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## Book Review

**Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1–2.4 in the light of changing scientific paradigms by Douglas F. Kelly  
Christian Focus Publications, Great Britain. 1997. 272 pages, \$15.  
Reviewed by John K. Reed**

One of the interesting aspects of modern creationism is the leadership vacuum displayed by the professional theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the filling of that vacuum by the laity, especially professional scientists. As we are all aware, sometimes the most vigorous defenders of evolution and uniformitarianism (and most vociferous critics of creationists) are theologians and church leaders. This has resulted in the inability of Bible-believing Christians to affirm God's truth and respond to the assaults of modern naturalism with the full spectrum of truth. And yet naturalism has shown itself to be the most vulnerable to arguments from the theological and philosophical disciplines once the scientific facade is penetrated. Integrating those foundational insights with scientific experience will result in the more rapid downfall of the naturalist-uniformitarian establishment. This reviewer has attempted to highlight both the need for and the potential of this type of "combined-arms" assault (Reed, 1996, 1998). One of the major conclusions of those works was the need for professional Christian theologians and phi-

losophers to take a key part in the battle against naturalism.

Dr. Douglas Kelly, Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC, has stepped into the breach with a remarkable book that integrates his deep theological insight with the efforts of many creation scientists. Many names familiar to the CRS readership jump out from the numerous footnotes. Although Dr. Kelly is not a scientist, he has obviously become familiar with many aspects of the scientific debate. He brings the refreshing candor of a theologian committed to the plain truth of God's revelation as the only reliable basis for certainty in understanding earth history. He admits frequently to his scientific shortcomings, but always returns to the position that God's Word is preeminent over any scientific "fact" in defining historical truth. He understands that exegesis is defined by first understanding the biblical text itself, and not assessing its truth by reference to modern natural history. In short, his position appears to avoid the error of so many modern theologians who want to balance the Word of God

against the conclusions of Sagan, Gould, Dawkins, et al., and then inevitably bow to the pressure of the secular “experts”. Dr. Kelly defends the epistemological primacy of the Scripture, and stands firm, even when challenged by the scientific elite. In the ongoing debate in conservative reformed circles between advocates of sound biblical interpretation and those who want to maintain their “intellectual-elite-stamp-of-approval ratings,” Dr. Kelly’s book will provide timely support to the former and a challenge to the latter. That challenge is to move to the forefront of what he terms a “paradigm shift” away from naturalism and towards an integrated Christian worldview.

Creation and Change is presented as an expanded outline and interpretation of the creation account of Genesis. Successive chapters step through the six days of creation (yes, they were real days), and add supporting discussion of key theological issues. The wealth of footnotes and end-of-the-chapter expanded notes is tremendously beneficial. These combine with sufficient indexed references to make the book useful to a broad audience. Neophytes can plow through the basic text without being sidetracked, and old hands can follow many interesting side trails. Although CRS members may be familiar with many of the scientific arguments woven into the text (and may pick a few nits one way or the other over pet theories), any and all will benefit from the author’s expertise in Hebrew, Old Testament studies, and systematic

theology. Creation from preexisting matter, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and the more trendy “Framework Hypothesis,” popularized by Dr. Meredith Kline, all emerge tattered and tarnished by Dr. Kelly’s insistence on proper exegesis and a theologically sound interpretation of the relevant passages. Those who assert the primacy of science and seem to use the Bible to add theological shine to their scientific theories (Hugh Ross, Davis Young, etc.) will have reason to regret the publication of this book.

I strongly recommend this book. It has much to offer to a broad audience. It is well researched and referenced. It presents significant exegetical and theological insights. Most of all, it hopefully presages a vanguard of theologians that stand firm on the truth of God’s Word in the face of intellectual pressure from the scientific elite, see from their unique perspective the many weaknesses of modern naturalism, and join the scientists in the trenches.

#### References

- Reed, J.K. 1996. A biblical Christian framework for earth history research, Part I—Critique of the naturalist uniformitarian system. *CRSQ* 33:6-12.
- Reed, J.K. 1998. Demythologizing uniformitarian history. *CRSQ* 35:156-165.

