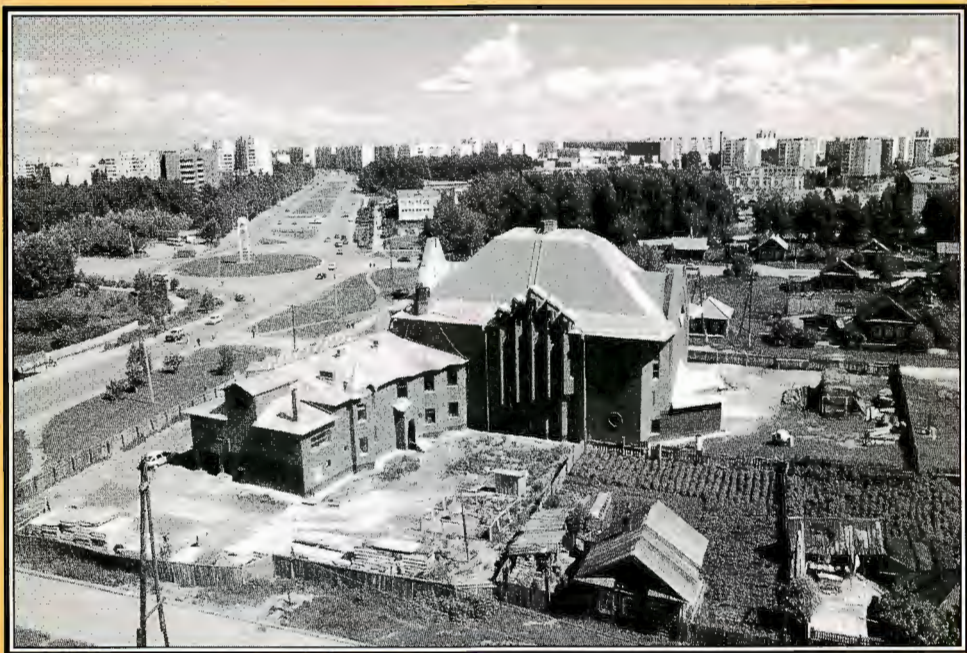
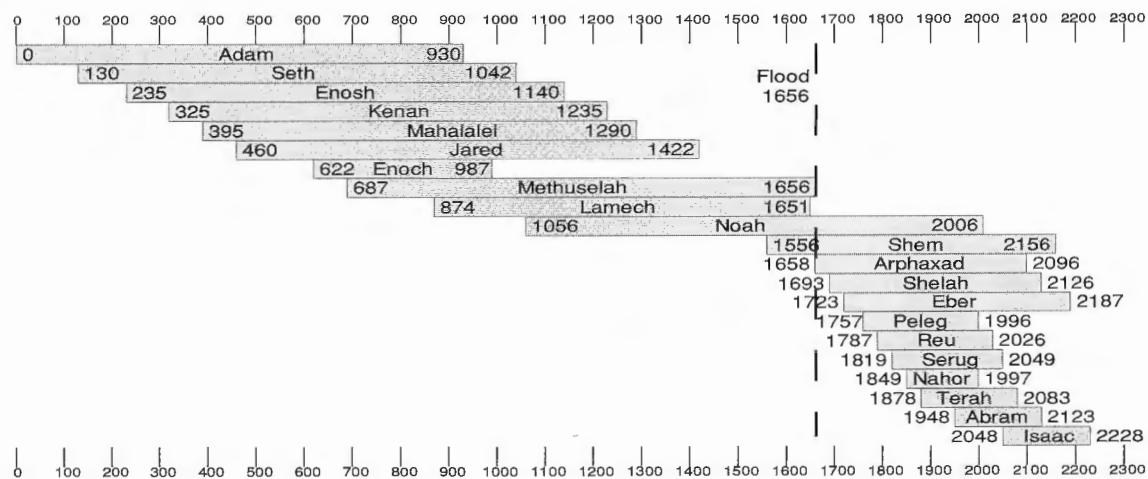


# REFORMATION TODAY



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1998

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In his article on the age of the earth Norman De Jong presents the genealogies with consecutive names. It is easier to follow this depiction based on *Genesis for Today – Showing the relevance of the Creation/Evolution debate to today's society* by Dr Andy McIntosh (Day One, 207 pages, pbk, 1997). Dr McIntosh is Reader in Combustion Theory at the University of Leeds and an elder in a local evangelical church at Armley. His book is written at the popular level. The scientific side of his work appears mostly in valuable appendices including one on fundamental scientific evidence concerning order and design.

Front cover: This aerial view of the new church at TOBOLSK, Siberia, shows how central the site is between the old and new towns. The new town is seen in the distance. The site was given by the Town Council during the period of religious freedom and expansion from 1990-1996. We need to pray for the continuation of this work as the Orthodox in the old town seek to suppress or even if possible to close down the work. For the still incomplete interior see page 32. Further funding is needed to complete the sanctuary.

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# Editorial

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## Liberalism: Attractions and Dangers

Robert Godfrey's observations about the attractions of liberalism are highly relevant. How can we defend Christianity in the face of aggressive evolutionary teaching? Norman De Jong in his article 'How Old is the Earth?' candidly shares with us how he was scorned some years ago, not having studied the subject sufficiently before stating his views about the age of the earth to a group of colleagues. His article is the result of his further biblical research.

One of the values of the book *Creation and Change* by Douglas Kelly is that it shows the folly of meddling with the Genesis account of creation. Rather than compromise we should strengthen our faith by observing the following principles:

1. *The authority of Scripture.* Creation cannot be understood apart from the revelation of Scripture. Science cannot solve the problems of origins because science itself is the product of time. Science operates on the basis of observation of available data. But science cannot go back to the time when there was nothing. Nor can science bear witness to the first moment when all that now exists was made out of nothing. Part of our faith is Hebrews 11:3, 'By faith we believe that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible.' The Lord chides Job, 'Where were you when I laid earth's foundation?' If Job could not explain the origins of superlatively complex creatures how could he fathom the mystery of the dreadful providence through which he had passed?

2. *The perfection of Scripture.* We can rely on Scripture on the subject of origins whereas we can neither rely on evolution nor on the dogmatic statements of cosmology, influenced as it is by evolutionary humanism. When last did the media inform the public that evolution is flawed by lack of evidence in the fossil records? If we cannot trust the sweeping statements made about evolution why should we trust the dogmatic statements made about the earth being millions of years old? Norman De Jong demonstrates that the genealogies of Scripture are consistent and reliable. We may not stretch them like elastic to accommodate vast periods of time. Likewise Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 is history, not poetry, as is ably shown by Douglas Kelly in *Creation and Change*.

3. *The decrees of God.* God's decrees lie behind his creation of everything out of nothing. He has his own sovereign purpose. 'Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world' (Acts 15:18 AV).

4. *The coming universal resurrection of all mankind from the dead.* According to the Word of our Lord, the physical resurrection of the dead from their graves will be universal for all who have ever lived. They, the righteous and the unrighteous, will come from their graves at the command of the Son of God (John 5:28). The response to Jesus' voice will be immediate as Paul says, '...we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed' (1 Cor 14:51-52). Only an omnipotent, omniscient God can create on that scale. Every living cell in our bodies carries a formula (DNA) the information of which would fill more than 1,000 books. The stupendous scale and complexity of the resurrection shows that for our Creator creation is an immediate act.

5. *The marvels of creation.* According to the psalmist, the heavens declare the glory of God. Each planet in our solar system is different yet together all are in unity, moving in orbit in perfect harmony. Job was encouraged to observe the wonders of creation. The ostrich, the hawk and the eagle are among the creatures chosen for observation. Today more than ever we know that animals, birds, fish and insects are exceedingly complex. Of thousands of examples take the bombardier beetle. This creature is able to defend itself by firing an explosive at its enemies. This involves a catalyst being injected into two complex chemicals (hydrogen peroxide and hydroquinine) which produces the explosion. It is a marvel that this beetle does not blow itself up! Random chance does not produce complexity like that any more than chance produces a motor car or a jet plane. The secular paper *The Week* commends the book *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Michael Denton (Adler and Adler, £18.50). 'Denton's masterpiece is the most convincing refutation of Darwinism one could hope for'.

