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Rethinking the Debates on the Theological Implications of the Biological Theory of Human Evolution on the Creation of Adam

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Abstract

The subject of the creation of Adam raises a seeming contention between Christian evolutionists and Christian antievolutionists, and this is evident in many ways including in the Scopes Trial of 1925 in Tennessee, USA. This discussion is important because it contributes to bringing all Christians together to a meeting point despite their diverse views on the subject. It also dismisses the notion that science is in conflict with the Christian faith. Using literary research methods to explore this subject, the researcher took into cognisance both scientific and theological approaches to the evolutionary origin of humans and to the creation account of Adam. The research finding shows that many researchers who have interest in the subject have not reached a conclusion on whether the Bible is in fierce or mild contestation with the views that Adam was created or evolved. The writer of this paper proposes that the author of Genesis had an

intention when writing the creation story. He recommends that the original intention of the author should be taken into cognisance when reading about the creation of Adam.

Introduction

The historical debates between some scientists like Galilei Galileo and Nicolaus Copernicus and some Christians like Samuel Wilberforce, Charles Spurgeon, the Catholic Church, Christian fundamentalists, and others created and even reinforced an impression that science is in conflict with the Christian faith (Leveillee 2011; see also Hodgson 2005:2). Christian evolutionists or theistic evolutionists are those who believe that God created humans through biologically based evolutionary processes that started over millions or thousands of years ago and culminated in the creation of human beings (Agai 2017:24-26). At the Council of Cologne in 1860, just a year after the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, the Roman Catholic Church refuted Darwin's views on evolution, which suggested that humans originated from brutes. The council noted that

It is contrary to Sacred Scripture and to the faith the opinion of those who do not fear to affirm the spontaneous evolution of an imperfect nature towards another more perfect; a continuous evolution producing finally man, at least as to his body. (Segey 1943)

However, about ninety years later, and specifically from the 1950s, they accepted ideas regarding evolutionary origins. Roman Catholic authors 'have put forward ideas accepting man's evolutionary origins without any interference on the part of the ecclesiastical authority' (Nemesszeghy and Russell 1972:43, 48). During a meeting at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican City in 2014, Pope Francis dismissed the view of some Christians who regard God as a magician that created instantaneously. He argued that the Bible did not contradict the scientific account of the earth's evolutionary formation and of human origins. He said:

The big bang, which is today posited as the origin of the world, does not contradict the divine act of creation; rather,

it requires it. [...] Evolution of nature is not inconsistent with the notion of creation because evolution presupposes the creation of beings, which evolve. (Davies 2014:1-3)

By the year 1960, few Roman Catholic Church members varied slightly on their views regarding the origin of Adam (Mixer 1960:188-189). Special creationists on the other hand believe that God might have created within the literal, twenty-four-hour days of creation; thus, humans were created instantaneously or through a short period of time within one of the seven days of creation (Schwarz 2002:164).

Matters Considered in Evolution Debates

The biblical view that nature and animals were created before human beings is comparable to the biological theory that humans evolved from animals. More so, because animals were created before human beings, and because God breathed into human beings his breath through which they became living souls (Genesis 2:7KJV), there is a need to inquire who and what was man (with reference to Adam) before he became a living soul (Rust and Held 1999:236). It is on the subject that Nemesszeghy and Russell (1972:66) argue 'The theory of evolution calls for a new interpretation of the creation of the soul'. The conceptualisation of the original sin is a theological tradition according to which the first sin committed by Adam and Eve affected or stained all humanity (Romans 5:14-19). The view that sin evolved is inconsistent but what is clear is that the sin of Adam affected all humanity (John 3:1-21) (Beecroft 2017:16-17; Enns 2012:192). The Belgic Confession, a Reformed confession of faith, believes that Adam's sin impaired all humanity even before birth:

We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and a hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore, is so vile and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin

always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation. ([de Brès] 2014)

More so, sin is regarded as the source of human suffering and disasters. Harlow pointed out that original sin is what brought about the fall of man, sicknesses, death, and natural disasters which affected all human beings (Harlow 2010:180). This conception further makes the subject of the study of Adam relevant for Christians including the Reformed Christian churches.

