

**Created for Everlasting Life: Is Theistic Evolution  
Sufficient to Explain Original Human Nature?**

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CPiS, 2/15/13

- I. The Issue: Could God have made us merely by evolution if we were designed for everlasting life?
- A. Focus on biblical eschatology, not the creation texts about the soul and image of God
  - B. Issue for academic community and for the CRCNA, Calvin College and Seminary
  - [C. I think that some kinds of ancient/progressive special creation are tenable]

II. The Compound-Complex Ambiguity of *Theistic Evolution*

- A. *Evolution*: biological, metaphysical/ontological, Divine?
- B. *Theistic*
  - 1. God-world relation: personal theism, deism, panentheism, pantheism
  - 2. divine action: supernaturalism/providential naturalism, naturalism
- C. A major view of theistic evolution (cf. Davies, Peacocke, Polkinghorne, Griffin, Clayton)
  - 1. standard science: uniformity of nature, operative naturalism, metaphysical naturalism, which is emergent materialism/physicalism, given Big Bang cosmology
  - 2. (panen)theistic naturalism (construed as emergent physicalism)
  - 3. humans are physical; the image of God and the soul or person are emergent functions
  - 4. question: how is everlasting life after death possible, esp. beyond the physical body?

III. Scripture teaches that God created humans for everlasting life; we already have it in Christ

- A. Scripture as a whole, not just creation texts; cf. Eph. 1, Gospel of John
- B. Creation, death, redemption, everlasting life
  - 1. original human nature: actual or potential immortality? is death a natural transition?
  - 2. doctrine: God gives everlasting life thru death, (interim existence), and resurrection
- C. Life after life
  - 1. the ecumenical view: personal existence between death and bodily resurrection
  - 2. modern variants: immortal soul; for anti-dualists, immediate resurrection or non-existence until resurrection; >>> all posit personal existence apart from the earthly body
  - 3. implications: supernatural action and generic person-earthly body separation
  - 4. axiom: essential human nature and the God-creation relation do not change
- D. Conclusion: *Christian theistic evolution* must be consistent with person-body dichotomy and fully adequate divine action

IV. Divine Action, Human Evolution, and the Person-Body Relation

- A. Supernatural and natural divine action
  - 1. not a biblical distinction; follows from reflection on experience
  - 1. natural/immanent: God acts according to the laws, content, and potential of creation
  - 2. supernatural/transcendent: God causes events in creation that are not possible given laws and state of affairs of nature
- B. God supernaturally augments evolution using a dualist metaphysics for creation
  - 1. God endows hominids with human souls; Warfield (Augustinian)
  - 2. God transforms (transubstantiates?) hominids into humans; John Paul II (Thomist)
  - 3. humans are created able to live forever or die, exist disembodied, and be resurrected

C. God guides cosmic evolution using monist metaphysics for creation

1. supernatural-natural (Teilhard de Chardin?)
  - a. God supernaturally endows creation with successive levels of being from primordial energy through the cosmos to humans
  - b. the primordial stuff could be material, neutral, psychophysical, or spiritual
  - c. anthropology: psychophysical unity with possible supernatural dichotomy
2. providential-natural emergentism (process thought, Teilhard? Dooyeweerd?)
  - a. compatible with occasional supernatural divine miracles
  - b. God creates primordial energy with the mandated potential and drive to develop various kinds and levels of being and eventually to produce humans with all their capacities
  - c. the primordial stuff must contain all modes of being in potentiality; it must be neutral, psychophysical, or multi-potential
  - d. anthropology: psychophysical unity with possible supernatural dichotomy and bodily resurrection (mainline process thought denies supernatural action; evangelicals affirm it)
3. providential-natural spiritualism, idealism, personalism
  - a. the material universe is the progressive appearance of God's intention for the world, so cosmic evolution is evident but not material
  - b. human bodies are manifestations of human persons/souls in this life and resurrected in the life to come, but not between death and resurrection
4. providential-natural emergent physicalism?
  - a. the principles of irreducibility and sufficient reason imply that matter/physical energy and law by themselves do not possess the potential for the other levels/modes of being; the strongest argument for it is that it must be true if theistic naturalism-emergent physicalism is true; *non-reductive physicalism* is an oxymoron that avoids some tough questions
  - b. providential-natural emergentism cannot proceed from mere physicalism
  - c. emergent physicalism requires supernaturalism (or it is metaphysical magic)
  - d. anthropology
    - 1) emergent physicalism does not allow for person-body dichotomy (or possibly even a person who is a responsible rational-moral-spiritual agent)
    - 2) Hasker's emergent dualism?
    - 3) Corcoran's material body fission dichotomy?

V. Conclusion

Several versions of theistic evolution are consistent with the biblical narrative from human creation to everlasting resurrected life in God's Kingdom. Some reaffirm the historic Christian doctrine of God and doctrine of humanity. There is no good reason for Christians to embrace theologically or philosophically problematic kinds of theistic evolution.