



**Chrtc 390 Module 3 Slides by
Looy and Flaman:
The Origin of Human Persons**

Evolution of the Human Brain/Mind

Adapted from Dr. Looy's slides & notes

- Did humankind evolve?
- If we evolved, in what way, if any, can we be considered special?
- Was there a historical Adam and Eve? Did they “fall” into sin?
- Science does not answer questions such as *why* we evolved or metaphysical and theological questions such as did God create the universe, and our relationship with God including questions regarding sin.



Evolution of the Human Brain/Mind

- Evolutionary science addresses the history of life, of species.
 - It describes/theorizes re: mechanisms of change, e.g., natural selection, sexual selection
 - It identifies *genetically-based traits*
- Evolution of the human brain correlates with changes in human behavior
- The science of evolution is like a big puzzle for which we have many but not all the pieces

Video: Mind's Big Bang

- The human brain has been evolving for about 8 million years since the split with apes.
- There seems to be no significant change in human appearance and gross brain size for about 100,000 years.
- Roughly 50,000 years ago there is evidence of a significant change in human *behavior* (cf. art, creativity, social complexity, culture ...).
- How did this occur without gross brain change?
 - Hypothesis: fine-tuning of neural circuitry
 - Functions evolved to address adaptive problems

Evolution of the Human Brain

- Homo Erectus, a hominid species, existed between about 2 million and 100-30 thousand years ago.
- Neanderthal, a hominid species, is thought to have existed between about 350 to 27 thousand years ago.
- Modern humans co-existed with Neanderthal for thousands of years and possibly also with Homo Erectus.
- Was the process of evolution truly random? Is God somehow involved?
- Re: the concept of sin, in what sense can something be understood to have gone wrong in the process of human evolution. Is this something science can address?

The Bible, Christian theology & Human Origins

The Genesis Creation Accounts

- Why do many biblical scholars think there are two accounts (Gen 1:1-2:3[4a] & 2:4b ff) which are “pre-historical”?

	<u>1st account</u>	<u>2nd account</u>
Style:	formal, repetitious, 7 day week pattern	narrative, graphic details
Order:	plants, animals, humans last	man, plants, animals, woman
Themes:	humans at apex of a good creation...	complementarity of man/woman...
God's Name:	Elohim	Yahweh Elohim
How God is Presented:	transcendent, all-powerful	immanent, with human images
Date:	550-449 B.C.	about 950 B.C.
Author:	“Priestly” (P)	“Yahwist” (J)

- *Consider a good theory also re biblical interpretation
- *Consider the authors as true human authors and inspired by God, enlightened (cf. their culture); the themes are complementary.

God's Creation & Providence: Catholic Teaching

- Rooted in the Bible & Tradition (Creeds, Fathers of the Church...)
- 4th Lateran Council (1215) & Vatican I (1870): God (eternal, omnipotent, perfect) freely, to bestow benefits on creatures, created out of nothing (2 Macc 7:28) both the angelic world (invisible) & corporeal (visible) universe; man belongs to both and is composed of spirit and body...; God watches over and governs all that he has made with might and gentleness.(Wis 8:1; Mt 6:25ff)
- Pius XII (1950): theory of evolution re the human body is an open question; souls are immediately created by God; it is not apparent how polygenism can be reconciled with the doctrine of original sin which is handed down to us by descent (propagation; not imitation)
- Vatican II (1965): bodily death is natural; if we had not sinned God would have kept us immune from death [cf. Gen 3 and Rm 5]
- John Paul II (1996): theories of evolution, humans in the image of God--ontological leap (dignity of person, specifically human characteristics); sciences of observation, philosophy & theology
- Excludes materialism, emanationism, pantheism, deism ...

Creation...: Christian Theology

- Ian Barbour outlines several theological views:
 - Protestant, Catholic, models of interaction ...; an emergent monist
- Ludwig Ott re Catholic teaching and theology:
 - God conserves everything; distinguishes God as primary cause of everything and secondary causes of creatures including human free will; and God's ordinary and extraordinary (miracles) providence. God permits evils--physical (creation is in a state of journey towards perfection) and moral evil (created persons freely sinning); Christ is the answer; God can bring good out of evil (see Rm 8:28).
- Victor Naumann:
 - from God's viewpoint there is no such thing as chance; cf. causality & our very limited human view. Re this consider also Barbour re law & chance; Don Page (physicist, Christian determinist) posits multiple universes to explain quantum effects; string theory; and Denis Lamoureux re dysteleological (blind chance) vs. teleological (ordained and sustained) metaphysics of human evolution.

Creation ... : Christian Theology

- B. Ashley: a Catholic theologian, speculates on how both polygenism & monogenism might have happened with regard to the human person as a compound of body and spiritual soul.
- G. Grisez: a Catholic theologian, speculates on how polygenism might be reconciled with the doctrine of original sin and its transmission.
- Cf. Denis Lamoureux re continuous polygenism, punctiliar monogenism and punctiliar polygenism
- P. Flaman: hypothesis re gradual biological polygenism with an ontological leap
- J. Polkinghorne: discusses the Anthropic Principle (the laws of the universe from the beginning are finally tuned to enable the evolution of carbon based life including ourselves) and the explanations of many independent universes and Creation by God; etc.