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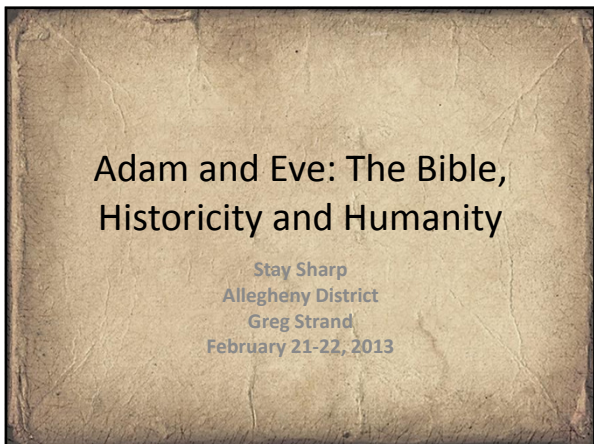
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Rationale/Goals/Purposes

1. Reaffirm biblical authority (special revelation).
2. Understand the complexity of the issue(s).
3. Identify essentials and non-essentials, determine what is biblically faithful, and what the confessional parameters are in the EFCA.
4. Identify the issues, not solve or resolve them.
5. Recognize the place and role of science (general revelation).

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6. Understand and respect the different positions on the age of the universe and Adam and Eve, within acceptable parameters. Reaffirm the historicity of Adam and Eve.
7. Engage in pastoral discussion and leadership as we live with the tension of acceptable parameters.
8. Model assurance in the Scripture with humility in dialogue, so that it can be replicated in the local church.
9. Avoidance of caricature and straw-man arguments.
10. Avoidance of moving in a liberal direction or a fundamentalist direction.

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I. Introduction

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## Protestant Pastors' Views on Creation

Survey of 1,000 Protestant Pastors  
LifeWay Research (Ed Stetzer)

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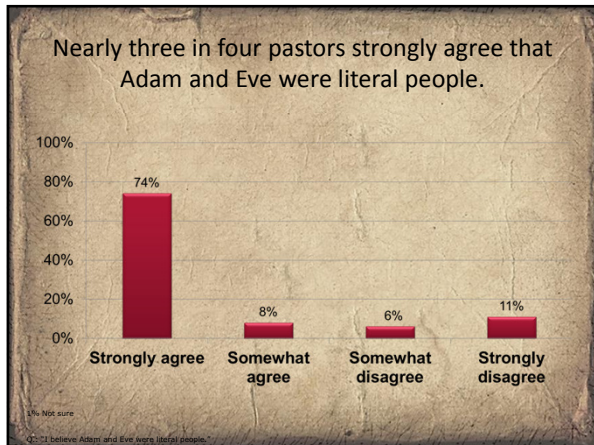
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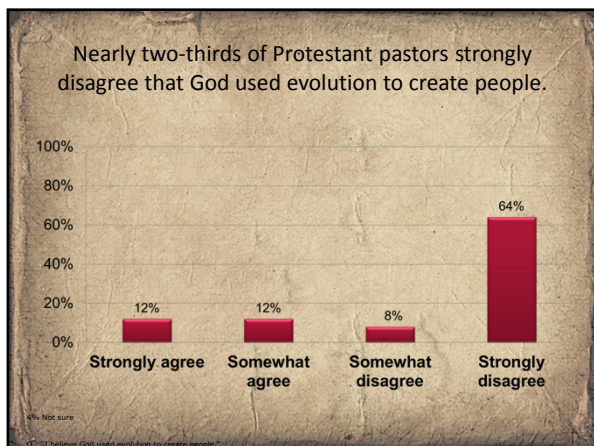
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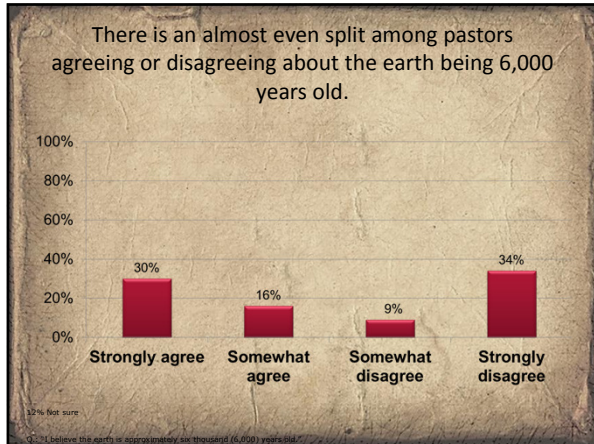
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1. Pastors overwhelmingly believe that Adam and Eve were literal people.
2. Pastors overwhelmingly believe that God did not use evolution to create humans.