On the evolution of the Earth and on the age of the Earth, both science and religious scholars have over the years attempted to give an estimate. The various approaches to determining the age of the world have been used to create an estimate for the age of human beings. Aryeh Kaplan, an American Orthodox rabbi, said that Adam might have been created in 3761 BC and that he might have lived for 930 years (1993:17-22). The rationale for his source of estimate is not clear. Also, using the methods of radioactive dating of rocks (geochronology), geologists have estimated that the earth is about five billion years old (Green, Stout, and Taylor 1990:861-862, 955).

Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) said that the earth was created in 4004 BC. His argument was founded on the chronology of the genealogies found in Genesis (Chan 1997:43). Ussher thought that humans were created about six thousand years ago:

A superficial reading of the first few chapters of Genesis may give the impression that man came into existence only about six thousand years ago and that the world was created at about the same time. (Chan 1997:43)¹

¹Though some scientists did not have a specific estimate for the date human beings were first created, they refused to accept Ussher's date regarding the age of the earth and of

However, Paul Little said that Christians need to exercise caution when estimating the age of the earth in relation to the age of humans: '[t]he Christian geologist[s] need not assume that all geological features were created with an appearance of age' (quoted in Agai 2017:44; see Little 1988:122).

Chan (1997:43) pointed at some limitations of Ussher's arguments. Firstly, he mentioned that in the Bible the use of the term 'father' may not necessarily refer to an individual's direct parent. For example, Jesus is called 'the son of David' yet Jesus is not the direct son of David. More so, there are times in the Bible when expressions such as 'he became the father of' and 'he was the son of' are used, and these expressions do not refer to a direct father/son relationship. In addition, Chan said that some names have been excluded in the chronology of the Bible and that this might have affected Ussher's dating. He said that Luke gave fifty-six names from Abraham to Jesus but Matthew gives forty names from Abraham to Jesus. These chronological differences might have been because Matthew emphasises the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father) while Luke wrote based on the line of Mary (Jesus' blood relative) (Chan 1997:43). While there are many theological implications for the biological theory of human evolution, this researcher concentrated on its implication for the creation of Adam.

The Biological Theory of Human Origins

On the Origin of Life

The biological theory of human evolution is a view according to which humans originated through a process that took millions of years. The theory, from the perspective Aristotle, posits that the first life on earth might have begun spontaneously over millions of years ago (Zwier 2018:355-356). Contrary to Aristotle's view and in Welch's opinion, Louis Pasteur believed that the first lives on earth were not spontaneously generated (Welch 1963:90). Pasteur conducted an experiment using a swan-necked flask, in which he did not destroy any 'active principle' (a naturally formed energy that catalyses non-living matter into living things) in the air. Yet no life was seen in his controlled

humans because they thought that sin marred the human intellectual status of accuracy (Wright 1985:127).

experiment (Agai 2014:1). Similarly, Francesco Redi in the mid-seventeenth century opined that organisms are not spontaneously generated; rather they come as a result of the metamorphosis of larvae. Around the same period, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek conducted an experiment using a simple microscope. He concluded that there are minute organisms swarming in the atmosphere through which macro-organisms are formed (Agai 2005:61-71).

There is another school of thought according to which the first life on earth emerged from ancient waters (Kimball 2023:1). Proponents of this theory have argued that protein molecules naturally surrounded reserved or preserved bodies of water. After a process of time, the protein molecules produced amino acids, and together with a thin soup made by the accumulation of carbon compounds in the ancient water, formed polypeptides and proteins. Other minute organic molecules in water also sedimented and formed larger and more complex molecules, which in the end became a cluster forming the first pre-cell. Over a period of time, the pre-cell began to absorb all the materials necessary for growth and reproduction from the thin soup, thus leading to a gradual complexity in the cell which is said to resemble the ancient heterotroph cell (Agai 2005:71-80).

