

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY

THE BIENNIAL JOURNAL OF THE KUYPER FOUNDATION

VOL. XVII, No. 2

WINTER 2007

Education and the Great Commission

Towards A Biblical Philosophy of Science

Persecution of Christians in Pakistan

The Judeo-Christian Cosmology

Formative Ideals of Western Civilisation

Trinity and Daily Living

The Degeneration of Liberalism

Christianity & Society is published biannually in Summer and Winter by the KUYPER FOUNDATION, a Christian charitable trust founded in 1987 to promote a renaissance of Christian culture in society by furthering awareness of the implications of the Christian faith for every sphere of life, including the Church, family and State. Its vision of Christian society was expressed in the words of Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch Christian theologian and statesman, who said: "One desire has been the ruling passion of my life. One high motive has acted like a spur upon my mind and soul. And sooner than that I should seek escape from the sacred necessity that is laid upon me, let the breath of life fail me. It is this: that in spite of all worldly opposition, God's holy ordinances shall be established again in the home, in the school and in the State for the good of the people; to carve as it were into the conscience of the nation the ordinances of the Lord, to which Bible and Creation bear witness, until the nation pays homage again to him." The Foundation seeks to promote this vision of Christian society by publishing literature, distributing audio-visual materials, and running lecture courses and conferences.

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EDITORIAL

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND THE GREAT COMMISSION†

by Stephen C. Perks

MODERN Britain faces a serious cultural crisis. The Christian worldview that once characterised our society has collapsed. This is not merely a matter of declining church attendance. Something has happened at a much more profound level in the psyche of the nation that declining church attendance and many other modern trends are merely symptoms of. Christianity has ceased to function as public truth, i.e. as the religion that underpins and gives meaning to our way of life. The nation has converted to a new religion, and it is in terms of this new religion that people make sense of life. The nation has been de-Christianised. The worldview that governs our society is no longer a Christian worldview. The worldview that governs the nation is secular humanism. It is the worldview of secular humanism that now functions as public truth in our society. And as the religion of secular humanism grows stronger the Christian values and virtues that underpinned and shaped our civilisation for over a thousand years are being relentlessly stripped away from the consciousness and life of the nation. The education system, the health care system, the family, the institutions of government, and strangely even the institutional Church, were all de-Christianised in the twentieth century. In education for example, there is a strong ethos of secularisation that emphasises a multi-faith approach to religion and the acceptance of sexual immorality in the promotion of homosexual lifestyles as morally on a par with heterosexual marriage. In the health system abortion is now accepted and practised virtually on demand and euthanasia is in the process of being legitimised. In the realm of politics the nation's freedom has been abolished and replaced by fraudulent "human rights" that are meaningless to the individual, the real purpose of which seems to be to disguise the increasingly totalitarian nature of the State. The married heterosexual two-parent family (the Christian view of the family) is now in the minority in the UK. And there is an ongoing and relentless drive in the main-line Christian denominations, including the Church of England, to legitimise homosexual lifestyles as morally acceptable. The orthodox faith of the Church once received and expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles, the doctrinal confession of the Church, has virtually disappeared in the excessive liberal gospel that has been preached from church pulpits for decades. Within evangelical Churches on the whole things are not much better; evangelical liberalism is a little out of date perhaps but it is liberalism nonetheless.

There is in Britain now a settled and institutionalised antipathy to the Christian faith and its value system. At times this attitude manifests itself almost as belligerence as the State uses the police force to enforce its secular humanist doctrines of political correctness on society. For example, the public expression of certain Christian values and morals is now likely to result in police visits and warnings to individuals that they should abstain from expressing such opinions publicly in future. Several such incidents have been reported in the media and even a bishop of the Church of England has been visited by the police and warned against expressing his opinions on certain moral values in public—though this latter incident was perhaps more significant for the fact that an Anglican bishop was prepared to make a stand in terms of orthodox Christian values than that the police tried to suppress the public expression of such values. Nevertheless, the fact that the police are increasingly taking it upon themselves to enforce this politically correct code of immorality demonstrates the reality of secular humanism as a religion that is willing and able to use the full machinery of State to enforce its own form of *religious* dogma: political correctness. This is the secular humanist inquisition.

In short, Britain is in the process of being de-commissioned as a Christian nation, and the hard-won freedoms that the nation cherished for so long, which were the fruit of a Christian worldview and way of life, are fast disappearing as society rejects the Christian religion. This cultural decline, however, is not confined to the UK. This is a problem that affects the West generally, though to varying degrees in different countries, and may well be a worldwide trend. We are in the middle of a Great *De-Commission*. And the irony is that the Churches themselves have not only been complicit in this, but have often been in the vanguard of the process. For example feminism, one of the most deleterious trends in modern Western society, was pioneered by the effeminate spirituality that has now come to dominate almost all branches of the Church. After nearly two thousand years of the Great Commission the nations of the once Christian West have gone into reverse and started de-civilising themselves. And we should not forget that the virtues and ideals that Western civilisation has traditionally valued and espoused as essential for the creation and preservation of a civilised society have been the fruit of a Christian way of life and a Christian culture.

The answer proposed by many Christians in the UK to this situation, this deterioration of Christian civilisation, has been lobbying, i.e. the organisation of protests aimed at inducing the government to stop passing liberal and permissive legislation and begin passing laws requiring Christian values to be upheld. There has been a great deal of money spent by Christians on the lobbying process and a great many protests have been organised. Attention has even been given to this lobbying activity in the media, though seldom from a positive viewpoint.

The problem with this response to the collapse of Christian civilisation is that there is no Christian consensus in society to underpin it and give it any significant meaning for the secular humanist establishment at which it is aimed. The Christian consensus, the Christian worldview, has collapsed, and without a Christian worldview underpinning society such lobbying is simply ineffective. There is insufficient support in society to make lobbying an effective way to influence government policy. Even the good results some-

† This article is the text of a lecture given at Hamilton Christian School, Hamilton, New Zealand on Friday 4th August 2006, and subsequently at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, Tauranga, New Zealand on Monday 7th August and Tyndale Christian School, Sydney, Australia on Tuesday 15th August 2006.

times gained by this approach, e.g. stopping government from introducing a bad law or from abolishing a good law, are quickly overturned. This is what happened with Clause 28, the regulation forbidding the promotion of homosexuality in State schools, and with euthanasia legislation. Initial success has eventually been overturned by the relentless onslaught of secular humanist ideology on the life of the nation, and as part of that on the actions of the civil government. Consequently Clause 28, despite a furious campaign waged by several Christian lobbying groups, was eventually abolished and plans to introduce euthanasia continue, chipping away little by little at an out-dated Christian morality. In this ineffective process of lobbying large amounts of money are wasted by Christians who seem to think that their duty has been done if they are able to induce politicians into making other people take on their responsibilities for them.

Even those successes that ostensibly seem to be permanent, at least for the time being, are often made irrelevant by the fact that the Christian consensus—the Christian worldview—has collapsed. For example, it was a few years ago established that religious education in State schools in the UK should be primarily Christian in character. But this has had little effect because religious education is often taught by people who are not Christians and do not understand the Christian faith. Christianity is taught therefore, but from a secular humanist perspective, not from a Christian perspective. This is possibly worse than no Christian education at all. In one State school the head teacher told the whole school in a supposedly “Christian” assembly meeting that Christians believe Jesus Christ is born again every Christmas. This lack of understanding of the Christian faith, i.e. the particular doctrines of the faith, is reinforced by a worldview that is anti-Christian in principle and in effect. Therefore, even where there is a commitment to the idea that religious education in secular schools should reflect the Christian heritage of the nation this may well translate into a nominalism that is meaningless, misleading or even worse.

But the RE lesson is not the problem in any case. What gets taught or mistaught to the children of Christians in such classes can be easily corrected by Christian parents at home and is not likely to have any significant effect on non-Christian households. The real damage is not done in the RE lesson, or even in the sex education lesson for that matter, but rather in the history lesson, the English lesson, the maths lesson, the geography lesson, the biology lesson, the science lesson, the social studies lesson, the art lesson,—that is to say across the whole curriculum and in the whole ethos and worldview promoted by the school, because in these subjects the secular humanist theory of knowledge underpins *everything* that is taught and the child learns to see the world and all things in it in terms of the secular humanist worldview. Therefore the child’s understanding of science, for example, is based on the secular humanist presupposition of the neutrality of the scientific method, i.e. that it is possible to come to a proper understanding of the facts without reference to the creative will of the God who created the facts. The pupil may well go home to Christian parents who will teach him that if he repents and exercises faith in Christ he will be saved from his sin on the day of judgement. But if he imbibes at school the secular understanding of science, i.e. the supposed neutrality of the scientific method as conceived by the secular humanist establishment, he will never see the

relevance of the Christian faith for the scientific task. In other words when it comes to science he will think like a secular humanist; the religion of secular humanism will govern his understanding of science. If he becomes a scientist as an adult this problem will be magnified. The same principle holds true in every other subject taught in the school. The secular humanist theory of knowledge will underpin the student’s understanding of the subject. Only in the narrow realm of “spiritual things” will the child learn, *possibly*, to think in a Christian way, although even here there is no certainty that what his parents and the Church teach him will be orthodox. In all the other subjects the student will learn to think in a non-Christian, i.e. in a sinful, rebellious way, though he will not be aware of this, not aware even that the faith applies to these other areas and therefore that there is an obedient way to do science, history, maths, art etc. In these areas the Christian parents of children in such schools will have little success in undoing the indoctrination that their children get in secular schools even if they are aware of the problem and wish to do something about it because the school forms the context of the whole learning process and it is impossible to undo five days of systematic secular humanist indoctrination each week with one hour of Sunday school each week or a few talks with the child in the evening. But sadly, most Christian parents will not be aware of the problem at all. They will likely have been indoctrinated into the same worldview that their child is imbibing and therefore the next generation gets no further than their parents while secular humanism pushes forward, aggressively conquering more ground in our society, controlling more institutions and shaping more and more the way people think about all things.

At the same time as all this lobbying is taking place there is little emphasis on the creation of Christian schools or the promotion of Christian home schooling in terms of a self-conscious Christian worldview and curriculum. Christian education, both in terms of Christian schools and home schooling, has been criticised strongly by many in the Church, including leaders and clergymen, and looked at with indifference and suspicion by lobbying groups. And there has been nowhere near the amount of money spent on this vital area as that spent on lobbying. The vast majority of Christians send their children to secular schools and yet many are willing to support lobbying organisations financially. Even many of those who are most vociferous about lobbying government and protesting against government policy in public will do so while refusing to take their children out of the secular schools and give them a Christian education.

This is astonishing, since lobbying government can only be effective where there is a generation of Christian people who can form a consensus that will underpin such lobbying and give it meaning. There is only one way in which we can create that kind of consensus, namely by educating the next generation in terms of the Christian worldview. On the one hand, by sending their children to secular schools Christian lobbyists are actually helping to create the very problem—a secular society—that on the other hand they are ostensibly trying to solve by means of lobbying. If this seems absurd it is because it is absurd. Before such lobbying can be effective we must create a Christian consensus in society. This can only be done by changing the worldview that underpins our society. This in turn can only be achieved by bringing up a

new generation of children who see life differently, who see life and the world from a Christian perspective. This Christian perspective must be imbibed from youth. The generation of those who will form the consensus necessary to change society must be educated and generally brought up in terms of such a worldview.

This is how secular humanists were able to capture our society. They captured the education system and as a result were able to change the religion of the nation by inculcating the new religion of secular humanism in the next generation in the schools. Christians must therefore withdraw their children from these schools and start educating them in terms of the Christian religion if they are to win back the nation to Christ. Lobbying cannot achieve this and is ineffective where a Christian consensus does not exist. It is *impossible* to create this Christian consensus in a generation without Christian education.

Christian education, therefore, is the high ground, the vanguard, in our battle with secular humanism for the soul of the nation. Unless we are willing to bring up the next generation in terms of a Christian worldview, a Christian understanding of the whole of life, we will not win our nations for Christ. We may gain individual converts of course. God will always save his elect. But we will not win our society, our culture, our nation for Christ. And it is the discipling of the *nation* that Christ commands us to pursue in the Great Commission, not the snatching of brands from the fire—i.e. soul saving.

In the secular school the child gets a complete worldview. The State schooling system in Britain requires teachers to provide for the intellectual, physical, moral and *spiritual* development of the child. In other words a complete worldview. Christian schools and home schools must do the same. The education provided by Christian schools and homes must not be a narrowly religious one, but rather a complete worldview.

By educating our children in this way we shall achieve far more than lobbying government can achieve. We shall create a generation that thinks, acts and *votes* differently. When we start creating such a consensus we shall not need to worry about lobbying. We do not need lobbyists; rather we need Christian politicians, i.e. politicians who think *politically* in a Christian way, and this is only possible where their thinking is done in terms of a Christian worldview. We need Christian educators; not educators who merely happen to be Christians—there are plenty of them, indeed the British State education system is awash with Christians, but this has little effect on the system. Rather, we need educators who think about education in terms of a Christian worldview. We need Christian doctors and health workers, i.e. not doctors and health workers who merely have saved souls, but doctors and health workers who think about medicine in terms of a Christian worldview. We need Christian film-makers and media people, not merely film-makers and media people with saved souls, but film-makers and media people who think about film and the media in terms of a Christian worldview. And likewise in all other walks of life. And sad as it is to say it today, we need Christian pastors and clergymen who will think about their work in a Christian way, in terms of a Christian worldview, because very often today clergymen do not think in a Christian way, they are often just as indoctrinated with the secular humanist worldview as their congregations are, sometimes more so. The

Church and the work of the ministry today are infected with all sorts of influences that come from the secular worldview that dominates our society.

This is a strategy that will win back our societies for Christ. Lobbying will not achieve this. The future of Western society and the world is now dependent on how we educate our children. The task of providing Christian education, therefore, is absolutely vital to the future of our culture and civilisation.

We need to get the message across to Christians that sending their children to secular schools is a practice that will help atheists to take over our society and is in fact the best way to paganise society, i.e. to de-Christianise the nation. We need to make it clear to Christians that faithfulness to the Lord necessitates that our children are educated *in the Lord*, i.e. in terms of a Christian worldview. Christian education is not an option for the enthusiastic Christian. It is a vital act of faithfulness to the Lord. To send our children to be educated in secular schools is *treason* against God. Christian education, therefore, is where the money needs to be spent and the time and resources concentrated if we are to win the battle with secularism, not lobbying.

But such education needs to be more than providing institutions where teachers are Christians. The *ethos* of the school must be Christian; the *curriculum* of the school must be Christian; and the *theory of knowledge* that underpins every lesson in every subject taught must be Christian because it is this Christian theory of knowledge that will determine the worldview that governs the student's understanding of all things.

Therefore the difference between a secular school and a Christian school is not in the type and number of subjects taught. It is rather in the *theory of knowledge* in terms of which the teaching is done. It is this that will shape the worldview of the teacher and therefore the understanding of the pupil in every area of study. Teaching is never a religiously neutral enterprise. One never teaches merely the facts, but always at the same time a particular way of understanding or interpreting the facts. This may be quite unselfconscious in the teacher, but it is always the case.

Nevertheless, in a world that is dominated by secular humanism and its reputedly neutral theory of knowledge, we need to be self-conscious about the Christian theory of knowledge because if we are not operating self-consciously from a Christian theory of knowledge we will most likely be operating, i.e. teaching, from a secular humanist theory of knowledge, even though we may be teaching in a Christian school. Of course the secular humanist theory of knowledge is not religiously neutral. It is a religious perspective. Religious neutrality is impossible. The illusion of religious neutrality is possible, but not the reality of it.

The point I want to stress here is the *vital* nature of the task that Christian schools and home schoolers are involved in. But it is not sufficient to set up a school that is run by Christians, with good RE lessons, good discipline, no drugs, no sex lessons etc., and think that these things on their own will make a Christian education. They are part of it of course. But the philosophy on which the teaching is based must be Christian as well. This means that the theory of knowledge in terms of which the teaching takes place in every subject must also be Christian. RE, a lack of sex lessons, the discipline policy of the school etc. are not the only Christian elements that make up a Christian school. The history

lesson, maths lesson, geography lesson, Latin lesson, art, music and English lessons, and every other subject in the curriculum must proceed from the Christian theory of knowledge; that is, from the assumption that the world exists and can be understood properly only in the light of the creative will of God—that only by presupposing (1) the creation of the whole cosmos by the God of Scripture, (2) the fall of mankind into sin, rebellion against God, and (3) the redemption of the world in the sacrificial and substitutionary life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, can we truly understand the world and all things in it.

It is this philosophy that I want to stress as being so important because it must underpin and inform every subject in the curriculum and shape the worldview of the school, the teachers and the pupils.

There was a time when this Christian worldview was dominant in the West. Even non-believers in the Western nations thought and acted as if they were Christians, and in a sense they were culturally Christian, if not regenerate. Today the situation is reversed. The secular worldview is dominant because the secularists took control of the education of the nation while Christians failed to respond adequately to the challenge. As a consequence Christians today, despite being regenerate and having a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour of their souls, often think and live like secular humanists. And sending their children to secular schools only compounds the problem for the next generation. We have therefore a Church full of increasingly worldly Christians with each new generation that comes along, a

Church that is of the world but not in it. This leads to a spiral down to the de-commissioning of the nations and disaster.

We must reverse this if we are to win the nations for Christ. The Christian worldview must be dominant if we are to fulfil the Great Commission. Without the consistent and dedicated practice of Christian education the accomplishment of the Great Commission is impossible. The Great Commission commands us to *teach* all nations, not snatch brands from the fire. Christian education is on the cutting edge of the Great Commission. Nothing is more important in this task than the teaching, the education of our children. Wherever Christian missions have gone in the world they have taught people, educated them, and educated their children. Education along with the provision of medicine has been one of the most important aspects of the Great Commission. And yet it has been abandoned in the homelands of the West. The preaching of the gospel to the nations and the subsequent conversion of the nations to Christ has not been accomplished independently of education and medicine, and this is because teaching and healing are necessarily connected with the preaching of the gospel, as Christ himself made clear (Mt. 28:18–20; 10:7–8; Lk. 9:2; 10:9). The divorce of education from the mission of the gospel, which is what has happened in modern Western cultures, has been an unmitigated disaster that has led to the Great De-Commission, the overturning of Christ's last command on earth to his disciples. There will be no progress in the Great Commission in the future without the reinstatement of Christian education in its fulness. *C&S*

KUYPER FOUNDATION FILM MAKING PROJECT

THE KUYPER FOUNDATION will be making a series of documentary films to be shown as part of multimedia road-show presentations and also for wider distribution in DVD format. The purpose of this project is to make the message of the Kuyper Foundation accessible to a wider audience than the readership of the journal.

In order to realise this project we need to purchase the necessary equipment. The current funding of the Kuyper Foundation enables us to publish the journal, organise conferences, publish books from time to time and run a large capacity web site. Some of the funding for this project will be made available by the savings we shall make by distributing the journal on the internet in PDF format in future instead of printing and posting the journal. However, we need to raise additional funding for this film project.

We have already been promised a certain amount of money for some of the equipment we need, but we need to raise a further £10,000 of initial funding to get the project off the ground.

This is an important new project for the future of the Kuyper Foundation. Please consider giving to help fund this project. Information on how to give to the Kuyper Foundation can be found on page 64.

If you want further information on the project or wish to discuss helping to fund the project please contact the Director. EMAIL: scp@kuyper.org • TEL. (01823) 665721

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

by Mark R. Kreitzer [†]

INTRODUCTION

THOMAS KUHN's study, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*,¹ helped spark a virtual revolution in the epistemology of science. Using a philosophically idealist, post-Kantian perspective, Kuhn and others are attempting to demonstrate that there is no steady progress forward in knowledge in the natural sciences. Instead, movement comes often as a series of paradigmatic shifts, yet with no necessary implication of a forward direction. Using this framework, many have now come to believe that all types of scientific knowledge are paradigm dependent. Therefore, all scientific factuality is theory laden, and every fact is an interpreted fact. The result is, in the words of an old Simon and Garfunkel song, "Every man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest." This article desires to point a scriptural way forward, away from this postmodernist relativism and the naïve Realism of evangelicalism, bound as it is by modernity. Being a Missiologist (Theologian of Mission), I have necessarily applied this scriptural way to Missiology, but the principles certainly have a much broader application. I have included a glossary of terms at the end for those who may need to familiarize themselves again with the philosophical terms which I use.

Following Kuhn, most philosophers of the social sciences today would no longer hold to any self-evident and universal, foundational truths upon which to base any knowledge whatsoever. All knowledge is actually belief mediated through human invented symbols (i.e., language), and "all of our beliefs together form part of a groundless web of interrelated beliefs."² Second, most would also correctly reject, it turns

out, the classic Greek dualism of the Enlightenment's age of modernity which contrasts objective and universal *science* with subjective and irrational *religion*.³

Therefore, Kuhnian-influenced, post-Kantian scholarship sees all knowledge, including theological knowledge, as mediated through the distorting mechanism of an individual's interpreting mind or collective human *minds*.⁴ This new post-modern theory of knowledge—often called non- or anti-foundationalism—emphasises the "epistemic importance of community," because every group has its own rationality and logic.⁵ In contrast to modernity, which bases knowledge on the perceptions of the individual, post-modernity or non-foundationalism sees knowledge as springing out of purely local, communal ideals. Each scientific community creates its own truths mediated through its ideals. Therefore "truth" is not universal, nor is it global, but merely parochial and local.

This revolution in thought has now hit the social sciences full force and has made a great impact upon anthropology, sociology, missiology, and intercultural studies.⁶ Indeed, much theology itself has also been deeply influenced.⁷

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 3. I will cite several articles and volumes by Van Huyssteen since he is an important Afrikaner theologian. This essay was originally written in a South African and particularly Afrikaans context.

3. See Herman Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*, translated by John Kraay, edited by Mark Vander Vennen and Bernard Zylstra (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1979).

4. See Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology*, p. 19.

5. Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology*, p. 3.

6. See e.g. Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, with a foreword by Bernard Ramm (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979); David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); Paul G. Hiebert, *The Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts. Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1999).

7. See J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology*. Note response to this type of theology, William J. Larkin, Jr., *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics: Interpreting and Applying the Authoritative Word in a Relativistic Age* (Columbia, SC: Columbia Bible College and Seminary Press, 1992).

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1. Thomas S Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970, 2nd ed.).

2. J. Wentzel Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationist Theology*

Having rejected the dualism of modernity, such post-Kuhnian scholars consider all social scientific and theological disciplines to be “like scientific paradigms.” Every discipline produces an “educational community” that initiates “members” into a unique paradigmatic manner for “recognizing and solving certain sorts of problems.”⁸ The logical concomitant of such post-Kantian idealism is a *group-based relativism*. Each disciplinary group or educational community provides a “differing view of reality,”⁹ a “total relativism of rationalities,”¹⁰ each unique to those holding to the presuppositions of the group paradigm. In its most consequent form, then, nonfoundationalism creates a “relativism so complete that any attempt at a cross-disciplinary conversation faces the threat of complete incommensurability.”¹¹ “Postmodernity has rightly unmasked the illusions created by epistemological foundationalism. We now know¹² that any issue is always seen from a particular interpreted point of view, and that our epistemic practices therefore constitute contexts in which our very participation is a precondition for our observations.”¹³

Growth of Instrumentalism and Critical Realism

Taken to its logical extreme, post-modern social science must teach that each disciplinary community, which is a unique cultural system on its own, is incommensurable to all other such communities. The language, logic, rules, and rationality of each cultural or disciplinary sphere are governed intra-disciplinarily and intra-culturally. Postmodernity, which is a fruit of the post-Kantian and post-Kuhnian era, rejects all singular “homogenous metanarrative[s].”¹⁴ This includes certainly natural and social science, theology, intercultural studies and missiology as I have indicated. Such epistemological relativism, however, is untenable for any research methodology that intends to communicate to a wider community than the small community of those initiated into the research paradigm.

In response, many scientists and even theologians become instrumentalists, or mere “technicians” in a pragmatic search for success, paying slight attention to their own philosophical presuppositions. Often another solution for such epistemological nihilism is a mediating, synthetic approach with several variations, termed “critical realism.” This project seems to be an attempt to meld the Realism of modernity-bound positivism and empiricism with the “critical philosophy” or “critical metaphysics” of Immanuel Kant.¹⁵ Ian Barbour introduced this epistemological *via media* into the theology-science discussions. Now through the works of Charles Kraft and the much more moderate Paul

Hiebert, Barbour’s approach has been introduced into missiology-science discussions.¹⁶ It has been the “dominant epistemology in the science-theology debate for several decades.”¹⁷ Several posit various permutations of this basic theme, such as postfoundationalism,¹⁸ soft non-relativism¹⁹ and “responsible relativism”²⁰ but each of these attempts at a mediating position is similar.

Interdisciplinary Methodologies

Critical Realism and other integrative and synthetic approaches attempt to overcome rigid paradigm boundaries and disciplinary isolation, and the consequent incommensurability between the disciplines. These approaches attempt to move in the direction of interdisciplinary research. “Interdisciplinary study itself is a paradigm shift” in global academia.²¹ On the one hand, this approach is distinct from disciplinarity and cross-disciplinarity,²² which involve only one discipline or disciplinary perspective.²³ On the other hand, the integration and synthesis of multiple disciplines proceeds on an ascending continuum from least to complete integration: (1) multidisciplinary,²⁴ (2) pluridisciplinarity,²⁵ (3) interdisciplinarity, and (4) transdisciplinarity.²⁶

Definitions

All synthetic, interdisciplinary study involves teamwork, which emphasises “integrative” studies over “discrete” studies done in disciplinary isolation.²⁷ Synthesis is achieved by developing a “holistic framework” that “facilitate[s] the interaction of quantitative and qualitative empirical efforts.”²⁸ The result is a new, singular, and coherent entity that

8. Richard Gelwick, “Truly interdisciplinary study and ‘commitment in relativism,’” in *Soundings*, Vol. 66 (1983), p. 422.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 425.

10. Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology*, p. 3.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Unfortunately, Van Huyssteen does not see the logical contradiction. He “knows” (a universal truth claim) that all knowledge is interpreted merely within a parochial group.

13. Niels Henrik Gregersen and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, “Theology and Science in a Pluralist World: An Introduction” in *Rethinking Theology and Science: Six Models for the Current Dialogue*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 5.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Carl Raschke, *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), p. 39, see pp. 37–40.

16. Ian Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper, 1971); Kees Van Kooten Niekerk, “A Critical Realist Perspective on the Dialogue between Theology and Science,” in *Rethinking Theology and Science: Six Models for the Current Dialogue*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), see e.g., Kraft, *op. cit.*; Hiebert, *op. cit.*

17. Van Kooten Niekerk, “A Critical Realist Perspective on the Dialogue between Theology and Science,” p. 52.

18. Van Huyssteen 1997; 1998; 1999. “Can there be a life of committed Christian faith after moving beyond the absolutism of foundationalism and the relativism of antifoundationalism? I believe a . . . helpful, postfoundationalist model for theistic belief can be found in a carefully constructed critical realism” (Van Huyssteen 1997, 41; see 1989, 143–197).

19. Ninian Smart, *Religion and the Western Mind* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

20. Gelwick, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

22. To view one or more disciplines using the rigid epistemological axioms of another, see Klein 1990, 55; Gelwick, *op. cit.*, p. 426. This is similar to what linguists and anthropologists call an etic perspective.

23. Gelwick *op. cit.*, p. 426.

24. “Essentially additive not integrative” and “not interactive” (Julie Thompson Klein, *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), p. 56. Disciplinary groups work in conjunction with one another.

25. Disciplines are related in parallel ways but without coordination (*ibid.*, p. 68; Gelwick, *op. cit.*, p. 426).

26. A high degree of cooperation between disciplines, mutually enhancing epistemologies (see Klein *ibid.*, p. 66). Refer also to Erich Jantsch, ed., *The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980); Gelwick, *op. cit.*, p. 426; Klein, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–73; Mabiala Kenzo and Enoch Wan, “Evangelical Theology, Postmodernity and the Promise of Interdisciplinarity,” unpublished paper (ETS Danvers, MA, November 17, 1999).

27. Klein *ibid.*, p. 60.

28. *Ibid.*

demands understanding and integration of varying epistemologies and methodologies. The new entity then constructs “a common vocabulary,”²⁹ establishing a “new metalevel of discourse.”³⁰

Transdisciplinarity is the ultimate, and possibly unreachable, goal in the integration continuum, which I mentioned above. It “signifies the interconnectedness of all aspects of reality, transcending the dynamics of a dialectical [dualistic] synthesis to grasp the total dynamics of reality as a whole. It is a vision of interdisciplinarity penetrating the entire system of science.”³¹ Erich Jantsch, to whom this continuum is greatly indebted, exemplified this approach in the volume he edited; *The Evolutionary Vision: Toward a Unifying Paradigm of Physical, Biological, and Sociocultural Evolution*.³² Materialistic evolutionism, he believes, is the transcendent unifying principle of total reality.

The result of this attempt at integrative studies is, as Gelwick states, that those trained in interdisciplinarity discover “the ultimate moral benefit” that “cognitive absolutes” are not tenable and that those who use the methodology “tend to adopt a responsible relativism.” Their conclusion is that there are limits upon “all absolute views of reality,” which are to be remedied by synthetic and integrative philosophies and methodologies of science and religion.³³ This is certainly what Gelwick claims is true if one first presupposes an absolute, monistic view of reality. This would then become a Grand Unifying Theory (GUT) of ontology (metaphysics).³⁴

Metaphysically, there are only two choices for such a Grand Unifying Theory. Either a person must presuppose an idealistic, spiritualist monism (Idealism), or one must take as axiomatic that matter is the singular substance of the universe (Materialism). Neither of these monistic unifying theories can explain why there are unifying noumena in the case of materialism or particularising phenomena in the case of idealism.

Anticipatory Biblical Analysis

Biblical Christianity, however, rejects both monisms as “absolute views of reality.” Both the noumenal and phenomenal³⁵ aspects of created reality push epistemology towards a viewpoint that must take both the material and ideal into account. Every data of particularity comes to human perception already organised in a unifying framework and vice versa. Thus a perennial question of philosophy has been the relationship of the one to the many, or unity to diversity.³⁶ The problem is “how to get a network of purely conceptual and absolutely comprehensive relations into significant con-

tact with an endless number of unrelated facts.”³⁷ Inevitably this dilemma has led all autonomous Western (and Eastern) thought towards some form of a syncretism, which is an inevitable pragmatic and dialectical dualism in life, even for those who desire to escape from it. In other words, every person must live with a world in which diversity is unified and unity is diverse *at the same time*. Dialectical dualism either assumes that the diversity is somehow accidental or the unity is somehow by pure chance. All dialectical dualisms, however, are unstable and inevitably break down. The break down always leads to a reversion to monistic thought, first at the presuppositional level and then culturally. Monistic presuppositions lead to individual and cultural anomie, and then to individual and cultural dysfunction.³⁸

Christians, to the contrary, know that there is no true fact (particularity, manyness) that is not connected to a true meaning framework (unity, oneness) in the whole creation and vice versa. No person can escape the Triune Creator’s truth and creation design. Therefore, only biblical Christianity begins with a true synthetic balance that does not compromise or mix either the noumenal or the phenomenal. The reason for this balance is that biblical Christianity begins with a commitment to a personal Plural-Unity as the transcendent foundation of all ethics, physics, and metaphysics.³⁹ Neither modern nor postmodern man can escape from the one (noumena) or the many (phenomena) within the Creation. Both the one and the many have been created and are presently upheld by the Grand Unifying, yet always Tri-Personal, One-Many. Every true fact is created by God, comes to the mind structured and upheld by God, and exists within a unifying truth framework created and upheld by the same triune God. Both the created and immanent, one and many, reflect the glory of that Triune God, in whom exists the equal ultimacy of the one and the many (Van Til).⁴⁰

This perspective is not a mere nostalgic return to a pre-modern view of the unity of knowledge. It is first a return to the biblical-Hebraic roots of both Testaments. Furthermore, following Paul’s example (e.g. 1 Corinthians, Colossians and Ephesians), it is a return to these roots only after a thoroughgoing engagement with contemporary culture. In other words, in our case, it is a radical return to the unity of

37. Cornelius A. Van Til, *Christian-Theistic Evidences*, p. 237, quoted in Greg L. Bahnsen, *ibid.*, pp. 237; see also *ibid.*, p. 383.

38. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953–1958), *idem* 1979; Rushdoony, “The One and Many Problem — the Contribution of Van Til”; *idem*, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy*. Dualism either breaks down to the monism of radical individualistic materialism leading to anarchism, radical Libertarianism, and nihilism, or it breaks down into the monism of spiritual-idealistic holism leading to various collective totalitarianisms, e.g., Fascism, secular humanism, racial socialisms [e.g., Nazism]; revolutionary humanisms [e.g., Maoism, Marxist-Leninism]; and an emerging New Age or cosmic humanism.

39. Corresponding to axiology and ontology (or metaphysics in Van Til’s terminology).

40. See Rushdoony “The One and Many Problem — the Contribution of Van Til”; *idem*, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy*; John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995), pp. 71–78; Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 238–241; 326. “For the Christian, the ultimate unifying principle is the self-sufficient, eternal, sovereign, personal, and triune Creator of the heaven and earth. And within this Creator there is an equal ultimacy of unity and plurality. . . . The impersonal, particular, and causal feature of the physical universe are subordinate to this God. . . . in the Christian’s comprehensive scheme of knowledge” (*ibid.*, p. 326, n. 131).

29. *Ibid.*, p. 57. 30. *Ibid.*, p. 66. 31. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

32. Jantsch, *op. cit.* 33. Gelwick, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

34. Even postmodernity, which denies any metanarratives and foundations must begin with this GUT, as an ontological presupposition.

35. Noumenal is the theory or concept tying the phenomenal or those perceptions of the senses together.

36. Rousas J. Rushdoony, “The One and Many Problem — the Contribution of Van Til,” in *Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Philosophy and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til*, ed. E. R. Geehan (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), *idem*, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1978); Greg L. Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998), p. 238.

all diverse knowledge in and by means of the Triune Creator only after an engagement with the presuppositions of both modernity and postmodernity.⁴¹

Lastly, it is a return to that unity only in the triune God who provides the unity of all knowledge. He has revealed himself with complete truthfulness in every area of life in Scripture, which teaches the unity of all knowledge in the one true God (Is. 45:5–10, 18–23; Rom. 3:29–30). “For the Christian, universals exist in a concrete (not abstract) fashion within the mind of the personal Creator Himself. God thinks ‘universally’ and such thinking is found in man ‘analogically.’”⁴² In other words, only the one, truthful God gives meaning (unity) to the particular facts of the universe by means of his Creation and providence. All facts come to man already interpreted meaningfully by the Creator. Man’s position is to discover and submit to the Creator’s pre-interpretation and learn to “think God’s thoughts after him.” Human beings can discover and think God’s thoughts exactly and accurately—but *never* comprehensively—which only God can do. The result is a singular epistemology, and a singular rationality for all disciplines and ethno-cultures of humanity. This understanding provides both a unifying paradigm for acquiring theological and scientific knowledge, and a model for interdisciplinarity, as we shall see.

In summary then, because God has previously pre-planned and pre-designed every detail of the universe and of history, “there are causal connections, meaning, and purpose to be discovered by man when he uses his powers of observation and applies his intellect to what he finds.” Except in those areas where Scripture gives direct information about nature and history, he cannot find “God’s thoughts regarding them [in Scripture].” Therefore, he must use his senses. “Given the presuppositions of creation, providence, and revelation, empirical knowledge is both possible and important to man.”⁴³

Certainly, the Bible is not a systematised textbook for science. Yet it does provide the meaning framework and some truly objective, factual data (history, chronology, origins, etc.) within which to discover God’s thoughts in nature and culture. The unbeliever, however, pretends to be religiously neutral, presupposing that chance, time, and luck stand behind all data, a view that “reduces [itself] to irrationalism. Empirical methods of knowing can be made intelligible only within the Christian worldview” as a truth framework to interpret all data.⁴⁴

Interdisciplinarity and Social Science Research Methods

“The move toward interdisciplinary study is a sign of our increasing awareness of the limits of problem solving, and of

the restrictions on creativity, when researchers and students are tied to a single discipline.”⁴⁵

Without the foundational presupposition of the personal Triune Providence, contemporary theorists are being forced again to reconsider the relationship of data to meaning, of the one to the many. Social science theorists debate over whether quantitative, data-bound empirical methodologies are inextricably tied to modernity with its positivist ideology, and whether qualitative methodologies are tied to post-modernist subjectivism. So-called positivist methodologies are termed foundationalist⁴⁶ and naïve realist. They are further criticised as “essentialist” because they allegedly attempt to discover the real essence of physical and social facts as they are in themselves. The opposite methodologies are categorised as non-foundationalist and idealist. Positivist and empiricist methodologies are tied to modernity and a correspondence theory of truth. Anti- or non-empiricist methodologies are tied to post-modernity and a coherence theory of truth.⁴⁷

Several suggest that an interdisciplinary methodology is the only method that can bridge the gap between the data bound correspondence theories and meaning bound coherence theories of truth.⁴⁸ Several postulate scientific realism or its variant form, critical realism, as the best philosophical foundation for adopting this mediating, interdisciplinary methodology. Princeton theologian Wentzel Van Huyssteen, especially, has developed a variant theological form of critical realism to allegedly bridge the gap between the two extremes.⁴⁹ In the realm of the interface of theology and science, Van Huyssteen emphasises the term post-foundationalism to describe his form of critical realism.⁵⁰ At present, as I have stated, the thinking on interdisciplinary methodology in theological circles seems to be dominated by critical realist and postfoundationalist philosophy.

I do indeed suggest that interdisciplinary methodologies are an excellent means to bridge the gap between the extremes of naïve realism and idealism. However, a Reformational form of interdisciplinarity is a much more biblical

45. Gelwick, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

46. “Whether in theology or the sciences, the classical model of rationality clearly always requires some form of foundationalism. Foundationalism . . . requires the foundationalist propositions must be self-evident and indubitable. Since, however, there are no grounds for believing that there exists a body of self-evident or given propositions that will allow us to justify our beliefs, foundationalism ultimately fails” (Van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science*, p. 124).

47. See discussion and typology charts in Hiebert, *op. cit.*; Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

48. See Gelwick, *op. cit.*; Klein, *op. cit.*; Van Huyssteen, *Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); *idem*, *Postfoundationism in Theology and Science: Beyond Conflict and Consonance in Rethinking Theology and Science: Six Models for the Current Dialogue*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen and J. Wentzel van Huyssteen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Enoch Y. Wan, “Rethinking Missiological Research Methodology: Exploring a New Direction. Paper presented to ETS/EMS, Columbia International University, Columbia, SC., Mar. 20–21, 1998; Kenzo and Wan, *op. cit.*

49. Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology; Essays in Postfoundationalist Theology*, “Postfoundationism in Theology and Science: Beyond Conflict and Consonance,” *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science*.

50. See Van Huyssteen, *ibid.*

41. See John Milbank, Pickstock, and Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999), a noble yet flawed attempt.

42. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 241. An excellent example of this singular methodology is the principles given for legal research in Dt. 13:12–14; 19:15–18; 25:1–2. The Creator provides the epistemological meaning framework and upholds all the data details to be discovered by the judges.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 244. This truth is objective, because it is created and given by a Transcendent Creator who sees all things as they comprehensively and truly are in themselves. Further, he is distinct from his created objects and has created each object distinct from each other. Only this Creation-based, biblical perspective can make sense of the world as it is.

alternative than critical realism as the philosophical foundation for this bridging effort. I would build this scriptural alternative upon the insights of Herman Dooyeweerd⁵¹, H. G. Stoker,⁵² and especially upon Greg Bahnsen's official collation and interpretation of C. A. Van Til.⁵³ Next, I will summarise some of the key philosophical presuppositions of critical realism and give a Vantillian critique.

Philosophical Presuppositions of Critical Realism

In missiological circles, some are now also claiming that a radical⁵⁴ or a more moderate and biblical⁵⁵ form of *critical realism* is a middle ground between the two extremes of naïve realism (positivism and empiricism) and idealism. Kraft and Hiebert (as well as Van Huyssteen above) seem to have followed Ian Barbour's lead in adopting this terminology.⁵⁶ Critical realists in missiology and theology⁵⁷ follow Kuhn's paradigmatic approach to some extent.⁵⁸ The opposite of Kuhn's approach is termed essentialism and is criticised as being foundationalist in philosophical background. All thus reject a typical positivistic model in both science, including social science, and theology. The basic question is not anymore "whether a given theory is provable, correct, or true."⁵⁹ Instead, critical realism in its various forms, ranging from Hiebert's conservative and more biblical form to Van Huyssteen's and Kraft's⁶⁰ more radical forms, asks a different question. The foundational query concerning any proposed theory in science or theology is, does it propose "adequate solutions to meaningful problems" within a particular cultural and worldview paradigm?⁶¹ "Truth" is not based on a universal rule, but is paradigm specific. Each paradigm has a specific rationality and truthfulness within the system. This rejection of proof and accuracy seems to

demonstrate a pragmatic, post-Kantian influence (i.e. instrumentalist influence).

In summary, positivist and empiricist methodologies are foundationalist, tied to modernity and the correspondence theory of truth. They teach that every fact is theory-neutral. On the other hand, idealist methodologies claim to be non-foundationalist and are now most often tied to postmodernity and the coherence theory of truth. Every fact is theory bound.

Basic Presuppositions of Critical Realism

The basic assumption of this perspective in theology and missiology is post-Kantian and post-Kuhnian. All access to "reality" is through a human, mentally imposed interpretation. Every fact is a human interpreted fact: "There is no uninterpreted access to reality and in the process of interpretation the role of metaphor is central."⁶² Critical Realism views descriptions of reality, assumed to be actual and external, to be accessed *indirectly* through human created models. Models are supposed to "refer" to something actual but in fact are only "metaphorically based screens or 'grids,' indirectly redescrib[ing] reality."⁶³

The basic assumption, following Kant, is that no human or human language can describe something as it is in itself (*Das Ding an sich*).⁶⁴ No human can discover the essence of anything. "We always relate to our world(s) through [human] interpreted experience."⁶⁵ This includes both theological and scientific knowledge, creating an "epistemic similarit[y]" between the two. Neither can claim "demonstrably certain foundations" to uniquely "warrant . . . theory choices."⁶⁶ Neither can demonstrate that a theory is "provable, correct, or true," only that it is pragmatically useful.⁶⁷ At this point, critical realism does not differ from Instrumentalism.

51. Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*.

52. H. G. Stoker, *Beginsels en Metodes in die Wetenskap* [Principles and Methods of Science] (Johannesburg, RSA: Boekhandel de Jong, 1969); *idem*, "Reconnoitering the Theory of Knowledge of Prof. Dr. Cornelius Van Til" in E. R. Geehan, ed., *Jerusalem and Athens: Critical discussions on the philosophy and apologetics of Cornelius Van Til* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), p. 25–70.

53. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*

54. See e.g. Kraft, *op. cit.* Kraft's earlier view (1979) could even be termed "Christian Instrumentalism" (see Mark R. Kreitzer, "Dependent Trinitarian Creationism, Theistic Critical Realism, and Christian Instrumentalism: C. A. Van Til, Paul Hiebert, and Charles Kraft in Missiological Interaction" (Unpublished Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Paper, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2000).

55. Hiebert 1999. Critical Realism seeks the "middle ground between positivism, with its emphasis on objective truth, and instrumentalism, with its stress on the subjective nature of human knowledge . . . It affirms the presence of objective truth but recognizes that this is subjectively apprehended" (Hiebert 1999, 69). "Like instrumentalism, critical realism distinguishes between reality and our knowledge of it; but like positivism, it claims that that knowledge can be true. Critical realism also assumes, ontologically, that the world is orderly and that that order can be comprehended, in some measure, by human reason" (Hiebert 1999, 71).

56. Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion*, 1971; *idem*, *Myths, Models and Paradigms*, 1974.

57. E.g., Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigm*, 1974; Kraft, *op. cit.*; Van Huyssteen, Bosch, *op. cit.*; Hiebert, *op. cit.*

58. Kuhn, *op. cit.*

59. Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith*, 1989, p. 174.

60. Kraft, *op. cit.*

61. Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith*, 1989, p. 174; see Kraft, *op. cit.*

62. Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith*, 1989, p. 158. Kraft, also denying that any knowledge corresponds with the external world, agrees that it is always an imposition of the human mind: "The fact that as human beings we see reality not as it is but always from inside our heads in terms of such models means that 'no direct comparison of model and world is possible' ([Barbour 1974]:38). We cannot, therefore, take our models . . . literally or absolutely" (Kraft 1979, 29). Science is a subjective model of the external world. Meaning and knowledge are intra-cultural and cohere to a cultural system of meaning with no necessary correspondence to any transcultural form (Kraft 1979, 23–28). Applied to Scripture, it is impossible to have an inerrant book and an accurate doctrine of inerrancy. Like Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith*, 1989, p. 179ff, Kraft explicitly rejects inerrancy; Kraft, *op. cit.*

63. Van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith*, 1989, p. 157; see also Kraft, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–31, Hiebert, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–78. Knowledge involves the human mind ordering sense percepts into "an interpretive whole" (Hiebert 1999, 77). Hiebert further states: "It is the configurational nature of knowledge that gives meaning to uninterpreted experiences. It gives to knowledge a coherence and comprehension that makes sense out of a bewildering barrage of sense data entering our mind," Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Question: What gives coherence to the barrage of data bombarding the senses: Man's mind or God's mind? It must be the Creator, who has designed and orders all data, which are external to man and are created objects to be observed. Furthermore, God placed meaning categories in man's mind by creating and providentially upholding languages. Lastly, he has given capacity to all humans to perceive and understand because of the rational aspect of the *imago Dei*.

64. See Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms*, 1974, p. 34.

65. Van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* (Eerdmans, 1999), p. 268.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

This form of critical realism creates what Van Huyssteen calls “a responsible epistemic pluralism,”⁶⁸ based on a “postfoundationalist” rationality.⁶⁹ A postfoundationalist concept of rationality is primarily individualistic, existential (i.e. decisional), and fideistic: “the predicate ‘rational’ first of all characterizes an individual’s responsible decisions and beliefs, not propositions as such, nor communities.” Paradoxically, however, it also involves the “larger context of the community.” Because each individual’s judgment is fallible, it requires an “ongoing critical evaluation by others.”⁷⁰ The standard of judgment, furthermore, is not transcendent to the community but immanent within it. It involves an attempt to take the individual’s judgment seriously and involves an “evaluation against the standards of a community of inquiry.”⁷¹

Rationality is thus diverse from community to community. There is no trans-cultural rationality: “There are no universal standards of rationality against which we can measure other beliefs or competing research traditions.”⁷² Parochial tradition is not merely “part of our background knowledge, but . . . the main source of our knowledge.”⁷³ Consequent nonfoundationalism emphasises the “fact that every group and every context may in fact have its own rationality.”⁷⁴ The result of this perspective is that the Reformation doctrine of *sola Scriptura* is no more. “There are no more foundationalist, universal, cross-cultural, or interreligious rules for theology,” though some rules and presuppositions can be shared cross-culturally to make some discourse commensurable across cultures, traditions, or disciplines.⁷⁵ Communal tradition seems to reign supreme.

This sharing, then, creates the basis for an interdisciplinary methodology. Two or more disciplinary or ethno-lingual communities attempt to share some rules and presuppositions in a process of finding mutually agreeable, and functionally “useful,” solutions to problems. Upon his presuppositions, however, Van Huyssteen fails to explain how there can be any prior interdisciplinary communication so that some rules and presuppositions can be mutually shared.

A Trinitarian Creationist or Nuanced Vantillian Critique

As a nuanced Vantillian,⁷⁶ I agree that an interdisciplinary methodology helps bridge the gap between the two epistemological paradigms. However, this agreement is based on grounds that differ from Van Huyssteen, Hiebert, and Kraft’s critical realism. All three *de facto* presuppose human autonomy in rationality because they adopt the Kantian view that the human mind imposes its order upon chaotic percepts.⁷⁷ Modernity and post-modernity, positivism and postpositivism share this presupposition.⁷⁸ I term the modi-

fied Vantillian perspective I use, Trinitarian Creationism.⁷⁹ This term is, by necessity, reductionistic because there are other key ideas that are not included (such as e.g. antithesis, eschatology). There are five key principles.

Trinitarian

This concept is more than the reduced Trinitarianism of systematic theologies. Eastern thought possesses a spiritual monism in which the external world of diverse phenomena is merely *maya* or illusion. Western philosophy often begins with a material monism and methodological naturalism. Both philosophies, however, are functionally dualistic because neither can escape from the one universe created by God with both unifying truth and diverse data. Christian thought must thus explicitly begin with the foundational presupposition of the “equal ultimacy of the one and the many” (C. A. Van Til). Both are necessary for truth and both are inescapable because both exist at the same time in the ultimate reality which is God and within His creation, which reflects His glory.

Transcendent Foundationalism

According to the Trinitarian Creationist critique, then, every person has a foundation. Either it is an individual or communal foundation that is immanent within the Creation or it is a transcendental foundation based upon the truth of the Creator as found in the Scriptures. There is indeed universal truth based upon the wisdom, character, and community of the Triune God. The Trinitarian Creationist perspective correctly begins with the Transcendental Argument for God (TAG): presupposing the existence of the Triune Creator and the complete presuppositional framework (worldview) of Scripture.⁸⁰ Only after beginning with that total picture can one demonstrate that the opposite is genuinely impossible. “There is *at base* only one non-Christian worldview; logically speaking, it is the negation of the overall picture described above—the denial of some or all of the propositions used to summarize biblically-based Christianity (e.g., the Trinity, creation, providence, sin, incarnation, redemption, regeneration) . . . Every non-Christian philosophical position takes for granted that man, not God, must function with ultimate intellectual authority, being the measure or “reference point” for all that he believes to be true.”⁸¹

According to Trinitarian Creationism, Christian social scientists must irenically challenge all other scientific-philosophical worldview systems. They then must demonstrate that the antithetical meaning system is actually meaningless upon its own presuppositions. None of the antithetical systems give the preconditions for any intelligible knowledge or morality. All are internally self-contradictory. By demonstrating the impossibility of the contrary, a biblical (i.e. Trinitarian Creationist) social scientist or missiologist can arrive at certainty. Certainty, of course, is anathema to all post-Kantian systems, both critical realist and instrumentalist. This includes all postmodernist systems. However, cer-

out to be a direct continuation of the classical model of rationality” (Van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality*, p. 127).

79. Cf. Kreitzer, *op. cit.* 80. See Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 311–312.

81. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 268. 69. *Ibid.*, p. 268. 70. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 268. 72. *Ibid.*, p. 267. 73. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 127. 75. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

76. Closer to Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, and Stoker, *Beginsels en Metodes in die Wetenskap* (1969) and “Reconnoitering the Theory of Knowledge” (1971), than Frame, *op. cit.* or Vern Poythress, *Philosophy, Science, and the Sovereignty of God* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976).