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3. Pastors are evenly divided over the age of the universe.  
4. Some Pastors teach/preach on this topic too much; others don't teach/preach on this often enough.

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Ed Stetzer concludes: "Earth's age is the only issue in this survey on which pastors are almost evenly divided. But to many of the pastors, belief in an older earth is not the same as belief in evolution. Many pastors who believe God created humans in their present form also believe that the earth is older than 6,000 years."

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David Roach, "Poll: Pastor's Oppose evolution, split on earth's age" (January 9, 2012):  
<http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Research-Poll-Pastors-oppose-evolution-split-on-earths-age>  
  
*Source: LifeWay Research*

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"If it is not true that all human beings descend from Adam as the first human being, then the entire history of redemption documented in Scripture unravels. The result is no redemptive *history* in any credible or coherent sense and so the loss of *redemptive* history in any meaningful sense." Richard Gaffin

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- Adam matters to our view of the Bible: can the Bible be relied upon to tell us the truth about the faith, life/practice, history and science?
- Adam matters to the way we think about the human race and culture: what does it mean to be the primogenitor of the human race in the image of God as a unique being created for the glory of God?

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- Adam matters to our view of God: what does this mean to our view of God, His reason for creating Adam in His image and the relationship for which man was created?
- Adam matters to the problem of sin and the solution found in the person and work of Christ, the second Adam: if Adam is not a historical person, what does that say about Christ?
- The Bible's beginning, starting with God and Adam, cannot be separated from the Bible's end, with its teaching on the believer and Jesus Christ.