Stanley Miller supported the view that the first life might have started from ancient waters forming blocks of amino acids. In an experiment, Miller attempted to create the earth's atmosphere by building an apparatus filled with water in addition to methane, ammonia, and hydrogen, and without oxygen (Tietz 2017). The contents went through continuous boiling and condensation for a week. The gases that evaporated from the apparatus passed through a chamber that contained two electrodes with an electric spark passing between them. Using paper chromatography, Miller demonstrated that the apparatus with the contents in addition to the experimental exercises formed amino acids and other organic molecules. Although scientists have recently concluded that the atmosphere of the early earth was not rich in ammonia and methane, Miller's experiment contributed to the view that the first life might have emerged from ancient waters through the formation of protein contents (Kimball 2023:1-2).

There is another hypothesis that life might have emerged from outer space (via meteorites). The falling meteorites, on meeting conditions sufficient for

the growth of living organisms on earth like water, carbon dioxide, sunlight, etcetera, began to develop, forming the first life on earth (Maxson and Daugherty 1987:131-135). But this hypothesis lacked credibility because there remains no convincing evidence that any life can survive in outer space and the hypothesis does not give an explanation as to the origin of life in outer space. In fact, the heat or cold experienced by these meteorites while falling to earth should have prohibited the survival of living organisms (Agai 2005:23). More so, the most popular arguments on the origins of life pertained to the ideas of spontaneous generation and the view that life might have started from ancient waters. If these views are to be considered as true, this implies that human beings might have originated from the first life on earth which might have started from ancient waters or spontaneously from other micro or macro matter on land.

On the Origin of Human Beings

The biological theory of human evolution postulates that human beings are products that emerged through a progressive development. The development or changes started from minute organisms that lived in waters and developed into visible organisms that left the aquatic life and entered the terrestrial world. It was from the terrestrial world that they became arboreal beings and finally culminated and permanented themselves with a return to terrestrial life (Agai 2005:61-67). Agai explained this chain of human development in this order: microorganisms, minute aquatic life, fish-like creatures, ape-like beings, early humans, and finally modern humans (Agai 2017:1-2). Modern humans are said to have shared a common ancestor with other primates like tarsiers, Esomias, New World monkeys, etcetera (Gore 2003:37). Myer Pearlman simplified this progressive development that took place in humans:

all forms of life developed from one form and that higher species developed from a lower, so that, for example, what was once a snail became a fish; what was once a fish became a reptile; what was once a reptile became a bird, and (passing on quickly), what was once an ape became [a] human being. (1937:97)

Although Charles Darwin is celebrated as one of the most significant figures in the development and the spread of the theory of human evolution, it is

important to note that the theory was debated before the emergence of Darwin. Aristotle in the fourth century BC taught that there is a progressive development of lower animals to higher animals that culminates in the emergence of humans. It is not surprising that Erik Nordenskiöld said about Aristotle's theory of human origin: 'here we enunciated for the first time a really complete theory of evolution' (quoted in Davidheiser 1969:41).

Other scientists and philosophers who contributed to the development of the theory of human origins included Empedocles (circa 494-444 BC), Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), Charles Bonnet (1720-1790), Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), and many more. After publishing *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871, Darwin became very popular on the subject of evolutionary theory, pertaining to both the origins of animals and those of humans (Cunningham and Saigo 1990:563; Darwin 1952:594; Jones 1985:198, 210; Sheldrake 1984:20).

More so, Darwin taught that the environment, which provided for adaptation, played a major role in the shaping and possible formation of new species of animals. In general, Darwin believed that humans originated from some four or five ancestors:

I believe that animals are descended from at most only four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number. (Darwin 1952:241)

In *Descent of Man*, Darwin added that human beings actually emerged from a hairy and a monkey-like type of ancestor:

We thus learn that man is descended from a hairy, tailed quadruped, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World [...] and all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long series of diversified forms, from some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal. (1952:591)

He further noted that the Genesis account of creation literally failed to address the adaptation and variation natural principles that led to the formation of higher animals (cf. 1952:238). After Darwin came the concept of Neo-Darwinism, which emphasises genetic mutation as key to the formation of new species (cf. Agai 2017:34-43). Molecular biology, which emphasises the genetic study of human origins, also indicates that human ancestors (*Homo sapiens*) were about 10,000 interbreeding individuals that were sparsely distributed around some parts of the world over 150,000 years ago (Harlow 2010:180).