### **The debate about homosexual practice**

In Britain, homosexual practice has recently been debated in the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and also at the largest ever (750) Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, meeting at the University of Kent (see News).

No passage of Scripture is more clear on this subject than Romans one which

shows that homosexuality is a perversion of God's created order. Paul declares that the glorious attributes of God's wisdom and power are clearly displayed in the creation. Men and women know and understand this. However they suppress this testimony of creation. They neither glorify the Creator nor give thanks. Instead of seeking him and knowing him they indulge in idolatry and give themselves to false worship.

This rejection causes God to withdraw his restraints. Since they will have none of his teaching they are given over to their own devices. Lesbian and homosexual practice is perversion because it abandons God's purpose in the legitimate union of a man and wife. God gives them over to a reprobate (depraved) mind (Rom 1:18). This blinding of the highest faculty of man constitutes a terrible judgment. It is impossible to reason with people when their minds are blinded.

Note the way reprobation is stressed. '*God gave them over* in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity' (v 24). '*God gave them over* to shameful lusts' (v 26). 'Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God *he gave them over* to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done' (v 28) [italics mine in all three verses]. Leviticus 18:22 describes homosexual practice as detestable. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire shows God's wrath against sodomy (Gen 19).

Civilisations rise and fall. When leaders in government and in society are themselves morally corrupt and legislate in such a way as to promote depravity, that is a sign of God's judgment. He has given them over to their own devices. The cost in human misery is enormous.

In pastoral work we have seen individuals saved from homosexual practice. They came to hate and deplore that way of life and have turned away from it completely. One of them told me that he has remorse when he thinks of those of his former circle who have died of aids and of drug abuse. There is no such thing as a practising 'gay' Christian. I Corinthians 6:9,10 makes it clear that those who continue in sin are not saved. There are undoubtedly true believers who have homosexual inclinations, and who struggle with that temptation, just as there are true believers who struggle with the temptation of heterosexual lust. But the *practice* of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian profession. By God's grace there were ex-homosexuals in the Corinthian church (I Cor 6:11).

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# The Nature of our Resurrection Bodies

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*Editor*

How important is the physical body? Paul states that the consummation of the highest status we possess as sons and daughters in adoption comes to fruition in the redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23). Many, perhaps most, Christians think of the eternal kingdom of heaven as living in the skies rather than on a terrestrial or earthy place. This is to deny the resurrection of our physical bodies. There are several reasons why this kind of thinking prevails.

1. *Erroneous conclusions about our Lord's resurrection body.* It is right to focus on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ but in doing so there is the peril of distortion. The disciples had difficulty in coming to terms with his resurrection body. He seemed to appear suddenly and then disappear (John 20:19, Luke 24:37). If we conceive of the body of our Lord as a mere spirit darting here and there it undermines the resurrection. Did he just pass through walls? There are other explanations. When Jesus was threatened with a violent death 'he passed through the crowd' (Luke 4:30). On the road to Emmaus Jesus controlled the perceptions of the two disciples. Peter appeared to pass through prison doors but in fact an angel opened those doors to him (Acts 12).

To correct the notion that he had a spiritual (immaterial) body Jesus stressed that he had flesh and bones. He insisted that Thomas test with his hands that his body was that same body that had been crucified (John 20:26-29). Too much is made of the locked doors which perplexed the disciples. Too little is made of his assurances. 'They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see me have." And while they still did not believe because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence' (Luke 24:37-43). The physical activity of our Lord is further observed in his preparation of breakfast for the disciples (John 21:12). This was not ghostly activity.

2. *The biblical teaching on the intermediate state.*<sup>1</sup> The moment a believer dies he is absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8). Hebrews 12:22 describes the present administration of earth and heaven, 'But you have come to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You





*Adel church, North Leeds, is a fine example of Norman architecture. The first rector of the church was registered in the year 1172. Innumerable parish churches and Nonconformist churches are surrounded by graves. Some inscriptions on the gravestones indicate faith in the glorious day of resurrection. Those in Christ will be restored to fellowship with each other around Christ our Redeemer on that resurrection day, the best of days.*

have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.’ This is glorious reality. We have no idea as to the geographic placing of this world which is the centre of power and government. All those who die in Christ live and reign with him until the trumpet sounds for his second coming. Then at his return their souls, already perfected, will be re-united with their bodies. Since the heavenly Jerusalem occupies so much of our concern and present spiritual activity it can easily become fixed in our minds that the heavenly is the permanent state.

**3. The heavenly emphasis in Scripture.** We are exhorted to rid ourselves of everything that is sinful and tarnished and look to Christ who is seated in the heavenly realm at the right hand of God (Col 3:1-10). This teaching is important in our daily battle to be pure and advance in holiness. However it is misguided to conclude that this world is a complete write-off. This whole world and all that God deems worthy in it will ultimately be redeemed. ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ’ (Rev 11:15).

**4. The rapture.** 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says that ‘we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the

air. And so we will be with the Lord forever'. It seems from this that we will be forever with the Lord in the skies. However the New Jerusalem will come down from the heavens to the earth (Rev 21:1-2).

The lovely hymn by Walford *Sweet hour of prayer*, concludes:

*This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise  
To seize the everlasting prize;  
And shout, while passing through the air,  
'Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!'*

The sense here is that flesh is left behind forever as a blessed release. But some hymns convey a glimpse of earth: *O sweet and blessed country* (Bernard of Cluny), and *There is a land of pure delight where saints immortal reign* (Watts).

But others take us as far away from this earth as possible such as the words also by Watts: *Pure are the joys above the sky, And all the region peace.*

And in Watts' famous hymn, *Give to our God immortal praise*, the obliteration of this world is inferred: *When this vain world will be no more.*

5. *The idea that the nature of the next world is transcendent.* 1 Corinthians 2:9 is often cited:

*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived  
what God has prepared for those who love him.*

This statement affirms that there are limits for us in our present state of understanding about the next life yet does not forbid exposition of the Scriptures relating to our resurrection bodies.

### **Biblical descriptions of our resurrection bodies**

The word 'vile' (Phil 3:20-21), used to describe our bodies in the King James Version, is sadly often true to life. However 'vile' is not what the Greek term expresses. The text is well translated in the NIV, 'But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.' The lowliness or humiliation (*tapeinos* means of low estate, poor and thus despised



by the mass of mankind. See also NASB and NKJV) is described in more detail in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44:

*The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;  
it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory;  
it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;  
it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

The key to this passage is to note the four contrasts that are drawn between the body we now have and the one we will have in the coming age. The repetition four times of the word *sown* highlights the fact of death and burial. It is at the point of burial that the contrasts are most stark. The thrill of this description is to grasp that this resurrected body is my body now made free from the original sin which brought it to death, and from the corruption of sin that defiled it. Liberation from all the powers of sin is one source of joy. The exquisite powers inherent in my resurrection body and mind will be a further source of joy.

*The first contrast.* ‘The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable’ points to the horrible fact of death. The body perishes. But my resurrection body can never perish. It is imperishable. My physical body is ageing inexorably and will die. Soon I will have a body that can never die. The causes which bring decay and corruption will be gone. The apostle is triumphant about victory over our worst enemy as he reaches the climax of the passage, ‘We will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”’

*The second contrast.* My present body is buried in dishonour but will be raised in glory. Undertakers can and often do achieve wonders in making a corpse look lifelike and reasonable, but behind the appearance created by the undertakers is a passive lifeless totality of decay and disintegration. The most honourable thing we can do with a dead body is to bury it. The body buried is motionless and lifeless. The body raised is glorious, the very epitome of life and beauty. The word *glory* is often used in the Bible to indicate a whole range of wonderful qualities. For instance when it says the whole world is full of God’s glory it means that everywhere there is expressed the glory of our Creator – in the heavens and in all the earth, everywhere there is the beauty of creation reflecting God’s attributes of wisdom and power. Glory is often

associated with the face. Stephen's face at the time of his martyrdom was like the face of an angel (Acts 6:15). Before the face of Christ the old earth and heavens will flee away. In the faces of the redeemed, each individually and uniquely, the glory of Christ will be reflected.