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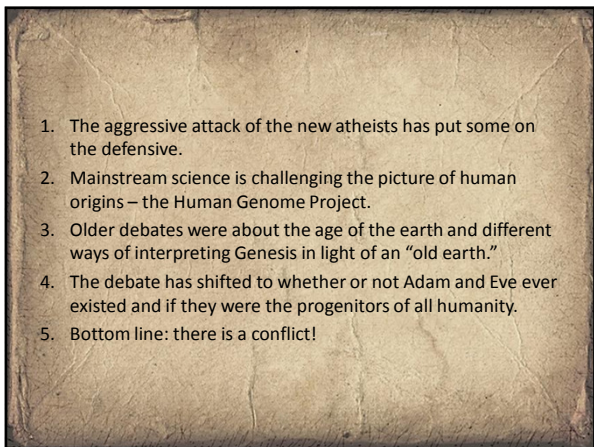
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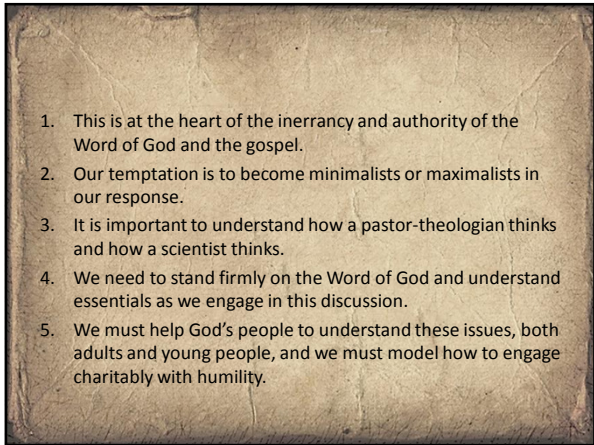
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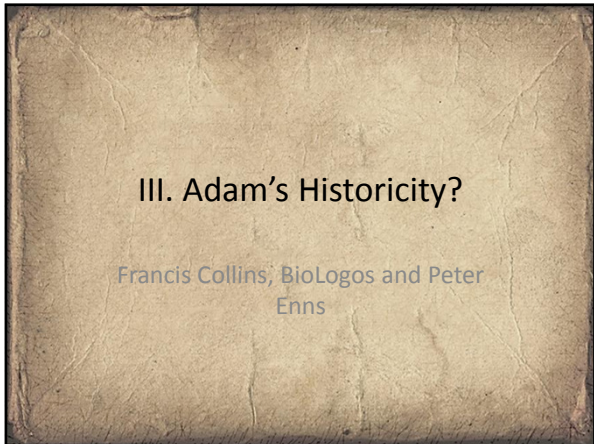
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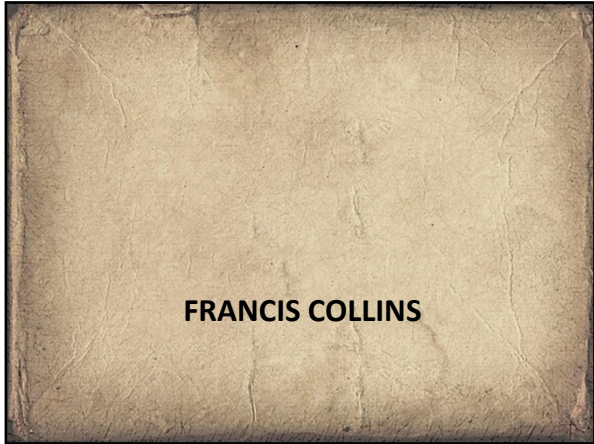
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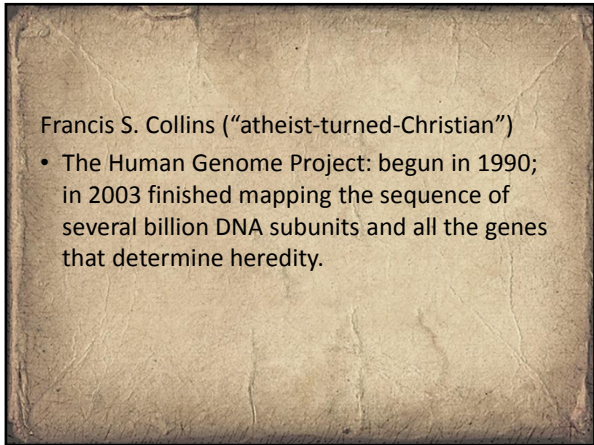
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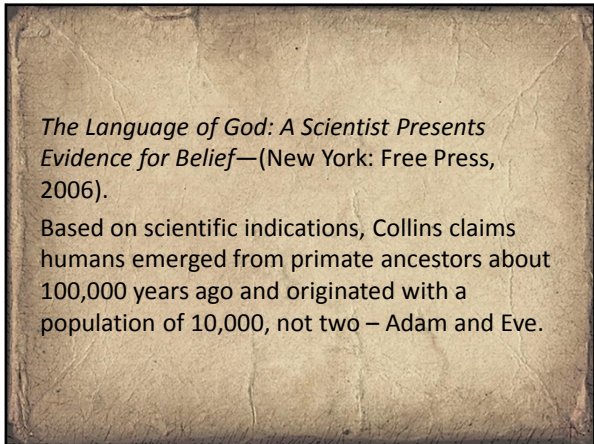
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In late 2007, Collins launched the San Diego-based BioLogos Foundation to promote theistic evolution, especially among evangelicals. He sought not only to embrace what he considers to be the best evidence, but also to bolster Christian credibility among people who are knowledgeable about mainstream scientific thinking.

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*The Language of Science and Faith: Straight Answers to Genuine Questions* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2011).  
This book is co-authored with Karl W. Giberson. One of the most significant claims is that belief in a literal Adam and Eve as the progenitors of the human race, i.e. they are the first couple, "do not fit the evidence."

