, and peace of nature were a shining reflection of the Creator and Father of all,” *The Road of Science*, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See Richard F. Carlson, and Tremper Longman III, *Science, Creation and the Bible: Reconciling Rival Theories* *of Origins* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2010), 107-127. The authors identify three important premises that should guide the contemporary reader of Gen.1-2: 1) Like her Near Eastern neighbors, Israel produced a creation account that reflected her identity as a people, her geographic place, and her understanding of God; 2) Two creation narratives in these chapters contain significant differences between them that suggest a non-literal reading. On the other hand, when read together as a unit, they complement and complete each other. They primarily tell a theological story; and 3) God has a high regard for creation and desires to see it thrive. Humanity has been given stewardship over creation to care for it in a godly manner (126-127). The “humanness” of this account in no way negates its divine inspiration. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Bill T. Arnold, Genesis, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life of Christ*, trans. C. J. de Catanzaro (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), 6:12. Cited in Cunningham, *Darwin’s Pious Idea*, 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. In his very recent , and certain to be hotly debated book, *The Evolution of Adam*, Peter Enns argues that the apparent “irreconcilability” between evolution and Genesis and Paul’s understanding of human origins leaves us with four hermeneutical options: 1) Accept evolution and reject the Bible (and hence, Christianity); 2) Accept Paul’s view of Adam as binding and reject evolution; 3)Reconcile evolution and Christianity by positing a first human pair (or group) at some point in the evolutionary process, thereby forging a dialog between the two parties; and 4) Rethink Genesis and Paul. As an evangelical, Enns clearly cannot adopt the first option, and as a scientifically-informed intellect, he also cannot dismiss the overwhelming evidence from evolution. Besides both of these positions assume a common (and questionable) assumption that the purpose of the Bible is to provide scientifically-accurate information. The third approach might seem to offer some promise of synthesis, yet its attempt to preserve a literal “first pair” in the context of evolutionary biology produces a Adam and Eve “that is utterly foreign to the biblical portrait.” Furthermore, it shares a failure with the first two approaches; i.e., all three fail “to address Genesis as ancient literature and Paul as an ancient man.” This brings Enns to his preferred fourth option that proposes that we reevaluate “what we *have the right to expect* from Genesis and Paul,” and not unduly attempt to align biblical and scientific models. In short, Enns is promoting the *non-concordist* approach of his BioLogos colleagues that sees Scripture and science providing true and complementary *perspectives* into reality, each with its own specific foci and boundaries. See Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and* *Doesn’t Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012), xvii-xviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ironically, it was the development of science in Christian circles that actually made it possible for Darwin to construct his evolutionary theory –precisely since biblical theology did not rule such out. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. We are endorsing Thomas’ *methodological approach* obviously rather than the Aristotelian cosmology that was the “flavor of the day.” In essence, Thomas shows us that theology and science can/should operate as “truth partners” without the former feeling threatened by or obligated to trump the observations of the latter. The scientific paradigm has of course shifted since the thirteenth century—twice in fact—but Thomas’ program of peaceful co-existence is still very instructive and relevant. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Adam makes his appearance in the “later confessionals” such as *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646)which of course, identifies him with a particular view of original sin, federal headship (cf. VI.iii). Adam is also a “staple” in the *Belgic Confession* (1567) largely because of the same theological reason. Just a thought: Does a strong commitment to a historical Adam drive us in sectarian directions? Or perhaps, sectarian doctrine needs a historical figure to buttress less than obvious biblical truths? [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. See Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Paul identifies what is of “first importance”: Christ’s death, burial and resurrection “according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4) as well as his multiple post-resurrection appearances (vv5-8). Adam is mentioned twice in this passage but largely in a typological manner (vv22, 43). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Cf. 1 Chron. 