*Arrayed in glorious grace shall these dim bodies shine,  
And every shape and face look heavenly and divine. (Watts)*

They will be God's treasured possession (Mal 3:17). Our Father will love them for what he has made them, beautiful in Christ (Rev 21:2).

*The third contrast.* My body is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. This reminds us of the weakness that precedes death and burial. Compared to a dying body how great is the power of the resurrection body. The strongest athletes, the most famous leaders, the most talented musicians, the most praised military generals, all, all of them end their lives in weakness. What sighs and groans have attended deathbeds. 'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers of the field fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever' (1 Peter 1:24). Only that which is for the glory of God Triune will endure. Note how this passage on the resurrection concludes. Our labour no matter how humble is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58).

Paul describes our present bodies as tents and our resurrection bodies as buildings (2 Cor 5:1). What a difference! Those who have camped out in a storm will know the precarious nature, inconveniences and discomforts of a tent. What a contrast between that and the creature comforts and security of a well-designed stone house.

Compared with the resurrection body our bodies are weak. We require food, drink and sleep, protection from disease and from dangers. Our resurrection bodies will be the same bodies and doubtless because they are human we will need sleep and food and drink. But we will know reserves of power, energy and stamina that we do not now possess. I propose that an average resurrection body will with training be able to equal and perhaps even surpass the best athletic feats of this world, and that an average citizen of the new earth will be able to learn music at a similar rate as the best prodigy in this life. The pleasure of life is to learn and progress. For most of us the learning curve is tedious. A few learn languages quickly and others have the gift of retentive memories. Our minds will be delivered from the sluggishness that now besets them. The mandate given to Adam and to Eve and through them to mankind was to develop constructively the world created for them. The parameters of the

redeemed earth will be exceedingly wide and the mandate to develop and advance the new cosmos will be integral with the resurrection.

*The fourth contrast.* My body is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. My physical body will be endowed with spiritual qualities which are able to meet the desires of the soul, desires to worship, sing and praise in harmony and beauty. Average ability to participate in and appreciate music is limited by inhibition and by lack of talent. The tremendous diversity of character we have in this world serves to glorify God. Where there are gifts we give him the glory. But in our resurrection bodies we will be filled with joy in the accomplishment of unfulfilled desires to glorify God. There is an increasing frustration in this life for most Christians. As they advance spiritually their spiritual desires and aspirations increase but their physical power to fulfil what they wish hampers, frustrates and limits them. They lament the works undone and the tasks incomplete.

To sum up, our resurrection bodies will be the same real bodies we have now, material flesh and bones, not immaterial and not in any sense denying the continuity from our present bodies. Helpfully *The Heidelberg Catechism* question 57 speaks of 'This my body, being raised, by the power of Christ'. Luther put it plainly as 'the resurrection of the flesh' and *The Belgic Confession XXXVII* has 'the dead raised . . . souls united with the proper bodies in which they formerly lived'.

Our resurrection bodies will possess a glorious character. Matthew Poole on 1 Corinthians 15:43 suggests helpfully, 'Three things make the body beautiful, a perfection of the parts, the well putting together and proportioning them one to another (symmetry) and a well-tempered, cheerful spirit.' We can well appreciate why we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23).

The image to which all the redeemed are being conformed is Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18). He took our nature to himself not only to redeem it but also to glorify it. Our nature, body and soul, is the nature which he has redeemed by his sufferings and death. The incarnation did not cease with the cross and the tomb; it continues.

### **Our resurrection bodies and the renewal of all things**

The passage just referred to is crucial. Romans 8:18-25 describes three groanings: 1. Creation's groaning 2. Our own groaning and 3. The Spirit's

groaning. The collation of these points to the unity that exists between man and the creation. The fall of mankind into sin brought suffering and damage, pain and futility to the created order, plants, trees and animals. 'For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God' (Rom 8:20-21).

In the creation of the world the physical bodies of our first parents related to their habitat. There was a harmony and unity throughout and Adam and Eve were able to relate to and appreciate all aspects of the creation around them; plants, trees, fruit, animals, birds and fish.

One of the concomitants of the second coming of Christ is the renewal of all things. From Romans 8:18-25 we see clearly that we are not going to lose this present creation. It is not going to be eliminated. It is going to be purified and rejuvenated. Paul personifies the creation as did the psalmists and prophets: the trees rejoice (Ps 96:12), the floods clap their hands (Ps 98:8), the wilderness will rejoice and blossom (Isa 35:1) and the mountains and hills will burst into song (Isa 55:12).

The entire first creation was pronounced very good! (Gen 1:31). The re-creation and rejuvenation of the whole world will be gloriously good! In the fall the ground was cursed with thorns and thistles and nature became red in tooth and claw. In the new creation the wolf will lie down with the lamb, and the leopard (the most aggressive of the cat family) will lie down with the goat (Isa 11:6-9). What species will be included or excluded we do not know. What we do know is that we were created in the first instance to relate to, understand and subdue (develop) the created order under God and to his glory. These parameters and dimensions are not going to be removed. Rather they will be developed and expanded. There will be changes. Jesus taught that in the resurrection there will not be marriage (Luke 20:35).

Psalm 104 is a song of worship praising God for all his creation; springs of water, birds of the air, mountain goats, the oceans teeming with creatures beyond number. And suddenly there is reference to ships! There go the ships! Man is living in this cosmos. It was made for him. And so we will occupy the new cosmos with multiple activities with huge areas for development, understanding and exploration all expressive of the manifold glory of God, a glory reflected in his people and in the habitat that he has made for them.

David expresses wonder concerning the first creation:

## Carey Conference for Ministers, 1999

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK  
6-8 January 1999

Speakers: Dr Mark Dever and Dr John Currid of the USA and pastors Geoff Thomas, Gareth Crossley and Ray Evans. Dr John Currid (see reference on page 15) whose book on *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* is now available (Baker USA, £15.95 from EP in UK) has chosen his subjects for January: An Egyptian Coffin or an Ark of Life? A study in the Birth Narrative in Exodus 2:1-10; and The Burning Bush and the Call of Moses in Exodus 3:1-10.

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,  
what is man that you are mindful of him?...  
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honour.  
You made him ruler over the works of your hands:  
You put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds,  
and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air,  
and the fish of the sea (Ps 8:3-8).*

The resurrection includes this whole cosmos. There will be no disjuncture between man and the world made for him. Man will not be divested of the dignity and honour accorded to him in his physical and intellectual appreciation of the cosmos. Anticipated is the glorification of the whole of man's environment, his habitat in all its detail, purified and rid of sin.

### Practical questions

What about bodies that have been utterly destroyed in the oceans or in cremation? In the 1990s we know a lot more than we used to know but even so we must still only be scratching around the borders of our Creator's omniscience. Modern science has discovered the creational wonder of the DNA, the formula of stupendous complexity which is a detailed specification of each individual. Our knowledge is extensive but still tiny compared with our Creator who has all knowledge. God's omniscience is awesome. Our knowledge is never the same. He allows us to explore his creation. But humility is needed. He alone is omniscient and omnipotent. As he created the universe in the first instance so he will exercise his creative power in the mighty fiat of the resurrection.

What about cremation? The reason why some Christians prefer burial is that this shows respect for the dead and most closely resembles the idea of a seed being sown which now awaits the resurrection. In large cities burial space is at

a premium and cremation is regarded as practical. If contrary to their desires Christians have to employ cremation they should not think for one moment that an omnipotent God will have difficulty in his work of resurrection because of that.

What about those who have any kind of handicap, perhaps severe physical and mental impairments? Certainly he is well able to remove all impediments including the decrepitude of age.

What about infants? We are not given enough information to be dogmatic about the development of infants to maturity.