More so, Daniel C. Harlow said that there is increasing evidence of hominid fossils. The distribution of the fossils suggest that humans did not find themselves as instantaneous beings or as creation, as championed by religious beliefs; instead, fossils and other anthropological evidence support the view that humans evolved through a progressive process over the course of about six million years (Harlow 2010:179; see also Fox 2010. Some Christians from various parts of the world dispute this scientific view of human origin.

Theological Implications

The Singularity of Adam as an Individual

Significance to the 'Days' of Creation as Literal Twenty-Four-Hour Days

Christians have different views regarding the interpretation of the Genesis account of creation in connection with evolutionism. For example, the idea of the historic creation *ex nihilo* posited that God is behind the creation of all things through his power, irrespective of time, while the young Earth theory posited that God created within twenty-four-hour, literal days of creation about 6,000 to 10,000 years ago (Huskinson 2020:108-136; Millam 2008).

This researcher will explain the implications of these views on the interpretation of the 'days' of creation. Paul Little (1988:121) for example said that the conceptualisation of the 'days' of creation is vital in the study of the evolution/creation debate. Rupert Sheldrake said that the 'days' of creation are vital in determining whether creation was instantaneous or progressive. He noted that the reference to the *day* of creation might not have meant a literal twenty-four-hour day but many years (1984:22) which is contrary to the young Earth theory. It is also important to note that the meaning of the days

of creation is significant in explaining the various views Christians have of the meaning of Adam (Madueme and Reeves 2014: vii-ix). Many people who regard Adam as a single person are evangelicals who prefer to interpret the Genesis account of creation as strictly a literal and a historical text (Jones 1985:210). The fundamentalist Christian movement, with particular reference to the World Christian Fundamentalist Association (WCFA), was a typical example of a Christian group that valued the referral of Adam as a single person who was created in a specific day not in millions or thousands of years. This group contributed to the banning of the teaching of evolution in government tax-supported schools in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Florida leading to the famous 'Monkey Trial' or 'Scopes Trial' of 1925 (Hopkins 2002).

The special creationists emphasise two theories of creation: the universal flood and the gap (re-creation) theories. The universal flood theory is a view according to which the earth was created within a literal twenty-four-hour, six-day period and that the age of the earth can be determined after the flood described in Genesis 7 and 8 (Flattery 1992:19). This view is connected to the young Earth creationists' belief according to which God created Adam and Eve as the first human ancestors about 6,000 or about 10,000 years ago. In other words, Adam and Eve are regarded as recent humans, not as beings created millions of years ago (Harlow 2010:181).

The gap theory on the other hand is a view according to which Satan destroyed the earth before it was re-created (Isaiah 24:1; Jeremiah 4:23; Ezekiel 28:12-25). Those who hold unto this view also argue that Genesis 1:2 ought to be translated as '[t]he Earth became formless and empty', and not 'was formless and empty'. They emphasise that the re-creation act took God six twenty-four-hour days and that the Genesis account of creation ought to be interpreted literally (Paul 1994:28). Hoff Paul said that the gap theory created an impression of a pre-Adamic human (1994:28), a view that would not be easily accepted by many special creationists.

Significance to the Meaning of Adam

Grace Beecroft (2017:3-7), Paul Little (1988:121-122), and Kemp (2020:144) who argue that the literal reading of the biblical account about Adam in Genesis 1 and 2 presents him as a specific individual (Genesis 2:7). Williams' *New Concise Bible Dictionary* said that, in the Old Testament, the word *Adam*

is used about 500 times to portray mankind and, in the New Testament, Paul uses the term *Adam* for a collective representation of mankind (1977:6-7).