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**BIOLOGOS**

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- Foundational to the BioLogos vision is the belief that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. The Bible is a living document through which God, by his Spirit, continues to speak to the church today.
- "We affirm historic Christianity as articulated in the classic ecumenical creeds."

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- "Given the diverse theological backgrounds of our staff and of the BioLogos community in general, we have chosen not to adopt a specific statement of faith. However, we know of no better summary of what we all believe than Paul's words in I Corinthians 15:1-5."

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The organization's 1,600 members, Collins among them, affirm the Bible's "divine inspiration, trustworthiness, and authority" on "faith and conduct," though not on scientific concepts. They are seeking ways in which Scripture can be reinterpreted to accord with evolutionary theory.

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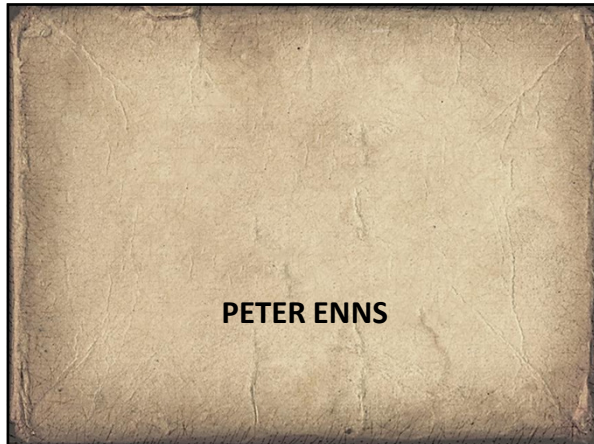
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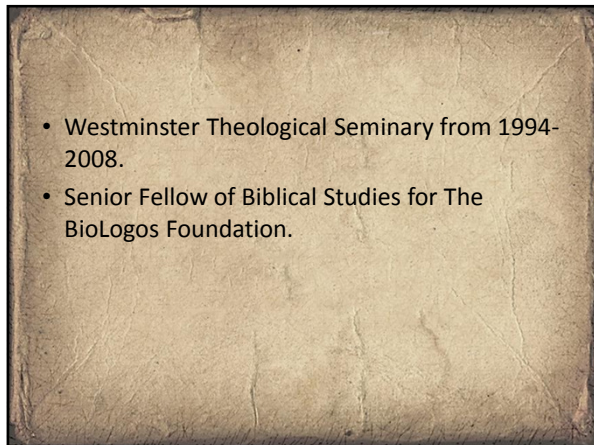
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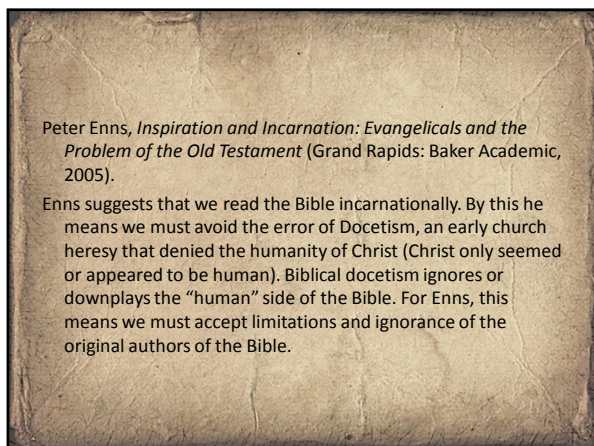
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Enns presents three areas of argumentation that support his thesis of supporting his incarnational model: 1) the non-uniqueness of the Old Testament in its cultural setting, 2) theological diversity in the Old Testament, and 3) the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

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First, he presents a number of examples of parallels and relationships between literature and stories from the ancient world and the Bible questioning the Bible's uniqueness.

- Enuma Elish (Babylonian Genesis) and Genesis creation account.
- Gilgamesh epic, an ancient story that references a flood, and the Genesis flood account.
- Nuzi documents (northern Iraq) and Hittite Suzerainty treaties, which reflect similar legal and cultural norms as found in the Bible.
- Code of Hammurabi and the Mosaic Law.

