

Denominational Resource List

This report was drafted in response to an action of Synod 2014, which "instructed the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA to encourage Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, in concert with other CRC-related institutions of higher education, to (a) make available to a future synod a list of resources on the relationship of science and theology, especially as they relate to the doctrines of creation, the fall, original sin, and the atonement, and (b) to organize one or more conferences or open conversations on these same topics" (*Acts of Synod 2014*, p. 567)

After Synod 2014, a committee composed of members of the Calvin College and Calvin Seminary faculty was formed (Professors Ryan Bebej, John Cooper, Loren Haarsma, Scott Hoezee, James K.A. Smith, and Mary Vanden Berg). In addition, representatives from Calvin College and Calvin Seminary met with representatives from Dordt College during Synod 2015. As a result of these efforts, Prof. Loren Haarsma is offering a session on "Creation, Evolution, Design, and Human Origins" during Engage 2016, just prior to Synod 2016. In addition, the committee has prepared this list of resources in response to Synod's request. This resource list will be available on Calvin Seminary's Ministry Theorem website:
<http://ministrytheorem.calvinseminary.edu/>

The following list includes all major perspectives held by Christians: recent creationism, progressive creationism, and different understandings of evolution. Not all of the authors are Reformed, and not all of their views necessarily fit within CRCNA synodical statements. But they illustrate how Christian scholars are currently relating biblical doctrine and the science of origins.

Resources by pastors and professors in the CRC and RCA

Calvin College Seminar Series on Human Origins.

<http://www.calvin.edu/admin/provost/seminars/human-origins.html>

This site collects audio recordings and handouts from more than three dozen lectures (mostly given at Calvin College) on the theological and scientific issues around human origins, with special emphasis on issues of the image of God, the fall, original sin, and atonement. Talks by Loren Haarsma (October 8, 2010; September 16; 2013) give overviews of the issues. Other talks explore various particular issues in greater detail.

Cooper, John. "Created for Everlasting Life: Can Theistic Evolution Provide an Adequate Christian Account of Human Nature?" in *Zygon*,

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/zygo.12013/epdf>

This article argues that naturalistic theistic evolution--the theory that God used only natural evolutionary processes to create humans--is inadequate for a Christian doctrine of origins. Scripture teaches that God created humans for everlasting life and that human persons or souls survive physical death, whereas evolution can only produce mortal physical beings. Supernatural theistic evolution and progressive creation are theories that acknowledge the development of hominids and God's supernatural action in creating humans.

Haarsma, Deborah B., and Loren D. Haarsma. *Origins: Christian Perspectives on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2011.

“When it comes to the history of the universe, many believe that science and faith are mutually exclusive. But in this revised version of *Origins*, physics professors Loren and Deborah Haarsma explore what God’s Word *and* God’s world teach us about creation, evolution, and intelligent design. Clearly explaining the science, the authors focus on areas where Christians agree. They also present the strengths and weaknesses of areas where Christians differ. *Origins* helps you develop a deeper understanding of the origins of the universe and sort out your own views on faith and science. Small group discussion questions follow each chapter.” Additional resources are available online:

<http://origins.faithaliveresources.org/> , including a set of DVDs which can be used in small-group or adult-education discussions.

Leunk, Thea. *Fossils and Faith*. Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2005.

<http://www.faithaliveresources.org/Products/130700/fossils-and-faith-student-newspapers.aspx>

<http://www.faithaliveresources.org/Products/130705/fossils-and-faith-leaders-guide.aspx>

This four-week course, designed for high school youth, provides an overview of multiple views on origins that adults will also find helpful.

Ratzsch, Del. *Battle of the Beginnings: Why Neither Side is Winning the Creation-Evolution Debate*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Del Ratzsch, emeritus professor of philosophy of science at Calvin College, “examines the history of the debate and takes aim at entrenched positions that he argues impede progress from either side. In considerable detail he looks at the history and development of Darwin’s theory and popular creationist misunderstandings of evolution, moving on to the history and development of creationist history and popular evolutionist misunderstandings of it.”

Stek, John H. "What Says the Scripture?" in *Portraits of Creation*, p. 236-265. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

John Stek, an expert in Old Testament studies, gives a careful and profoundly valuable exegetical study of the language, cultural setting, and theological themes of the first several chapters of Genesis.

Smith, James K.A. and Cavanaugh, William T., eds. *Reimagining the Intersection of Evolution and the Fall*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

This is an interdisciplinary collection that includes multifaceted contributions by Celia Deane-Drummond (theology & biology), J. Richard Middleton (Old Testament), Joel Green (New Testament), Peter Harrison (history of science), and more.