77. Hiebert, however, comes close to rejecting human autonomy in knowledge. “We begin with a biblical worldview and then develop our theology and our science within this overarching framework of givens” (Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 104).

78. See Van Huyssteen’s discussion of the multiple rationalities view (above): “Ironically, extreme nonfoundationalist relativism turns

tainty does not mean arrogant dogmatism and a stubborn, non-listening attitude. The wisdom “from above, is . . . peaceable, gentle, reasonable” (Jas 3:14). Arrogance and not-listening is based upon human autonomy and a dualistic view of knowledge.⁸²

Proving the impossibility of the contrary is done by “spiral reasoning.”⁸³ The Christian, founded upon his transcendent presupposition of the Triune God, “go[es] around and around” the antithetical presupposition or worldview. In so doing, one “presuppos[es] the things . . . learned on the previous trip [around] and appl[ies] those presuppositions to the new data.” At times, new data obtained in the orbiting of the presupposition or paradigm under study “will require us to unlearn things that we thought we knew before. In the religious case, *we may have to revise our interpretation of God’s revelation in some areas.*”⁸⁴ By means of this spiral process, the opposite of the scriptural presuppositions can be transcendently demonstrated to be impossible.

This spiral reasoning process can apply to both particular data and data based meaning systems up to, and including, worldview paradigms. Empirical evidence interpreted within the biblical framework can be used in this process. This spiralling process inescapably demonstrates that facts and created factuality-systems can be known exactly and accurately but never comprehensively.⁸⁵ Though a social researcher can learn many things accurately and exactly, he or she can never know anything comprehensively as the Creator does.

Lastly, this spiralling process must include the international hermeneutical community and other disciplines exactly as Van Huyssteen and other critical realists intuitively realise.⁸⁶ Wisdom is in many counsellors (Pr 11:14, 15:22, 24:6). No one individual, discipline, or ethno-community possesses comprehensive knowledge or universal observation, but each observes the same created reality and records complementary observations of God’s one world. Collation and integration of the varying complementary perspectives provides a more comprehensive picture of that one reality. Hiebert, for one, rightly demonstrates this within his theistic version of critical realism.⁸⁷

Creationism

Clearly, the foundational presupposition of all human thought is that of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing). This implies that the Creator and his creation are distinct. Neither man nor his mind creates and upholds the universe. Another concomitant of this is the biblical concept that the original Creation was very good because there was no animal or human disease, deformity, death, or suffering as Paul states (see Rom. 5:12–21; 8:19–23). This excludes the idea of long ages of animal suffering and death upon the earth before humanity, as our Lord himself stated: “But from the begin-

ning of creation, God ‘made them male and female’” (Mk. 10:6 NASB; Mt. 19:4). The very good Creation included two fully developed human beings with a complete conceptual universe encoded in their minds in the form of human language. Another facet of this presupposition is that the deluge during Noah’s time was a world-encompassing Flood of universal judgment like unto the universal judgment of fire which is to come upon the earth at the end, as Peter witnesses (2 Pet. 3:4–7, 10–12). Lastly, the Creator placed within the minds of humanity what are now the various families of languages at the Tower of Babel. Taking the meaning of the Creation, Flood, and Babel accounts as transcendently revealed presuppositions indicates that all the sciences (including missiology) must redo much of their chronological thinking. All dating schemes for ancient things in contemporary social sciences are based on the totally opposite presupposition of uniformitarianism and methodological naturalism.

Covenantalism

God has entered into a relationship with every human being through Creation. Theologians have termed this relationship variously as the Edenic Covenant, Covenant of Life, Creation Covenant or the Covenant of Works. For my purposes, I will call it the *Legal Covenant* or the Covenant of Law. There were two basic principles springing from the justice of the Triune Creator’s nature: Every human being—male or female—must trust and obey every one of God’s moral imperatives. Second, every human being that rejects these imperatives even once must experience spiritual, biological, and eventually eternal death as separation from God. Every principle of the Mosaic Decalogue was implicit in the creational order and in creational relationships in the Garden, or can be legitimately deduced therefrom.

To remedy the possibility of a breach of the covenantal relationship, the Triune God covenanted within himself to have the eternal Word-Son to be born as Jesus of Nazareth, to take upon himself the obligation and sanction of the Legal Covenant, and hence to redeem his chosen people from both the curse and obligation of the Law (Gal. 2–3). Relationship is restored through this Covenant of Grace through faith in the future work of the Son in the Old Testament and through explicit faith in Christ since his death, resurrection, and ascension. Trinitarian Creationism is always redemptive and looks forward to the consummation with the Second Coming of Christ in which humanity’s moral and noetic darkness will be completely healed.

Human Dependency

God created humankind to reflect the glory and strength of the Creator. Humans are created finite and dependent beings, hence all humans are totally dependent upon a transcendent perspective to make sense of the whole of existence.

Fallenness, according to Scripture, is caused not by the ontological structure of nature. Death, sickness, and spiritual blindness are not normal but caused by the rebellion of the first two humans (Rom. 5:12ff). The Fall totally corrupts man’s understanding of the created universe because he rejects the Creator (Rom. 1:18–31; 1 Cor. 2:14). The Fall then implies that all of human thinking apart from Christ is both corrupt and distorted not because of any fault of human

82. How often have even those who claim biblical, non-autonomous wisdom actually not acted with the loving knowledge they claim to have (see 1 Cor. 8:1–2)?

83. Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 306–307.

84. Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 306; emphasis added.

85. Barbour, Kraft, Van Huyssteen, and Hiebert all deny this. However, the statement, “Nothing can be known exactly or accurately” purports to be an exact and accurate statement, contradicting itself. It is meaningless.

86. E.g., Hiebert, *op. cit.*

87. Hiebert, *op. cit.*

sensory equipment but because of a spirit of rebellion against the Creator (Rom. 1:18–32). God created Adam's kind to think and logically reason within the framework of the thought structure of truth that he created. Reason is only "reasonable" with the thoughts of the mind of God found in Christ. "In him dwell all the treasures of wisdom and understanding" (see Col. 2:2–10). Only within that creational framework, as it is refreshed by the regenerating and enlightening Spirit working through the Scripture, is humanity capable of discovering accurate truth concerning the data surrounding him. Only within that creational framework is Adam's kind able to fit data into organising schemata that accurately reflect a coherent and integrated whole system of truth itself upheld by God. Therefore the issue for all human thought processes in both worldview and moral principles is that of human autonomy versus human dependency. Humanity is doubly dependent, both because all humans are very finite beings from creation, but also because all are fallen persons. Dependency is thus not something created out of the Fall, but was part of the original good creation in the beginning. Humans thus have been designed to glory in their own dependency and in the independent wisdom, glory and power of the Creator found in Messiah Jesus.

Summary and Deductions

"The transcendental critique of unbelieving worldviews aims to show that, given their presuppositions, there could be no knowledge in any field whatsoever—that it would be impossible to find meaning or intelligibility in anything at all."⁸⁸

The "transcendental argument for God" provides certainty for the biblical worldview and shows that the opposite is impossible. Christian social scientists and missiologists using the Trinitarian Creationist paradigm "use factual and logical arguments, governed . . . by Christian presuppositions" to demonstrate the certainty of the total biblical-Christian worldview.⁸⁹ In other words, all other worldviews accept time, chance, and chaos as the sole source for the development of order, meaning, and design out of nothing.

This is clearly impossible. Only within that framework can true factuality about the human social creation be discovered.⁹⁰ Only within the Creator's comprehensive truth paradigm, i.e. the biblical worldview, can humanity, both in its individual and collective manifestations, be researched and understood. Only in his light do we see light (Ps. 36:9; Pr. 4:18).

A Trinitarian Creationist perspective, thus, does "not object to facts, but only brute facts."⁹¹ The same is true of theories. A theory about individual or collective humanity can only be true within the Creator's design-paradigm revealed in Scripture and within the observed data of Creation. In Scripture, God describes human individuals and collectivities, as they are in themselves, in their created essence. Only within that divinely interpreted essence can more about humanity be discovered.

No neutrality

Naturally, then, careful deductions can be made from the Trinitarian Creationist perspective. First of all, clearly no person's mind is neutral and autonomous. A person and a culture are for the Creator and his Son or they are ethically and noetically against the Lord God. Every person and culture is for or against God in values and mental interpretations of the Creator's universe (Jos. 24:15; Ps. 2, 19, 119; Mt. 6:24; 12:30; Mk. 9:40). Everyone, therefore, begins his or her social scientific reasoning and his or her missiological reflection with a pre-commitment to a worldview. Critical realists, postfoundationalists, and Trinitarian Creationist-Vantillians formally agree on this, though not necessarily upon all of the implications of it.

No brute factuality

There are thus no "brute facts." There are no "particulars unrelated to any plan or interpretation." The universe does not consist of "purely random matter, moving completely according to chance." Furthermore, there are no abstract, autonomous "universals," that is "abstract, impersonal, and apparently self-existent universals" that serve as "connecting links" between "brute facts."⁹²

Singular truth flows from one God. Because God has pre-planned and presently controls all things and events, certain "facts and events" can be known and predicted, indeed interpreted "in advance." Therefore, not all theories and hypotheses about ethnic and socio-cultural phenomena, for example, are "as credible as any other" prior to observation, investigation, and evaluation.⁹³ Scripture is the canon for such credibility.

There is thus no "epistemic pluralism," as Van Huyssteen suggests. Van Til refutes this as being equivalent to the serpent's temptation of Eve.⁹⁴ Because of the fact of Creation and providence, purely contingent "open factuality" can be discarded from the beginning.⁹⁵ There is no possibility that any and every contingency can and should be explored. All true data are attached to the total truth-system designed and upheld by the Creator. He creates and defines the only truth framework; the opposite is false and irrational.

On a non-Christian basis, facts are rationalised for the first time when interpreted by man. But for one who holds that the facts are already part of an ultimately rational system by virtue of the plan of God, it is clear that such hypotheses as presuppose the non-existence of such a plan must, even

92. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, p. 279. At this point Barbour, Van Huyssteen, and Kraft all agree. Because they do not self-consciously begin with the truthfulness of the complete biblical worldview, they begin with mental neutrality (autonomy).

Hiebert is one who struggles to reject this autonomy: "Faced with disagreements, positivists attack one another as false, instrumentalists smile and go their own ways, idealists split, and critical realists go back and search the Scriptures to test their different points of view" (Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 103). However, he fails because he does not reject up-front the Kantian presupposition that all facts are human interpreted, that is, all facts are [human] theory laden.

93. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

94. "Eve was obliged to postulate an ultimate epistemological pluralism and contingency before she could even proceed to consider the proposition made to her by the devil . . . Eve . . . assume[d] the equal ultimacy of the minds of God, of the devil, and of herself. And this surely excluded the exclusive ultimacy of God" (Bahnsen 1998, 152–153).

95. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

88. Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 514.

89. Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

90. See Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

91. Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

from the outset of his investigation, be considered irrelevant.⁹⁶ Because there is one God, there is one universal truth found in him. An “epistemic pluralism” presupposes a polytheistic universe with multiple realities, truths, and gods, and an infinite variety of possibilities. However, because of the one true God, what is true is true cross-culturally and across disciplines. The Trinitarian Creationist perspective integrates transcendent and immanent truths into one system, allowing true interdisciplinarity. Hiebert intuitively senses this: “Juxtaposing different knowledge systems does not assure us of integration [interdisciplinarity]. . . . For integration to take place, the knowledge systems must truly be complementary. This requires first that they both be embedded in the same worldview. Just as it is impossible to integrate a theology based on idealism with a science based on realism, we cannot integrate theology with a science that denies God’s existence. We must begin with a biblical worldview and then develop our theology and our science within this overarching framework of givens.”⁹⁷

“True truth” (F. Schaeffer) both corresponds to creational realities and coheres to the larger divine truth system. Both empirical evidence and coherence to a theoretical framework are necessary for certainty. A Christian social scientist using the Trinitarian Creationist perspective cannot possess one without the other. Thus Trinitarian Creationism truly integrates the false dilemma between so-called naïve realism and idealism—the one looking upward (e.g. Plato), the other observing downward (e.g. Aristotle).

Lastly, no culture can exist without using something of the singular Christian truth-system. Hence even unbelievers must use something of true created and providentially upheld facts to exist in God’s world. Otherwise they would self-destruct (see Paul’s argument in chapters 1 and 2 of Romans).

Therefore, each culture does not construct a different creation than the one inescapable *uni*-verse created by the one Lord. “Epistemic pluralism” leads to a *multi*-verse, no matter how hard people try to deceive themselves into thinking this may be true since the Fall. A *multi*-verse implies multiple deities and multiple worlds and multiple truths. Because of the one Creator and his singular *uni*-verse and singular truth, an etic system of classification can exist. Trinitarian Creationism alone allows for an understanding of all lingual-cultures in comparison to others. The one truth of the one God serves as the single transcendent canon and source for comparison. He and his created truth, being distinct from man, serve as the object for understanding. This defines objectivity.

True objectivity

Third, real objectivity does exist in the Trinitarian Creationist biblical system. God has created both objects and subjects to be controlled and interpreted under himself by dependent humanity.⁹⁸ Humans, in the biblical worldview, can see the essence of objects and interpret them

accurately and exactly, but never comprehensively. This opens the door for true dependent humility and for a listening ear for other witnesses both within one’s own culture and from other cultures. No one eyewitness can see everything. We need one another.

True universality

A fourth deduction is that all immanent truth is created and upheld by God in general revelation. All transcendent truth is derived from the eternal Being of the Triune God. This embraces the principles of logic, including the law of contradiction. This means that neither logic nor any other created immanent foundation for knowledge is autonomous, abstract and impersonal, i.e. exists apart from the personal and universal Trinity. There are three immanent foundations for all knowledge: (1) logic based upon the law of [non]-contradiction,⁹⁹ (2) correspondence to the data of creation design, and (3) coherence to created meaning systems are universal foundations for knowledge in all cultures. All three, however, presuppose a transcendent foundation, i.e. philosophical Trinitarianism. In summary, then, both the coherence and the correspondence theories of truth are necessarily true at the same time and logic is inescapable and founded in God’s transcendent nature. In other words, logic and both theories of truth presuppose the triune nature of God. All three depend upon the Creator’s Triune and transcendent rationality placed in our being as the *imago Dei*.

This then provides the reason for the fact of commensurability between ethno-lingual groups. The fact that there is some mutual understanding between ancient and modern cultures also reflects the reality that all lingual-cultural

we hold that there cannot be objective knowledge of anything. In that case all things in this universe are unrelated and cannot be in fruitful contact with one another. This we believe to be the simple alternative on the question of the objectivity of knowledge. . . . If God has an absolutely self-determinate character, then the universe also has an ‘objectivity’ to which the mind of man must submit itself. Then man cannot by the power of his logic determine the nature of God. And that is what he, as a sinner, wants to do . . . To seek to control reality, to be the source of ‘objectivity,’ is not the ideal of the modern idealists only; it was the ideal of classic realism just as well . . . Even in observation of facts the subjective element enters into the picture. There is not the least harm in this. It is a purely metaphysical and psychological fact. It is not the fact that a subject is involved in the knowledge situation that makes for skepticism. It is only when this subject does not want itself interpreted in terms of God that skepticism comes about” (Bahnsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–306; emphasis added).

99. Each created fact is distinct or diverse from every other fact or object in the creation yet is interrelated with every other fact. This is reflected in both the ontological and epistemological forms of the law of [non]-contradiction.

Ontological: “Personal A is not personal non-A” demonstrates that A and non-A are distinct, i.e., I am not you. “I” is the distinct subject; “you” is a distinct nominative object in the predicate position. Every English sentence with a subject and object presupposes this. This is true of the Godhead and the Creator-creature distinction. I am not God. He and I are distinct. Within the Trinity, the ontological principle is best illustrated. The Son is not the Father or Spirit and the Father is not the Son or the Spirit, and so forth. Yet, contrary to Kantian dialectical thought, the law of contradiction does not teach the absolute separation of subject from object “out there,” creating brute factuality. Though the Son is not the Father, they are still one personal essence.

Epistemological: “A is not non-A.” This demonstrates both true distinction between “A” and “non-A” and yet also unity because the whole phrase is meaningful only as a unity. Again this flows from the nature of God.

96. Van Til, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

97. Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

98. “If the Christian position with respect to *creation*, that is, with respect to the idea of the origin of both the subject and the object of human knowledge is true, there is and must be objective knowledge. In that case the world of objects was made in order that the subject of knowledge, namely man, should interpret it under God. . . . On the other hand if the Christian theory of creation by God is not true then

systems depend upon one Triune Creator, one Creation distinct from the Creator, one transcendent truth system (which has been actively but never completely suppressed), and one *imago Dei*. The one Creator created the language of every people of earth so that each may grope after and find truth in the one Lord, in whom dwells all the treasures of wisdom and understanding. Though each created language differently categorises the one external Creation upheld by the Logos, each provides a complementary view of that one Creation.

No truth is mere human interpretation. All immanent truth has been created by the Creator God who is Triune. Within the Triune Godhead, neither the immanent particulars (the many, particularity) nor the universals (the one, unity) are arbitrary or created by human minds. Meaning and order are not imposed upon a chaotic external reality by human minds. From a transcendent perspective, the statements: “All facts are [human] interpreted facts,” and “all factuality is [human] theory laden” is as self-contradictory as “all truth is relative.”

Socio-cultural factuality is not a creation of interpreting human minds, which alone impart meaning to chaotic social observations or percepts entering the brain through the senses. The fact that the immanent one and the many are created and presently upheld by God provides the only reason the present socio-cultural and natural order continues for the next millisecond into the future. Only Providence allows for predictability, which is an absolute necessity for social research. Providential ordering includes both the particularised data and the unifying frameworks.

Man’s mind must truthfully relate to the real external world of social experience by bowing to the Creator’s prior organisation of it. Even mankind’s social and individual deviations from God’s moral norms fall within his providential planning (see e.g. Gen. 50:20; Ac 2:23). Because of noetic and ethical rebellion, humankind’s individual and cultural-collective mind can choose to twist, distort, and pervert God’s creative-providential meaning-order. “It is clearly seen through that which has been made” (Rom. 1:20). Humanity can choose to see what it wants to see and disregard the rest. Therefore, man’s rationality, even in rebellion, is never autonomous but always dependent. Humanity must “think God’s thoughts after him” or it will descend into increasing personal and social disorder and perversion (Rom. 1:18–32; Jas. 3:14–16).

Lastly, the data of human social experience is always connected to other providentially upheld data. No data are autonomous, brute facts awaiting the organising mind of humans to make sense of and interpret them apart from the Creator’s prior interpretation. A Christian social scientist must first understand what Scripture teaches about social factuality, then interpret observed data in that light. All social facts come to the human mind already organised and interconnected by the sovereign Providence of the universe. This data is found in both created nature and Scripture, which glorify God and his nature (Ps. 19; Rom. 1:20ff). He alone gives a truthful etic perspective upon human culture. God reveals himself and his truth both in the book of Creation and Scripture, without contradiction, and with clarity (perspicuity).¹⁰⁰ This allows for a true interdisciplinarity since all truth is God’s singular truth.

Contextuality and truth

Since all truth is God’s truth, a fifth concomitant of nuanced Vantillianism is that truth coheres to a meaning system created and upheld by the Triune God. Each individual and linguistic group perverts that singular truth, both data and system, to a greater or lesser extent because of rebellion (Rom. 1:18–30). Trinitarian Creationism accepts a single comprehensive system of divine knowledge, but varying ethno-perspectives can be complementary and equally valid since no person or culture’s knowledge is comprehensive. Trinitarian Creationism accounts for cultural diversity and differing worldview presuppositions in knowledge of created objects better than Critical Realism. First, the Fall distorts man’s acceptance of God-ordered truth, not his perception of it (Rom. 1:19–21). Each culture is a unique, complex meaning web of distorted truths and ethical rebellion against God. One discovers the meaning of these distorted truths within each culture.

Second, Trinitarian Creationism allows for genuine diversity of complementary perspectives of the one Creation, albeit distorted by sin. Trinitarian Creationism thus does not deny the emic and etic distinction. Each cultural-lingual meaning system must be understood within its own context. In other words, the human community possesses multiple cultures, each of which are in fact social meaning systems. Each of these cultural systems consists of a mixture of rebellion, autonomous interpretations of God’s world based on false presuppositions, and formal meanings borrowed surreptitiously from the common grace knowledge that the Creator has placed in every one.

Every culture possesses a unique mix of autonomous meanings and formal, common grace understandings of the divine design-order. Hence when a social scientist or missiologist tries to grasp another culture’s system of meaning in terms of his culture’s system of meaning, there is a necessary measure of incommensurability. However, a researcher can develop an emic perspective of both cultures through using an integrative Trinitarian Creationist interdisciplinary methodology,¹⁰¹ first to understand his or her own culture and then to grasp the unique meaning system of another culture. Only on that basis can he make valid trans-disciplinary, trans-cultural comparisons of an etic¹⁰² perspective and accurately present the Trinity God’s scriptural view to the observed culture.

SUMMARY CONTINUUM OF PHILOSOPHIES AND THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND BIBLICAL FAITH

The top end of the continuum are philosophies emphasising almost exclusively the *One*. These are connected closely to Idealism, the coherence theory of truth and ultimately relativism and subjectivism, even though Plato sought universal absolutes. The Greek philosophical roots thus spring from Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy. In contemporary times this is called non-Foundationalism and is often associated with post-modernity. Like the opposite, knowl-

100. See Van Til, *op. cit.*

101. A Trinitarian Creationist interdisciplinary methodology integrates a Trinitarian Creationist-based philosophy, wholistic covenantal theology, and a participant observation process founded upon both.

102. For definitions of an EMIC perspective and an ETIC perspective, see the glossary.

edge is totally autonomous, founded upon man's intuitive a priori insight so that *every fact is human-theory laden*.

From this end of the spectrum the continuum runs toward the biblical balance in the middle. Therefore, it runs from (1) Kantian Interdisciplinarity to (2) Post-foundational Interdisciplinarity (Van Huyssteen), to (3) Christian Instrumentalist Interdisciplinarity (Charles Kraft), to (4) Clarkian Interdisciplinarity (Gordon Clark).¹⁰³ From Clark, and much closer to what is the biblical balance, we come to (5) Theistic Critical Realist Interdisciplinarity (Paul Hiebert) and then (6) Poythress and Rushdoony's reading of Vantillian Interdisciplinarity. Much closer to the balance is Greg Bahnsen's reading of Vantillian Interdisciplinarity, concerning which H. G. Stoker is very similar.

At this point is the *Trinitarian Creationist, biblical balance*, which emphasises the equal ultimacy of both the one and the many. Hence, every fact and the universally valid truth system has been created and is presently upheld by the Triune God. This means that truth corresponds to data and coheres to divine meaning-system. I call this Transcendent-Immanent Foundationalism.

From this mean, and descending toward those systems emphasising the many are (1) Veridicalist Interdisciplinarity¹⁰⁴ (Mark Hanna), then (2) Vantillian Interdisciplinarity as interpreted by John Frame. Next, and further down the scale come (3) Classic, Common Sense Realist Interdisciplinarity (B. B. Warfield, R. C. Sproul, et al.).¹⁰⁵ I would place next (4) Christian Empiricist, neo-Thomist Interdisciplinarity (Geisler, Moreland 1985, 1987, 1989; W. L. Craig),¹⁰⁶ then the almost deistic integrative theories by scholars following John Locke, Lockean Interdisciplinarity. Lastly would be the almost total anarchism of Ayn Rand.

Therefore, at the bottom of the spectrum, are those theories emphasising the Many. These are inevitably bound to Modernity. Every fact is said to be value and theory free and the Correspondence Theory of truth reigns supreme. Again, as at the top of the spectrum, all knowledge is totally autonomous. A Creator is never referred to in attempts to integrate science and worldview. Other names for the philosophies at this bottom extreme are Positivism, Empiricism or Absolutism and Objectivism. In conclusion, I would characterise these philosophies as Immanent Foundationalism.

Trinitarian Creationist Interdisciplinarity in the Social Sciences

The task of Christian missiologists and social scientists taught by Trinitarian Creationism, therefore, is to build a socio-cultural anthropology upon "thinking God's thoughts after him." That thought framework of interrelated presuppositions, paradigms, institutions, values, and meaning

(*principia*) is found in an inerrant Scripture.¹⁰⁷ Both the packaging around those truths and the truth itself are truthful. There is no upper-story, lower-story dualism in biblical thought.

No division between fact and value

The Creator does not dualistically separate brute factuality from a human chosen, metaphysical value-system as post-Kantian philosophy does. All ethno-social research must be governed by the Creator's revealed social and individual ethical norms, which flow from his personal character (see Ps. 119:137). Certainly the Bible is not a textbook of social science. However, sufficient truth is found in Scripture, in a sufficient framework of exact but not comprehensive *principia*, for man to exercise his dominion task as the vice-gerent of God, in Christ. *Theoria* and *praxis*, knowledge and value, are never separate in the Trinitarian Creationist worldview.

Therefore, a scriptural ethnology and social science must carefully describe man's ethno-cultures as they are, within their own unique meaning system. It must then catalogue and classify these cultural-lingual systems, using biblical *principia* to form an etic perspective. This knowledge must never be abstracted or divorced from the triune God and his divinely enjoined covenant-missiological task and values. He has commanded the new man in Christ to rule and disciple the whole earth, bringing all of its cultures, peoples, and creatures under his suzerainty, teaching them to do all that the Covenant Lord has commanded. This includes the individual, family, economic, socio-political, and ecclesial spheres. All areas of life including facts, paradigms, and values are bounded and regulated by Scriptural *principia*.