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Second, Enns raises the question about the internal consistency and integrity of the Bible by pointing out diversity within the Old Testament, e.g. Synoptic Gospels.

Third, he also questions the way in which the New Testament used the Old Testament.

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Peter Enns, "Adam is Israel"  
<http://biologos.org/blog/adam-is-israel/>  
"It also helps us look at the Adam story from an angle that might be new to some readers here: Adam is the beginning of *Israel*, not *humanity*.  
"There are two ways of looking at this parallel. You could say that the Adam story came first and then the Israelites just followed that pattern. But there is another way. Maybe Israel's history happened first, and the Adam story was written to reflect that history. In other words, the Adam story is really an Israel story placed in primeval time. *It is not a story of human origins but of Israel's origins.*

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"We are quite justified in concluding that the Adam story is not about *absolute human* origins but the beginning of one smaller subset, one *particular people*.  
"The parallels between Israel and Adam that we see above tell us that the particular people in mind are Israel. Adam is 'proto-Israel.'

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"But the 'Adam is Israel' angle is at the very least a very good one—and in my opinion a much better angle than seeing Adam as the first human and all humans are descended from him. Genesis does not support that reading.  
"This 'Israel-centered' reading of Adam is not a stretch. It is widely recognized, not only in modern scholarship, but by pre-modern interpreters. And you have to admit there is one distinct advantage of this reading that readers of BioLogos will recognize immediately: if the Adam story is not about absolute human origins, then the conflict between the Bible and evolution cannot be found there."

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Enns' understanding of the Bible is based on three hermeneutical principles:

1. archaeological findings ("human cultural remains");
2. scientific data;
3. Ancient Near East religions, and their proof that the Bible is not a unique source of religious thought.

Enns concludes that "a strictly literal reading of the Adam story" no longer fits with "what we know" from the secular sciences.

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Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012).

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"My Christian faith is summed up in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, which are expressions of broad Christian orthodoxy." (x-xi)

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“The most faithful Christian reading of sacred Scripture is one that recognizes Scripture as a product of the times in which it was written and/or the events took place – not merely so, but unalterably so. . . .so is the Bible of ultimately divine origin yet also thoroughly a product of its time.” (x)

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“I am arguing that our understanding of Adam has evolved over the years that it must now be adjusted in light of the preponderance of (1) scientific evidence supporting evolution and (2) literary evidence from the world of the Bible that helps clarify the kind of literature the Bible is – that is, what it means to read it as it was meant to be read.” (xiii)

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“To the contrary, it is clear that, from a scientific point of view, the Bible does not always describe physical reality accurately; it simply speaks in an ancient idiom, as one might expect ancient people to do. It is God’s Word, but it has an ancient view of the natural world, not a modern one. . . . If evolution is correct, one can no longer accept, in any true sense of the word ‘historical,’ the instantaneous and special creation of humanity described in Genesis, specifically 1:26-31 and 2:7, 22.” (xiv)

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“A historical Adam has been the dominant Christian view for two thousand years. We must add, however, that the general consensus was formed before the advent of evolutionary theory. To appeal to this older consensus as a way of keeping the challenge of evolution at bay is not a viable option for readers today.” (xvi)

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Enns concludes his book by outlining nine theses that identify the core issues (137-148):

*Thesis 1:* Literalism is not an option.

*Thesis 2:* Scientific and biblical models of human origins are, strictly speaking, incompatible because they speak a different “language.” They cannot be reconciled, and there is no “Adam” to be found in an evolutionary scheme.

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*Thesis 3:* The Adam story in Genesis reflects its ancient Near Eastern setting and should be read that way.

*Thesis 7:* A proper view of inspiration will embrace the fact that God speaks by means of the cultural idiom of the authors – whether it be the author of Genesis in describing origins or how Paul would later come to understand Genesis. Both reflect the setting and limitations of the cultural moment.

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*Thesis 8:* The root of the conflict for many Christians is not scientific or even theological, but group identity and fear of losing what it offers.

*Thesis 9:* A true rapprochement between evolution and Christianity requires a synthesis, not simply adding evolution to existing theological formulations.