The reference to Adam as a single person suggests that Adam was created alone as a person not a group of people. This view is generally referred to as monogenism, which is a concept according to which all human beings are descended from a single human couple (Adam and Eve) by the process of procreation (Agai 2005:98-99). Grace Beecroft, in an uncritically reviewed and an unpublished paper argued that Genesis 1–3 should be read as a historical book and not an ahistorical book. She noted that Adam and Eve were two literal persons that were specifically the first humans to have ever lived. She added that even Jesus himself is said to have alluded to Adam and Eve as the first married couple. Beecroft (2017:12) said that the Bible made it explicitly clear that ‘he who created them from the beginning made them male and female’ (see Matthew 19:4, Luke 11:51).

The author further disputed any view that connects creation to billions of years, noting that

Adam and Abel existed very close to the beginning of creation, not billions of years after as an evolutionary or old earth framework suggest. (Beecroft 2017:12)

Other arguments are that the first use of *Adam* in the Bible contains no definite article but suggests a person and that the Jewish use of *Bereshit* (Jewish reference to the creation narrative) referred to Adam as a single person (Beecroft 2017:14-16). The *Abarim Bible Dictionary* concurred, advancing a similar idea that the origin of the name Adam meant a person, not necessarily referring to a particularly known person but any person (Abarim Publications 2014). This interpretation regarding the Hebrew origin of the name Adam referring to not a specific person seemed contrary to Beecroft’s view according to which God breathed life into one man and not many people.

A school of thought that was popular in the twenty-first century promoted the view according to which Adam and Eve were two specific people and through them came other human beings. Mark Pretorius, a systematic theologian at the University of Pretoria, said that combined recent research, conducted by

geochemists, anthropologists, and experts in genetics, about the Y-chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA showed evidence that all human beings originated from a particular man referred to as *Adam* and a particular woman referred to as *Eve* from a particular geographical area (2011). Pretorius cited Dr Francis Collins, a renowned expert in the study of the human genome who conducted several pieces of research on the subject and came to the conclusion that human beings ‘descended from a common set of founders’, implying Adam and Eve. Pretorius said that there is evidence that the human DNA might have originated from a single set of parents, namely Adam and Eve (2011:166-167). Another point of interest in this subject is the study that attributes human origins to Africa due to DNA analysis and the fossils of the ancestors of early humans, which have been found in many parts of Africa (Caldwell and Gyles 1966:5; Clark 1970:18; Stringer and McKie 1996:174-175).

Contrary to the above view propagated by Pretorius, Daniel Harlow, a professor of biblical and early Jewish studies at Calvin College, Michigan, said that the media and other writers have misled many into thinking that the molecular evidence that pertained to ‘Mitochondrial Eve’ meant the biblical Eve (2010:180, 192). Harlow noted that the geneticists who nicknamed Mitochondrial Eve did not mean the literal biblical Eve or the mother of all humans but a matrilineal carrier of an ancestral mitochondrial DNA molecule that gave rise to mitochondrial DNA in women today. Further research conducted on variation in chromosomal DNA suggests that Mitochondrial Eve was just one of the members of a larger breeding group among many other early humans that included both males and females alike, and has nothing to do with the literal biblical Eve (Harlow 2010:180).

On the Y-chromosomal DNA associated with Adam, Harlow said that the findings are not in any way evidence that Adam was a single person or that Adam lived; instead, the findings are links that associated men with the Y-chromosome to a patrilineal ancestor who lived about 60,000 years ago, some 100,000 years after Mitochondrial Eve (Harlow 2010:180). A view that dispels the regard for Adam as a single person who gave rise to the entire human race on the globe had in the twentieth century been propagated by Nemesszeghy and Russell, who said a single person might not have the genetic capabilities to fill the whole world with his descendants:

One pair would be too narrow a base genetically for mankind and would imply a genetic weakness of an inbreeding type. The emergence of new species normally takes place in numerous individuals about the same time [...] Homo sapiens appeared essentially the same way as any other species. (1972:52)

The arguments above suggest that Adam should not be interpreted as meaning one person but a representative of a group of people whom God selected to represent other human beings. The idea that Adam meant a group of people is in tandem with the biological theory of human origins, which suggests many early humans as the ancestors of modern humans. It is pertinent to look into theories that promote the view that Adam meant a group of people, thus the plurality of Adam.