Growth of Cultural Knowledge

As the mission mandate is fulfilled, using a Trinitarian Creationist perspective and interdisciplinary methodology, socio-cultural knowledge will grow incrementally. Paradigm shifts will occur as Christian philosophers and researchers discover that previous attempts to explain observed data are not as accurate as subsequent attempts.

For example, imagine four dots placed at random on an A4 piece of copy paper that are parts of a greater shape that is not yet totally known. To connect the dots, one may theorise that the underlying shape is a cross, an oval, a trapezoid, or any number of other shapes. With only four dots of information, one can create a large but finite number of "theories" to explain the data known. However, a theory attempts to predict what the shape of the underlying figure will be when the rest of the more or less hidden dots (data points) have been discovered through further investigation. The dots of "data" are certain and can be empirically verified by two or three eyewitnesses to be actual and not illusory. However, as the researcher continues investigating

103. Gordon H Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1988, 2nd ed.).

104. Mark M. Hanna, *Crucial Questions in Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

105. R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

106. Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); James Porter Moreland, *Universals, Qualities, and Quality-Instances: A Defense of Realism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985); *Idem*, *Scaling the Secular city: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); *Idem*, *Christianity and The Nature of Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

107. Contrary to what Raschke, *op. cit.* and Bosch, *op. cit.* and others have been claiming, inerrancy is not necessarily bound to naïve Realism and modernity. Postmodern views of truth and rationality are not the way forward. Indeed, the Scripture itself teaches its inerrancy. Hence this doctrine is founded upon humanity's total dependence upon the wisdom and understanding that flows from the transcendent foundation who is the personal Triune Creator God (Trinitarian Creationist).

and discovering the placement of other dots (data points), he may experience a paradigm shift from a cross, to a trapezoid, to an oval “theory” in attempting to explain the actual form he is working to discover.

As applied to studying ethnicity, for example, the dots may represent certain bits of ethnographic evidence gained by participant observation. Varying theories give differing explanations for the meaning of the evidence with respect to what ethnicity is and how it functions. In actual ethnographic research, however, many of the data points have already been filled in place in Scripture, and thus serve as infallible reference points to develop true theories. These certain data points can first be discovered by exegesis and the hermeneutical spiral as described above. This is aided by using insights from the whole inter-ethnic Christian and non-Christian community. Both Trinitarian Creationism and Hiebert’s theistic critical realism note this need for an inter-ethnic, interdisciplinary common search.¹⁰⁸

In summary then, progress in social scientific (and by extension, physical scientific) knowledge occurs when observations increase and data gaps are filled in within the prior presupposition of the Trinitarian Creationist truth paradigm discovered in Scripture. As each observation is cross-checked and verified, a clearer perspective on the Creator’s design is discovered.¹⁰⁹

Social Science and Interdisciplinary Methodology

“The appropriate method of study is generated by careful consideration of the research questions.”¹¹⁰ Therefore, a Trinitarian Creationist study of the social sciences (and indeed of the physical sciences) with an interdisciplinary methodology leads to the development of what Creswell calls a “middle-range theory.”¹¹¹ Interdisciplinarity lends

108. See Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 78. Hiebert’s view, as demonstrated in the case of Barbour, Kraft, and Van Huyssteen, inevitably leads to neo-orthodoxy, something he would want to avoid. The critical realist explanation of truth as a “model, map, and blueprint” (Hiebert, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–81), when applied to Scripture, is Barthian. For example: “Every map purports to give us true information, but only about some parts of reality. . . . The truthfulness of a map is not measured by the accuracy of its extraneous information but of the information it claims to present truthfully” (Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 80). This seems to be open to the “form-content” dualism as developed by existentialist theologians. For example, the proto-history (Gen. 1–11), crucial to discovering a scriptural Trinitarian Creationist theory on ethnicity is merely saga rather than real history because it presents “extraneous information” (see e.g. F. W. Buytendach, *Aspekte van die Vorm/Inhoud-Problematiek met Betrekking tot die Organies Skrifinspirasie in die Nuwere Gereformeerde Teologie in Nederland* [Aspects of the Form/Content Problem with Reference to the Organic Scripture Inspiration [Theory] in Recent Reformed Theology in the Netherlands] (Amsterdam: Ton Bolland, 1972).

109. This process applies to all social and natural scientific issues. An example is the difference between the Tychonian, Copernican, or Einsteinian views of the universe. Differences between them are paradigmatic and need a transcendent Trinitarian Creationist presuppositional basis to sort out.

110. Kjell Erik Rudestam and Rae R. Newton, *Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process* (Newbury Park: Sage Rudestam and Newton, 1992), p. 60.

111. John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), p. 83. “Grand theories attempt to explain large categories of phenomena and are most common in the natural sciences (e.g., the theory of evolution). Middle-range theories fall between minor working hypotheses of everyday life and the all-inclusive grand theories. Substantive theories are restricted to a particular setting, group, time, population, or problem” (*ibid.*, p. 83).

itself well to an interaction of (1) missiological observations and theories (e.g. Homogeneous Unit Principle and Church Growth observations and studies), (2) social science theories of anthropology, (3) exegesis of Scripture, (4) philosophy of science insights, and (5) field research data. All of these can be interpreted using a common worldview paradigm (Trinitarian Creationist) just as Hiebert suggests. For interdisciplinary integration to genuinely occur, “knowledge systems must truly be complementary” because they share “the same worldview.” Trinitarian Creationist research on anthropology “begin[s] with a biblical worldview” and then develops “within this overarching framework of givens.”¹¹²

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summary and conclusion then, the two opposing methodologies have a biblical balance point: Positivist and empiricist methodologies are foundationalist. These are tied to Modernity. Since every fact is supposedly theory neutral, facts then are concrete and impersonal. The research focus must be upon impersonal data points. Again, on the other end of the spectrum are Idealist Methodologies in which every fact is supposed to be theory bound. Facts are abstract and impersonal but the focus is upon overarching, unifying principles.

Reformational Christianity is the source of the biblical mean and is what I term a *Trinitarian creationist methodology*. The methodology could actually be characterised as a transcendent foundationalist¹¹³ method because the foundation of all truth is the person and wisdom of the Triune Creator who is distinct from the Creation. I would further term this a Trinitarian theory of truth.¹¹⁴ Every true fact in the Creation is bound to and upheld by truth in the personal Creator’s mind.¹¹⁵ Facts are hence concrete, yet still personal, because they immediately spring from the Creator’s personal Being. At the same time, however, facts are part of a unifying pattern or web upheld by the personal connection to the Creator. This method focuses upon both data points and the overarching principles, generated and upheld by the Creator. Truth must correspond to what actually exists in the universe which the personal Creator is generating out of His mind as he upholds the previous seconds of the continuing Creation. Truth must also cohere to the knowledge web which He also is generating and upholding. Lastly, true truth, to quote Francis Schaeffer, must work to solve practical aspects of the dominion mandate given to Adam’s kind in the Garden.

112. Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

113. All thought begins with the givenness of the existence of the Creation and the direct knowledge of God found in every person (Rom. 1:18–21).

114. *Corresponding* to actual states of affairs in the real, external phenomenal world, generated from the mind of the Creator yet distinct from the Creator (i.e., the Creator-creation distinction). *Cohering* to unifying frameworks generated in and from the mind of the Triune Creator through the eternal Word, that is Christ (Jn. 1:1–3; Heb. 1:1–3; Col. 2:1–10).

115. In other words, “true truth” is never bound to human theories and human interpretation of external data.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Correspondence Theory of Truth (Christian version): Messages about the external world, received by human senses, must match the measurable data of Creation to be accurate and true, yet at the same time cohere to the system of truth springing from the Triune God.

Coherence Theory of Truth (Christian version): Messages about the external world, received by human senses, must cohere to the transcendent and created meaning system, which is upheld by divine providence, to be true, yet at the same time must correspond to what is actually occurring within the created universe.

Commensurability (opposite is *incommensurability*): The quality of being measured or understood by the same standard or scale of values and rationality. (In other words, there is common ground between human groups that allows them to understand each other).

Critical Realism: According to P. Hiebert¹¹⁶ this theory “strikes a middle ground” between empiricism, with its naïve realism and emphasis upon a neutral and autonomous truth that anyone can perceive and know, and “instrumentalism, with its stress on the subjective nature of human knowledge.” Ian Barbour and Charles Kraft hold a more radically subjective form of this theory.

Dualism: Any theory, or system of thought or belief, that assumes a double ultimate principle, double ultimate being, or double ultimate force etc., rather than merely one (e.g. as opposed to *idealism* and *materialism*): “The doctrine that mind and matter exist as distinct [and opposed] entities. . . . The doctrine that there are two independent principles, one good and the other evil.¹¹⁷ Often dualism presupposes that unity, spirit, and ideas are good, whereas diversity and matter are evil.

Emic and etic: Twin terms used in social science to signify two varying kinds of written accounts of observed data concerning human actions. An *emic* account describes behavior in terms and values “meaningful (consciously or unconsciously) to the actor” as an insider. An *etic* description records behavior in terms and values familiar to the observer’s outside perspective. “Scientists interested in the local construction of meaning, and local rules for behavior, will rely on emic accounts; scientists interested in facilitating comparative research and making universal claims will rely on etic accounts.”¹¹⁸

Empiricism: The theory which regards sense experience (received either directly or through instruments which can extend the reach of our senses such as telescopes and microscopes) as the only source of certain knowledge.¹¹⁹

Epistemology: The sub-branch of philosophy which attempts to discover the definition and method for discovering certain knowledge.

Fideism or Fideistic: The theory which teaches that all human knowledge is based upon unjustifiable foundations which are solely founded upon a subjective feeling of certi-

tude. In other words, no one can know anything for certain, yet one can feel a certitude called “faith,” which substitutes for certainty.

Foundationalism: A theory which teaches that all basic premises must be justified (known certainly), using human observations and based upon objective and neutral human reason. These foundations are based on self-evident truths that are inescapable and non-resistible, and therefore are not justified by other beliefs. “Foundationalism is simply a less tendentious term for modernism.”¹²⁰

Immanent Foundationalism: Equivalent to “Foundationalism.”

Non-Foundationalism: A theory related to post-Kantianism and postmodernity which teaches that any phenomenon from the external world is always perceived through a grid of various worldview beliefs. All facts are interpreted facts, that is, all facts are interpreted in the human mind and no one can see anything in itself. (Note that the statement: “All facts are interpreted facts” is self-contradictory).

Transcendent Foundationalism: The teaching that agrees with immanent Foundationalism upon the necessity of a certain beginning point for all human knowledge. However, that beginning point is not found within the observable Creation and does not begin with neutral human observation or neutral human reason. All true thought begins within a commitment to the invisible Creator and his total truth (both as a system and as diverse data points). All such data that comes into human senses (e.g. the eyes, ears, etc.) are not ordered by the human mind but by God’s mind. The triune God (and his wisdom) is thus the transcendent foundation of all truth for every individual and every culture. All true data thus must also cohere to the system of truth which God is in himself and then expresses in his creation and providence (Jn. 1:1–3; 14:6; Col. 1:15–17; 2:3, 8; Heb. 1:1). Humans perceive data and can discover their coherency within the divine truth system, but sin and finiteness distort this information. The Holy Spirit unbends and heals the distortion caused by sin. The Scripture (and indeed other cultures’ Spirit-led reading of Scripture) helps limit our human finiteness. There are then “facts” which humans can perceive which are not first interpreted by human minds. The reason is that God is the original interpreter. Humans must think God’s thoughts after him to know certain truth. (see *Transcendental Argument for God*)

Idealism: “Any system of thought . . . in which the object of external perception is held to consist, either in itself, or as perceived, of ideas [or spirit],”¹²¹ or the belief that all things can be reduced to universal unity or universal spirit (akin to monism).

Post-Kantian, Critical or Transcendental Idealism: The perceiving mind and the whole contents of our experience, consists of ideas organised solely within the individual. These ideas are known to the individual, but not necessarily as the object of perception actually is “in itself.”

Instrumentalism (or pragmatism): See “pragmatism” below.

Interdisciplinary: An integration of two or more academic disciplines or schools of learning; or a study which contributes to or benefits from two or more disciplines. “Interdisciplinarity” is “the quality, fact, or condition of being interdisciplinary.”¹²²

116. Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

117. Based on <http://dictionary.oed.com>.

118. Based on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emic_and_etic; see Karl J. Franklin, K. L. Pike on Etic vs. Emic: A Review and Interview. Summer Institute of Linguistics, November 27, 1996. <http://www.sil.org/klp/karlintv.htm> (accessed 28 December 2005).

119. Based on <http://dictionary.oed.com>.

120. Raschke, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

121. [Http://dictionary.oed.com](http://dictionary.oed.com).

122. *Ibid.*

Metalevel: Christian perspective: A connecting aspect of created truth above the concrete bits of data. Both the data pieces and the connecting truth have been created by God and are presently upheld by him. *Oxford Online Dictionary*: “A level or degree (of understanding, existence, etc.) which is higher and often more abstract than those levels at which a subject, etc., is normally understood or treated; a level which is above, beyond, or outside other levels, or which is inclusive of a series of lower levels.”¹²³

Missiology: The scientific study of Christian mission with an interface of theological and social scientific methodologies.

Modernity: A movement begun within Western culture which presupposes the autonomy of human reason and a neutral, empiricist method along with functional materialism for discovering any truth. The basic assumption is that autonomous humans, beginning with some sense related data can discover certain and universally valid truth about an external reality by the inductive method.

Monism: Any worldview or system of thought that presupposes that all things within reality can be reduced to one substance rather than more than one: Either diversity or matter (e.g. Materialism), or unity or invisible spirit (e.g. Brahmanism).

Paradigm: “A constellation of concepts, values, perceptions and practices shared by a community which forms a particular vision of reality that is the basis of the way a community organizes itself”¹²⁴ In other words, a paradigm is an integrated framework of presuppositions or beliefs through which a person or group interprets both internal and external phenomena.

Postmodernity: An emerging worldview in Western cultures which denies the existence of any universally valid “master narratives” or “metanarratives” holding all human cultures together and providing a common foundation for communication and development (see e.g. Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard). Therefore, each community (and ultimately each individual) lives within its own communal paradigm or individually developed world of meaning. “What Kant held in common with Derrida and the deconstructionists was a simple side glance that perceived reality [is] not as we naively perceive it, but as a system of signs and sign-relations and part of a rational architecture serving somehow to explain everything we know and see.”¹²⁵

Pragmatism (or instrumentalism): A philosophy which distinguishes between external reality as it is in itself and our knowledge of it. There is no certain knowledge of anything in itself. However, in a concession to what actually happens through the development of technology, the philosophy teaches that any manipulation of the external world which produces positive results is good. The meanings of the terms “good” and “positive” are taken surreptitiously and illogically from the surrounding Judeo-Christian culture.

Presuppositions: The basic foundational axioms of a person’s or of a group’s worldview.

Realism: “Belief in the real existence of matter as the object of perception (*natural realism*); also, the view that the physical world has independent reality, and is not ultimately reducible to universal mind or spirit. (Opposed to IDEALISM).”¹²⁶

Naïve Realism: “the belief . . . that a perceived object is not only real but has in reality all its perceived attributes.”¹²⁷ The problem with this view is not that the external reality is not actual, nor that our senses cannot see photographically that world and that minds create order out of the chaos of the external world, but that humans are easily deceived by mirage, illusion, demonic deception and human sin.

Transcendental Argument for God (TAG): The irrefutable argument which demonstrates that language, logic, science, ethics, and indeed every other datum of “human experience and knowledge are preconditioned by the existence of the [Triune] God. That is, one could not make sense of any of them apart from the conditioning belief in the existence of [this triune Creator-]God. This argument is commonly used by presuppositional apologists and is considered by some of them (especially those of the Van Tillian variety) to be the only valid method of apologetical argumentation.”¹²⁸

SOME BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS, OBJECTIONS, AND THE “IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE CONTRARY”

Man is not dependent upon anything except himself. Antidote: In the very act of denying your lack of dependence you are depending on words, the understanding of others, and the stability of the communicating medium, etc. to try to deny dependency. This does not prove dependence upon a transcendent god but does disprove the statement.

Man is not to praise anything but himself, because we praise that which we depend upon. Antidote: The very act of stating this disproves the statement. We depend upon communication, others to understand, air we breathe and so forth, all the time. Where do these other things come from?

There is no reality to any diversity because it is illusion. Antidote: You have just communicated with a diversity which you yourself claimed did not exist, contradicting yourself. Thus the real consequence of believing the statement would be to stop breathing, thinking, and living which involves diversity which you claim to be an illusion.

There is no reality to unity because all that exists is diversity of chaotic atoms. Antidote: You have just communicated with a diversity which you yourself claimed did not exist, contradicting yourself.

The “Trinitarian presupposition” is nonsensical because it is illogical. Antidote: Your very statement uses both unity and diversity to explain your rejection of the equal ultimacy of the one and many/unity and diversity.

All facts are [human] interpreted facts. Antidote: Then the above fact is interpreted by the human mind and communicates nothing. Therefore, all facts are either interpreted by the Creator God because He made and upholds all things and humans must follow his interpretations to know anything or man has only relative “truth” which is actually nonsensical and meaningless.

I can know nothing transcendent nor is there any transcendent foundational truth. Antidote: This is in itself a transcendent truth claim and thus self-contradictory. I cannot know true facts in the immanent realm if there were no God who is the source of transcendent truth.

123. *Ibid.* 124. Kuhn, *op. cit.* 125. Raschke, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
126. [Http://dictionary.oed.com](http://dictionary.oed.com).

127. *Ibid.*

128. [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_argument_for_the_existence_of_God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_argument_for_the_existence_of_God).

All truth is relative. Antidote: That means this “truth” is relative and the proposition is nonsensical. Conclusion: There is some absolute and unchanging truth.

No absolute truth exists. Antidote: This truth is not absolute and the proposition is nonsensical. Conclusion: There is some absolute and unchanging truth.

All truth is merely community based, relational, and never propositional. Antidote: Certainly then if *all* truth is community based then this truth is as well. This means that the speaker must presuppose propositional truth to attempt to deny all transcendent truth.

No one can know anything with certainty until he/she knows everything. Antidote: This is a self-contradictory statement. I know that I cannot know. Therefore some exact transcendent truth exists that can be known. I do not have to know everything to know that specific thing.

On the other hand the self-contradictory nature of the

statement shows that God has indeed put into the Creation and into language ideas which can come only from him. If man could start (he can’t and doesn’t) with a *tabula rasa* mind that is totally neutral, then he can know nothing with certainty because until we know everything, the bit of knowledge not known could overthrow a theory helpful up to that point.

Man is a mere product of time plus chance plus good fortune (i.e. chaos). Antidote: Just as nothing can produce nothing, so chaos cannot produce order, meaning, purpose, or upwards development of greater order. This also presupposes that chaotic matter-energy is eternal and has the ability to generate order, meaning, and a cycle of existence.

God is not distinct from the Creation but is the Creation. Antidote: If “god” is everything it is nothing (no thing). Something cannot come out of nothing. This leads to the Creator-creature distinction. C&S

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN MODERN PAKISTAN

MORE CASE STUDIES FROM CLAAS

In the October 2004 issue of *Christianity & Society* (Vol. xiv, No. 4), we published three case studies of the murder of Christians in Pakistan, which were sent to us by the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS). Christians are regularly persecuted, assaulted and murdered in Pakistan by Muslims because of their Christian faith. These atrocities and murders continue while Western governments insist that Islam is a religion of peace. This is simply not true. While Muslims as human beings are no more nor less sinful than other people, the religion of Islam is a religion that makes a virtue of war and encourages the persecution of non-Muslims (see the editorial in C&S Vol. iv, No. 3 for more on this). CLAAS can be contacted at the following address: CLAAS, P. O. Box 81, Southall, Middlesex, UB2 5YQ. Tel: 02088679180. www.claas.org.uk. CLAAS has recently sent us the following information on the continuing persecution of Christians in Pakistan.—SCP

1. 84-year-old Christian charged under blasphemy law

Walter Fazal Khan, 84 years old, of Samanabad, Lahore has been charged under the blasphemy law for desecrating the Quran, and his wife Glades was forcibly converted to Islam. The case has been registered by his driver Raja Riaz, who claims that he has seen Mr. Khan burning the holy Quran’s pages. The case has been registered and Mr. Khan has been sent to jail. Mr. Khan’s house has been taken over

by Fun-damentalists and they are now claiming to start a Madressah in the property. We have been told that Mr. Khan was selling his house for Rs.1.2 million, but was offered Rs. 8 million and when he refused, he was implicated in a blasphemy case so that his house could be possessed. This is not the first case of this nature; the similar cases of Yousaf and Ayub Masih are not very old.

CLAAS has condemned the misuse of the blasphemy law and has expressed concern over the growing number of false cases against Christians in Pakistan—this is the fourth false case this year against Christians. Worst of all is its nature, as it is not simply a case of grabbing land, but also a case of forcible conversion to Islam. The law is being misused by fundamentalists and poses a serious threat to religious freedom and violates human rights. Christians and other religious minorities feel unsafe and are living under constant fear for their lives. CLAAS-PK has taken charge of the case, and CLAAS’s lawyers are going to file a suit for illegal possession against the complainant and also for a permanent Injunction (Stay) of his property. However, CLAAS has applied for bail for Mr. Walter Khan. The hearing for this is on 27 May 2007.

CLAAS-UK has already started a campaign to repeal the blasphemy law and is determined to continue until the law is repealed or appropriate changes are brought to this law. If you would like to join our campaign or receive further information please email CLAAS at: info@claas.org.uk.

2. *12 year old Christian girl kidnapped and gang raped for 3 days*

On 8 April, 2007, a 12-year-old Christian girl, Shaheena from Lahore, was abducted and gang raped by Safdar and his friends, only to be recovered on the third day to be provided with treatment and admitted to the General hospital, Lahore. The police arrested four rapists but released them shortly afterwards due to the pressure placed on them.

Although the present government has passed the “Women’s protection bill” Christian women are still suffering because of their religion and hatred prevails against Christians in Pakistani society.

3. *Christian man arrested for alleged blasphemy*

A Christian man, Sattar Masih, 28, was charged under Section 295–A and C blasphemy laws, and arrested by the police on his wedding day on 13 April, 2007. A piece of paper with his photograph and insulting words against the Prophet Mohammad in Urdu was allegedly found in the donation boxes outside the mosque in Kotri, Jamshoro district. A Muslim mob marched to Masih’s home and threatened to kill him, but local police intervened and took him to the police station. Masih, a former cook at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, Hyderabad, has allegedly been tortured into offering a confession, and a case of blasphemy has been filed against him. He told APMA: “How could I write this blasphemous note with my picture and name on it, when I know that the punishment for the blasphemer is death?”

4. *A Christian community leader accused of blasphemy*

On Saturday 24 March, 2007, a false case was registered under the blasphemy law against community leader Amanat Masih, from the village of Nabipura (district Sheikhpura/Punjab). According to reports from CLAAS-PK, Amanat Masih is a respected Christian in the community and is also the voice of local Christians; as a result, he has been ostracised by the local Muslim feudal lords. His agony started when his second wife, Shamim Bibi left him for another man, and to bring her back home he went to the talisman, Peer Liaqat Ali. The talisman gave him some papers with Quranic verses written on them and asked him to spread them in the streets and bury them in his room. However, he denies defiling the Quran and scattering the Quran’s pages in the street. On 23 March, 2007, at about 3:30 p.m., a huge crowd of people led by Qaisar Mehmood, Abdul Majeed, Molvi Mehmood Ahmed, Munawar Hussain, Amir Shahzad, Chaudhry Abbas Ali, and Ghulam Rasool attacked Amanat Masih’s house. They beat him and accused him of desecrating the holy Quran.

The crowd attacked Amanat’s house on information from Razia Bibi, who told the local Muslims that she had seen the Quran’s pages scattered on the roof of Amanat Masih’s house. Amanat Masih has denied tearing and scattering the pages. The crowd also dug up the grounds of Amanat’s house but they found nothing, then they took him to their farmhouse and tortured him into confessing to the crime that he had not committed. Later he was handed over to the police. Amanat Masih told the SP (superintendent of police) that he had not done anything and that he was being punished for being the voice of the local suppressed and poor Christians.

CLAAS believes that Amanat Masih is innocent, as nobody has seen him tearing and scattering the Quran’s pages in the streets and on the roof. Also, nothing has been found by digging at his house; this is just a case to settle personal scores.

5. *Five Christians are charged under the blasphemy law, including an 11 year old child*

This is a very alarming situation as the third blasphemy case has been registered against five Christians including one minor, Rashid Masih, 11 years old, Slammat Masih, Sahba Masih, Sheela Masih, and Sadique Masih (father of Rashid Masih) in Toba-Tek-Singh. Two other cases were registered against Martha Bibi in January, 2007 and Amanant Masih in March, 2007. Christians in Toba-Tek-Singh (Punjab, Pakistan) are very concerned because of the growing number of false blasphemy cases against Christians and the misuse of the blasphemy law.

An FIR was registered against all the above mentioned names on 1 April, 2007 by Abdul Gaffar of Bakshi Park for using blasphemous language and desecrating stickers with the names of Allah and the Prophet Mohammad written on them. On April 1, the Christian colony of Toba-Tek-Singh was attacked by 80 Muslim youths and Rattan Masih was injured and admitted to hospital. Slammat and Sheela Masih have been arrested, whilst the other people are on the run. However, the police have arrested two other innocent Christians, Shahzad Masih and Green Masih, even though their names are not in the FIR, because they are relatives of the accused. The police have warned that Ittefaq and Green will not be released until everybody is arrested.