1:1; Hos.6:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45. Paul no doubt assumes the existence of a real historical Adam as any Second Temple Jew would. But this is really tertiary to Paul’s purposes, particularly in Romans, which is to demonstrate the incomparable work of Christ which he will then develop more fully in the subsequent chapters (6-8). James Barr has aptly noted that “Paul was not interpreting the [Adam] story in and for itself, he was really interpreting Christ through the images of that story” James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (London: SCM, 1992), 91. This approach is basically adapted by Peter Enns in *The Evolution of Adam* (119-135). Enns contends that Paul is not only reading the Adam “Fall narrative” through the Christ-event but that the latter actually infuses the former with considerably more *theological significance*( i.e., universality of sin/death) than what would be commonly given in contemporary Jewish interpretations 9123-127). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. F. Collins and K. Giberson, *The Language of Science and Faith*, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. For example, in *The Summa Theologica, Pars Prima Secundae*, in which the discussion of Adam’s sin occupies Q. 81 whereas QQ. 82-89 is largely about the nature and effects of sin. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid., 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Cf. Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation*, 291-293. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Cunningham, *Darwin’s Pious Idea*, 392-397. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Bouteneff, *Beginnings*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. John R. Schneider, “Recent Genetic Science and Christian Theology on Human Origins: An ‘Aesthetic Supralapsarianism’,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 62:3 (September 2010): 197-212. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. On the positive side, the ETS executive committee took a year to thoroughly review the openness views of Clark Pinnock and John Sanders, finally offering recommendations that their writings—while theologically “unusual” and problematic—did not violate the Society’s Statement of Faith. Unfortunately, this occurred after much rancor had already been created. A membership vote on whether to retain Pinnock and Sanders as members, while democratic, did little to settle the waters. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. John Collins suggests there are at least four reasons why Christians should be careful about abandoning the traditional understanding of Adam and Eve: 1) the conventional way of telling the story gives us an *integrated narrative* that clearly starts with an original goodness of creation that is a necessary precursor to the Fall and a our hope of restoration; 2) it accounts for sin as an alien invader and makes comprehensible biblical atonement for its remedy; 3) To give up common origin is to potentially forfeit common human dignity as well as the common need of the solution that Christ brings; and 4) Removing a historical Adam and Eve does become a problem ultimately with biblical authority; i.e., since Jesus and Paul believe it, can we really do less? (*Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?,* 133-135). These issues are not inconsequential and must be more fairly addressed by EC advocates than they previously have been. These reasons should keep evangelical scientists, biblical scholars and theologians at the roundtable in robust discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Cf. Nicaea’s Trinitarian decision against a more “logical” Arianism, as well as and Chalcedon’s repudiation of the major construals of Christ’s deity and humanity in favor of a simple affirmation of *vera deus, vera homo*. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. One can appreciate Lamoureux’s frustration with readers who want to pre-empt thoughtful discussion but the following words only seem to “ramp up” the tension: “I fully expect this first sentence, like those introducing the next four biblical precedents, to be torn out of context by critics and manipulated to serve their purposes” (*Evolutionary Creation*, 309 n.). The other side can be equally shrill! John Collins’ aforementioned work, while clearly siding with the traditional reading, attempts to be fair and respectful as it interacts with evolutionary creationists. It is a model for advancing this debate in a healthy manner. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Schneider, “Recent Genetic Science,” 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. J. Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist*?, 135-136. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation*, 294-297. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Ibid., 308. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Ibid.,309. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ibid. 309-310. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Ibid., 310. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid., 316. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ibid., 323. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid., 319.Lamoureux’s choice of inflammatory terms( i.e., “the Bible is wrong”) will unfortunately do little to give EC a hearing among wary evangelicals. One wishes that he would have simply expressed himself in what is a more palatable hermeneutic to conservatives: The Bible accommodates itself to the phenomenological understanding of the world held by the ancients. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ibid., 330. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid.,331. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Ibid., 325. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. John 11:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. 1 Cor. 15:3-5 [TNIV]. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)