Young, Davis A., and Stearley, Ralph F. *The Bible, Rocks, and Time*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

"This book would be especially helpful for Christian college students with a major or interest in science; pastors and youth workers who need a viable, Biblically-sound alternative to young-Earth creationism; non-believing scientists, doctors and engineers

who reject Christianity because they think faith in Christ is incompatible with science; anyone who has an interest in the relationship between science (especially geology) and the Bible.”

Additional resources focused on Natural Science:

Falk, Darrel. *Coming to Peace with Science*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Darrel Falk is a biology professor and a committed evangelical Christian. “It is written in an understandable and sensitive way that honors both the scientific vocation and the authority of scripture. Darrel Falk embraces and rejoices in both the biblical message and the history and processes of creation as revealed by scientific investigation. He also makes a strong and personal appeal for peace--not only between science and faith but also among committed believers who have come to different conclusions with regard to the creation’s formational history.”

Rana, Fazale, and Hugh Ross. *Who Was Adam? A Creation Model Approach to the Origin of Man*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005.

Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross of the old-earth creationist organization Reasons to Believe explore the hominid fossil record, genetics, and other lines of evidence to test the validity of human evolution. They present a new creation model approach to human origins, arguing that miraculous intervention by God approximately 50,000-70,000 years ago offers a better explanation for the origin of humanity than evolution and common descent.

Wiens, Roger C. “Radiometric Dating: A Christian Perspective” (2002).

<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/Wiens2002.pdf>

This article provides a clear description of the science behind radiometric dating and how it is used from a Christian perspectives.

Additional resources focused on Religion and Theology

Alexander, Denis. *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* (2nd edition) Grand Rapids: Monarch Books, 2014.

“Dr. Denis Alexander is a neuroscientist who believes passionately in both the biblical doctrine of creation and the coherence of evolutionary theory. His book draws on the latest genetic research.” Alexander presents his research in an accessible format with diagrams and pictures to help lay readers understand concepts that can seem very difficult. Ultimately, Alexander suggests that choosing between creation and evolution is a false dichotomy.

Barrett, Matthew, Caneday, Ardel B., and Gundry, Stanley N., eds. *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, edited by Contributors include Denis O. Lamoureux, John H. Walton, C. John Collins, William D. Barrick, Gregory A. Boyd, and Philip G. Ryken. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2013.

“*Four Views on the Historical Adam* clearly outlines the primary views on Adam held by evangelicals, featuring top-notch proponents of each view presenting their positions in their own words and critiquing the positions with which they disagree. You will come

away with a better understanding of the key biblical and theological issues at stake and of the implications of Adam for contemporary Christian witness and church life.”

Collins, John C. *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who they were and why you should care.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2011.

Collins is a professor of Old Testament who also holds computer science and systems engineering degrees from MIT. Collins carefully considers both the Bible and science as he seeks to understand human origins. Biblical scholar Christopher J. H. Wright describes Collins’ work as a combination of “graciously applied scholarship, conviction, and humility.” He goes on to note that Collins makes “very clear where biblical faithfulness requires us to be uncompromisingly affirmative, and where there is room for varying opinion over possible scenarios that could be consistent with such biblical conviction.”

Murphy, George L. *Models of Atonement: Speaking about Salvation in a Scientific World.* Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2013.

“George Murphy is one of the leading scholars working at the intersection of the Christian faith and modern science. *Models of Atonement* is an incredibly thoughtful and eminently readable attempt to rearticulate the doctrines of sin and salvation in light of evolution. Murphy has mastered both the science of human origins and the range of resources in the Christian theological tradition. Specialists and lay people alike can only benefit from this engaging and timely book.”

Vandoodewaard, William. *The Quest for the Historical Adam: Genesis, Hermeneutics, and Human Origins.* Reformation Heritage Books: Grand Rapids, 2015.

“In *The Quest for the Historical Adam*, William VanDoodewaard recovers and assesses the teaching of those who have gone before us, providing a historical survey of Genesis commentary on human origins from the patristic era to the present. Reacquainting the reader with a long line of theologians, exegetes, and thinkers, VanDoodewaard traces the roots, development, and, at times, disappearance of hermeneutical approaches and exegetical insights relevant to discussions on human origins. This survey not only informs us of how we came to this point in the conversation but also equips us to recognize the significance of the various alternatives on human origins.”

Walton, John H. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.

“Those entrenched on either side of the creation/evolution debate owe it to themselves and others to read and consider carefully John Walton’s evidence, arguments, insights, and remarkable conclusions.” The purpose of this book is to help readers understand the world of the Biblical text in order to properly interpret that text without imposing modern ideas on it.

Walton, John H. *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015.

“For centuries the story of Adam and Eve has resonated richly through the corridors of art, literature and theology. But for most moderns, taking it at face value is incongruous.