A CLAAS lawyer filed a habeas corpus (a legal remedy which states that a person in detention must appear before and be judged by a court of law for the sake of justice) in the court of Justice Shamim to recover Shahzad Masih, son of Yousaf Masih and Green, son of Rafeeq Masih from illegal custody of Toba Tak Singh Police. The High Court deputed a bailiff (an official who is responsible to take people from illegal detention and to provide for them to be taken before a court for appropriate action) to raid the Police Station in Toba Tak Singh and recover detainees from illegal detention by Police.

6. *Christians in Charsada threatened to convert to Islam*

Christian residents of Charsadda (the Northwest Frontier Province) received a threatening letter stating they must convert to Islam or face dire consequences. Copies of the letter have been distributed among Christians who have already started leaving Charsadda and moving to safer places. The police are failing to provide adequate protection. This has raised a sense of insecurity among Christians who have been living under constant threat for several years. According to *Asia News* this same letter also threatened to attack churches in Charsada and Mardan.

7. *Government rejects bill to amend blasphemy law*

The government on Tuesday rejected the tabling of a bill to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1998 (The Blasphemy [Criminal Laws] [Amendment] Bill, 2007) terming it repugnant to the

injunctions of Islam. Minority MNA MP Bhandara moved the bill, seeking curtailment of the abuse of provisions and procedures of the law, involving offences relating to religion. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr Sher Afgan rejected the bill, saying it was against the injunctions of Islam. He told the House that the bill should not be tabled in the House: "Islam is our religion and such bills hurt our feelings. This is not a secular State, but the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," Afgan said, and asked the speaker not to introduce the bill in the House.¹

The opposition benches supported the objections raised by the minister with the thumping of desks. Afgan informed the House that according to Article 227 of the Constitution, all existing laws shall be brought in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the holy Qur'an and Sunnah. "No law shall be enacted which is repugnant to such injunctions."

Similarly, he said according to 125 Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, if a member raises the objection that a bill is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam, the assembly may, by a motion supported by not less than two-fifths of its total membership, refer the question to the Council of Islamic Ideology for advice as to whether or not the bill is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam.

1. EDITOR'S NOTE: Pakistan was originally founded as a secular State, not an Islamic State. See Stephen C. Perks, "From Jihad to Great Commission" in *Christianity & Society*, Vol. xiv, No. 3 (July 2004), p. 2ff.

Bhandara told the House that the objective of the bill was to stem the abuse of provisions and procedures of the law, involving offences relating to religion, and to make such provisions and procedures non-discriminatory and equally protective of all citizens and their religious beliefs and sensibilities in accordance with the Constitution and to amend such provisions and procedures in accordance with the injunctions of Islam as interpreted by the Federal Shariat Court.

He said that Article 2-A and Article 36 of the Constitution guarantee that adequate provisions shall be made for the minorities to freely profess their religions and that the State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities.

8. *Government fails to oppose death for apostasy draft*

On the 8 April, 2007 The National Assembly proposed and sent a bill entitled the "Apostasy Act, 2006" to the standing committee for consideration, which was presented by the MMA. The bill proposed sentencing to death male apostates and imprisonment with penitence or death for female apostates.

This bill is totally against religious freedom and against human rights, which will further promote religious intolerance and extremism in Pakistani society. I believe that the government's concept of moderation and enlightenment will be suppressed and Christians will become more miserable by the passage of this law. C&S

THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN COSMOLOGY AND THE ORIGINS OF SCIENCE

by Paul Gosselin¹

If we refer to the history of science, modern science originated in Europe in a context (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) where Christianity was the dominant world-view, permeating all aspects of life.² Not only was the proverbial antagonism between "science" and religion non-existent,³

but during this period scientific research itself was conceived (by *scientists*) as a *religious* task, a means of understanding the wisdom of God manifest in Creation and as a way to worship him. Discussing this attitude among the Puritans, R. K. Merton remarks:

This is the very motif that recurs in constant measure in the very writings which often contained considerable scientific contributions: these worldly activities and scientific achievements manifest the Glory of God and enhance the Good of Man. The juxtaposition of the spiritual and the material is characteristic and significant.

1. Paul Gosselin has a background in Social Anthropology (Masters 1989, Laval University, Quebec City) and is specialised in the study of belief systems, ideologies and religions. He is the web master of the French Evangelical web site Samizdat and author of two French books.

2. Christianity during this period had successfully permeated most of its host cultures, but as regards biblical standards of behaviour the "success" was often only skin-deep. One has only to think of the wars between "Christians" and the persecution of the Jews and other minorities to see this.

3. In "Scepticism, Theology and the Scientific Revolution in the

Seventeenth Century" Richard Popkin provides evidence that this antagonism belongs more to positivist mythology than to real history (pp. 1–28 in Lakatos and Musgrave (eds.), *Problems in the Philosophy of Science* (North-Holland, Amsterdam: 1968).

This culture rested securely on a substratum of utilitarian norms which identified the useful and the true. Puritanism itself had imputed a threefold utility to science. Natural philosophy was instrumental first, in establishing practical proofs of the scientist's state of grace, second in enlarging control of nature; and third, in glorifying God. Science was enlisted in the service of individual, society and deity. That these were adequate grounds could not be denied. They comprised not merely a claim to legitimacy, they afforded incentives which cannot be readily overestimated. One need only look through the personal correspondence of seventeenth-century scientists to realize this.⁴

This attitude towards science was not, however, particular to Protestantism but was common (with a few variations) among other scientists and mathematicians of the time such as Galileo, Descartes and Father Mersennes. Merton points out that many renowned seventeenth-century scientists and mathematicians were also members of the clergy. Merton also notes that lay scientists such as Boyle, Nehemiah Grew and Isaac Newton all had a keen interest in matters religious.

Taking these facts into consideration, one must not be surprised then at science's present ideologically incomplete state, because at its birth science was thoroughly integrated in the period's dominant religious system: Christianity. There are good reasons to believe that during this period science operated as a sub-cosmology,⁵ that is, a sub-cosmology specifically oriented towards the systematic study of the physical world and equipped with a basic methodological technology. In this context Christianity provided the "remainder" of meaning, a larger, overarching cosmology, which is required by people of all times. The "remainder" of meaning provided by Christianity would include, among other things, insights into areas of morality, sexuality, general cosmology, eschatology, etc. Setting these considerations aside for a moment, it must be pointed out that the awakening to the fact of science's metaphysical⁶ or cosmological aspects has had repercussions far beyond the field of the philosophy of science. This new awareness of science's metaphysical basis has had an important impact on the debate on rationality presently taking place in Anglo-Saxon anthropology, where, among other things, much attention has been paid to the following question: "Does the distinction between scientific and non- (or pre-) scientific thought have any basis? Is it meaningful?" As we will see later, the various views taken with regard to the origins of science play an important role in the formation of attitudes and determining positions adopted in the debate on rationality, specifically on the question of accepting or rejecting the distinction between scientific and non-scientific thought.

4. Robert K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science* (University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 232.

5. Popper, at least, would hardly be put off by such an affirmation. Some time ago he himself wrote: "I, however, believe that there is at least one philosophical problem in which all thinking men are interested. It is the problem of cosmology: the problem of understanding the world including ourselves, and our knowledge, as part of the world. All science is cosmology, I believe, and for me the interest of philosophy as well as science lies solely in the contributions which they have made to it" (*The Logic of Scientific Discovery* [University of Toronto Press, 1959], p. 15).

6. See Karl R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge* (London: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 40; Langdon Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 53f.; and Mario Bunge, "Les Présupposés et les Produits métaphysiques de la science et de la technologie contemporaine" in Settle Dockx (ed), *Science et Métaphysique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1976), p. 193–206.

Due to the debt owed by a number of prominent participants in the debate on rationality to the works of Karl R. Popper, we will briefly discuss his contribution. In an article entitled "Back to the Presocratics"⁷ (pp. 136–165) Popper has postulated, as have most philosophers and historians of science, that the West owes its scientific heritage to the philosophers of ancient Greece. According to Popper, the Greeks' greatest contribution was that of establishing a *tradition of critical discussions* which made possible the review of contemporary religious beliefs and opened up opportunities for innovation in matters cosmological.⁸ In a fascinating article by Robin Horton⁹ we find one of the first discussions bearing on the parallels and discontinuities between scientific and non-scientific thought (specifically, African traditional thought). Horton points out that African cosmologies propose (or presuppose), quite in the same manner as modern scientific theories, a certain number of beliefs with which it is possible to explore and classify the world around us and also that *both* systems rely on the use of metaphors. Horton is of the opinion that the difference between scientific and non-scientific thought is due to social circumstances, what he calls "open" and "closed" predicaments (concepts borrowed from Popper). Horton remarks that societies characterised (at least to some extent) by scientific thought involve an "open" situation, that is, the population in general is aware of *more than one* cosmology or world-view. Traditional (or "closed") societies involve situations where there is no developed awareness of cosmological alternatives and are usually characterised by *one* cosmology or world-view. Horton believes that the presence of cosmological alternatives is a crucial factor for the birth of science, permitting in the long run the development of critical attitudes towards current (religious) conceptions. In a "closed" situation people will tend to accept the dominant world-view simply because there are no alternate world-views available with which they could develop a critique. The scientist, however, is capable of going beyond common sense perceptions due to the fact that he has access to more than one cosmology. A number of critiques have been levelled at Horton's approach to the origins of science and the science/non-science distinction. Ernst Gellner (1973), for example, remarks that the "poor savage" living in a monolithic society with *no access* to alternate cosmologies, that is without contact with other societies having different cosmologies, is practically non-existent. Furthermore, access to cosmological alternatives will not automatically result in the development of a western form of science. Gellner notes¹⁰ that many traditional societies transcend their common conceptions of the world simply by the syncretistic addition of beliefs from other cosmologies. *Nothing is eliminated*. Thus, a situation where cosmological pluralism is an established fact cannot, then, be held to be "modern" or "scientific" and will not necessarily bring about the development of a critical tradition as required by Popper and

7. In Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 148–151.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Robin Horton, "African Traditional Thought and Western Science" in *Africa* Vol. 37, No. 1 (1967), pp. 50–77; Vol. 37, No. 2 (1967), pp. 155–187.

10. See Ernst Gellner, "The Savage and Modern Mind" in Robin Horton and R. Finnegan (eds) *Modes of Thought* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), pp. 162–181.

Horton. Looking at another point, Paul K. Feyerabend expresses doubts about the “essential scepticism” that Horton holds to be characteristic of science. The average scientist, as far as Feyerabend is concerned,¹¹ has a much more “closed” attitude than is commonly believed. Quite like the “primitive,” the average scientist keeps scepticism to a minimum as “. . . it is directed against the view of the opposition and against minor ramifications of one’s own ideas, never against the basic ideas themselves. Attacking the basic beliefs evokes taboo reactions which are no weaker than are the taboo reactions in so-called primitive societies.”¹²

Pursuing this further, the average over-specialized scientist, doing normal research (à la Kuhn), works within *one* single paradigm (often without any idea of alternate theories), yet we will all admit this still amounts to science! In a recent essay, “The domestication of the savage mind,” Jack Goody has brought his attention to bear on problems initially discussed by Horton. Goody, agreeing with Gellner, notes that the presence of alternative cosmologies in a society is not a sufficient condition for the development of science, much less a constraining condition. Goody holds to the critical tradition view of the origin of science, as does Horton, but taking into account the weaknesses of the cosmological pluralism hypothesis, Goody proposes the hypothesis that it is *the introduction of writing* which will be crucial for the *accumulation* of critical thoughts and alternative cosmologies. Writing, then, in Goody’s view, provides the conditions necessary for the establishment of the critical tradition, which in its turn is a prerequisite for the birth of science. One might ask “Why pay so much attention to writing?” Goody answers:

Because when an alternative is put in writing it can be inspected in much greater detail, in its parts as well as its whole, backwards as well as forwards, out of context as well as in its setting; in other words it can be subjected to quite a different type of scrutiny and critique than is possible with purely verbal communication. Speech is no longer tied to an “occasion”; it becomes timeless. Nor is it attached to a person; on paper, it becomes more abstract, more depersonalized.¹³

Goody understands, however, the difficulty of establishing a radical dichotomy between societies with or without writing, a *single* dichotomy supposedly accounting for the development of science,¹⁴ but remains convinced that to a large extent western science owes its development to writing. Ironically, there are a number of ethnographic facts not only known to Goody but published by him which contradict the idea that writing constitutes a causal factor determining the development of science. In *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, Goody (pp. 11–16) and others cite many cases of societies where writing exists, but where nothing resembling western science has developed. The Tibetan case¹⁵ is particularly striking. There, writing has been restricted to religious uses and printing often associated with the accumulation of spiritual merit. As I understand it, then, writing inevitably constitutes *one* of the conditions necessary for the development of science, but, and in agreement with Kathleen

Gough,¹⁶ I must insist on the fact that a number of ethnographic facts contradict the idea that writing might be considered, by itself, a causal or constraining factor. I would then advise that if we are to attain a proper understanding of the development of science we must look elsewhere taking into account the inhibiting and stimulating effects that cosmological presuppositions can have on the comprehension and the exploration of the physical world around us. In anthropology, to a large extent, there has been little interest in the origin of science and in the effects that cosmological presuppositions may have on its development. Nonetheless it must be pointed out that some authors have at least touched on the issue.

The idea of natural order, a basic assumption of the scientific method, is probably essential to most religious interpretations of the nature of things, but it is weakened by the hypothesized existence of malicious spirits or deities capable of souring milk, ruining crops or sending pestilence for no particular reason whatsoever. Individuals who believe that they may at any time be objects of unprovoked and unavoidable misfortune almost certainly lack the confidence and security afforded to those who live in a safe world guarded by benevolent and predictable deities.¹⁷

Previously we have pointed out the intimate relationship existing between science (at the time of its birth) and Christianity. Might this simply be one among many trivial details in the history of science or, rather, might it be evidence of a deeper relationship? Data now turning up from various directions indicate that the relationship is anything but trivial. In an essay published initially in 1925 Alfred North Whitehead, an English mathematician, has made the following remarks on the origins of science.

I do not think, however, that I have even yet brought out the greatest contribution of medievalism to the formation of the scientific movement. I mean the inexpugnable belief that every detailed occurrence can be correlated with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner, exemplifying general principles. Without this belief the incredible labours of scientists would be without hope. It is this instinctive conviction, vividly poised before the imagination, which is the motive power of research: that there is a secret which can be unveiled. How has this conviction been so vividly implanted on the European mind? When we compare this tone of thought in Europe with the attitude of other civilizations when left to themselves, there seems but one source for its origin. It must have come from the medieval insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and the rationality of a Greek philosopher. Every detail was supervised and ordered: the search into nature could only result in the vindication of the faith in rationality. Remember that I am not talking about the explicit beliefs of a few individuals. What I mean is the impress made on the European mind arising from the unquestioned faith

11. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso 1975/79), pp. 294–300.

12. *Ibid.* p. 298

13. Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 44.

14. *Ibid.* p. 50f.

15. Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (1968), pp. 15f.

16. Gough remarks: “My discussion of literacy in traditional Kerala thus tends to bear out conclusions reached from a general consideration of China and India . . . Literacy is for the most part an enabling rather than a causal factor, making possible the development of complex political structures, syllogistic reasoning, scientific enquiry, linear conceptions of reality, scholarly specialization, artistic elaboration, and perhaps certain kinds of individualism and of alienation” (“Literacy in Kerala” in Goody, *op. cit.*, p. 153). On this subject one might also consult an interesting article by Ruth Finnegan, “Literacy versus Non-Literacy: The Great Divide” in Robin Horton and R. Finnegan (eds), *Modes of Thought* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973).

17. Beals, Beals and Hoijer (eds.), *An Introduction to Anthropology* (1977), p. 492

of centuries. By this I mean the instinctive tone of thought and not mere creed of words. In Asia, the conceptions of God were of a being who was either too arbitrary or too impersonal for such ideas to have much effect on the instinctive habits of mind. Any definite occurrence might be due to the fiat of an irrational despot, or might issue from some impersonal inscrutable origin of things. There was not the same confidence as in the intelligible rationality of a personal being.¹⁸

Strange though it may seem, the “deeper relationship” discussed earlier between the origins of science and Christianity is related to the borrowing of Judeo-Christian metaphysical components which, with time, came to serve as science’s “hard core,” its implicit ideo-logic to some extent. More specifically, these components constitute a set of beliefs now designated by the term scientific realism. As Leatherdale points out here, realism is related to a number of metaphysical components central to Judeo-Christian cosmology.

A belief in the certainty of science was no doubt supported by the belief in a God-ordered universe. We see this in Descartes’ belief that God would be no deceiver, in relation to empirical knowledge, and the belief of Newton, for example, and indeed the whole Deistic bias of Enlightenment thought, in a God-designed orderly universe capable of being understood by man’s reason. It was to knowledge of a God-given and therefore real existent order of real things that man’s reason was to win through. The order of things could be known with certainty, and reason leads to certainty, and therefore the literally true. This conviction is only slightly eroded by the advent of hypotheticalism, and, in some quarters, an awareness of the analogical or metaphorical nature of the new philosophy.¹⁹

Pierre Thuiller too points out that Newton’s scientific works were based on Judeo-Christian presuppositions.²⁰ Discussing the works of Galileo, Stanley Jaki underscores the fact that, historically, the explicit postulation of certain Judeo-Christian presuppositions made the development of scientific realism possible:

Nature, here, stood for God, not of course in a naturalistic sense, but in the sense made possible by the belief that nature was the work and faithful symbol of a most reasonable Supreme Being. Therefore nature, in analogy to her Maker, could only be steady and permeated by the same law and reason everywhere. From the permanence and universality of the world order followed, for instance, that the same laws of motion were postulated for the earth and the celestial bodies [against Aristotelian metaphysics—P.G.]. It also followed that regularly occurring phenomena, such as the tides, baffling as they might appear, should not be assigned a

miraculous cause. The most important consequence of the permanence and universality of the world order anchored in the Christian notion of the Creator was the ability of the human mind to investigate that order. Such was an inevitable consequence that if both nature and the human mind were products of one and the same Creator. As to the human mind Galileo most emphatically stated that it was a “work of God’s and one of the most excellent”. The rapid survey of man’s various intellectual achievements, which closed the First Day, served indeed for Galileo as proof of precisely such a theologically oriented conclusion.²¹

A historian by the name of Lynn White, better known perhaps for his research incriminating the Christian worldview regarding environmental issues, points out certain aspects of Judeo-Christian cosmology that had a positive effect on the rapid development of technology in the West.

In 1956 Robert Forbes of Leyden and Samuel Sambursky of Jerusalem simultaneously pointed out that Christianity, by destroying classical animism, brought about a basic change in the attitude towards natural objects and opened up the way for their unabashed use for human ends. Saints, angels and demons were very real to the Christian, but the *genius loci*, the spirit inherent in a place or object, was no longer present to be placated if disturbed.²²

Another scholar bringing somewhat unexpected support to the idea of a causal relationship between Judeo-Christian cosmology and scientific realism is Joseph Needham, who as a Marxist historian has spent many years studying the development of Chinese civilisation and technology (ancient and contemporary). Needham, who for the most part considers that environmental and socio-economic factors have played a predominant role in the *non*-development of a theoretical science in China, seems to have been forced by simple facts out of the orthodox (Marxist) theoretical framework to pay attention to the effects that certain metaphysical presuppositions may have had on the birth of science. He notes:

My colleagues and I have engaged in a rather thorough investigation of the concepts of laws of Nature in East Asia and Western culture. In Western civilization the ideas of natural law in the juristic sense and of the laws of Nature in the sense of the natural sciences can easily be shown to go back to a common root. Without doubt one of the oldest notions of Western civilization was that just as earthly imperial law-givers enacted codes of positive law to be obeyed by men, so also the celestial and supreme rational Creator Deity had laid down a series of laws which must be obeyed by minerals, crystals, plants, animals and the stars in their courses. There can be little doubt that this idea was intimately bound up with the development of modern science at the Renaissance in the West. If it was absent elsewhere, could that not have been one of the reasons why modern science arose only in Europe; in other words, were mediævally conceived laws of Nature in their naïve form necessary for the birth of science?²³

Needham, in the following discussion on the God concept in Chinese cosmology, exposes at least one obstacle to the development of scientific realism among the Chinese:

18. Quoted from Alfred N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 12f. Immediately after this sentence Whitehead weakens these affirmations by casting doubt on the idea that the logic of Judeo-Christian cosmology could justify such faith in a rational and ordered world. It is somewhat difficult to assess just what Whitehead means by this as his own pronouncements (in the quote) explain quite readily how the order in nature can be understood in relation to the rationality of the Creator . . . unless one refuses to accept the concept of an omniscient and omnipotent God as central to Judeo-Christian cosmology! I would tend to suspect that Whitehead’s doubts on this point are largely concessions to the positivistic era in which he wrote. Incidentally, Whitehead never pressed the point any further, at least in the essay under consideration.

19. Leatherdale, *The Role of Analogy, Model and Metaphor in Science* (North-Holland, Amsterdam 1974), p. 231f.

20. Pierre Thuiller, *Jeux et enjeux de la science: Essai d’épistémologie critique* (1972), pp. 46f.

21. Stanley L. Jaki, *Science and Creation* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), p. 278.

22. Lynn White, *Medieval Religion and Technology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 237.

23. Joseph Needham, *The Grande Titration* (University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 35f.

But in any case three things are clear: (a) that the highest spiritual being known and worshipped in ancient China was not a Creator in the sense of the Hebrews and the Greeks; (b) that the idea of the supreme god as a person in ancient Chinese thought, however far it went, did not include the conception of a divine celestial law-giver imposing ordinances on non-human Nature; (c) that the concept of the supreme being very early became impersonal. It was not that there was no order in Nature for the Chinese, but rather that it was not an order ordained by a rational personal being, and hence there was no guarantee that other rational personal beings would be able to spell out in their own earthly languages the pre-existing divine code of laws which had been previously formulated. There was no confidence that the code of Nature's laws could be unveiled and read, because there was no assurance that a divine being, even more rational than ourselves, had ever formulated such a code capable of being read. One feels indeed, that the Taoists, for example, would have scorned such an idea as being too naïve to be adequate to the subtlety and complexity of the universe as they intuited it.²⁴

One cannot hope, for obvious reasons, to produce in one short article all the proofs necessary to establish irrefutably the hypothesis of the Judeo-Christian origin of scientific realism, but I believe the evidence cited above demonstrates at least that such an explanation is plausible and should be taken seriously. The best research touching on this subject that I have come across so far is a volume by Stanley L. Jaki: *Creation and Science* (1974). In this essay, the author explores a number of major ancient civilisations among which we find the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Indians, the Chinese and the three major civilisations of the New World (plus a look at modern Western science), assessing the various effects that their respective cosmologies had on the development (or *non*-development) of science in these societies. Jaki observes that it was only in the West, where the concept of a *transcendent* (that is not limited to the physical world) and omniscient Creator God had become an essential and central component of the cultural ideo-logic, that a theoretical *and* experimental science did appear: "The scientific quest found fertile soil only when this faith in a personal, rational Creator had truly permeated a whole culture, beginning with the centuries of the High Middle Ages. It was that faith which provided, in sufficient measure, confidence in the rationality of the universe, trust in progress, and appreciation of the quantitative method, all indispensable ingredients of the scientific quest."²⁵

Seeing it would be inappropriate here to bury the reader under a flood of quotations from the works of Jaki, I can only suggest that the curious or the sceptics interested by the issues surrounding the origins of science take a look for themselves. The amount of historical research that has gone into Jaki's essays is rather astounding.

I am of the opinion that the fundamental issue taken up by Jaki touches on a crucial (and "sticky") point: are the various ideologico-religious systems of the world of indifferent epistemological value or are some better suited as a basis for the development of an empirical science? Though it may be conceded that a large variety of ideologico-religious

systems can give rise to reasonably harmonious societies (as far as is possible in this fallen world), the data presented above indicate that they cannot all serve as a basis for a vigorous science. Feyerabend complains that we in the West are too quick to proclaim the superiority of our science, that we should let many traditions (or cosmologies) develop side by side in order to see if some other tradition might not do "much better."²⁶ "Unfortunately" the experiment that Feyerabend demands has, in historical and anthropological terms, already taken place. Of the numerous ideologico-religious systems of the world that have had, in some cases, thousands of years to develop, only one has given birth to a theoretical *and* experimental science capable of a prolonged autonomous development.

The preceding data cast some doubt on the "standard" version of the origin of Western science presupposed by most historians of science, which attribute the origin of this institution to certain components of Greek natural philosophy. It must be pointed out, moreover, that a number of historical facts contradict the "standard" view. Jaki notes that the "standard" version of the origin of science generally fails to underline the fact that the Greeks themselves only took their science to a certain point, from whence it then went into stagnation and decline²⁷ and that the Greeks never paid much attention to experimentation. The "experimental tendency" was born and was popularised on a large scale only in seventeenth-century Europe. Jaki remarks that outside of the West, for example in the Byzantine Empire, in India, among the medieval Arabs and the Chinese,²⁸ the arrival of Greek science did *not* provoke the birth of an independent social institution whose accomplishments rapidly eclipsed those of the Greeks as was the case in seventeenth-century Europe. It would seem quite clear then that the Greek origins hypothesis is a dead-end.

