

# Letters

lated are still invoked by an extraordinarily diverse group of people across the sociopolitical spectrum.

Hanks, a professor of French language and literature at the University of Scranton, has been a long-time member of the International Jacques Ellul Association and very active in scholarship related to this seminal thinker. She is widely known as the premier bibliographer of Ellul, who left behind a huge volume of material—much of it totally disorganized and scattered. Her most recent effort along these lines before this volume was *Jacques Ellul: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary Works* that was published as *Research in Philosophy and Technology, Supplement 5* in 2000 by JAI Press. This volume is the result of a multi-year effort to collect in one volume significant writings in English and French about Ellul's work and life from the 1930s to the present, based largely but not exclusively on collections at Regent College Library in Vancouver, BC, and Wheaton College, IL. Entries are grouped into three main categories (chapters): (1) books, articles, and interviews; (2) dissertations; and (3) reviews of Ellul's books. Notes for each entry range from a few words to a few paragraphs. A very comprehensive set of indices covers authors and subjects. This resource is invaluable for anyone who wants to explore the impact and ideas of Jacques Ellul as viewed through the eyes of others.

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**TECHNOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY: How the Information Revolution Affects Our Spiritual Lives** by Stephen K. Spyker. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2007. 158 pages. Hardcover; \$19.95. ISBN: 9781594732188

"Most of us are not terribly reflective about the technologies we use." So asserts Stephen K. Spyker in the first line of the book. Spyker is an engineer and technologist by disposition with thirty-five years of experience at the intersection of technology and spirituality. He currently serves as the director of information technology at Earlham School of Religion and Bethany Theological Seminary.

Spyker pays particular attention to how technologies shape our spirituality. He employs the device or concept of "matrix" to describe the rather complex relationship between one's spirituality and technology. He borrows this concept from the fields of mathematics and computer science and uses it in two different, yet related ways. First, a matrix represents a place of origination. In order for us to understand something as multifaceted as technology, we need a matrix to represent the varied imagery associated with a complete definition of a given technological concept or the emergence of a given technology. A matrix implies that technology is much more subtle and less well defined than most people realize. Technology, in fact, operates at a much deeper level than is usually considered.

Secondly, the matrix represents the interconnectedness of technology and one's spirituality. In other words, there are many levels or planes of relationships on which technology and spirituality exist and many "lenses" through which to view these relationships. The book

employs eight of these lenses to observe the influence that technology has on our spirituality. The lenses are simplicity, transparency, community, identity, relationship, velocity, connectivity, and liberty. Spyker devotes one chapter to each of these lenses, demonstrating how they allow readers to evaluate the impact of emerging technologies on their life.

For the first of these lenses, simplicity, he reminds us that the promise of technology was a simpler life. He goes on to ask if certain technologies have had the opposite effect. Other discussions include how technology has increased the "speed" or pace of our lives, how it has tailored some of our goals and ambitions, the way in which it shapes or influences one's own identity, and the ways that it filters our view of the Divine. Spyker extends this dialogue quite successfully to the areas of daily life that technology affects and insightfully demonstrates how entrenched technology has become in our lives.

Part of the appeal of this book is its accessibility to those who would not consider themselves very savvy in the sphere of technological innovations. In fact, in some regards, people in this camp are the intended audience. Yet, the discussions probe deeply enough that even those of us who consider ourselves technologically literate would do well to reflect upon them. Spyker strikes the right balance between popular appeal and sophisticated dialogue to engage a broad readership. This book gives the reader an opportunity to reflect on the myriad of ways everyday life is influenced by the vast technological developments that are a part of the modern world.

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## Letters

### First Man versus Adam in Genesis

In a letter to *PSCF*, P.G. Nelson<sup>1</sup> comments on an apparent problem with my article<sup>2</sup> in which I am suggesting that Adam and Eve in Genesis 2-4 came later than the first humans in Genesis 1.

He claims that the first human in Gen. 1:27 is the same as Adam in Gen. 2:7, because the same expression (*ha'adam*, "the man") is used in both cases, the article (*ha*) being retained in what follows, and Adam (*'adam*) without the article is used later only, beginning with Gen. 4:25. But 1:26 has "Let us make man" (*'adam*), immediately followed in 1:27 by "So God created man" (*ha'adam*). Both refer to the same collective of humans, as explained by the specification, "male and female he created them," which implies that here "man" is not Adam, but humanity.

Then, Gen. 2:7-4:1a uses *ha'adam* including the article (2:23b and 4:1b have *'ysh* rather than *'adam* for "man" — for obvious reasons). Nelson apparently takes "there was no man to work the ground" in 2:5 (*'adam* without the article) to refer to mankind as a whole, believing that what follows is a creation story amplifying 1:27. But he

does not explain why in 4:1a, when Adam fathered Cain, the article is used with his name, but not in 4:25, when the same Adam fathered Seth. Nor does he say why 5:1–5 omits the article consistently (5 times) for the same Adam with whom Genesis 2–4 is dealing. From Genesis 6 onward, “man” cannot denote Adam any more, yet in virtually every case in the rest of Genesis we read *ha’adam*, the same form used for Adam in Genesis 2–4.