The Plurality of Adam as a Group/Representative of a Group

Significance to the 'Days' of Creation

Special creationists thought that God created all things including humans from pre-existing matter through a process of time (Agai 2005:93-94). Wright said that anyone who has no understanding of the theory of evolution will interpret the Genesis 1 'days' of creation as literal twenty-four-hour periods (1985:127). This view is shared by some, but not all, evangelicals (Little 1988:122). Paul Little (1988:12) mentions that David Young, a theologian, believed that

the language of Genesis 1 for example [the development of vegetation on day three], strongly implies the process of natural growth and development, initiated by the fiat of God's word.

According to Hoff Paul, one of the theories developed by theistic evolutionists is the age-long day theory, according to which God's creative acts were completed in one long day and not necessarily twenty-four-hour days. Their argument is that the whole creation period is summed up in a period called a *day*, meaning 'the day the Lord made the earth and the heaven' (Paul 1994:30; see Job 8:56; Isaiah 2:12, 13:6; Joel 1:5; Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 14:1; 2 Corinthians 6:2). Theistic evolutionists argue that God took a long period of

time to create and that a thousand years is like a day and a day like a thousand years for him (Wright 1985:127; see Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8). The age-long day theory regards Adam and Eve as *ancient* representatives of many humans who evolved from hominids. Believers of this theory think that God made himself known to a large group of early humans around 150,000 years ago and that ‘the biblical Adam and Eve are symbolic of this group’ (Harlow 2010:181).

Other theories propagated by the theistic evolutionists are the pictorial day theory according to which God created through a long period but revealed his creative acts to the writer of Genesis in six consecutive days (Paul 1994:29-30). Proponents are like the old-creationists who think that God created humans about 150,000 years ago but selected a pair of them, Adam and Eve, about 10,000 years ago to represent all humanity, thus making the interpretation of the plurality of Adam as somewhat *recent* humans (Harlow 2010:181). The alternating day and age theory is a view according to which long periods of time lay between the days of creation (Paul 1994:29-30). It thus suggests that the ‘days’ of creation meant thousands or millions of years which backed the evolutionary view of the creation of Adam as the representative of a group of people.

Significance to the Meaning of Adam

The idea of the plurality of Adam suggests that the name *Adam* implies a symbolic representation with a narrative and not a historical message. Harlow noted that *Adam* meant humans and *Eve* meant living one, which are both symbolic representations that indicate the role of a couple. He said the initial appearance of Adam in Genesis is meant to represent a group and not an individual: ‘The first man is called *ha-’adam*, the generic Hebrew term for human being’ (2010:186). Harlow’s argument is based on a view according to which some aspects of Genesis 1 and the entirety of Genesis 2-3 be read as symbolic and not historical. He cited as examples that the mention of trees, rivers, gold, cherubim, etcetera in Genesis (2:10-14) are symbolic representations of the tabernacle and sanctuaries in Jerusalem. Therefore, to him, Adam is a symbolic representation of a group of people (Harlow 2010:186). The view presented in the *Abarim Bible Dictionary* that *Adam* does not refer to a specific person but ‘a person’ or any person (Abarim Publications 2014) supports Harlow’s argument.

Furthermore, Nemesszeghy and Russell said that in the whole of the New Testament it is only Luke 3:27 and Jude 1:4 that strictly speak of Adam as an individual. They thought that most other New Testament references describe Adam as the representative of a group of people (1972:56). They noted that an exegetical study revealed that the Hebrew word for man, *Adam*, has both individual and collective significance. They said that *Adam* can be translated as some men, all men, any man whatever, human race, descendent of, ancestor of, and son of (Nemesszeghy and Russell 1972:56).