What about unbelievers? The Scriptures teach that there will be a universal resurrection from the dead followed by the Great Judgment. Detailed awesome descriptions of this sequel come from the lips of our Lord in Matthew 25:31-46 and from the apostle John in Revelation 20:11-15.

## Conclusion

Jesus has preceded all others in the resurrection. He now anticipates his reward which will find its consummation in the physical resurrection of his people from the dead:

*I will declare your name to my brothers;  
in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.  
Here am I, and the children God has given me (Heb 2:12,13).*

In his subsequent ascension and exaltation he is now preparing the new world for us to occupy with him. In the meantime we are assured that though we are physically wasting away we are inwardly renewed day by day and that our prospect in the resurrection represents an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs our present sufferings (2 Cor 4:16-18). The creation around us is also looking forward to the great resurrection day. As Frederic Godet eloquently expresses it, "The appearing of the sons of God in their true sanctified nature will break the bonds of the curse which still to this hour hold the creation in fetters. And nature herself is impatient to see those new guests arrive, because she knows that to receive them she will don her fairest apparel."<sup>2</sup>

## References

- 1 'Fellowship and the Intermediate State' *Reformation Today* 113, Jan. 1990. Listed in *The Finder* under 'fellowship'.
- 2 Commentary on Romans 8:19.



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## Pressure on Genesis 1:1 – 2:4

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*A review article by the editor*

**Creation and Change – Genesis 1.1 – 2.4 in the light of changing scientific paradigms**, Douglas F Kelly. A Mentor imprint published in 1997 by Christian Focus Publications, 272 pages, £9.99.

Douglas Kelly is professor of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina. He is not only a systematic theologian and skilful exegete but is well informed in science and philosophy which is evident from the breadth of the books cited and the impressive bibliography at the end of the book.

The question of origins is one of the most important that we face today. In order to accommodate the theory of evolution the Press and TV affirm that the earth is millions if not billions of years old. Evolution is constantly presented as fact. For instance *National Geographic* (August 1998) has an article in which ape men are drawn as though they form part of a chain from apes to men over a period of four million years. This has a profound effect on morals. If we are animals that have evolved we will follow animal ethics. If we are created in the image of God and are accountable to him we will live according to the morals he has prescribed for us.

Biological evolution is more pseudo science than science. As real science advances all created matter is seen more and more to be exceedingly complex. This presumes a designer. It is inconceivable that chance of itself could produce such complexity. As Douglas Kelly declares 'Design is evident when a number of separate, interacting components are ordered in such a way as to accomplish a function beyond the individual components. The greater the specificity of the interacting components required to produce the function, the greater is our confidence in the conclusion of the design' (p 64). Allied to this is the principle of entropy which entails greater randomness, disorganisation and decay in the whole energy matter spectrum. The arrow of time is flying in the wrong direction for evolution. Put simply, things are not generating and improving. They are degenerating and decaying.

Douglas Kelly presents his material in twelve chapters, each of which is followed by a few pages of technical and bibliographical notes for reference purposes and each chapter concludes with a page titled 'Questions for study'. These add up to 138 for the whole book. By glancing through the questions the

reader will soon know how much he has understood. The work is clear and there is no reason why, with application, any reader should not eventually be able to score well.

The subject of creation is expounded in the first chapter and its validity confirmed. Chapter 2 outlines the first three chapters of Genesis while 3 and 4 consider the creation of all things out of nothing. Chapter 5 is a demolition of the gap theory described as 'an exegesis of desperation'. Chapter 6 is devoted to the meaning of the word DAY. The creative activity of God on days two to six take up chapters 9 to 11. 12 expounds the Sabbath day.

Of many important issues opened up by Dr Kelly I select the following:

*Firstly, the deception of evolution.* Creation is foundational to the whole of God's Word. In Western secular post-modern society the battle is between the Word of God and evolutionary humanism. A number of authors, mostly secular, are quoted to show that biological evolution is wishful thinking. According to Michael Denton evolution is a theory in crisis; 'after a century of intensive efforts biologists have failed to validate evolution in any significant sense' (p 20). Lynn Margulis has stated, 'Molecular biology has as yet been unable to demonstrate the formation of a single new species by mutations' (p 26). Evolutionary humanism is a 'religion' requiring a massive faith to believe that all that we see has made itself through chance.

Prof Kelly quotes Michael Behe, author of *Darwin's Black Box – the biochemical challenge to evolution* (p 191). Behe devotes two chapters to demonstrate that as more is learned about the amazing complexity of cellular structures (as well as that of their building blocks), the theory of chemical evolution becomes ever more impossible. Dr Kelly shows the way in which we can think for ourselves in challenging the evolutionary hypothesis. As an example, on Tuesday evening August 11th, 7.30pm on channel 5, British TV, there was a 25 minute nature programme on the ostrich. The wonders of the ostrich were portrayed brilliantly. It was blithely asserted that the ostrich took 500 million (not 499 million!) years to evolve! But what did the ostrich look like half way through the supposed evolutionary process? Or quarter way? When did the first ostrich male egg come into being?

*Secondly, the omnipotence of God.* 'God's lack of anything outside himself to be who he always was surpasses the power of our limited minds to comprehend, since everything that we experience around us had to have a beginning, and thus needs something outside itself to be brought into existence. Our Triune God is beyond the need of origins. His very name in Exodus indicates this: "I am that I am"' (p 75). Our Creator is independent of the vast creation that he has created.

This reality needs to lie at the basis of all our thinking about origins. The Lord asked Job where he was when the creation was under way. The same question needs to be asked of all our cosmologists.

*Thirdly, Genesis chapters 1-3 are literal and not to be interpreted as mere poetry.* Prof. James Barr, a notorious opponent of evangelicalism, is quoted as saying that he did not know any professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1-11 intended to convey to their readers the idea that creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience (p 51). Yet we find evangelical scholars bending under pressure in wishing to accommodate modern ideas. In the third verse of the Bible the Lord actually defines what he means by a day and thereafter just in case we might forget stresses that each day has its morning and evening. These are literal days of this planet and not huge periods of time.

*Fourthly, Kelly deals effectively with the false notion that Genesis 1-3 is poetry.* Is Genesis 1-3 poetry or is it literal? He cites the massive erudition of E J Young who refuted the idea that Genesis 1-3 is poetry. Psalm 104 and parts of Job provide poetic accounts of creation. Hebrew has its own character, and poetry, according to E J Young, is not a feature of Genesis one. Dr Kelly quotes Prof. John Currid: 'There is no indication of figurative language (e.g. schema, metaphor, and other tropes).' Kelly dismantles the Framework Hypothesis view (not a literal six days but a literary way of presenting a six-fold creation) which has misled many sincere Christians. He cites Jean-Marc Berthoud who has correctly observed that this axiomatic disjunction between literary form and literal meaning is a philosophical position that does not itself come from the Bible (p 115).

*Fifthly, the subject of geological age is more complex than biological evolution.* As we see from the article by Norman De Jong it is not possible to fit vast time scales into the biblical framework. Chapters 7 and 8 in his book argue for the possibility of a young universe are problematic. We must not deviate from the principle of faith expressed in Hebrews 11:3: 'By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.' There may be questions which are difficult to answer but the same applies to those who hold to vast periods of time.

*Sixthly and finally, we must pray for a massive intellectual, moral and cultural healing to occur and this entails a revolutionary 'paradigm shift' from mythological evolution to a Bible-based paradigm of reality* (p 245). As we see from the article by Robert Godfrey we must not succumb to pressure from liberals however pressing that might be. We can and must trust the God of Scripture.

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# Liberalism: Attractions and Dangers

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*W Robert Godfrey*

Abraham Kuyper, J Gresham Machen and Cornelius Van Til are prominent among those who stood in defence of historic Christianity against the rising liberal doctrine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For those of us who are conservatives, the dangers of liberalism and the courage and nobility of those who stood against it are almost self-evident. But we will not really understand those dangers or that courage unless we pause to see something of the attractions of liberalism.

