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A response to Lamoureux and Venema

The recent replies by Dennis Venema and Denis Lamoureux to Joshua Swamidass and Seth Hart concerning the Genealogical Adam and Eve (GAE) model[1] contain some theological errors, and misrepresentations.

Venema states 'Genomics evidence has challenged two longstanding Christian claims: that the first humans were created *de novo,* and that all humans descend from them as sole genetic (and thereby sole genealogical) ancestors' (78). But where did the Biblical authors or church fathers claim that Adam and Eve were the sole genetic ancestors? They did not know about genetics! What they did claim was that all humans descended from them as the sole genealogical ancestors. That is the longstanding claim which is affirmed by GAE models.

Contrary to Venema who says that GAE models 'do not arise because they naturally flow from the evidence' (78), these models naturally flow from the evidence of the Biblical texts which speak of genealogical ancestry (as indicated by the genealogical lists in the Bible) and the scientific evidence concerning the recent common ancestry of all living humans which Swamidass cites in his work.[2]

Venema claims that 'by Swamidass's usage of the term, Russell's teapot and the GAE are equally 'consistent with the evidence' (79). This is a false analogy which fails to note that, unlike Russell's teapot which we have no independent reason to think exists *and* which serves no explanatory role, there are scriptural reasons for thinking that Genealogical Adam existed (given the arguments for thinking that the Bible is divinely inspired and intends to teach this point),[3] and GAE models serve to explain how this can fit with scientific findings.

Venema then criticizes Swamidass for denying 'the uniform understanding of the Genesis narratives for thousands of years of Jewish and Christian thought,' that 'they refer to humanity as a whole, not a theologically-distinct subset that interbreeds with other biologically compatible beings…In traditional Christianity, being human and being a descendant of Adam are co-extensive' (79). In footnote 6 he claims that 'Andrew Loke…proposes a modified version of the GAE hypothesis that suffers from the same fatal flaws described here, and has come under similar theological criticism.'

This is a misrepresentation which fails to note that, unlike Swamidass, Loke does not argue for the possibility that Adam was not the first human (Swamidass is also not necessarily committed to this possibility either, as he has defended other possible GAE models in his publications). On the contrary,

1 Science & Christian Belief 37(1), 78 and 81

2 E.g. Rohde, D., Olson, S. and Chang, J. 'Modelling the Recent Common Ancestry of All Living Humans,' *Nature* (2004) 431: 562–6.

3 Craig, W.L. *Systematic Philosophical Theology Vol. 1*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell (2025); *In Quest of the Historical Adam*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2021).

Loke's version of the GAE model agrees with William Lane Craig's affirmation (cited by Venema) concerning 'the truly universal progenitorship of Adam and Eve.' Craig's criticism that 'there could be people today who look and act just like us but who are not in God's image and therefore sub-human' is based on a misunderstanding of the GAE model; this and other criticisms have already been answered in Loke's writings.[4]

The key issue is how 'human being' is defined. Venema's misunderstanding of this issue is indicated by his objection 'under the GAE hypothesis, did the *de novo* Adam have the signs of common ancestry in his genome?...If no, then Adam is not truly human but a being with a genome significantly different than our own' (9). But why should having signs of common ancestry in the genome be regarded as essential to the definition of human as creatures created in God's image?

It is ironic that Venema criticizes Swamidass' view as being contrary to traditional Christianity when in fact it is Venema's and Lamoureux's view—the denial of the historical Adam— that is the most theological problematic and contrary to traditional Christianity. It is almost universally rejected not only by conservative Evangelicals but also Roman Catholics (see Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis*) and Eastern Orthodox Christians (for whom the theological views of the church fathers are regarded as normative)—i.e., the overwhelming majority of Christians.

The rest of Venema's and Lamoureux's objections concerning 'Concordism' have already been answered in Swamidass' and Hart's essays.

Lamoureux's claims that there is contradiction concerning the Biblical account of Cain and that the account of Cain marrying a woman is an addition by an unknown editor is based on his failure to consider other interpretative options.[5] Lamoureux's claim that the GAE model attempts to save the appearance of a historical Adam is akin to the 'epicycles' in Ptolemy's astronomical theory that lacked beauty and simplicity compared to heliocentric theory (83). This is a false analogy which fails to note that the heliocentric theory is also an attempt to 'save the appearances' (i.e. to account for observed [astronomical] phenomena) by providing a simpler model than Ptolemy's. By contrast, Lamoureux and Venema are 'rejecting the appearance' (i.e. the phenomena of a historical Adam, warranted by the reasons mentioned above) and thus their view cannot be regarded as providing a model at all. The GAE model is in fact the most beautiful and simplest available model which shows how the Biblical account of genealogical Adam and scientific evidence concerning recent common ancestry and population genetics can fit together.

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4 https://www.academia.edu/92656662/Reply_to_reviews_of_The_Origin_of_Humanity_Science_and_Scripture_in_Conversation

5 Collins, J. *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*, Phillipsburg: P&R (2006).