Curiously, if one does allow for the Judeo-Christian origins of our Western scientific cosmology, this casts new light on the fact that Popper has attributed scientific realism not to the Greek "critical tradition" but to "common sense."²⁹ What Popper fails to point out is that the "common sense" in question here is *Western* "common sense," a body of beliefs and presuppositions that has, over the centuries, become saturated with Judeo-Christian metaphysics. Outside the West the attitudes vis-à-vis the world (and the ideo-logics underlying them) were unable to sustain the confidence that we live in a rational and ordered world.

It is quite possible that some will object to the preceding explanation of the origins of Western science in that it will be likely to give strength to Western prejudices about "other" people's inferiority, encouraging paternalism, perhaps even racism. Who knows? Perhaps it might. Narrow-mindedness will always find fuel for fire. However, looking at this question a little open-mindedly, one may draw rather different conclusions. For example, thinking back to my first impressions of the works of J. Needham I remember being particularly impressed by the level of Chinese mediaeval technology, on many points *surpassing* that found in Europe

24. *Ibid.* p. 327. Also see Stanley L. Jaki, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

25. Stanley L. Jaki, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

26. Paul K. Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: NLB, 1978), p. 106f. It's hard to tell what Feyerabend means here by "do much better." Should we take this in speculative/theoretical, technological or moral terms? Feyerabend doesn't say.

27. For more information on this question see Jaki, "The Role of Faith in Physics" in *Zygon*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1967), p. 195; Jaki, *op. cit.*, p. 102–137; *idem*, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 19–33 and R. Hooykaas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972), p. 29f.

28. See also Needham, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

29. Karl R. Popper, *op. cit.*, (1973) p. 32–44.

at that time. I was also struck by the contrast drawn by Needham between the semi-retarded,³⁰ barbarian and non-innovative Europeans (during the Middle Ages) and those

ingenious mediaeval Chinese. The contrast is such that one is tempted to ask: Why is it that the ingenious Chinese did not invent science whereas those, not so bright, Europeans did?

It seems to me quite evident that such an event was *not* due to some intrinsic superiority of the Western “races,” but rather to a happy “coincidence” which made them heirs to a cosmology encouraging a confident attitude towards the rational exploration and study of the world. This cosmology, it must also be pointed out, was not native to Europe but had been imported from the Middle East. *C&S*

30. At least this is the picture Needham draws. He really seems to enjoy telling stories about “bright” mediaeval Europeans hauling roosters suspected of having laid eggs into court of law and as well as other animals suspected of having broken the “laws of nature” (see Needham, *op. cit.*, p. 328–330).

THE NATURE, GOVERNMENT AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

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THE IMPULSE OF POWER: FORMATIVE IDEALS OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

by Michael W. Kelley

PART I: ANCIENT MAN: “THE FIRST ENLIGHTENMENT”—*cont.* 2. PLATO: THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAL

1. *Plato Versus Homer*

HOMER's influence in forming Greek cultural ideals and their subsequent development can hardly be exaggerated. Beginning early in Greek history, he left his imprint upon each generation of Greeks up to the final flowering of Greek culture in the Hellenistic period. Plato's confession in his *Republic* (595c), “I've had a kind of fascinated admiration for Homer ever since I was young,” is a sentiment which no doubt was true for nearly all Greeks, not only in Plato's day but throughout ancient Greek history.¹ No Greek who had any sense of his own cultural identity could possibly feel that Homer was someone alien to him. Homer was the source of everything he believed! Homer's epic poems were the principal tools in the education of the youth, as Plato testifies. Greeks everywhere, and at all times, could not think of themselves as Greek without Homer.

It may seem surprising, therefore, that, despite his singular importance and widespread popularity, Homer, and poetry in general, came under sustained and lethal attack from within the culture itself. Specifically, the attack came from that quarter of Greek thinking represented by philosophy, and, moreover, the point-man in the assault was none other than Plato. Why is this? The issue does not rest on Plato's personal views about poetry in general or Homer's epic poems in particular. It is much more than a dispute with Homer over the aesthetics of his poetic style. For Plato, the issue turned on the difference between the substance or content of poetry, Homer's in particular, and that of philosophy.

According to most modern thinkers, the difference between Plato and Homer is the difference between science and religion, reason and fantasy, truth and make-believe; in short, between philosophy and myth. Homer's world was a fanciful one in which primitive man accounted for life as arbitrarily invaded by imaginary supernatural agents who capriciously determined all that affected him. Because they lacked a true understanding of the causes of events, the men in Homer's day ignorantly supposed that the incidents which affected them were due, in part, to invisible divine powers in which they naïvely believed. Plato, so the explanation goes, broke with these superstitious beliefs and sought to trace the causes of happenings in man's world to purely *natural* occurrences which have their bases in entirely *rational* explanations. He thereby freed the mind from credulity and ignorance, from believing in nonsense about supernatural beings. From this liberation Western science and technology are alleged to take their beginnings.

Although this modern explanation contains a grain of truth, still the conflict between philosophy and poetry was much more than a contest between science and religion, or reason and myth. It was a dispute between two different *religions*, two different *myths*, within the same cultural mindset. Plato and Homer, because they belonged to the same humanistic world of Greek ideals, shared the same vision of reality. Homer's man-centered outlook was not something against which Plato stood opposed. The idea that man could rise up hero-like and redeem his existence was for Plato not in doubt. That order could somehow triumph over disorder was a view he likewise shared with Homer. How, then, are we to account for Plato's virulent attack on poetry and Homer? The answer lies in the struggle between two different *humanistic* points of view. In Plato's mind, Homer did not

1. All references to Plato's *Republic* are taken from the Robin Waterfield edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

develop a fully *humanistic* account of man and society, and of the nature of order and disorder. Homer made life too much dependent upon gods, that is to say, upon *external* or non-human factors ultimately beyond man's control. Since Plato wanted man fully in control of himself and his society, he believed that he must refine the humanism of the inherited Homeric culture from one in which man lives by an order that is largely the product of unseen and unknown *outside* agents to one in which order is clearly seen to be the result of human endeavour alone. This is no change from religion to science. It is the attempt to establish the religion of humanism on a more certain foundation.

Plato's attack, far from being an attack on the poetic style, was an attack on Homer himself as the universally accepted spokesman for humanistic Greek ideals. Plato knew that Homer was reckoned to be more than a great artist; he was recognised as "the educator of the Greeks." The Greek humanistic world-view was framed by Homer, who was the source of *revelation* integrating the Greek cultural vision. As Havelock points out, Homer "controlled the culture in which he lived for the simple reason that his poetry became and remained the only authorized version of important utterance."² It is Homer's *control* of the culture that Plato means to challenge. His authority in the formation of culture must be overthrown, and his role as educator of the Greeks transferred to Plato. Plato, that is *philosophy*, must become the new "authorized version of important utterance." Plato believed that Homeric education did not sufficiently stress the "rational faculty in which alone lies hope of personal salvation and also of scientific assurance."³

Havelock's comment, while helpful, requires further elucidation. First, the use of the expression "rational faculty" is a prejudice of modern psychology. Plato did not simply pit one *faculty* of the mind over against another. For him, the issue was the concept of the mind *as such*, and the central role it must play in the fundamental struggle for order against chaos. This is why, second, as Havelock correctly observed, replacing poetry with philosophy was, for Plato, a matter of "personal salvation." Homer's idea of *salvation* through the gods was no salvation at all. He made man dependent upon something or someone other than himself. For Plato, order established by the gods is not one which can guarantee man absolute certainty, that is, can provide him "scientific assurance." So long as man remains dependent upon the gods he is at the mercy of forces that, because they are unknown, cannot be relied upon or controlled. The Olympian order must be replaced by self-generated order, which arises from the depths of man's own being. The source of that order must be found in the mind or soul, that is to say, the *reason* and nowhere else.

The fundamental question for Greeks, we may recall from the last chapter, was "what is the explanation of order?" And related to this question was a second, "what are the causes of disorder?" The desire to resolve these questions, far from being abstract and academic in nature, was tied to the belief that, by knowing the answers to them, man would then be in a position to take control of his life and be able to build a culture and civilisation that would promote and secure the best life possible for man. The need to do so could not be a matter of indifference or neglect. Identifying the ground of order was viewed with the greatest urgency, for the *salvation*

of man from chaos and barbarity were dependent thereon. Without the key to order man lives constantly under the threat of disorder.

From a Christian view, the longing in man, whether past or present, to know the causes of order and disorder is not something man thought up on his own. It was in the nature of man, as first created, to possess an inner inclination to know the order of the world in which he lived. Man was deeply and ineradicably endowed by his Creator with the need to understand the truth about himself and his external surroundings. But it was also made clear to him that he could only know the truth in this respect so long as he acted in obedience to his Creator. Should he disobey, he would be punished and his knowledge taken away. Man did, in fact, disobey, his disobedience stemming from having listened to (i.e., *obeyed*) another voice than that of God, the voice of a would-be god, whose explanations were false, indeed, lies. Because man chose to listen to that other voice, his punishment bears the hallmark of enslavement to that other voice and its lies. At the same time, that other voice proclaimed that man could be his own authority in the matter of all explanations concerning himself and his life in the world. Under its influence man has come to believe that the source of truth lies within himself.

Man was deceived and his life and world were cursed. Scripture speaks of man as having fallen into sin and of his world being reduced to disorder as a result. For this, man alone is responsible. What is more, man is in no position to correct the problem by himself. Man has become confused, he no longer understands the true explanation of order, nor does he admit that the causes of disorder lie in his ethical rebellion against the only true God. Yet, because he remains man, created in the image of his Maker, he cannot escape the need to know the truth about order and disorder. The ancient Greeks are testimony to fallen man's innate desire to solve this problem, but their wish to know the truth in this respect is a manifestation of fallen man's confidence that he can discover it on his own and so proclaim his own endeavours as the solution.

Homer's principal contribution to this *humanistic* ambition can be found in his attempt to explain the "causes of disorder," as well as the basis of order, as made possible only "under the gods."⁴ In a way, this is to be expected of men who stood fairly early in the history of the race, for at this early date the sense of dependence with which man had been created to live under God was not to be easily effaced from his conscience. While man wanted to be the locus of truth in all questions which pertained to his life and world, much, however, eluded his grasp and the experience of disorder seemed too great for man to control on his own. If some order did exist, it appeared as something which came to him from without. Some power or powers greater than man must be responsible. Still, order did not come ready made from the gods. Their actions, too, were at times the causes of disorder. Somehow man and gods must strive together to fashion order. Homer never meant to claim that order came from the gods whereas disorder was from man. His gods were not absolute. In some sense, man, too, must be the source of order, even as in some sense, he was responsible for disorder. But Homer could not imagine that just any men could perform so exalted a task; his world of thought re-

2. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, p. 145.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

4. Voegelin, *The World of the Polis*, p. 71.

quired that great men, *heroes* endowed with *divine* attributes, be the natural leaders in the struggle to save man from the abyss of chaos. In later Greek intellectual development, Homer's notion of the role of heroic human agents would continue to inspire thought, but their connection to a world of invisible divinities would come under severe attack. To complete this attack, the nature of heroic action would have to be transformed. This, not the impulse of *science*, inspired the rise of philosophy. Or, rather, Greek philosophy and science were imbued with a deeply religious motive.

Thus, while Homer talked of order as something which involved *gods* in its establishment, he was concerned to show that man was needed as well. This *humanistic* component, while historically a part of early Greek ideals, did not satisfy later Greek thinkers who began to purge all features from their world view that did not leave matters exclusively in man's control. All Greeks believed that order must be *divine*, but divine order as explained in Homer was insufficient by itself to reveal that order to man who must himself *inwardly* grasp and reconstruct that order, thereby making the *soul* the true source of order. Furthermore, Homer did not explain the causes of disorder such that man could know their principles. Without a proper understanding of disorder, it would be impossible to set the explanation of order over against it. No *gospel* of salvation could be proclaimed against chaos and degeneration if one did not know their exact causes. With Homer, human thought had not yet reached *autonomy*, that is, had not yet reached the stage of independence from other than self-justifying motives. It was not yet the sole source of all truth about itself and its world. If we are to understand anything about Greek philosophy, especially Plato, we must recognise that central to the *salvation* of man and society is the belief that the "[r]estoration of order could only come from the soul that had *ordered itself* by attunement to the divine measure."⁵

It has been said that "Homeric man has not awakened to the fact that he possesses in his own soul the source of his own powers [but instead] he receives them as a . . . donation from the gods."⁶ Homer did not grasp the role of the *logos*, the reason, which, according to philosophy, is the essential nature of the soul. He saw only the *passions* of both gods and men, that neither could be explained according to some standard of rational conduct. The only controlling motive was, as we mentioned, the need to be honoured. But this was not something like an absolute truth in Homer, or an inviolable principle of conduct. Both men and gods are possessed of this ambition, but it does not represent a universal standard of just behavior. Consequently, no internal or mental power acts in either man or gods to enable them to see or adhere to an invariable order of things. That being so, philosophy was bound to ask, why should man look to the gods as a *higher* aid to order in his life? If man does not have the power in his own inner self to erect order, justice and a common social life for man, and the gods are devoid of it as well, why should he expect any help from the gods? And if man does have the power, as philosophy came to believe, why should the gods be necessary? At no point do the gods constitute a *transcendent* order, therefore a definitive rule for human purpose and action. But if man needs some standard of action, where is it to be found? If it does not come

from the gods, it can only come from man. Homer's concept of the hero produced the first standard in Greek ideals. From their great self-esteem and desire to achieve glory they provide a model that man can relate to and imitate. But Homer's heroes, lacking the *logos*, do not comprehend that order must first be apprehended by the mind before it can be achieved by means of the will-to-act. This is what philosophy seeks to clarify.

For the most part, Plato carried out his attack on Homer in Books III and X of his *Republic*. Early in that work Plato has Socrates, his spokesman, endeavouring to define what is considered to be the most important question having to do with order, the question of what justice is. Unless he can answer this question to complete satisfaction, all attempts to create a world for man to live in, he believes, are foredoomed to failure. Socrates proposes that the best way to discover the answer to this question must lie in an attempt to erect a social community, for only then will it be possible to see what justice truly is. Justice, the proper ordering of life, can exist in human society, but not in just any society, only when the best kind of society is conceived. That type of society is made possible when a clear distinction is shown to be necessary between rulers and ruled. Justice, in Platonic thought, is more a matter of organization and social arrangement than of law or principle. Everything depends, then, entirely upon fostering the right relationship between those who should be the natural masters and those who should be the natural slaves. Some men, according to Plato, are by nature the right men to give commands, whereas others, for the same reason, are best fitted to obey. Justice will be found when the best and wisest are put in charge of everyone else.

However, Plato believed that it was more than a matter of putting the right men by nature in charge of the community, for these sorts of men do not appear from nowhere. Rather, philosophy was needed to ensure that what nature produced was properly cultivated for the task of governing. Consequently, these men, whom he called the guardian class, must also undergo a rigorous education, so that they will rule by reason of superior insight into the good of the whole and not solely by reason of brute force. Their rule, in other words, must be in accordance with knowledge, not merely according to the threat of violence. Nor, presumably, must it redound to their own aggrandisement, rather it must be exercised for the good of society. That is, they must rule on behalf of the State, not private interest. The question, then, is how are they to be educated? What models must they pattern their actions after?

At this point the nub of the issue between Plato and Homer comes to the forefront. Homer and the poets had long been the accepted *educators* of rulers. In the *Republic*, which is Plato's treatise on the education of rulers, he intends to show them as having failed to educate rulers for their proper role by alleging that the traditional models they used did not lead to a correct understanding of the State nor inspire rulers to love the State and its good over all private good, including their own. They were unable to do so because, in fact, they taught that *personal* honour and glory were the highest motives by which both gods and men could possibly act. To live by such *selfish* ideals was to offer us rulers who were no better than the ruled whose only interest was to satisfy their senses and appetites. Such behaviour in time leads to conflict and the breakdown of order. Rulers must be educated to live and act according to that which lies beyond

5. *Ibid.*, p. 43 (emphasis mine).

6. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, p. 21.

the material and therefore not subject to change or decay. They must live and rule in accordance with things only perceived by the mind, namely, the *Ideas*, or as Plato called them, the *Forms*.

If Plato believed that justice, that is order, would be found when the rulers were properly educated, he did not think it necessary to educate the people. The well-ordered State is made possible only when the right kind of rulers are in charge. It is irrelevant, even dangerous, to permit the people any responsibility for the concerns of the State. Because they are chiefly interested in their private material well-being, they cannot be expected to take a disinterested view of the good of the State. Only men (and women) who have been carefully selected and properly bred to the job of ruling will know how to act for the good of the whole, for they will have been purged from all subjective motives in deciding and acting, and will rule in accordance with superior knowledge of the Forms.

To educate the rulers they will need “exercise for the body and cultural studies for the mind” (*Republic*, 376e). The physical exercises were secondary, or so Plato would have us believe. In fact, only rulers would be in physical condition. They must be strong and capable of taking concerted military action against any threat. Presumably that threat was external. But Plato also believed that it must be used against the people themselves if necessary. The people must be kept unarmed and untrained for combat in case they were to rebel against the rulers.

Education was also to be literary, that is, by means of stories. Plato asserted that there were two kinds of stories: true and untrue kinds (377a). Rulers must only be taught the true kind. Homer and the poets have all taught untrue kinds. Plato’s most serious charge is that they have given “a distorted image of the nature of the gods and heroes . . .” (377e). Thus, Plato attacks Homer for presenting *lies* about those who were responsible for the maintenance of order and culture. Plato deplored the fact that the stories about gods presented them as immoral and irrational, “fighting and scheming and battling against one another . . .” (378c). How could they be models of culture if their behaviour indicated that they, too, were subject to the forces of chaos and corruption? It showed that gods were themselves subject to *change* and *becoming*. Far from being above temporality, they were, like men, moved by the *lower impulses* of the body and emotions. In Homer, and all the poets, time and motion took precedence over rest and eternity. Accordingly, the gods do not represent permanent standards. Heroes who imitate them are moved more by *selfish* interests than by universal norms, which means that man is not truly in control of himself or his world. Men will be easily driven by motives that lead to conflict and disputes. Consequently, rulers must be taught to believe that *God* is always good, that is to say, that he never changes and is always what he is, namely, perfect (379a and 381b).

It would be easy to conclude that this dispute between Plato and Homer was simply a matter of saying the right things about the gods as if both were in agreement on what was meant by the word *gods*. But that is far from the case. When Plato says that *God* must “always be portrayed as he really is” (379a), he has changed from the use of the plural to that of the singular. He means to redefine the nature of divinity while continuing to use the traditional word. But he does not accept the gods; he believes in God, that is, in an

invisible world of permanent things which are accessible only to the mind. God, in his view, does not change and, therefore, is always good. Furthermore, he must not be understood as responsible for everything, only for a small portion. As Plato states, “[h]e and he alone must be held responsible for the good things . . . [and] responsibility for bad things must be looked for elsewhere” (379c). What Plato means is that the world of Forms, the good things, is not the reason for the existence of the other side of things, namely, matter which affects us adversely. The Forms are permanent, which is to say, eternal, whereas matter and physical reality (the bad things) are constantly subject to change. The world of mind alone is good; the realm of matter is always bad. Nevertheless, it is by means of the good things (Forms) that matter is brought under control and subjected to order and purpose, for by means of the permanent things which the mind grasps is the changeable realm of matter made to submit. Rulers, therefore, must be educated in the good things of the mind and learn to shun the things of the body and material reality. Then they will learn the right way to build and govern a perfect world, for they will have patterned their thinking in accordance with the perfect and unchanging *God*.

Homer explained the gods as if they were persons like men, thereby giving a personal attribute to everything that happened in the realm of external phenomena.⁷ Plato disposed of the personal character of the gods and transformed them into an impersonal *God*. The struggle to control the humanistic agenda of Greek cultural ideals required that the only *personal* being be man himself. All else must be impersonal so that man can then impress his personality upon it. Plato meant to offer a new educational program for training the rulers, one which would require them to act in terms of impersonal ideas as the “divine measure.” Once they attune their souls to that measure by means of a rigorous dialectical procedure, they will intellectually merge with the world of the Forms and become one, and thereby realise through themselves the only *gods* that men will ever need.

Plato’s attack on Homer and poetry is the culmination of a long struggle by philosophy to achieve control of the formation of humanistic culture in the ancient world. Far from initiating the conflict, Plato himself avers that the opposition between philosophy and poetry is “an ancient quarrel” (607b). It is no academic dispute, for the prejudices of the masses are deeply involved. Their minds have been deformed by the false explanations of those who, like Homer, have fed them *representations* of the mere images of reality but not the truth, not reality itself. People listen to the poets and believe what they say because they appeal to what is base and gratifying to their senses and feelings, what Plato calls “their irrational side” (605b). In so doing, the poets destroy the rational part. They teach that man is essentially a bundle of emotional responses to the world around him and represent the truth of man and his relationship to the world as “far from intelligence” (603a, b). People are easily deceived by the poets because they are especially skillful in making “us feel particularly strong feelings” (605d). Far from teaching men to rise above their passions and subjective feelings, which are due to our sensual, bodily nature, the poets reinforce the

7. W.C.K. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. I, *The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 26.

people's prejudices by appealing to their appetites and desires. Consequently, the poet stirs the wrong motives, rousing men to extremes rather than teaching them to be in control of themselves and their world. "When the part of us which is inherently good has been inadequately trained in habits enjoined by reason, it relaxes its guard over this other part, the part which feels . . ." (606a). In Plato's view, "poetic representation . . . irrigates and tends to these things when they should be left to wither, and it makes them our rulers when they should be our subjects, because otherwise we won't live better and happier lives, but quite the opposite" (606d). To replace poetry with philosophy is an urgent matter, for the foundation of order, and the good of man's life, depend upon it.

2. *Hesiod and the Beginnings of Speculation*

Before we can discuss the outgrowth of philosophy in the period prior to Plato, that of the so-called Presocratics, we must notice that the Greek mind, even in the heyday of the poets, had always sought to frame the world along some sort of rational line. While the world was filled with gods, it was never thought that truth about the gods, and hence about human social order, was a matter of revelation from the gods. At the very least, the poet regarded himself as possessing within himself the requisite explanatory power to articulate matters as he saw fit. The Greeks, more than any other people in the ancient world, firmly believed that man's ability to speculate on the nature of reality was essential to the formation of truth and order. While the Greek mind was intensely religious, its deepest concern was to discover the key to the nature of the cosmos as the product of rational introspection. Everything in man's world, including the gods, must conform to man's interpretation. This is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the works of that other great poet of antiquity, Hesiod.

Although we have not mentioned Hesiod, his importance to ancient Greeks (and Romans) was nearly as great as that of Homer. Cicero, for example, in the *Tusculan Disputations*, when he discusses the comparison between Roman and Greek poets, and why the latter were for so long superior to the former, mentions Homer and Hesiod together as if they were equal in the formation of Greek poetry, as if, in other words, like Romulus and Remus, they were viewed as co-founders. And Plato, who mentions Homer by name repeatedly, mentions no other poets specifically except Hesiod. What is more, Hesiod is mentioned alongside Homer as if, once again, they represent a duo. Clearly, Hesiod, too, deserves credit for helping to shape Greek ideals.

While Hesiod also looked at the world and man through the *myth*, that is, through the gods, he did so only as the myth itself had been systematically and rationally organized. Hesiod presented the world of the gods, not so much as actors in the affairs of man, but as an ordered species of living beings. He arranged them according to their proper groupings like a modern biologist seeks to classify living organisms. Hesiod, moreover, provided something that Homer was not so clear about, namely, an explanation of the *origin* of the gods and why the Olympian order exists as necessarily good for men. In this, Hesiod shows the first inclination in the evolving humanism of the need not only to understand the nature of order, but of the belief that the solution to the order-disorder problem depends upon the mind of man knowing absolutely

the origin or beginnings of all things. It was not the Presocratic thinkers who first purported to explain origins, it was Hesiod. What Hesiod showed was that man could know the truth of the matter merely by the resources of his own intellect. With Hesiod begins the humanist tradition of belief in the mind of man to be able to speculate on ultimate questions and to know with confidence the secrets of the universe.

Hesiod, then, although a poet, represents the first step in the direction of philosophy by his attempt to discuss the role of the gods in an abstract and systematic manner. In his *Theogony* "the myth is submitted to a conscious intellectual operation, with the purpose of reshaping its symbols in such a manner that a 'truth' about order with universal validity will emerge."⁸ In other words, Hesiod is not merely interested in recounting the deeds of gods and heroes; he intends to step back, as it were, and by the powers of his own intellect set the explanation of ultimate truth into a formula conducive to the reason of man and agreeable to his needs. How important this is can be understood from Hesiod's personal interest in the victory of the Olympian order of the gods over the older nature divinities, a triumph of *dike* (justice) and ethical order over savagery and demonic cruelty represented by the Titans. The final order of the world, won in war by Zeus and his followers, represents a cosmos and is a retribution against the forces of chaos and darkness whether they arise from gods or men. Consequently, Hesiod can confidently use the threat of transcendent vengeance against his brother who has defrauded him of his property.

This first step in the direction of philosophy was no ivory tower affair, but it derived from an urgent desire to establish a world in which man was able to find the key to social and ethical order, and offer a guarantee against the forces of chaos as exemplified by injustices and wrongs which men experienced from other men. Hesiod's importance lies in his having empowered the intellect of man as the chief means by which the nature of order and disorder could be interpreted, and so lifted man above the necessity of fate and placed him in a position to define for himself the reality that he alone would approve of and submit to. Next to the *order of the gods* Hesiod set the *order of the mind*. It would become the task of the Milesian thinkers to continue this line of development.