Liberalism arose, according to its understanding of its mission, as an effort to save Christianity. Liberals believed that the intellectual challenge of the Enlightenment had made the defence of traditional Christianity impossible and that if Christianity were to be preserved in any form, the faith had to be accommodated to modern standards of thought. One theologian took up this task very self-consciously. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) in 1799 published an influential work entitled, 'Religion, Speeches to its Cultured Despisers'. He hoped that a more liberal expression of Christianity might win unbelievers back to the faith.

Although liberalism took a variety of forms, certain common characteristics emerged. Liberals insisted that the ultimate authority in theology must be man, either in his reason, his will or his feelings. The Bible was a record of human religious reflection and, while valuable, was not ultimately authoritative. Seeing man as the measure of religious truth had several benefits for the liberal. First, it made Christianity intellectually respectable. The liberal could accept and incorporate in his thought all the latest scientific and philosophical developments and avoid any hint of anti-intellectualism. He could avoid the horror of being old-fashioned. Second, liberalism could be a force for human unity. As any exclusive claims for Christianity faded, various denominations and various religions could all be appreciated and affirmed as contributing to the advance of the truth. Liberals could exemplify the modern virtue of tolerance. Third, liberalism was progressive and forward-looking. Liberals could be optimistic, confident that the future held only advancement for mankind.

These characteristics of liberalism seemed very attractive to many – from the days of the late eighteenth century down to our time. One can be a Christian and fit right into the modern world. Or so the liberals thought.

A variety of defenders of historic Christianity spoke out against the various forms of liberalism. Two of them were intimately acquainted with liberalism. Abraham Kuyper was educated in a liberal seminary and embraced for a time the liberalism taught there, only later turning to an orthodox Calvinism. J Gresham Machen studied with some of the leading liberal theologians in Germany and felt the power and appeal of their religious convictions.

Kuyper's knowledge of liberalism from the inside made him an especially effective critic. In his famous *Lectures on Calvinism* he addressed the problems of liberalism especially in his second lecture, 'Calvinism and Religion'. He noted that liberalism had taken several forms: rationalism, mysticism and practical moralism depending on whether one stressed the mind, the feelings or moral duty as the essence of Christianity. But whatever the form of liberalism, it assumed the essential normalcy of the world in which we live and the ability of man without supernatural intervention to lead the religious life. Kuyper insisted that the Christian religion taught that this world is abnormal and only by supernatural help in revelation, redemption and regeneration is there any hope for man.

Machen also attacked liberalism in his brilliant work, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923). In terms similar to Kuyper's, Machen wrote: 'The many varieties of modern liberal religion are rooted in naturalism – that is, in the denial of any entrance of the creative power of God (as distinguished from the ordinary course of nature) in connection with the origin of Christianity.' He argued that this liberalism was the most dangerous form of religion: 'The great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology.'<sup>1</sup>

The simple thesis of Machen's book that Christianity and liberalism were two different religions outraged the liberals. But Machen defended his claim clearly and effectively in the course of his book.<sup>2</sup> He maintained that Christianity must defend itself on both the religious and scientific fronts. Christians must not take refuge in anti-intellectualism: 'Modern liberalism may be criticised (1) on the ground that it is un-christian and (2) on the ground that it is unscientific.'<sup>3</sup> Real scholarship will not undermine, but will uphold Christianity.

Machen's book still reads today as if it had been written to the controversies of our time. Let me offer one small example from the introduction where he comments on the effect of liberalism as a broad cultural movement on the public schools in America in the early 1920s. 'When one considers what the

public schools of America in many places already are – their materialism, their discouragement of any sustained intellectual effort, their encouragement of the dangerous pseudo-scientific fads of experimental psychology – one can only be appalled by the thought of a commonwealth in which there is no escape from such a soul-killing system.’<sup>4</sup> He seems to have had a prophetic spirit in this comment, as in so many others.

What Kuyper, Machen and others saw clearly was that the attractions of liberalism were themselves the dangers of liberalism. That conclusion is more clear today than it was even earlier in this century as we have seen the intellectual and moral bankruptcy of liberalism. Liberalism not only lacks a clear or convincing vision of truth, but also lacks a clear moral system. Radical relativism dominates both. The effort to replace the Bible as authority with man as authority has been a total failure. Liberalism’s weaknesses are seen in the very areas where it was attractive to many. First, liberalism has not been as successful as orthodox Christianity in providing an intellectually respectable defence of the faith. Second, it has promoted unity only by abandoning any claim to truth. And third, in its optimism it has failed to account for the undeniable evil in human nature.

Liberalism has failed in its central task. It has not saved Christianity. Today it is the liberal churches that are increasingly empty while many conservative churches are growing and vital. Even liberal theologians, such as Harvey Cox, have come to recognise that their expectation of the decline of religion and the steady rise of secularism was wrong.

The world continues to need, just as it always has, faithful, orthodox Christianity. Christian churches still face the temptations of liberalism and tragically some continue to succumb. The lure of respectability in this world is often too strong. To help us all resist such temptation we need to know about some of the heroes that helped the church expose and resist liberalism. J Gresham Machen was such a man.

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#### References

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|---|----------------------|
| 1 J Gresham Machen, <i>Christianity and</i>     | 2 <i>ibid</i> , p 4. |
| <i>Liberalism</i> , Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, | 3 <i>ibid</i> , p 7. |
| 1923.   | 4 <i>ibid</i> , p 1. |



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# How Old is the Earth?

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*Norman De Jong*

Some years ago I got involved in a discussion with some colleagues, presumably friends, about the age of the earth. In the course of our discussion (debate, maybe?), I offered the proposition that the earth was relatively young and certainly not millions or billions of years old. As one form of proof, I suggested that the genealogies given to us in the Bible did not allow room for a creation that was more than 6,000 years old. I had also contended that the word 'day' in Genesis 1 and 2 was a normal, twenty-four hour day as you and I know it.

The response was not very pleasant. They were barely able to hide their derision. I was told that the genealogies could not be used for such calculations because they were full of gaps, holes and missing persons. Since I had not studied them intensively, and did not then have a degree in Theology or Biblical Studies, I felt a bit ashamed for putting my ignorance on display in a public meeting. I quickly clammed up and retreated into a protective shell of silence.

More recently, because of new demands for leadership, I once again conjured up my courage and broached the subject. On consulting my *New Geneva Study Bible*, I was informed by the editors that 'many scholars argue that there are gaps in these genealogies, and that they therefore cannot be used to compute a precise chronology'.<sup>1</sup> The editorial commentary seemed to suggest that most Bible scholars would laugh at the claim of Archbishop Ussher that the earth was created by God 4,004 years before Christ (BC).

In a recent heresy trial involving a ruling elder and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the charge was made that it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and to the *Westminster Standards* to argue that Adam had primate ancestors. Such an assertion, it soon became apparent, was built on a set of presuppositions which implied that the earth is millions and even billions of years old. Dr Terry Gray, the defendant, in his appeal to Presbytery, claimed that scientific evidence showed the earth to be old enough for such evolutionary development to have occurred. One of his grounds for the old earth, he

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1 *New Geneva Study Bible*, p 17, notes on Genesis 3.

claimed, is that ‘the genealogies have been shown to be stylised and with gaps’.<sup>2</sup> *The NIV Study Bible* adds to this impression by stating, ‘The fact that there are exactly ten names in the Genesis 5 list [as in the genealogy of 11:10-26] makes it likely that it includes gaps, the lengths of which may be summarised in large numbers. Other ancient genealogies outside the Bible exhibit similarly large figures.’<sup>3</sup> The logic of the NIV argument escapes me, for there is no apparent reason why the number ten should lead to the conclusion that ‘it includes gaps’. If we are ever to refute such claims, we will have to examine them carefully and determine whether they have any validity. In Fig. 1 below we will begin to examine those genealogies carefully to find their relevance and validity.