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“Evolution is a serious challenge to how Christians have traditionally understood at least three central issues of the faith: the origin of humanity, of sin, and of death.” (147)

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IV. Key Biblical/  
Theological Issues

Why This Matters

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A few key texts –

- Genesis 1-2
- Romans 5
- 1 Corinthians 15

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1. Historicity of Adam and Eve as Progenitors of Humanity in God's Image

Genesis 1:26-27;  
Genesis 2:7, 15-17, 18, 20-25  
Genesis 3:16, 20  
Genesis 4:1-2, 25  
Genesis 5:1  
Acts 17:26

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2. Adam's Historicity Connected With Other Historical Entities – Israel and Moses

Hosea 6:7 Adam and Israel  
Romans 5:14(2) Adam and Moses

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3. Biblical Genealogies which Treat Adam and Eve as Historical Persons

Genesis 5:1, 3, 4, 5  
1 Chronicles 1:1  
Luke 3:38

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4. Jesus' and Paul's Teaching on Marriage and Divorce Assume the Historical Existence of Adam and Eve

Matthew 19:4-6  
Mark 10:6-8  
Ephesians 5:21ff  
Cf. 1 Timothy 2:13-14

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5. The Sin of Adam, the First Adam, and the Redemption from Sin by Jesus Christ, the Second Adam

Romans 5:12-21  
1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 45-47  
Cf. Hebrews 2:5-18

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As the first historical an and head of humanity, Adam is not mentioned merely in passing in the New Testament. The redemptive-historical correlation between Adam and Christ determines the framework in which – particularly for Paul – the redemptive work of Christ has its place. That work of redemption can no longer be confessed according to the meaning of Scripture, if it is divorced from the framework in which it stands there.

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Whoever divorces the work of redemption from the framework in which it stands in Scripture no longer allows the Word to function as the norm that determines everything. There has been no temptation down through the centuries that theology has been more exposed to than this temptation. There is no danger that theology has more to fear than this danger.  
J. P. Versteeg, *Adam in the New Testament* (P & R, 2012), 67.

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Conclusion

1. The creation and fall of Adam is bound up, redemptive-historically, with the wonderful redemption in Jesus Christ. If you lose the creation and fall of Adam, then the question is: what does that do to our understanding of redemption?
2. The other major issue is biblical authority. Those who are denying a supernatural creation of Adam and Eve and subsequent fall do so because of scientific evidence:

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- Formal principle of the Scriptures, it is the absolute norm (*norma absoluta*), the norming norm (*norma normans*).
- We affirm accommodation, but not that it contained error (cf. next slide).
- We also recognize the important role creeds play as guardrails (*norma normata*).

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This *accommodatio* occurs specifically in the use of human words and concepts for the communication of the law and the gospel, but it in no way implies the loss of truth or the lessening of scriptural authority. The *accommodatio* or *condescensio* refers to the manner or mode of revelation, the gift of the wisdom of infinite God in finite form, not to the quality of the revelation or to the matter revealed.

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Note that the sense of *accommodatio* that implies not only a divine condescension, but also a use of time-bound and even erroneous statements as a medium for revelation, arose in the eighteenth century in the thought of Johann Semler and his contemporaries and has no relation either to the position of the Reformers or to that of the Protestant scholastics, either Lutheran or Reformed.

Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Baker, 1985).

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V. Church History  
The Consensus

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1. All major Christian confessions and creeds affirm the historicity of Adam and Eve, and their fall, in our space-time history, with implications to us and our salvation.

2. In the early church, there were differences hermeneutically, but they all affirmed the historicity of Adam.

3. Prior to Darwin, all orthodox Christians believed in a historical Adam and Eve (and a fall).

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4. There are Evangelicals who have affirmed the notion of pre-Adamites, e.g. R. A. Torrey, James Orr, B. B. Warfield. There have been and are different views on this. But, even these past Evangelicals who were theistic evolutionists affirmed the historicity of Adam and Eve and their fall. Those beliefs were non-negotiable. In contrast, most modern theistic evolutionists almost universally deny those older doctrines.