3. *Presocratics: Re-locating the Divine*

If the origins of Western speculative thinking, however tentative, can be traced to the Greek poets, Hesiod especially, nevertheless it was not until the rise of early Greek philosophy, we are told, that its true dimensions began to appear. The Presocratics, those so-called early Greek naturalists, were the first to explain the mysteries of the world entirely in rational terms. They are said to have discovered the principles of reason which have enabled us to know with confidence the uniformity of nature and the causes of events, rather than, like their superstitious forebears, assigning them to the capricious wills of supernatural agents. No longer would they accept an explanation of the reason for order from other than what was observable to sense perception and explainable by man's intellect. They spoke of the realm of *nature* as an autonomous realm. That is, "[n]ature was to be explained in terms of nature itself, not of something fundamentally beyond nature, and in impersonal terms

8. Voegelin, *The World of the Polis*, p. 126.

rather than by means of personal gods and goddesses.”⁹ “[It] is,” furthermore, “the recognition that natural phenomena are not the products of random or arbitrary influences, but regular and governed by determinable sequences of cause and effect.”¹⁰

This explanation of the rise of philosophy is by now the standard one. The replacement of man-made gods with a world that has some basis in logic, governed by principles which the mind can know with accuracy and assurance, is universally taken to be the first step in the direction of Western knowledge and science, and the foundation of its intellectual culture. Everywhere it is agreed that early Greek thought derived from the wish to unfetter understanding from the clutches of religious fable and legend, the root causes of irrational fear and oppressive credulity, the bane of mankind. Early Greek thinkers, driven by a newly awakened aspiration to know the workings of the world as an intrinsic facet of human interest, set Western man on the course of progress and civilisation, of which we today are the heirs and beneficiaries.

This explanation of the rise of Greek philosophy, while it possesses a grain of truth, should not be seen as a product of man’s normal curiosity to understand why things are as they are or work in the way that they do. Moreover, it was more than just a struggle between science and religion. Their interest was to shift the locus of *ordering power* from the gods to the mind of man, so that the mind of man becomes the source of order and is able to govern reality according to principles innate in the reasoning power of man alone. No order truly exists, they taught, until the power of human logic discloses that order to man’s searching gaze. Of course, the Greek thinker often imagines that he derives his principles from a source *outside* the mind of man, from such things as Plato later called the *Forms* or *Ideas*. These immaterial entities were alleged to exist in reality and not just in the mind. But they long remained hidden from view, behind the outward material and sensible phenomena, until the philosopher penetrated to their inner essence and showed them to be the conclusion of his reason. Man’s control of his world depended upon a theoretical grasp of these *ideas*, for no *power* over nature was thought possible without total comprehension of the invisible essence of all that exists. On the surface, order might appear to be in the world, but no order has any usefulness unless and until it is made correlative to the reason of man. The Presocratics shifted *divinity* from gods to man, but not just to man in general, rather to intellectual or philosophical man! Science did not mean freedom from religion, but a new religion of intellectual man who replaces the gods and orders reality in accordance with his reason.

The forerunners of Plato (and Aristotle), the founders of Western humanistic thought, inhabited the eastern and western fringes of the ancient Greek world. The Greeks, living near the sea, were a venturesome and colonising people. History records that they were often cramped for space and thus compelled to disperse abroad in order to find more habitable room. They moved in both a westerly and easterly direction and founded new cities on distant shores.

However, they continued to maintain contacts with the homeland and retained their Greek identity. On these opposite shores Greek civilisation first took hold and flourished. Too, it was here that the Greeks’ love of *new ideas* also began to dawn. Beginning with the Ionians (East), but soon followed thereafter by confident innovators in southern Italy (West), philosophy eventually replaced the gods as the source of order in the world.

In Ionia, on the shores of Asia Minor, the so-called Milesian (all citizens of Miletus) thinkers were the first to attempt an explanation of the world as due to entirely naturalistic causes.¹¹ Their names are Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. All were known to each other, for each was the teacher of the next. We have, then, in these Milesian thinkers something of a school of thought. In their day Miletus was a thriving and wealthy metropolis, the leading city of its day, followed by Ephesus. It had wide contacts, extending from Mesopotamia and Egypt to South Italy and beyond. As a center of trade it had ready access to material goods and resources inland which it shipped abroad. Its magnificent harbor transformed it into the greatest export-import entrepot on the coast of Asia Minor. But it was also a leading manufacturing city whose finished products were the envy of the nations.

Like all Greek cities of its time, its leading citizens were aristocrats. However, rather than living the knightly ideal typified by Homer’s audience, the aristocracy in Miletus had become enamored of luxury and material comforts. Although they continued to dominate public affairs, a growing bourgeois citizenry whose wealth gave them a greater voice in government helped to break down the tribal mentality of earlier centuries and loosen the grip of power and prestige that was for so long associated with rigid class divisions. These political and social transformations in turn furthered changes at the level of traditional customs and beliefs, giving vent to a new broad-mindedness and skepticism regarding the official dogmas of the city’s religion. For many the visible wealth of the city and the high standard of living were seen to be the result of human energy and initiative. In this context, it is not surprising, traditional religion declined and a more worldly and materialistic attitude prevailed. When it came time for the new thinkers, men originally from the aristocratic classes, to take stock, naturally they tended to reflect less on the role of the gods and more on the world of nature which had so obviously yielded up its wealth and secrets to human labour and ingenuity. At the same time, the new wealth supplied the opportunity for the leisure to think and reflect on the nature of things and on man who has exercised his own skill and brought forth such wealth.

“Philosophy and science” declares Guthrie, “start with the bold confession of faith that not caprice but an inherent *orderliness* underlies the phenomena . . . the explanation of nature is to be sought within nature itself.”¹² This remark, though prejudicially modern, nevertheless ably summarises the new attitude which Greek humanists, beginning with Thales, were wont to proclaim. In this outlook one can observe that in exchange for *faith* in the gods as the source of order there is substituted a new faith in an *inherent* order, one not in need of extra-human personalities to make it possible.

9. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), p. 20.

10. G. E. R. Lloyd, *Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1970), p. 8.

11. The ideas of the Milesian thinkers are to be found in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Bk. A.

12. Guthrie, *The Earlier Presocratics*, p. 44.

It is order that is non-personal and altogether unconnected to the decisions or wills of an ordering mind, at least any mind other than man's. Nature, in this perspective, gets its order from nature and from nothing else. This is the part that modern man likes to emphasise most in the Presocratics, nature as self-ordering. Furthermore, natural order is inherently intelligible, which enabled nature to be viewed as an order that could be rationally penetrated by man's mind. The Greek philosophers might continue to speak of order as *divine*, but divinity in this sense was a theoretical construct and altogether abstract. Divine meant nature as a permanent, unchangeable, eternal and completely rational order in and of itself. Still, nature's order, although innate in nature itself, would seem to require some explanation of its ordering principle. How did nature act as the cause of nature? Even if nature were an inherent order, the Greek mind could not rest content with the mere claim. They wanted especially to know and explain its cause.

Thales' proposal that water should be the source of natural order, the cause of all things, has usually been received with a smile. His student, Anaximander, was perhaps somewhat less puzzling with his claim that a "boundless," or "unlimited" (*apeiron*) was the *arche* or first principle from which all else has descended. Then along came Anaximenes, his younger contemporary, who said that air constituted the creative principle of all things, and once again we think "how odd" and quickly move on. However, given the assumption that nature is the reason for nature, the thinker must seek for something innate in nature to explain the cause of its existence. To all appearances nature is physical and material. Therefore, the cause of its existence must be material as well. And that cause must be some one thing, for nature is one, a unity. That is what defines it as an order; it all fits together. So only one ordering principle can be the cause of nature, and it must come from nature. Besides, many *gods* would be a source of disorder. Consequently, each gave as his explanation some one thing in nature that seemed best suited to fulfill the role of the first or ordering principle.

In truth, these early Milesians needed to explain the origins of life, of man's life especially. This accounts for the peculiar choices selected to act as ultimate causes. Water is necessary to living things, a sustainer of life, apart from which living things die. Water teems with life and is an abundant source of life for man. Of natural things that were indispensable to the life of man and animals none seemed more so than water. This would seem especially so for the Greeks who were inclined to be a sea-faring people. Would it not be natural to put faith in water as the ultimate cause of natural order and life? Much the same could be said for air. Air was associated with *breath* which higher living things need and possess. With Anaximenes, it would seem that ridding thought of an entirely personal divinity (living and breathing) was not easy, especially when it came to explaining the existence of other living beings. Life must at least be the cause of life. And as life is associated with the soul and the soul is similar to air, then air must be the ultimate cause of both living and non-living things.

But what should we make of Anaximander's "boundless?" It must be said that while he along with the other two strongly desired an explanation of nature that derived from nature itself, still he could not convince himself that the order he experienced *in* nature was altogether caused *by* nature.

For how could that which is caused (natural order) at the same time be the cause? As caused, nature was *bound* or *limited* to what it is. But the principle of all that is caused must itself be uncaused, that is, *unbounded*. It must also be beyond man's physical perception, for what is caused is material and matter cannot be both the cause and what is caused at the same time. Yet, man must be able to grasp it with his reason, otherwise man is left with the unknowable and unpredictable, that is, he is back with the gods. Anaximander, consequently, cleverly invented an explanation that would seem to satisfy the mind of man that life and order have a cause, but at the same time placed it beyond the possibility of discovery by the senses of man, thereby relieving him of the need to invent odd material explanations like water or air. It also exalted the man of reason, for only he would understand the concept of a "boundless" and why it was necessary to the ordering of nature.

To the Milesians the formation of the cosmos was the key to explaining the order that man needed in order to live in the world. They wanted no order that would be at the mercy of willful and arbitrary supernatural agents. They only believed in an order that nature gave to herself. Nature had self-producing powers. To discover the order of nature it was only necessary to study nature and she would reveal her secrets to man's inquiry. Man would see that the self-generation of nature required no hiatus or unnatural intrusions in nature. Instead, nature revealed itself as an order that fit neatly with the reason of man. Nature was logical. When it came to the origin of nature, the Milesians were the first in a long line of Western humanist thinkers to insist that "the causes operating in the beginning were to be regarded as the same kind as those which we see operating now."¹³ Otherwise, natural order would resist rational control, and that is what was desperately demanded.

Still, to rely upon a concept of nature as a self-generating order laid open the idea that nature works without any purpose or design, something that, however capricious, could at least be attributed to the gods. Every explanation of the formation and working of natural order was reduced to abstract causation devoid of intrinsic purpose. Purely mechanical causation leaves the basis of moral order in doubt. How could man build civilisation without a moral order? How could the impersonal produce the personal? Where do morality and society fit in with this view? Life reduces to a matter of the strong oppressing the weak, a seemingly *natural* occurrence. The early Milesian thinkers had freed man from the gods but had failed to find the basis for a civilisation constructed solely by and for man, an order in which justice triumphed over injustice. Perhaps it was for this reason that early Greek philosophy took a decidedly different direction with the rise and spread of Pythagoreanism.

Pythagoras lived at the opposite end of the Greek world in South Italy (Magna Graecia), a man who, if he is mentioned at all, is recalled for his unique discoveries in the realms of maths and music. Who after all, in the study of triangles, has not learned the "theorem of Pythagoras?" Most, then, have wanted to see him merely as an inventor of rational mathematical and harmonic theorems and nothing more. However, his interest in numbers and scales had no *scientific* purpose as understood by modern man. As Guthrie correctly observed, "[T]here is no ground for separating the

13. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

religious from the philosophical or scientific side in a system like the Pythagorean. In contrast to the Milesian tradition, it undertook philosophical researches with the conscious purpose of making them serve as a basis for religion.”¹⁴ Pythagoras, in other words, used philosophy as a tool for teaching man how to live.

At the heart of Pythagoras’ inquiries and teaching was the belief that philosophy was about nothing more nor less than discovering and living the best life possible. He shifted philosophy away from speculative questions concerning origins, or the order of nature by itself, to an exclusive interest in man and man’s well-being. However, he was no simple mystic; he saw philosophy, as rational inquiry, to be necessary. But philosophy’s usefulness lay in what it taught about man, in particular, what it taught of the nature of the soul and its role in the cosmos. Philosophy was seen as a means to teach the truth about man as nothing less than man’s *salvation*, for philosophy showed that the order of truth in reality was, at the same time, an order of truth in the soul of man. By discovering the one, man would be assured of discovering the other. Philosophy was the means to cultivate the soul so that it would become one with the truth of reality, and in so doing achieve a *higher* life on an eternal plane.

For Pythagoras it was the soul, the inner nature of man, that had central importance. How could the soul find the key to the triumph of life over the dissolution of death? The soul was the spirit in man, but much more besides. Its nature as an ordering *power* through rational penetration of the order of reality gave it precedence over everything else in man’s life. In fact, it was Pythagoras who first insisted that all material reality, including the body of man, was of no value to the best life possible. Only the soul, because it was immaterial, mattered. Furthermore, matter was a cause of *impurity* (ignorance) in the soul. Philosophy was needed to purify the soul from the taint of matter. The goal of the philosophical life must be to escape from the world of matter and to reconnect with the world-soul, an existence in which the harmonious mind meets with a total rationality and logical coherence and becomes incapable of perishing or error.

In order to cultivate the soul it was necessary to seek for an understanding of the governing structures of the divine cosmos. One must engage the intellect in a study of the relevant fields that correspond with the realm of order in the cosmos: number-theory, geometry, music and astronomy. But knowledge of these matters was no idle curiosity. Rather, the soul, by having acquired such knowledge, would undergo a transformation, enabling it to achieve conformity with the *divine*. Philosophy (science), in Pythagoras’ view, is the means to the divinisation of man. When the soul, through much labour, has at last gazed upon the harmony and order of the divine cosmos, it will itself become harmonious and ordered, a belief that will re-emerge at the outset of the modern world with the Renaissance.

Pythagoras did not promote his ideas as if they had no connection to man’s life here and now. Indeed, he believed that those who cultivated their souls ought also to be put in charge of all human affairs, especially the State. As Eduard Zeller comments, “[T]he Pythagoreans felt themselves called to the spiritual guidance of their fellow-countrymen—i.e., to

rule.”¹⁵ Pythagoras himself had at one time been the undisputed leader of Croton, his adopted city. And Pythagoreans continued to insinuate themselves into positions of rulership in other cities. They formed in many respects a secret society, like modern day Freemasons, with ambitions to take control of human society and construct it in accordance with their peculiar vision of perfect rational order. It was not enough that they aspired to an individual salvation, they felt compelled to save society as well. None of the early Presocratic thinkers will leave a more lasting impression on Plato’s own thinking than Pythagoras. Pythagoras was the first to speak of intellectual elites being put in charge of shaping society in accordance with a rational plan that they have devised for themselves. Their legacy to the West has been profound.

No discussion of early Greek philosophy can fail to mention Heraclitus and Parmenides. Others might perhaps be considered, but these must be included. For they, more than most, helped to shape Plato’s own thinking and, hence, played a greater role in the formation of Western humanistic intellectualism in general. Of the two, Heraclitus came earlier. However, Parmenides’ solution to problems introduced by Heraclitus were even more instrumental in the inspiration of Plato’s distinct philosophical agenda, which was, namely, to find permanence and order in the midst of continual change and degeneration. Therefore, we start with Parmenides.

Parmenides came from a wealthy and noble family of Elea in southern Italy. His outlook on life was shaped by his class background, but also by Xenophanes under whom he studied and by the ideas of the Pythagoreans. Xenophanes became famous for his denunciation of Homer and Hesiod for their anthropomorphic representations of the gods. He undoubtedly convinced Parmenides that the traditional gods were mainly the invention of the popular imagination, and that one could not truly believe that man’s life must depend upon such unreliable fables. The way of truth must be found in philosophy, that is, in man’s ability to contemplate the nature of things with his mind unfettered by superstitions or preoccupied with worldly concerns. Xenophanes taught that nature and Deity are interchangeable and inseparable. Divinity is identical with the *being* of all things which only the *enlightened* mind can see without prejudice.¹⁶ Parmenides also learned of philosophy as the higher life of elite wisdom from his friend Ameinias, the Pythagorean, who taught that by acquiring knowledge of the numerical and harmonic *forms* of things Parmenides would be best fitted not merely to order his own life well, but society’s, too. Knowledge was the key to power and government.

Parmenides is probably the first real philosopher in the ancient world since he is the first to free thinking from everything that is not thought, that is, from sense perception. He is the first, in other words, to view reality as the product of a theoretical reflection, as an intellectual abstraction. For Parmenides the order of the world is an order of Being which exists only when and as the mind of man specifically thinks of it. Being is what *is* and cannot be observed by ordinary everyday sensual experience which is too much influenced by empirical *things*. Being only appears to the reflecting mind

15. Eduard Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1980), p. 32.

16. See, e.g., Guthrie, *The Earlier Presocratics*, pp. 373–383.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

when man severs his thought from all sensuous experience, for the senses perceive many things which come and go and these do not truly *exist*. Being, however, does not change or come and go, but remains what it is. It alone is real, because it is not subject to beginning or end, coming into existence or passing away. Being is not this or that, but is simply existence in general. All things have a share in Being because they are products of Being. Here was Parmenides' answer to the Milesian's attempt to explain the origin of all things. He proclaimed Being as the source of what is but which itself is "uncreated and imperishable."¹⁷

Since Being is known only by means of a philosophical reflection, it is to the extent it is *conceived*.¹⁸ That is, Being is correlative to the *nous* or mind of man. Being is what thought perceives when all thinking has been purified of all non-intellectual influences, that is, when sense perception is neither required nor present. Because what is sensed seems to come to man from something outside himself, or at least is caused by external things, it is such as not to be relied upon. Man cannot be certain of anything that is not wholly his own. *Nous* or mind, however, is his own, and his reflection upon the Being of things does not begin from an external source but arises in his reason and therefore alone is reliable. Anything that is not absolutely certain to the mind of man is a source of all that is not true or erroneous. Truth, then, is in the mind of the philosopher who alone is able to *see* Being. Parmenides was laying the groundwork for what in the West would take on the aura of the autonomy and infallibility of science. In other words, critical speculation is the sole legitimate means to the discovery of Truth and the mind need submit to nothing but its own logical processes.¹⁹ We might say that Parmenides was a Cartesian before Descartes.

Being, then, has no predicates which might describe it, for then it would be seen to be like material things. These latter begin and end, change and die, can be divided or become what they are not. Men who live in terms of changeable things are easily fooled and led astray. However, Being is immovable, unchangeable; it cannot be anything other than what it is. It is eternal and beyond time, that is, "it is without beginning or end."²⁰ Thought which grasps it is also beyond time and error. In the *nous* or *logos* (reason) of man resides the possibility of achieving an eternal state, one that is freed from all temporality and passing away, and also from ignorance and deception. Being for Parmenides was the *ens realissimum* (supreme reality): nothing lay beyond Being. Since thought is correlative to Being, thought too participates in its supreme, unchanging reality. "Thought is not different from Being; for it is only thought of Being."²¹ By reason of the *nous* (mind) or *logos* (reason) man becomes divine. Now he who is divine is he who *orders* the cosmos.

Voegelin writes, "In the medium of speculation the philosopher reproduces Being itself; the well-rounded sphere of Being becomes the well-rounded sphere of speculative order. Philosophical speculation is an incarnation of the Truth of Being."²² Not any man, therefore, acquires the

status of *orderer* of the cosmos, only the philosopher (scientist). Confirmed in this belief, Parmenides set up a dichotomy between the truth of Being as grasped by the *reason* of the philosopher and the untruth of what he called the *doxai* (opinion or beliefs) of the masses, a distinction that would be even more fundamentally upheld by Plato. Those who see the Truth by the mind do not erroneously conclude that order is a product of generation from non-order. The realm of Being is not material and physical and so not subject to change and decay, but precedes material things and is the source of their existence. Nor does Being have any of the distortions of the passions or desires of sensate creatures. Being, as ultimate reality, is eternal and without the possibility of becoming other than what it is. Because the order of Being is at the same time the "sphere of speculative order" of the philosopher, then the philosopher does not err in his thinking, but understands the truth of reality perfectly and can reproduce that reality in his thinking. He alone is in a position to be able to order the life of man, because he, with his reason, stands in the light whereas others are always in the dark and do not see correctly. Because the order of reality is the order of the mind of the philosopher and none but the philosopher, others must be in subjection to his authority and power for their own good.

With Heraclitus we return to the East, for he was a descendent of the royal and priestly rulers of Ephesus, a city whose preeminence replaced that of Miletus after the Persians had destroyed it. As a member of a long-standing noble family Heraclitus was raised to see himself as morally and otherwise superior to those beneath his station, an outlook he apparently embraced without demur. By all accounts he was of a haughty nature and seems to have gone out of his way to display his contempt not only for the lower orders but for nearly the general run of mankind. That he was gifted intellectually only served to encourage his arrogance and condescension toward others and fuel his disdain for people who seemed to him like idiots. He especially hated the new democratic ideas that were spreading among the Greeks of his day, and considered the people stupid and incapable of running the affairs of government. Heraclitus withdrew from society into a world of purely intellectual interests. He left behind little written material, and what we have is not likely to encourage study, for Heraclitus had a reputation for obscurity. "He delighted in paradox and isolated aphorisms, couched in metaphorical or symbolic terms."²³ He was an odd-ball, to say the least.

Yet, while he viewed most everyone around him with cordial disdain and took no active interest in civic affairs, nevertheless Heraclitus was no recluse nor dispassionate proponent of ideas for their own sake. He was nothing more nor less than a *preacher* of truth, who wrote and spoke as a prophet, as one who had himself journeyed to the light of day and therefore deemed himself especially chosen to enlighten his fellow man. Heraclitus believed serenely in philosophy as the true path of salvation for man and society.

Heraclitus, in opposition to Parmenides, saw change as ultimate, that all things come into being and just as readily pass away and that this continuous process was the central law of reality. Heraclitus' main purpose, however, was to disclose the knowledge of this general law of the cosmos which produces change as the principal truth of all things.

17. See, e.g., G.S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1975). p. 273.

18. Kirk and Raven, p. 277.

19. See, e.g., Voegelin, *The World of the Polis*, pp. 207–214.

20. Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 276.

21. Zeller, *Outlines*, p. 50.

22. Voegelin, *The World of the Polis*, p. 213.

23. Guthrie, *The Earlier Presocratics*, p. 410.

What ordering principle maintains the cosmos in the midst of seeming chaos and incessant change? In particular, how does man, who is born and dies, fit into the reason of things? Does the world have a purpose and does man play a central role in it?

Heraclitus, along with Parmenides, believed that there were two types of men: those who achieve understanding by recognising and living in terms of a higher wisdom, and those who live only by what they experience and perceive moment by moment. For Heraclitus the issue of truth turned on the meaning of man and how he could achieve the status of the former. Man only becomes true man when he has *ascended* from the manifold of visible and tangible appearances of things to the invisible and intangible essence of the whole or One. In order to grasp the world process, he must rise beyond mere sensations to a new principle of order—the *logos*.²⁴ The inner principle of ultimate reality, which exists beyond the constant flux of outward change, and which governs the nature of all things in accordance with a hidden agenda, is to be found in something called the “world-order.”²⁵ The world-order is the driving force of change, the divine (i.e. “everlasting”) “fire,” from which through strife and confrontation the order or cosmos of the world is repeatedly achieved and guaranteed. Man is a participant in this process because he possesses in himself the nature of soul or reason as a spark of the world-order. When by means of great intellectual exertions he has thrown off all superfluities of body and matter and has ascended to the One he will then be able to live in terms of the higher reality of ordered life, this despite the impermanence of all material things.²⁶ Heraclitus taught that only that life is worth living in which man has *cultivated* the self and thereby become a part of the ordering power of Reason. That man will then be in a position to return to the world of mundane affairs in order to arrange everything in accordance with his superior insight.

Voegelin indicates what this will mean for Plato: “In Heraclitus the idea of an order of the soul begins to form which Plato unfolds into the perennial principle of political science that the right order of the soul through philosophy furnishes the standards for the right order of human society.”²⁷ But what was true of Heraclitus was equally true of all the Presocratics leading up to Plato. The idea of a standard of truth which the soul grasps by means of an innate and autonomous intellectual power became the fundamental basis upon which a new humanist order could be made possible. The mediator of that truth to society was to be none other than the philosopher who has with his thinking penetrated the mystery of nature and discovered the *logos* or reason of all reality. There could be no other *truth* available to mankind but that discovered and expounded by the philosopher. Man had achieved the chief place in the cosmos.

4. *Plato's Agenda*

As it was said that all roads in the ancient world lead to Rome, so, too, in the realm of Greek thought all avenues lead to Plato. Plato is no mere contributor to the edifice of Greek ideas; he is the culmination of Greek thinking, the summa-

tion of all those who have preceded him. All the various strands of earlier ideas are woven together in his thinking; yet, at the same time, they are transformed by Plato into a tapestry that represents a final maturation of their point of view and a clearer indication of the inner humanism that Greek thinkers were striving to achieve. *Platonism* is the logical outworking of the philosophical ideal.

Plato, for example, was thoroughly in agreement with Milesian *naturalism* about the formation of the cosmos. The world, he too believed, was a natural order which had the basis of its existence and structure within itself. If he departed from them on account of their crude *materialism* it was only because he came to believe, from other sources, that nature as an ordered system was something more than mere matter. It was primarily *idea*, a product of mind or intellect. Not what was visible could be accounted nature, but only that which was invisible and comprehensible to reason could be called nature, for order did not derive from matter but was to be found in the *form* of material things. This Plato learned from the Pythagoreans and Parmenides who spoke of ultimate reality as lying beyond the appearance of things, a reality discovered only by abstracting from the world of matter. The mind or reason alone was able to penetrate to the real nature which lies obscured behind the outer physical image perceived by the senses. All truth was to be found there and nowhere else. Only those who have pursued the way of philosophy would ever come to know the true reality of all things.