**Fig.1 the genealogies of Genesis 5-11**

<i>Genealogies</i>	<i>Elapsed</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Lifespan</i>	<i>Died</i>
Adam	130	0	930	930
Seth	105	130	912	1042
Enosh	90	235	905	1140
Kenan	70	325	910	1235
Mahalalel	65	395	895	1290
Jared	162	460	962	1422
Enoch	65	622	365	(987)
Methuselah	187	687	969	1656
Lamech	182	874	777	1651
Noah	500	1056	950	2006
(flood)	100			1656
Shem	100	1556	600	2156
Arphaxad	35	1658	438	2096
Shelah	30	1693	433	2126
Eber	34	1723	464	2187
Peleg	30	1757	239	1996
Reu	32	1787	239	2026
Serug	30	1819	230	2049
Nahor	29	1849	148	1997
Terah	70	1878	205	2083
Abram	100	1948	175	2123 <sup>4</sup>
Isaac	60	2048	180	2228

2 Terry Gray, PhD, Appeal to the Presbytery of the Midwest Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Sept 14, 1995, p 11.

3 *New International Version Study Bible*, p 13, note 5:5.

4 *The NIV Study Bible*, in a front piece entitled ‘Old Testament Chronology’, places Abram’s birth date as 2,166 B.C. and

his death at 1,991 BC. In Fig.1 the author is using the creation event as year 1 and adding to that date, in the same manner as do the Jews today. If, for the sake of discussion, we added the 2,166 years of the NIV to the 1948 that I have calculated, we would have a total of 4,114 years, only 110 more than Ussher’s date.

Elapsed time refers simply to the number of years between the time of a patriarch's own birth and the birth of the next generation that is mentioned, e.g., 'When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of . . . Seth' (5:3).

The year in which the person died is determined simply by adding the elapsed time for the previous generations to the lifespan given in the Bible, e.g., in the case of Seth we add Adam's elapsed time to the lifespan of Seth to get 1042.<sup>5</sup>

Some interesting questions:

1. How many generations of grandsons could Adam have held on his knee?
2. What were some of the benefits of having Adam around that long?<sup>6</sup>
3. How many people would you estimate were living on the earth at the time of the flood? Suppose, for the sake of your calculations, that the population doubled every 100 years. Next, suppose that it doubled every 50 years.
4. Which of the men on the above list were dead before the flood? Who died in the year of the flood?
5. Why did men live so long before the flood?
6. Why did men have children earlier after the flood?
7. Did Noah know Abram?

If we only look at the genealogies as found in Genesis 5 and 11, we run the risk of encountering the charge that these first 11 chapters of Genesis are not historical accounts and cannot be treated as chronologically or mathematically precise. Even such a reputable source as the *NIV Study Bible* fails to treat the

5 For similar charts and analyses of these genealogies, consult *Barnes' Notes, Exposition of Genesis*, vol 1, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953, pp 236-248, 395, and Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol 1, *The Pentateuch*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981, pp 121-122.

6 Concerning this, see John Calvin, *Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, vol 1, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker

Book House, 1993, p 229. Calvin there says, 'Through six successive ages, when the family of Seth had grown into a great people, the voice of Adam might daily resound, in order to renew the memory of the creation, the fall, and the punishment of man; to testify to the hope of salvation which remained after chastisement, and to recite the judgments of God by which all might be instructed.'

period prior to Abraham in its opening time lines, suggesting thereby that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are not history, but myth or some kind of literary or theological framework. To avoid such argument, we need to look at other books of the Bible against which such charges have not been levelled (figure 2). Do they corroborate or refute Genesis 5 and 11?

**Fig.2 a comparison of biblical accounts**

<i>Genesis 5-11</i>	<i>1 Chronicles 1</i>	<i>Matthew 1</i>	<i>Luke 3</i>
Adam	Adam		Adam
Seth	Seth		Seth
Enosh	Enosh		Enos
Kenan	Kenan		Cainan
Mahalalel	Mahalalel		Mahalalel
Jared	Jared		Jared
Enoch	Enoch		Enoch
Methuselah	Methuselah		Methuselah
Lamech	Lamech		Lamech
Noah	Noah		Noah
(flood)			
Shem	Shem		Shem
Arphaxad	Arphaxad		Arphaxad
			Cainan
Shelah	Shelah		Shelah
Eber	Eber		Eber
Peleg	Peleg		Peleg
Reu	Reu		Reu
Serug	Serug		Serug
Nahor	Nahor		Nahor
Terah	Terah		Terah
Abram	Abram	Abram	Abram
Isaac	Isaac	Isaac	Isaac

There have been repeated assertions from many theologians that the genealogies cannot be used to date the earth because there are these supposed gaps, missing links and contradictions. Our study so far, though, shows nothing of the sort. Maybe an examination of the remaining segments will uncover these 'problems' that our scholar friends claim to exist. If there truly are significant gaps and differences, we may have to adjust our beliefs concerning the age of the universe in which God has placed us. The following table (Figure 3) will help us decide.

**Fig.3 the genealogies from Abram to David**

Ruth 4:18-21	Matthew 1	Luke 3
	Abraham	Abraham
	Isaac	Isaac
	Jacob	Jacob
	Judah	Judah
Perez	Perez	Perez
Hezron	Hezron	Hezron
Ram	Ram	Ram
Amminadab	Amminadab	Amminadab
Nahshon	Nahshon	Nahshon
Salmon	Salmon	Salmon
Boaz	Boaz	Boaz
Obed	Obed	Obed
Jesse	Jesse	Jesse
David	David	David

Still no problem! No disagreements!! What then, are these higher critics talking about?

When we look beyond David, then it cannot be denied that there are significant differences between the genealogies as given to us by Matthew and by Luke. If one were to lay them side by side, as does John Calvin in his *Commentary*, there would be many obvious differences, *but only from David to Christ*, where no disagreements exist among secular and sacred historians concerning the time of existence! There are no differences from Abraham to David, just as there are no differences from Adam to Abraham, with the exception of the name of 'Cainan', which is easily explained as a textual difference peculiar to the Septuagint (LXX) source, in contrast to the more reliable Hebrew Masoretic text.

Calvin reminds us that Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience who is concerned about the kingdom of Christ, and is therefore following a line of *legal* descent, showing that Christ is the lawful heir to David's throne, as per God's promise to David and Solomon (2 Chr 7:17,18). Luke, on the other hand, is concerned with showing the natural, biological connections. Furthermore, it is clearly demonstrable from the studies of Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah that, after the Babylonian captivity, the same persons are given different names by their captors. These two Gospel genealogies were never called into question by the Jews, who had all the historical records and public tables to do so, nor by any of the early enemies of Christianity, even though many of them examined them minutely.

During the time of the Reformation, the Protestant Reformers argued for an infallible, inerrant Scripture, which led John Calvin to conclude that the earth was created 3,943 years BC.<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther, operating on similar biblical principles, came to the conclusion that God created the earth in 3,960 BC, while Melancthon said that it occurred in 3,963 BC. Given the 1996 years since Christ, Calvin, Luther, Melancthon and their contemporaries would all today be arguing that the earth is less than 6,000 years old.

Most of this has been forgotten because of the assaults of evolutionists who find it essential to have a very old earth in order to find any credibility for their theory. It is because of evolutionary assumptions that the genealogies of the Bible have come under such unrelenting attack during the last two centuries. Now, when evolutionists want to ridicule the creationists' cause, they will ask if we still hold to Archbishop Ussher's date of 4,004 BC. We could tweak their noses by claiming that Ussher probably allowed a little more time than necessary, but should certainly remind them that the great Reformers, no scholarly slouches, predated Ussher and held to a younger earth than did he. We should remind them, too, that Bible-believing Lutherans, Baptists and Presbyterians are still strongly committed to the biblical account of creation, as given to us in Genesis 1-11.

After examining all the evidence, we ought to come to the same conclusion as reached by *Barnes' Notes*, 'There is no reason for doubting the correctness of the chronology submitted by the Hebrew Masoretic text. This is and is intended to be a complete chronology, complete as far as marking the actual lapse of time is concerned. No other nation has anything to compare with it. Yet, strange to say, the only reliable chronology which we have . . . is being questioned, corrected, amended and condemned in favour of fallible documents. . . . The claim that the Scriptures do not give a complete and accurate chronology for the whole period of the Old Testament that they cover is utterly wrong, dangerous and mischievous.'<sup>8</sup>

For all of us, it ought to be no shame to stand on the infallible, inerrant claims of Scripture, given to us in not one isolated incident, but corroborated in many places. The God of the Bible has given us his Word. That is good enough for me!

