

A PERELANDRA HYPOTHESIS

Dear Editor,

The middle book in C. S. Lewis' fictional space trilogy, **Perelandra**,¹ describes a planet with three basic ecosystems. The terrestrial and aquatic are like those we see on Earth. The third, where most of the action takes place, consists of giant floating and mobile islands of vegetation. Though they might resemble algae mats and bog surfaces in today's environment on Earth, they are much bigger in scale. Trees and large animals are supported on these islands.

Recent issues of the **Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal** as well as other creationist literature suggest an origin for coal related to floating mats of vegetation. The Mount St Helens-Spirit Lake analogy² promotes bark shed from trees stripped from a terrestrial environment by catastrophic action. Scheven³ favours a unique floating ecosystem of arboreal lycopods. Some writers point out dinosaur tracks in the top layers of coal beds. Garton⁴ has animals disembarking from floating islands onto emergent land and then dying out in the new environment. There are many more relevant articles that can be considered.

A Perelandra hypothesis deserves further investigation in comparison to Scripture. The Bible seems to make no mention of floating islands, but that does not nullify their possible existence. The Bible declares that all terrestrial environments were inundated by the Flood, but does not require that all locations were simultaneously submerged. The stratigraphic record seems to indicate an undulating terrestrial surface during the Flood with subaerial environments being severely eroded and subaqueous

environments experiencing catastrophic deposition rates. The Bible declares that all land-dwelling, air-breathing animals and people were destroyed except those preserved on the Ark. It does not mention the aquatic animals and terrestrial invertebrates which survived outside the Ark. Large floating islands, as in Perelandra, would provide shelter for some of their inhabitants during at least part of the Flood year as a natural Ark of much larger dimensions.

During the Flood year the many floating islands would become beached in shallow water at various times, as indicated by the numerous positions of coal seams in the stratigraphic column. The islands may have had differing varieties of flora and fauna. The apparent stratigraphic order of fossils may be a reflection of the timing of when the various island types were beached and buried. Those having an abundance of dinosaur types appear to have been grounded before those having an abundance of mammals. The disembarking animals would leave their footprints in some of the sediments. Some animals may have needed to make nests and lay eggs immediately, only to have them buried by the next sediments. No people lived on the floating islands, just as in Perelandra no people dwelt on the land. So the islands were irrelevant to the death of all people not on the Ark.

Having the Earth repopulated by representatives from the former floating islands, in addition to those preserved on the Ark, may ease our challenges with regards to the dispersal after the Flood. Would such natural Arks violate Scripture? It is guaranteed by Scripture that all terrestrial and air-breathing animals and especially people were destroyed. It is guaranteed by Scripture that animals and people protected on the Ark dispersed at the

end of their ride. However, just as the Bible makes no mention of the preservation and dispersal of the aquatic life-forms, perhaps it also makes no mention of the preservation and dispersal of the unmentioned floating island inhabitants. Some of our present flora and fauna could be refugees from the last floating islands to become grounded, from an ecosystem that no longer exists. Changes in sea water mineral content could have caused the demise of any surviving plants that were the basis of the floating ecosystem.

This Perelandra hypothesis has already been anticipated by other writers. It has attractive features that are not denied by Scripture. Speculating about ecosystems that no longer exist is admittedly quite unscientific, but there appear to be some observations about the stratigraphic record that relate to the hypothesis. I encourage those who like to do literature searches and develop scenarios to pursue this idea and see where it leads. I have the curiosity but not necessarily the time and resources to work on it myself.

Edmond W. Holroyd, Jr.,
Arvada, Colorado,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.