Other authors had supported the view that Adam signifies a group. Karl Rahner said that the group that was represented by Adam had one mind in making their decisions to the point that they decided to sin at the same time, each with his independent freedom of decision but in a dialogic relation to the others: 'one influences the other in his individual decision without forcing him' (Rahner 1967:68-72).

With regard to sin and the singularity or the plurality of Adam, some New Testament passages indicate that just as sin came into the world through Adam, so did the salvation of God through Christ (Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49). Harlow said that, although Paul and Luke regarded Adam as a historical person, the aim of these passages is not to attest that through one person sin came to the world but to emphasise that one person represented the sin of many, just as Christ took away the sins of the world. He further noted that the regard for Adam as a single person was negligible by Paul in the sense that Adam was not the first sinner but a symbol that pertained to the origin of sin; 'For Paul, then, Adam's act *affected* the human race but did not *infect* it' (Harlow 2010:190). Harlow (2010) noted that a similar view is insinuated in 2 Baruch: 'Adam is therefore not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam' (cf. 54:19; see also 2 Baruch 54:15; 4 Ezra 7:118; Harlow 2010:190).

The view propagated by Harlow is that Paul had little interest in the categorisation of Adam as the source of sin and death but in a representative imagery whose emphasis on Adam as the cause of sin and death was rather symbolic and spiritual (Harlow 2010:190; see Romans 5:12).

Those who regard Adam as the representative of a group of people do not deny that there are other biblical passages that present Adam as a single person. Instead, they view the idea of the plurality of Adam in the Bible as having more emphasis, that is, as being more implied, than the regard for Adam as a single person. Harlow for example said that there are two accounts regarding creation found in Genesis. He stated that Genesis 1 illustrates that, after the creation of lands and animals, God created an unspecified number of male and female humans while Genesis 2 portrays God as creating a single person followed by the creation of animals and, next, the creation of a single woman (Harlow 2010:185).

Theological Evaluation

The word *genesis* means origin and it suggests that Genesis is a book that conveys ideas about the beginning of many subjects of biblical interest. The subjects may include the creation of the universe and of the human race in the persons of Adam and Eve, likewise the origin of sin, suffering, and the ancestors of the Israelites, and many more. As shown, there is bountiful modern evidence that suggests that the concept of the biological theory of human origins might date from before or during the time of Aristotle, as he suggested that the first life on earth might have originated spontaneously through a progressive development that culminated in the emergence of modern humans (Agai 2017:24-25).

Darwin contributed immensely to the development of the concepts of human origins from lower animals. The many fossils found distributed in many parts of the world also attest and support that a single person like Adam might not have been the *only* ancestor of all humans. Also, studies in modern genetic research all suggest that attributing human origin to just one couple in the persons of Adam and Eve who were thought to have lived in the Garden of Eden or somewhere in Mesopotamia can be contested. In other words, the biological theory of human evolution provides evidence that modern humans originated from many other early humans.

The notion explained above seemed to generate a form of contestation between science and faith. As a result, the ideas of interpretation and translation, likewise contextualisation, below are vital.

- The book of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, might not have been written to explain the scientific technicalities that led to the creation or evolution of humans. Perhaps the interest of the author was to direct the minds of the readers to *whom* the creator is, and to the *purpose* of creation and *how* humans should *relate* to the things created and the creator so that he (the creator) would be revered accordingly (Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:21).

- On the other hand, the direct transliteration of *Adam* as ‘all men’ or ‘humans’ or ‘some men’ or ‘human race’ can also be accepted with an alternative explanation. The author of Genesis might not have meant that *Adam* means a group of people who lived alongside Adam or the entire human race. Instead, the author meant that the circumstances surrounding Adam’s life, such as sin and suffering, forgiveness and grace, will affect other humans that he will give rise to. In other words, the transliteration or the plurality of Adam as a people carries the weight of purpose not the weight of person. It might also be recalled that the transliteration does not negate the fact that *Adam* can also mean ‘any man’ or ‘a human being’, which suggests the singularity of Adam as a person (see Harlow 2010:186; Nemesszeghy and Russell 1972:56).