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7 *ibid*, p 231. Calvin there concludes that the age of the world was 987 at the time that

Enoch was translated to glory.  
8 *Barnes' Notes*, vol 1, pp 237-8.



## The Battle for Britain

### *Rejection of homosexual rights agenda*

*A battle has been waged in Britain over the homosexuality issue. This has focused on a Bill in the House of Commons to lower the age of consent for homosexual practice from the age of 18 to 16. Iain Bainbridge of the Christian Institute, 26 Jesmond Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 4PQ (e-mail: [info@www.christian.org.uk](mailto:info@www.christian.org.uk) tel 0191 281 5664) reports:*

The Bible is unambiguous in its condemnation of homosexual activity. In both the Old and the New Testament homosexuality and lesbianism are condemned. Their prevalence in a society is, according to Paul, a sign of God's judgment on a nation. Whilst we are to love homosexual people we are to hate homosexual practice. This includes fighting any moves to legitimise it. The homosexual rights agenda is therefore one that we should be very concerned about.

On the 22nd of June the House of Commons voted by 336 to 129 to accept an amendment to the Crime and Disorder Bill to reduce the age of homosexual consent from 18 to 16. (It was reduced from 21 to 18 in 1994.) Almost 200 MPs were either absent or they abstained. Prime Minister Tony Blair voted in favour of the reduction. Both leader of the Liberal Democrats, Paddy Ashdown, and Conservative leader William Hague expressed their personal support for the reduction but were unable to attend the vote.

The Bill then returned to the House of Lords where it began earlier this year. Baroness Young put down an amendment to reverse the Commons amendment. On the 22nd July 1998 the House of Lords voted 290 to 122 to reverse the Commons amendment. Incidentally even if hereditary peers had had their voting rights removed the Lords would still have reversed the Commons amendment. (If no Conservative peers had voted the amendment would have only been defeated by 15 votes). This is because the vast majority

of crossbenchers and a significant proportion of Labour peers voted with Lady Young. (There were significant Labour abstentions, and of the Labour peers who did vote, 1/4 voted with Lady Young.)

With the parliamentary timetable extremely tight the Bill then returned to the House of Commons. The Bill contained major provisions on crime. Jack Straw therefore, faced with the likelihood of another defeat in the House of Lords, promised that the Government would introduce a bill in the next parliamentary session to enable MPs to get their way. The fight is therefore certainly not over. But the victory in the House of Lords has certainly been a significant victory over the gay rights agenda. It has encouraged many people to have the courage of their convictions and to speak out against homosexuality.

Lady Young has received an enormous amount of public support. In the few days after the vote more than 700 letters flooded into her House of Lords office, the vast majority of which were supportive. An opinion poll on Friday 24th July found that 65% of the public were against reducing the age of consent, with a further 9% undecided. The Christian Institute worked closely with Lady Young throughout her campaign. They sent briefing materials to hundreds of MPs and peers and are preparing to fight this issue again probably in Spring 1999.

### ***Anglican bishops vote to condemn gay practice***

*'The Daily Telegraph', 6 August 1998 carried a detailed front page feature article. A résumé of the report follows:*

Seven hundred and fifty Anglican bishops, the largest number ever to gather from all over the world met at the Lambeth Conference held at Canterbury, Kent at the end of July and beginning of August. Deep anxiety preceded this major gathering as differences over the homosexual issue threatened to divide the International Anglican Communion. In the event the Conference upheld traditional biblical teaching. The defeat of the homosexual lobby was uncompromising. The declaration was passed that homosexual practice is incompatible with Scripture and the Church should not allow the blessing of homosexual partnerships or ordinations of practising homosexuals. The final statement was passed with 526 in favour, 70 against and 45 abstentions. Archbishop Carey seems ambivalent on the issue, a 'Mr Facing both ways', but unfortunately that has too often been the role and character of Anglican archbishops.

The bishops from Africa and Asia in particular were noted for their condemnation of homosexual practice. The bishop of Owo, Nigeria, declared, 'To accept homosexuality in the Church is to commit evangelical suicide.' There was a confrontation between Richard Kirker, general secretary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, and Emmanuel Chukwuma, bishop of Enugu in Nigeria. 'You will go to hell. Repent now!' urged the bishop of Enugu. According to 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 he is right and faithful to give warning to Mr Kirker as he did.

An avowed non-believer, Tom Utley, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* (August 7th) pointed out that far from being persecuted, the homosexual lobby is persecuting the Church of England – and trying to exploit its weakness. Utley comments that no amount of shouting, or marching, or placard waving is going to make the homosexuals right and he applauds the Anglican vote, 'They have kept open the arms of the Anglican Communion to that great majority who would like to believe, but find it hard enough as it is, without having to sanctify buggery.'

### ***Essentially Evangelical***

*Eighty British Christian leaders met recently for an informal two-day consultation at High Leigh, to consider the need to work more closely together.*

Coming from a variety of groupings: Anglican (Reform), FIEC, Grace, Reformed Baptist, and Free Church of Scotland, this network is not in competition with existing organisations but is a forum for those who maintain that 'Christ cannot be central if his Word is marginalised'. The steering committee includes Dave Burke, Richard Coekin, Brian Edwards, Philip Hacking, Julian Hardyman, Erroll Hulse, David Jackman, Mark Johnstone, Peter Lewis, Peter Milsom, John Rosser, Simon Scott, Jonathan Stephen and Melvin Tinker.

'Essentially Evangelical' is committed to the historical evangelical view of Scripture: that the Bible alone speaks with final authority on all matters of Christian belief, practice and experience.

## ***Promotion of ECT in the Republic of Ireland***

*Matthew Brennan reports that the visit of Dr J I Packer to Dublin for two meetings on Friday 31st August was attended by about 200.*

Dr Packer gave a preamble in which he stated that three great concerns have been his passion all his life. They consisted of evangelism, nurture, and the 'Lund principle' which states that 'Ecclesiastically divided Christians should try not to do separately what their consciences allow them to do together' (see Charles Colson and Richard Neuhaus in *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, p 149).

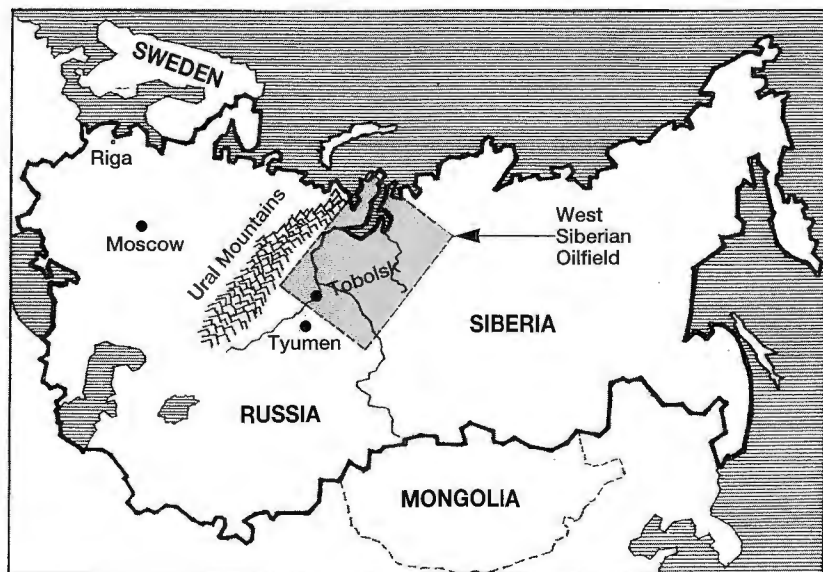
After telling something about himself, Packer mentioned Catholic devotional literature as evidence of Catholics who have experienced Christ. He outlined how the ECT document came into being as the direct result of Colson and Neuhaus listening to a report on the hostility that ensued when the Pentecostal movement saw growth and the Catholic Church saw their numbers decline in South America and how these two men wanted to help in that situation.