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## VI. EFCA Essentials

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The EFCA states clearly and explicitly in our Statement of Faith, Article 1 that God is "Creator of all things." We have spelled out some parameters in the EFCA on the matter of creation in *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America*, 34.

To be sure, Genesis 1 expresses truth about God as Creator and his creation, but because of the uncertainty regarding the meaning and literary form of this text and the lack of Evangelical consensus on this issue, our Statement does not require a particular position on the mechanics of creation. However, to be within the doctrinal parameters of the EFCA, any understanding of the process of creation must affirm:

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1. That God is the Creator of all things out of nothing (*ex nihilo*)
2. That he pronounced his creation "very good,"
3. that God created with order and purpose,
4. that God is the sovereign ruler over all creation which, by his personal and particular providence, he sustains,<sup>9</sup>
5. that God created the first human beings—the historical Adam and Eve—uniquely in his image,
6. and that through their sin all humanity along with this created order is now fallen (as articulated in our Article 3).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> We deny the notion that God is simply the Creator of the universe but is no longer active in it, as is espoused by deism.

<sup>10</sup> This Statement does not speak to the precise process of creation or to the age of the universe. To be acceptable within the EFCA any views on these specifics must completely affirm this Statement of Faith and align within these essential parameters.

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*Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America, Article 3, B. The Significance of Adam and Eve, 76-77:*

There are legitimate differences of opinion about how one understands the nature of the language used in the early chapters of Genesis to describe the actions of God in the world. However, our Statement affirms that Adam and Eve were historical figures<sup>16</sup> in the following sense: 1) From these two all other human beings are descended (Acts 17:26).<sup>17</sup> 2) These two were the first creatures created in God's image such that they were accountable to God as responsible moral agents. And 3) these two rebelled against God, affecting all their progeny.<sup>18</sup>

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What is essential to the biblical story-line is that the problem with the world is not ontological-that is, it is not a result of the material nature of creation itself nor is sin an essential part of our humanity.<sup>19</sup> The problem is moral. The first human beings from the very beginning, in a distinct act of rebellion, chose to turn away from God, and this act not only affected all humanity (cf. Rom. 5:12-21), but creation itself (cf. Rom. 8:18-25). This leads us from considering the dignity of humanity to acknowledging our depravity.

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16 The historical reality of Adam and Eve has been the traditional position of the church (so Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine, Calvin) and is supported elsewhere in Scripture. Particularly, Paul compares the "one man" Adam with both Moses and Jesus (cf. Rom. 5:12, 15-19; 1 Cor. 15:20-22). In addition, Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam (Luke 3:23-37; cf. also 1 Chron. 1).

17 We take no position on the manner in which the human soul is passed on, either by natural heredity ("traducianism") or by a unique work of God in each life ("creationism").

18 Consequently, no human beings existed prior to these two, and, consequently, no human beings were sinless and without the need of a Savior.

19 This also gives us hope that human beings can be redeemed from sin.

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## VII. Questions

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Mark Noll's response as an historian. He looks to the past and learns "after the fact" and uses that to "speak into the present (or future)."

The necessary response from the pastor-theologian.

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However, the pastor/theologian (PT) does not have that liberty. The theologian needs to understand it and speak to it as a servant of the church. The PT must speak, and not to speak would be unfaithfulness. It is necessary to be careful about what is spoken, but speak the PT must.

The PT, then, needs to provide guidance in and during the discussion. The PT needs to work hard at making sure the issue is understood and framed well, so it can be understood and discussed among God's people. For the PT to wait and be silent until after the fact, would mean the PT, too, would be unfaithful to the calling as one called to serve God's people.

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### Questions

1. How much have you known about this discussion, and how do you keep up on these kinds of issues? How do you address them from the pulpit and your teaching?
2. How do you approach the question of "faith and science?" How is this discussion fruitfully engaged? Do you have both good and/or bad examples?
3. How do you determine essentials and non-essentials in this discussion?
4. How are you helping people to understand (and preparing them to engage) these issues without narrowing too much, or without broadening too wide?

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