Nelson claims that the transition from singular to plural in Gen. 1:27, “in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them,” is explained by the story of the creation of Eve in 2:21–23, implying that therefore in 1:27, “him” refers to Adam and “them” to Adam and Eve. This is not compelling. It looks like circular reasoning. Starting with a belief that Adam was the first man, he concludes that 1:26–27 must refer to Adam, and from this, he concludes that “male and female he created them” in 1:27 must refer to Adam and Eve. Similarly, some translations of 1:27 incorrectly talk of a man and a woman, whereas “male and female” are generic terms. So “them” can be the same collective entity as “him,” which is plural in essence.

A given form of an expression is no guarantee that it always designates the same entity. The context has to be considered within the sentence, the paragraph, the book, the whole Bible, ancient culture, and language flexibility.

One crucial case of context sensitivity is the question of the extent of the geographical frame. Gen. 1:1–2:4a is a creation story, referring to the entire universe, the Earth, and life as a whole. On the other hand, 2:4b–4:16 deals with the history of God’s personal dealing with Adam and his family.<sup>3</sup> This second section of Genesis is clearly centered in southern Mesopotamia, the land of Sumer of the fifth millennium BC, as evidenced by the four rivers of 2:10–14.<sup>4</sup>

Between Gen. 2:4b and 12:3, there is no obvious break in the narrative, the geographical context gradually widening toward the northwest, before Abraham goes to Canaan. Nothing in this long story deals with the whole Earth. In particular, this applies to Noah’s flood, its farthest northwestern reach being near Cizre on the upper Tigris, at the edge of the low hill country part of Urartu (Ararat).<sup>5</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>P.G. Nelson, “Adam and Eve,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* [PSCF] 60, no. 1 (2008): 71.

<sup>2</sup>P. Rüst, “Early Humans, Adam, and Inspiration,” *PSCF* 59, no. 2 (2007): 182–93.

<sup>3</sup>Gen. 2:4 constitutes a symmetric bridge linking the two parts in a manner indicating a temporal succession, rather than an expansion; cf. A. Held and P. Rüst, “Genesis Reconsidered,” *PSCF* 51, no. 4 (1999): 231–43.

<sup>4</sup>C.A. Hill, “The Garden of Eden: A Modern Landscape,” *PSCF* 52, no. 1 (2000): 31–46.

<sup>5</sup>C.A. Hill, “The Noachian Flood: Universal or Local?” *PSCF* 54, no. 3 (2002): 170–83.

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## Does the Bible Really “Declare” the Earth Young?

In the recent response (*PSCF* 60, no. 1 [2008]: 35) to the essay review of Randy Isaac on Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth, Larry Vardiman, a physicist at the Institute for Creation Research and a member of the RATE group, said, “... the apparent conflict between the billions of years of earth history commonly espoused by conventional science and the thousands of years declared by Scripture seems to be resolvable.” This sentence raises a question: Does the Bible really declare the earth young?

Unfortunately, I did not find any biblical sentence that declares the earth young or the earth old. The Bibles that the RATE Group used would be the same as others. I believe, therefore, that the RATE Group should correct the phrase “declared by Scripture” with “declared by young-earth creationists” in the sentence. There can be many interpretations for a single declaration of the Bible. Of course, the young-earth argument is just an interpretation. An interpretation should not be confused with the biblical declaration.

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## Can Science Make the “Breath” of God Part of Its Subject Matter?

Graeme Finlay (*PSCF* 60, no. 2 [2008]: 103–14) reflects on how the randomness of natural processes achieves God’s creative purpose. Finlay indicates:

To the Christian it is axiomatic that each one of us is a created being (Ps. 139). Scientifically, we are the product of random genetic process. Theologically, we are the outcome of loving divine purpose. Molecular randomness (in scientific terms) and createdness (in theological terms) inevitably go hand-in-hand.

A human being is a physical/nonphysical/supernatural entity, which is quite consistent with the Christian notion of humans as body/mind/spirit (Matt. 6:22, Rom. 12:2, 1 Cor. 2:11). Scientific study of the human genome cannot access the nonphysical in humans. The notions of life, consciousness, and rationality lie at the foundation of the humanity of humankind, but cannot be reduced to the purely physical. The latter somewhat contradicts the assertion that “Genetic mechanism in all its happenstance has produced the genetic basis of humanness.”

Consciousness is a moment-by-moment awareness of our temporal existence and surroundings. Human knowledge has access only to snapshots and flashbacks of reality. God is the being forever conscious and thus eternal that does not exist in time. God has no history and so he experiences the whole of reality as an eternal “Now.”<sup>1</sup> God is the supernatural or divine being that is omniscient and sustains His creation (Heb. 1:3). It is not