Having given his talk, lasting about an hour, Packer invited questions. In response to a question about the Pope being the Antichrist he responded that he abominated the papacy but considered the present Pope a fine Christian man. One of the conclusions at the end of the evening was that Catholics and Evangelicals should and could evangelise together as we go into the next millennium.

This promotion of ECT in Ireland raises problems for the evangelical constituency which forms a small minority. One difficulty is the threat of division over ECT among Evangelicals. A further problem is the hidden agenda requiring that Evangelicals desist from evangelising Roman Catholics. What sense does that make in the Republic where 91 percent are RC?

Dr Packer has brought the ECT across the Atlantic. In America the Council of Confessing Evangelicals has clarified the issues from a Reformational perspective. What this Council has achieved applies to other areas. An account of the influence and work of this Council of Confessing Evangelicals in the USA is held over for a future issue of *Reformation Today*.

# Journey to Siberia



*A report by Roger Weil, July 1998*

## The national situation

Pastors I spoke with say that the whole of Russian society, including government departments, KGB, police, army and local authorities, is riddled with corruption and avarice. Everyone has his price and uses his position for gain. Businesses, shops etc. have to pay 'protection' money thus inflating prices for the already poor people. No one knows how this vice-like grip can be broken. Governments and factories claim to have no money to pay wages yet their employees continue to work for them, fearing to lose their jobs. Seventy years of Communism have cowed workers into a supine passivity, afraid to protest, afraid to strike, afraid to take a lead against wickedness and corruption. No one wants to take a stand –

so they work for no wages! I was surprised that the pastors I spoke to about this saw it as a judgment on the nation for its support (passively or actively) for atheism over seventy years – sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind. But God is also merciful and 1 Timothy 2:1-2 is still in our Bibles! Is not God therefore the key to all problems? Is anything too hard for him?

The Orthodox Church, seeing its influence severely threatened by the rapid spread of 'foreign' religions during the 1990s, is mustering all its resources to persuade governments, local authorities, KGB, police etc. that it and it alone is truly Russian and truly patriotic. All other religions are 'Western', sinister, anti-Russian and therefore likely to undermine the whole of society! On Sunday morning we arrived at our small meeting to find a notice pinned to the fence:

**WATCH OUT! SECTARIANS.  
KEEP HOLY RUSSIA TO THE  
ORTHODOX FAITH!**

What a myth – *Holy Russia*! On the 'holiest' day of the year (Easter) out of a population of nine million in Moscow only 110,000 attended the Orthodox Church services, about 1%! There is nothing holy about Russia today nor anything very sanctifying about the influence of the Orthodox Church, yet the myth persists that to be 'Orthodox' in name somehow makes the people 'holy', and to be an evangelical Bible-believer makes one unholy and un-Russian. But Orthodox propaganda on the media makes people afraid of having anything to do with the 'sects' and they class Evangelicals with JW's, Mormons, Hari Krishna and extreme charismatic groups. They have got a good stick to beat us with – sectarians are non-Russian *and* heretical.

### **Tyumen**

Four years ago there was no evangelical Christian Church in this city (pop. 800,000). Then Pastor Boichenko and his young family came from southern Ukraine to help ten believers in this Siberian city. Now a modest meeting room has been built attended by 150-200 people. The gritty determination and the spiritual vigour of these servants of God reminded me of what Dr Lloyd-Jones said of the early Methodist fathers, 'There is something volcanic about these men!' Paul said, 'The kingdom of God is not in word but in power.' It is an electrifying experience to be alongside ordinary men and women in whom one sees the power of God. There is much to do and many souls needing help, reproof and encour-

agement. Following the two hour service on Sunday morning the young people meet for a couple of hours so the pastor who leads both meetings is very tired when he gets home in the evening! There are house-groups on Monday evenings when the sermons heard the previous day are discussed. Wednesday evening is Bible Study and Prayer Meeting and there are other mid-week meetings as well, both devotional and evangelistic.

Life today is savage in many parts of Russia; crime is rife and law enforcement often non-existent. There are two heavy steel plate doors to the pastor's flat with big multiple locks – so many flats have had their front doors broken in by gangs armed with sledge hammers. Their two daughters (8 and 5) are taught to pray at the door for God's protection before going out. Children are sometimes kidnapped and sold into prostitution.

All Russian churches less than 15 years old are compelled to seek registration with the local authorities by the 1st January 2000. Those who cannot prove they are part of an existing registered religious organisation will have so few legal rights they may well have to close down or meet illegally in homes. Pastor Boichenko discovered that sixty years ago there was an evangelical Christian church in Tyumen and that both it and its pastor were liquidated during the period of Stalin terror. He sent one of the lady members of the church to innocently ask in the city archives if such a church had indeed existed. Not knowing who she was, they not only produced the most detailed and well-preserved records she requested, but also allowed her to take photocopies! After a while Boichenko duly went to the Council Offices, presented these documents and requested registration on the grounds that his church was the same as that liquidated by Stalin



*Pastor Sasha Boichenko and his family  
in Tyumen*



*Leonid Litovchenko and his family. He is  
working full-time in the church in Tobolsk*

sixty years before! The council officials were clearly shocked and reluctantly agreed to consider his application and let him have their answer in October. Please make this too a matter for prayer.

While in Tyumen we also met the young couple, Zhenya and Larissa Loshkin, who are working part-time in Onokino, a small town twenty miles away where a group of a dozen or more meet once or twice a week in a rented schoolroom. Five ladies were baptised the Sunday before I arrived. I visited their meeting and saw the young couple helping people to read the Bible, pray and learn some hymns. They are all beginners in God's school. This is real missionary work in an area where the gospel has not been known before. Larissa has a two-year-old daughter and the family live in a one-room flat a long way from the church. This means during the winter months she and the child live a very isolated life with no kindergarten and no believers nearby to talk to. We thought it important therefore to help them move nearer the church and into a two-room flat where they can be more involved in the life of the church.

## **Tobolsk**

Timothy and Tanya Oleinik came here from southern Russia when the work began seven years ago; they have two boys, 8 and 5. A large brick church was built with outside funding but sufficient only to complete the main structure. He is therefore appealing for about £14,000 to complete the inside of the building. Although they have 300 members many of them are young people or those who have not been paid for months and months, so help has to come from outside. The pastor has one full-time helper, Leonid Litovchenko. We accompanied him and a team of young people to an evangelisation in a distant village held in the community hall. The Orthodox priest had told people to keep away but a small meeting was possible and some heard the gospel for the first time. Oleinik is wisely seeking to introduce younger men into positions of responsibility. I met three such who have completed Bible School and want to serve the Lord. The Orthodox Church attacks the work in the press and on TV but there is no right of reply. We are sponsoring a three-month Bible





*The unfinished interior of the church in Tobolsk (see front cover for outside perspective view)*

course this autumn to be led by Russian Bible teachers and have agreed the programme with them. The church also wants to send out missionaries into the surrounding area and is in every way a hive of spiritual activity.

### **Nyagan and Priobye**

Nikolai Redka is a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, very fervent and zealous for the Lord. His wife is Olga. There have been some baptisms to encourage them in Nyagan as the work is still in its infancy. Nyagan is a town of some 80,000 souls. They have 16 members and a further six are enrolled in a Bible course for beginners.

Thirty miles to the north a work has begun in the small town of Priobye (12,000). They have 15 members whom Nikolai

visits regularly. We were able to bring him a portable projector for his Sunday School which was recently started and now has about ten children. Although Nyagan is not a large town and is in quite a remote area we were surprised to hear that quite a number of heretical cults are active, making the work more difficult than before. The very long and severe winters with temperatures often as low as  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ . make for testing conditions.

It is surely both a privilege and a duty for us to support such faithful men in their church-planting ministry.

*Roger Weil is secretary of the Slav Lands Christian Fellowship who support the churches and workers described. For more information please write to The Secretary, 28 Hayesford Park Drive, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9DB.*

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