

specific with only minor changes such as a forest for a thicket and some other liquid for oil. This tale is ancient, widespread, and uniform. The multiplicity of Flood themes is likewise ancient and widespread, but not quite so uniform.

Anthropologists in general feel that the widespread and often geographically continuous distribution of both the Magic Flight and the various Flood accounts is due to the transmission of the tale from one group to another, slowly spreading out from the centers of origin. The universal prevalence of Flood legends cannot be considered 'proof' of the actual reality of the Flood, or that all peoples who have Flood accounts most similar to the Biblical accounts have passed them on through their generations from time immemorial. If it is so considered, there is as strong a proof for the occurrence of the Magic Flight!"

-- William A. Smalley and Marie Fetzner, "A Christian View of Anthropology," in *Modern Science and Christian Faith* Second Edition, by members of the American Scientific Affiliation (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1950), pp. 187-189.

Additional scientific information on Flood traditions is provided by Dorothy B. Vitaliano, a professional geologist with the U.S. Geologic Survey, in her book *Legends of the Earth Their Geologic Origins*. In the chapter entitled "The Deluge," Mrs. Vitaliano surveys the Flood traditions from around the world. The following section attempts to present some of her material in excerpt form:

"There is a series of traditions which stands apart from all others in that these traditions appear in every part of the world -- or, to be more exact, in almost every part of the world. These are the traditions of a great flood which destroyed either all mankind, or at least a substantial number of the earth's inhabitants. Such traditions are so widespread that many believe them to be a 'racial memory' of some catastrophic inundation which affected at least a very considerable portion of the globe simultaneously. At the other extreme are those who believe that all the different flood traditions stem from a single local flood, the deluge of the Bible, the memory of which was disseminated as man migrated from the original scene. Does the geologic evidence support either of these diametrically opposed viewpoints, and if not, what does it tell us? . . .

"Because it is impossible to produce a truly universal flood by any normal geologic process, some highly ingenious attempts have been made to invoke extraterrestrial agencies as the cause. Such theories always cite folklore as evidence and bolster their arguments with incorrect or farfetched interpretations of geologic features which can be explained far more easily in terms of the normal action of geologic agencies. But the universality of flood traditions can be explained very easily without requiring a widespread flood of cosmic or any other origin, if we bear in mind that floods, plural, are a universal geologic phenomenon. . .there is virtually no part of the globe where there could