And even for many thinking Christians today who want to take the authority of Scripture seriously, insisting on a “literal” understanding of Genesis 2-3 looks painfully like a ‘tear here’ strip between faith and science. How can faithful Christians move forward? Following his groundbreaking book *The Lost World of Genesis One*, John Walton now backlights this foundational story with the ancient world of the Bible. Walton gives us the context, insights and clarity to reset the discussion and move forward.”

Wood, Todd Charles and Murray, Megan J. *Understanding the Pattern of Life: Origins and Organization of the Species*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003.

"From the Preface of "Understanding the Pattern of Life": 'I pray that what you are about to read will be unlike any creationist book that you have ever read. It has never been my intention to write yet another book about the truth of Scripture or perceived inadequacies of evolution. Instead, this book is an expression of my attempt, however feeble, to allow the truth of God to transform my view of biology. Rather than trying to prove the truth of Scripture, I assume it as a starting point. From there, I build what I believe to be a reasonable model of biology that fits both the facts of Scripture and the data of creation. You will find that evolutionary theories are mentioned only rarely, and when I do discuss them, I do so to highlight the differences between my ideas and the conventional view.'"

Encouraging Civil and Productive Conversations

The Colossian Forum on Faith, Science and Culture. <http://www.colossianforum.org>

Headquartered in Grand Rapids, it started out as an organization with the goal of trying to have a better conversation on the topic of human origins within the church. It focuses on how to engage many divisive issues at the intersection of faith, science, and culture, and “facilitates dialogue on divisive topics and approaches differing perspectives as Christ-given opportunities to build community, expand knowledge, and deepen faith.”

Mouw, Richard. *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World*. Chicago: Intervarsity Press, 2010.

Can Christians act like Christians even when they disagree? Richard Mouw, former Calvin professor and recently retired Fuller Seminary president, has been actively forging a model of Christian civil conversation with those we might disagree with. Few if any people in the evangelical world have conversed as widely and sensitively as Mouw. So few can write more wisely or helpfully than Mouw does here about what Christians can appreciate about pluralism, the theological basis for civility, and how we can communicate with people who disagree with us on the issues that matter most.

Sacks, Jonathan. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. New York: Continuum, 2002.

Sacks presents a monotheistic theological basis for a “respect for difference, based not on relativism but on the concept of covenant”. Particularly pertinent is his proposal that *conversation* is the key to living with strong differences while sustaining community.

Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

From a broadly Reformed perspective, Volf propose the idea of embrace to reduce the natural tendency for us to react out of fear and anger toward those with whom we disagree. He suggests that Christians should lead in being open to others with different views, “enfolding him or her in the same embrace with which we have been enfolded by God.”

Additional resources from various Christian perspectives at the following organizations

American Scientific Affiliation: <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/>

The ASA is an international society of Christians in science whose mission is “to integrate, communicate, and facilitate properly researched science and theology in service to the Church and the scientific community.” This website contains a wealth of resources gleaned from ASA conferences and journals over the years and is organized by topic. Topics include reading Genesis, Adam and Eve, the age of the earth, divine action, and others.

Answers in Genesis: <https://answersingenesis.org/answers/>

“Answers in Genesis is an apologetics (i.e., Christianity-defending) ministry, dedicated to enabling Christians to defend their faith and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively. We focus particularly on providing answers to questions surrounding the book of Genesis, as it is the most-attacked book of the Bible. We also desire to train others to develop a biblical worldview, and seek to expose the bankruptcy of evolutionary ideas, and its bedfellow, a “millions of years old” earth (and even older universe).” The page linked above is to frequently asked questions about topics including evolution, the age of the earth, and biblical interpretation.

BioLogos Foundation: <http://biologos.org/common-questions>

“BioLogos invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith as we present an evolutionary understanding of God’s creation.” The page linked above includes responses to frequently asked questions about topics including evolution, human origins, biblical interpretation, and God’s relationship to the creation. The “resources” tab has links specifically for pastors, for youth workers, and for K-12 educators. The “common questions” tab links to some of their most-recommended resources.

Ministry Theorem <http://ministrytheorem.calvinseminary.edu/>

The Ministry Theorem seeks to remind pastors and other leaders in the church that an appreciation of science lies deep within the Reformed tradition as well as within the Christian tradition generally. From a biblical-theological standpoint, Christians rightly view science as a partner in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, increasing our wonder over God's works and so enhancing our worship of this Creator God.

Reasons to Believe: <http://www.reasons.org/about/faqs>

“[Reasons to Believe]’s mission is to spread the Christian Gospel by demonstrating that sound reason and scientific research—including the very latest discoveries—consistently

support, rather than erode, confidence in the truth of the Bible and faith in the personal, transcendent God revealed in both Scripture and nature.” The page linked above includes responses to frequently asked questions about topics including evolution, the age of the earth, and biblical interpretation.