- With regard to research done on the many found fossils distributed in Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa, in addition to mitochondrion genetic research which suggests that humans might have evolved over a long period of time, at this stage there is no need to doubt the visible reality of this evidence. The Bible has little or no clear explanation for the origins and the reasons for the distribution of the fossils. Since these scientific developments have been proven as facts, it can be proposed that other humans might have lived alongside Adam but the Bible did not make it explicit, or that Adam might have been created through an evolutionary process alongside other humans. Therefore, the view that *Adam* meant many people could be logically debated since it does not negate the fact that *Adam* also meant ‘a person’ or ‘a man’ or ‘any man’.

Conclusion

The pseudo or seeming conflict that exists between Christian evolutionists and Christian antievolutionists has been regarded by many scholars as a conflict of worldview or perspective and not the conflict of science and faith (Paul 1994:29-30). Chittick said that the conflict

is not a matter of science versus religion; one may be 'religious' and hold either world view. It is a matter of one belief system in conflict with another because they come from different starting assumptions. (1984:267-268)

Whenever issues on creation and evolution are raised, Christians should learn how to approach such matters in love and should teach them in relation to the salvation plan of God towards humankind (see Chittick 1984:260-263). It is also relevant for Christians to direct their hearts towards the purpose of creation, which is to recognise, serve, and worship God as the creator (Romans 1:18-25).

The story of Adam and Eve has been equated with some ancient Near Eastern myths that pertained to the Gilgamesh epic, the *Enuma Elish*, and the myth of Adapa (Irons 2015:8-18). The myth of Adapa for example corresponds in many ways with the Adam story. *Adapa* means man/human, likewise *Adam*. Adam and Eve were instructed about eating and not eating, likewise Adapa, and both Adapa and Adam were denied immortality. While Adapa was clothed by Anu, Adam and Eve were clothed by Yahweh, and while Adapa was returned to Eridu to die, Adam and Eve were chased out of the Garden of Eden as a form of consequence for disobedience (Harlow 2010:183). Irons said that Genesis 1-11 ought to be regarded as myth because of its connection to other Mesopotamian myths (2015:8-18). It is difficult to trace precisely how the author of Genesis received the revelation pertaining to the creation of Adam; whether he was influenced by ancient Near Eastern myths or not may not be ascertained at this stage. It is due to this contention that the writer of this paper suggests that the intention of the author of Genesis towards directing the hearts of the readers to the creator ought to be emphasised. Whether Adam meant a person or a group of people might have been of little or no interest to the author of Genesis; instead, his intention is to introduce Yahweh as an all-powerful God.

What is vital in connection with this research is that, whenever the Adam story is brought forward, it should be read within the context of the intention of the writer, which is firstly to introduce God as the creator so that he can be revered. Secondly, the intention of the writer has never been to explain the step-by-step processes of creation or evolution but to reveal the intention of God to create, love, and save humans through 'Adam', which can either be a cooperate being or a person.

This research discusses the contestation between Christian evolutionists and Christian antievolutionists. While both views are clearly articulated in this research, the researcher upheld the view that the days of creation probably suggest literal, twenty-four-hour days of creation. This is because, in the Genesis 1 account of creation, it is clearly stated that 'there was evening, and there was morning' (Genesis 1:5, 7, 13, 19, 23). A literal modern understanding of evening and morning suggests a twenty-four-hour activity within a day and, by implication, Adam might have been created within a day. Modern studies regarding the implications of biological evolution for creation pose serious questions for regarding Adam as a single, known person who was created in a literal, twenty-four-hour day. This is why this researcher is open to the view that *Adam* might also mean a group of people and that Adam might have been created through evolution. One of the objectives of this research is to motivate interest for further research among scholars into whether biological evolutionism challenges the view that 'Adam' meant a single, known person who was the first human being to have ever existed.

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