The preeminence of philosophical knowing over other types of knowing therefore also led to the belief that philosophers were superior to other men and should be responsible for ruling them for their own good and the good of society. While some thinkers seemed to withdraw from worldly affairs in order to engage in undistracted reflection, nearly all of them had nothing but contempt for the masses who spent their lives chasing after material comforts and pleasures, being aroused only by their passions and desires which led to continual disputes. They were constantly bestirred into factions, intrigues, wars, and jealous strife. Rather than being in control of themselves and living in harmony and peace in their communities, they were always quarreling and fighting. How could they possibly govern themselves lacking as they do a true knowledge of the nature of all things? Since only philosophers possessed such knowledge, it was only natural that they should be in charge of civic and social affairs. Plato acquired this notion that philosophers should rule in society primarily from Pythagoras who also maintained that philosophers should not be held accountable to the ruled. Their unquestioned grasp of the truth was enough, for true knowledge was necessarily shrouded from any but philosophers, it being too recondite for ordinary people.

Finally, Heraclitus taught that reality was a product of constant struggle, that, from the material standpoint, the world and man's experience was a flux, random and meaningless, a process of perpetual decay and degeneration. It was always a troubling thought to ancient Greeks to contemplate the idea of the triumph of chaos over order. The fact that all around us there is constant change, that man, in particular, is born, grows old, and dies would seem to indicate that chaos was at least equal, if not superior, to order. Nevertheless, Heraclitus believed that order stands preeminent over the seeming flux of all things for the reason that all change is determined by a law or principle which

24. Kirk and Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, pp. 187, 188.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

27. Voegelin, *The World of the Polis*, p. 227.

compels change to take place in such a way that order constantly and eternally issues from it. There is a principle of order governing the flux. What is more, the philosopher can discover that law and employ it as an ordering principle for human affairs. Inspired by this, Plato confidently believed that, however bad or rotten society was in his day, it would nevertheless be possible to find the key to the salvation of society along lines that were more in tune with the law of ultimate reality and hence with perfect truth. In other words, Plato believed it possible to arrest change which to him meant corruption only and thereby realise the perfect (i.e. changeless or incorruptible) human society.²⁸

Plato was clearly imbued with the ideas of earlier Greek thinkers. One other thinker, traditionally thought to be the most important of the influences that shaped Plato's agenda, was Socrates. Socrates represents a different current of thought, namely, that of moral reform. The issue was far from academic, for Socrates and Plato, his younger contemporary, lived in tumultuous times. The period saw the Greek city States plunged into internecine war—the Peloponnesian War. Plato, especially, was deeply disturbed by the social upheaval and political instability that he came to witness in his native Athens as a result. He needed, like Homer, to be able to diagnose the causes of disorder and, if possible, to discover a cure for the moral disease that he believed was the reason for the malady afflicting the society in which he lived. For Plato, philosophy took on an importance beyond the wish to understand the world as a kind of intellectual curiosity. Rather, philosophy was the key, the only possible means, to put the socially and morally fragmented humpty-dumpty back together again. As Plato expressed it in his *Republic*: “[u]nless political power and philosophy coincide . . . there can be no end to political troubles . . . or even to human troubles in general . . . there is no other way for an individual or a community to achieve happiness” (473d, e). Philosophy had immediate, practical consequences and an urgent task to perform. Plato saw the philosophical enterprise as having to do with the restoration of political order, as a message of salvation, through a well-regulated “love of wisdom.”²⁹ This programme of philosophy Plato received, in part, from Socrates.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand Socrates and his self-appointed *Socratic* mission unless we know something of the times in which he lived and the condition of the society (especially in his native Athens) of which he was a part. However, an adequate explanation is beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to say that Socrates lived at a time when, as we said, Athenian society was experiencing turmoil. The politics of the city was controlled by the *demos*, ostensibly an elected body of citizens who were responsible for all decisions of government and policy. Rather than being under the absolute authority of one man, or group of men, the people themselves, by democratic means, decided upon everything that concerned the life and good of the *polis*. While this democratic ideal allowed the people a say in government, at the same time it opened the door to intense political rivalries between various ambitious individuals who wished to influence the direction of State and persuade the

people that they could best lead them for their own good. Such rivalries gave rise to factions which, in order to achieve their aims, would often resort to almost any means available with little consideration for the moral consequences. Needless to say, the consequences were what we might expect, a breakdown of order and a struggle for power. In the minds of those who, like Socrates, saw the moral corruption to which *democracy* seemed to lead, this raised serious questions over whether or not some kind of reform was possible in order to *save* society. Would it be possible to discover a set of principles that would act as a standard of right and wrong, principles which were grounded in the nature of things and not the product of human and social convention? Or, was moral truth merely a matter of custom as the Sophists declared and, therefore, bound to the needs of the moment, being neither absolute nor permanent? In other words, did men have no standards by which to live other than the standard of self-indulgence, and if so, then how is it possible to escape the degeneration of social order and the collapse into chaos? How could men truly achieve the good for themselves if there was no agreement on what constituted the good, or if the good was merely what each decided for themselves? Would society simply become a struggle by one group to impose its will on others by force? These were the great moral dilemmas facing Socrates who believed himself especially called to disturb the complacency of his fellow Athenians and expose their peril should they fail to solve the problem of the moral relativism that was undermining the social fabric.

Socrates maintained that the problem of moral behavior was an intellectual one. He believed that men do not commit immoral acts because they want to, or because it is in their nature to do so. Rather, they act strictly from *ignorance* of what is truly for their own good. All men, he also believed, act for the purpose of some good they hope to gain by so acting. The problem is that what men usually think is for their own good actually turns out to be bad. This is especially true in regard to injustices which their actions produce in society. If men's actions promote injustices, it is because they do not clearly know what is a just act. For many people, justice meant getting whatever you wanted regardless of the consequences. Injustice, then, is being deprived of what you think is your due. Consequently, justice is not about motives or character, but only about achieving what one wants. But Socrates taught that justice is not about the fulfillment of momentary desires, but has to do primarily with what we are by nature. If men are properly taught justice as prescribed by natural order, they will become just in their natures, and, consequently, will never commit unjust acts. For Socrates the matter was clear-cut; to be just is to do what is just. The solution to the ills of society depended upon all men acquiring knowledge of the moral good, for those who know the good would always do the good. Socrates was a great optimist in the matter of moral reform. Education, a basic premise which he inherited from his predecessors, was the great resolution to the regeneration of men and societies afflicted with moral corruption.

Here we encounter something called the “Socratic problem.” Socrates believed that moral enlightenment was the only means to the moral reform of society. Socrates also believed that each man possessed in his own rational soul the singular source of enlightening power. “Each man is to live a rationally ordered life, to deliberate and decide and act

28. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. I, *The Spell of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 18–56.

29. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, Vol. 3, *Plato and Aristotle* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 5.

according to the dictates of his decisions.”³⁰ None could compel another to accept what was not at all acceptable to his own autonomous rationality. To achieve this aim, it was necessary, therefore, to use a special kind of persuasion, called *elenchos*, the art of refutation. Socrates would enter into a dialogue or verbal argument with any who showed a willingness to put his convictions on any ethical matter to the test. Socrates had little doubt that his method of discussing and analysing all types of thinking would necessarily act as an effective means of teaching the people to think for themselves. When they learn to do so, they shall undoubtedly act in accordance with their true good rather than the false good by which they used to behave before they had, with Socrates’ assistance, undergone a process of enlightenment. Everything depended upon getting the people to turn to their innate rationality and, by this inner light, achieve the moral knowledge that will then produce good moral actions. Socrates believed it not only possible but necessary for *all* men to acquire enlightenment, for all men have the same rational nature.

Socrates believed that his task was to enable his fellow Athenians “to waken . . . to the importance of caring for their souls, or caring for virtue.”³¹ Each individual must realise the need to engage in a process of self-criticism as the sole means by which to discover those moral principles that will govern their lives, and would do so only under the guidance of one whose own soul had already been *nobly* formed, that is, by Socrates himself. Socrates would act as midwife to those who possessed the spark of truth in their own souls, but which was smothered by the prejudices of the *demos*, the people. He would proceed by means of a programme of one-on-one, for Socrates does not believe it possible to persuade the people *en masse*. Thus, he neither addresses the people as a whole nor expresses the belief that moral reform can be achieved by reforming society first, in other words, by the enactment of political programmes to compel the people to live in accordance with the moral good. This is chiefly why Plato presents Socrates in the dialogue format; he meant to show how Socrates believed philosophy was to be bred in noble souls. One noble soul, by means of the dialogue format, would guide the next to an understanding of philosophical truth. It takes one conversion at a time, for the discovery of moral knowledge was neither simple nor easily gained.

Would it be possible to carry out such a task given the strong prejudices of the people? Is it conceivable that each individual could be freed from the false opinions that shaped the masses as a whole given the assumption that the people were incapable of knowing what was truly good for themselves? Was Socrates, perhaps, not a little too optimistic that he could achieve his goal by addressing each person individually? Plato, for one, did not share Socrates’ optimism when it came to converting *all* the people. Of course, he did believe along with Socrates that reason could achieve the dominant rule in man and thus enable him to control his appetites. But it was too much to expect that everyone could reach it. Furthermore, Plato was too class-conscious to believe that each individual possessed an equal spark of true knowledge within his own soul. Rather, he believed that “the most exalted truths are accessible to man, but only to the

highly privileged few. Since only the philosopher can reach such heights, the many must be enslaved to the few if they are to partake at all of divine intelligence.”³² The Socratic ideal that each individual must care for his own soul must be discarded. In its place Plato erects a State-system in which a few carefully bred and nurtured souls will be put in charge of all that concerns man’s relationship to his fellow man. As Klosko explains:

While Socrates envisioned a collectivity of free, autonomous souls, with each individual seeking for himself the knowledge that is virtue, Plato sees a tightly controlled city of people having virtue imposed upon them from without. In the ideal state, only philosophers possess moral autonomy, and even in their case this is possible only because they too are subjected to rigorous conditioning in their youths.³³

Plato’s agenda entailed the belief in philosophy as the intellectual tool by which an elite few will be trained to rule absolutely over the ignorant many for the presumed good of social order. Philosopher-rulers will have correct moral knowledge because they, and they alone, will see its “permanent and unvarying nature.” (479e) “[G]iven that philosophers are those who are capable of apprehending that which is permanent and unvarying, while those who can’t, those who wander erratically in the midst of plurality and variety, are not lovers of knowledge, which set of people ought to be rulers of a community?” (484b). For Plato the answer was only too obvious. Philosophers must rule, and the people must be ruled. Sometimes Plato even goes so far as to call the latter *slaves* of the philosopher-rulers. Unless philosophers rule there will be no end to difficulties, to corruption and disorder. Philosophy alone can insure the *salvation* of man and society. Reason in those who are properly educated and taught *scientific* knowledge of the *whole* of reality (475b) will be in a better position to erect order and prevent chaos.

With Plato “the Greek legacy” at last comes into its own. Plato severed the last links to the *gods*, that is, to any source of order for man and society other than man’s inherent rational powers. At the same time, he placed man and society in subservience to new gods, namely, to the scientifically or philosophically bred elites who, because they possessed true knowledge of ultimate reality, that is, the *idea* or *form* which lies hidden behind all that appears, must be put in charge of creating the utopian conditions which no chaos or corruption could destroy. Presumably, Plato had great faith that his philosopher-rulers, who grasp the invariable truth, would then impose that *truth* on the world and man with an interest in the Good for its own sake and not for reasons of personal gain. It is, however, an optimism no less misplaced than that of Socrates; yet this ideal of the rule of reason by means of specially chosen and cultivated agents would take deep roots in the consciousness of Western men. For many in Western history *reason-as-power* would return again and again to inspire confidence and shape the processes of culture.

Unquestionably some will strenuously object to the notion that the culmination of the Greek legacy is reached with Plato. After all, what about Aristotle? What is more, who could ignore the later developments of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and finally, Neoplatonism? There is, to be sure, more to the Greek legacy than Plato. However, while major

30. George Klosko, *The Development of Plato’s Political Theory* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd), p. 31.

31. Klosko, p. 166.

32. Klosko, *The Development of Plato’s Political Theory*, p. 166.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

differences crop up in philosophical detail between Plato and, especially, Aristotle, it is not possible to assert that a fundamental distinction exists in the philosophical ideal itself. Aristotle, it is true, was dissatisfied with problems in Plato's thinking, but he does not differ with him on the basic premise that philosophy or science should be the source of order for man and his world. Aristotle would in time distinguish between the theoretician and the politician, the thinker and the actor, but he would not question the need of the latter to be governed by the ideas of the former. For both Plato and Aristotle the world must be constructed by the

intellect of man if it is to be suitable for the life of man. Other *divinities* are relegated to the world of conceptual necessity. That is, any *god*, if he exists, merely provides a theoretical starting-place in the scheme of causal origins of natural order. But such a god is a mere limiting concept, needed only to explain the necessary starting-point. After that, however, the intellect of man takes over and renders reality intelligible by the powers of abstracted ideas. For all Greek thinkers the speculative order was the order of reality and vice versa, a fact that would prove to be of no small consequence to the further unfolding of Western civilisation. C&S

THE TRINITY AND DAILY LIVING

by Derek Carlsen

THE teaching on the Trinity is at the core of the Christian religion. Thus, to be unclear here means we will not succeed in any area of our Christian life (our theory *and* practice will be wrong). The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly taught in the Bible and that is why Christians believe it. Even Christians, though, struggle to submit to God's revelation as the ultimate authority for all things. *The Biblical revelation about the triune God probably shows most clearly fallen mankind's refusal to bow to God's absolute word.* The age old problem introduced by Adam and Eve is still with us, namely, that we want to have a say in defining what we are prepared to submit to, or believe. Many who don't reject God's revelation outright, nevertheless, still insist on somehow checking up on what God has said, *before* they are prepared to believe it. They set up some standard that is acceptable to them (and probably only to them), by which they can "test" and "evaluate" each statement found in the Scriptures. Those parts of God's revelation that "pass the test" are accepted as true, while those that don't are doubted or rejected. However, this makes man the ultimate authority in determining all things and therefore his assurance for knowing what is real and true and what can and can't exist, etc., depends upon his research, experience and intellectual ability. Such a person will not accept anything that his mind and limited resources cannot confirm. His starting point is a belief that whatever is beyond his ability to comprehend, is unacceptable and must be rejected—he makes himself the only standard by which all things can be known and measured. This is why man struggles with the Trinity.

Man's reasoning ability, however, was never meant to

play the part of ultimate judge, but was always meant to be used as reason, i.e. to enable man to understand, connect, relate and apply God's revelation to his relationships and circumstances in life. Man's reasoning must start from a foundation of already established truth and then draw from and function within those already established boundaries. To believe that man, by use of his reason, is able to *determine* the foundation of ultimate truth and *establish* the boundaries wherein reason can operate, is to destroy reason, man and society. It is madness to assign to reason a function or task it is *incapable* of fulfilling and then base one's whole hope on the belief that reason will fulfil this task. Yet, those who only accept from God's word what their minds can verify, do just that. Unaided reason cannot define the limits of possibility or reality in this world; it cannot determine the limits and possibilities with respect to God's being, purposes or relationships with his creation. Man's reason can only function properly when it *starts from and is controlled by* those eternally established truths that have been revealed to us by God.

At the outset of our discussion about the Trinity it needs to be made very clear that this doctrine is dealing with the depths of the essence or being of God and therefore, much cannot be explained. All we can do is repeat what the Scriptures say on the subject and be content to stop where God's revelation stops. This means that while our goal is to have a clear grasp of what the Scriptures say about God's trinity, some details will forever remain obscure and incomprehensible to our minds. If we do not hold to everything that has been revealed, or if we seek more than has been revealed on this subject, we will end up in error—that is, worshipping

an idol. We cannot measure God by our own senses or confine his essence to our limited concepts, abilities and knowledge.

Adam and Eve didn't want to acknowledge the immense difference between themselves and God. They tried to reduce the massive gap that exists between the Creator and everything that he has created, by thinking that they were able to comprehend the essence of God and thus define good and evil independently of God. It was impossible to rise up and become like God (which is what they were hoping to achieve), so they brought him down or reduced him to a level that could be comfortably understood by their minds. Adam and Eve tried to do to God what Adam had done with the animals, i.e. comprehend and define (Gen. 2:19, 20).

Apprehend and comprehend

To protect ourselves from the temptation of doing what Adam and Eve did, it is necessary to make a distinction between the words *apprehend* and *comprehend* and then use these definitions to explain our knowledge about God. For our illustration we will say that *apprehend* means to catch or perceive the meaning of something so as to have an intelligent acceptance of a fact, whereas, *comprehend* means to understand something in its entirety (fullest extent). Being aware of this distinction, we can then say that it is possible for us to *apprehend* something of the essence of God without *comprehending* his essence. Error comes in with respect to man's understanding of the Trinity when he tries to reduce God's essence to the limits of his small mind in order to *comprehend* God. God forever remains far above man's ability to *comprehend*. Man cannot possibly grasp the infinite fullness of God with his limited mind.

Similar to this, we can *apprehend* without *comprehending* the idea of God's infinity (when we say God is infinite we mean he has no limits—his power, wisdom, holiness, knowledge, love, being, etc., are free from any limitation). Sinful people reject such a God and reduce him to a human level, then they confidently rush on and explain God's essence with human terms and concepts, calling impossible anything that doesn't fit into their limited experience and reasoning ability. What such people are saying is that God's essence cannot be greater than their mental capacity (their minds). A god that can be fully comprehended by man can be defined by man, and if he can be defined he can also be controlled by man. If man can control God then man becomes god—which is fallen man's greatest desire and constant ambition. Such aspirations arise out of a rebellious heart that attempts to replace the true God with an idol made according to man's imagination. We do not understand God by shaping him according to our ideas, but by submitting ourselves to his self-revelation revealed in the Scriptures.

God has told us much about himself, however, we must not reduce the being or essence of God to the limits of what we can perceive and understand. God has told us that he is Spirit (John 4:24), he has told us about his attributes and nature, and revealed to us what he can do, what he likes and what he doesn't like. He has told us what he expects from us and what we can expect from him, but all of this is far from giving us a comprehensive explanation about his being—which would be beyond our ability to grasp anyway. We need to submit to the fact that God's essence is far beyond our ability to ever comprehend. When we humbly bow to

this truth we will not foolishly try to explain God's essence in a way that gives the impression that we actually do *comprehend* him in his fullness. Nor will we think that the depths of who God is can be defined by a few "cleaver" sentences or illustrations. If creatures could comprehensively define God, then he would be limited to the capacity of the human mind; however, to limit God in any way is to deny the God of the Bible. It is the rebellious in heart who strive to limit God in some way or other. We need to be conscious of our smallness and vast limitations and of God's incomprehensible and immeasurable greatness. When we demand to *comprehend* something we are not able to comprehend, we are then standing in a position of self-deception. The self-deceived person is in rebellion against the fact that he is a creature and very limited; he rebels against the fact that he is totally dependent upon the word of God for all his understanding, and he rebels against the clear revelation God has given about himself. Such a rebellious person distorts God's truth in order to bring it into line with his own understanding and own definitions of possibility and impossibility. The doctrine of the Trinity is forever a clear reminder that we are utterly incapable of comprehending the essence of God, yet the Tri-Unity of God is inseparable from the very idea of God. We forever remain creatures and therefore, are forever limited. The difference between God and mankind is too great to be calculated and should cause us to submit to and depend upon God and his word for all our wisdom and knowledge about everything and most certainly about God.

Having said this, we must not fall into the trap that says, since we cannot *comprehend* the fullness of God, God cannot be known at all, for God has told us what we can know about him. The Creator of all things also created our minds in a way that we cannot only understand what he has revealed about himself, but so that we are able to reason correctly and come to good conclusions about all things (based upon what he has said about himself and his creation). God sets the limits of how we are to think about him—he marks out the "playing field" and then we are to stay within those boundaries. I cannot play soccer properly if I do not stay within the lines marked on the field, or play by the rules defined by those in authority. Similarly, as Christians, we must never go beyond the limits God has revealed, and think about him in ways he has not revealed. Those things which our minds cannot fully understand we believe upon the authority of God's word, knowing that we worship the Invisible One who dwells in light that no one can approach (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:16).

Natural illustrations of the Trinity?

There are no natural illustrations of the Trinity! Every single natural example that people use to illustrate the triune God distorts the biblical teaching on the Trinity (e.g., the egg, wheel, water, sun, etc.). Those who use natural illustrations to explain the Trinity, do not reveal the Trinity, but rather reveal that they have not understood what the Bible teaches on the subject. Moreover, many people, when thinking of God as Spirit who is everywhere, try to make sense out of this by drawing comparisons with things they are familiar with. Thus, they picture God's being as some sort of gas that is spread out (extended) and reaches everywhere. However, God is not spread out, yet the *fullness* of his being is in *every* place in the universe. Let me illustrate how some try to make

sense out of this: they picture smoke from a massive fire covering a whole village and then make a comparison, thinking that just as the smoke is everywhere in the village, in a similar way, God is everywhere in the village and beyond. However this is wrong, because the smoke that is at the top end of the village is not the same smoke that is at the bottom end of the village—it is the same kind of substance found at both ends of the village (smoke), but it is not the exact same smoke found at both ends. Due to our limitations we are tempted to think of God's being as we think of this smoke—as if God's being is stretched or spread out. This is wrong, however, because the *fullness* of God's being is present in *every* millimetre of the universe. There are no parts to God's being. There can never be one part of God in one place and another part of him somewhere else. All of God is everywhere present in its fullness, all the time. Our minds cannot understand how this is possible since we have nothing in our understanding or experience that is comparable to God's being (Job 11:7–9; Ps. 145:3; Isa. 40:18).

The sinful heart refuses to bow to Scripture and thus rebels against its clear teaching on the Trinity. In order to counter this teaching they then come up with ridiculous arguments like: 1+1+1 can only equal 3, therefore, Christianity has three gods. Such foolish reasoning tries to separate or divide the Spirit of God, thus failing to realise that the concept of division cannot be applied to *spirit*. On what basis or authority can people apply such concepts to the essence of God? The only way that such people think about God is in the way that they are able to think about other things around them—things they know and have experienced. However, they cannot do this with God's essence and therefore to say either that God can or can't be divided (in the sense that we talk about other things we know) is to be greatly mistaken. To demand that we can merely apply our own categories and understanding to God in order to perceive such things is the height of rebellious foolishness and thus forbidden by the second commandment (Ex. 20:4). We cannot look to our minds to be the source of our knowledge about God. We are forever bound by what God has revealed to us in his word. Moreover, what God has seen fit to reveal, we are able to understand and ought to apply to our own lives and to the world around us.

Salvation and the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is not something we ought to argue about and debate with those who are in rebellion against the authority of God and his word. The foundation of this teaching rests upon our total submission to the Lordship of Christ and to his revelation in the Scriptures as the final authority for all things. True believers humbly bow before and adore this mystery about the God they love. The doctrine of the Trinity is at the very heart of Christianity and cannot be rejected without rejecting Christ himself. It is this Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, that we must believe in to be saved. Thus, to deny the biblical teaching on the Trinity is to deny Christ. To reject the Trinity, means the “christ” you are believing in is a creation of your own mind and not the true Christ of Scripture, and therefore, you are still in your sins. We are saved through faith in the true Christ, not in some false “christ” made by our imaginations. This does not mean that people have to have a complete understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity before they can

be saved. It does mean, however, that if someone who professes to believe in Christ rejects the teaching on the Trinity when it is shown to them, serious doubt must be placed upon their claims to know Christ. Proof that we are united to Christ is seen by submission to and reverence for the word of God. Thus, it is to the word that we must turn in order to receive instruction about our great triune God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the Trinity is not something that human minds can arrive at using their own resources.

Mt. 16:14, 16, 18 shows us that the foundation of the Church is the person of Christ and his person is inseparable from who he is in the Godhead (the Second Person of the Trinity). Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against this truth, but this doesn't mean that Satan hasn't in the past and doesn't still fight against this truth in order to overthrow the very foundations of Christianity. The mind of man is not allowed to pass judgement upon the clear teaching of Scripture. As soon as people do this they have rejected the authority of God—which is what Satan has been trying to get everyone to do from the very beginning. To have a distorted understanding about the doctrine of the Trinity will create distortions in every other belief. Our ability to relate to God and to the world around us is determined by how well we have understood and submitted to the revelation of God that he is One and Three (though God is not Three in the same way that he is One).

When Christians speak about God they are talking about the God who has revealed himself in the Bible as the triune God. A “god” that people might talk about who is not defined by the pages of Scripture is nothing but a creation of man's imagination—in other words, an idol. There is only one God (Dt. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; Gal. 3:5) and His nature, character and will are ONE and these have been revealed to us in the Scriptures. Besides the God of Scripture, there are no other gods whatsoever (Dt. 4:35). There are idols and images in people's minds that they call ‘gods’, but this doesn't make them gods. The Bible does use the word “god” in a figurative way sometimes and applies the term to human leaders (Ps. 82:1, 6) or to supernatural beings; however this does not make them truly gods. Satan is said to be the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), but this merely means that those living in rebellion against the true God have made Satan their god, which can hardly turn him into God or give him God-like powers. Satan will forever remain a creature and will always be under the authority and rule of the *only true God* (Is. 44:6; John 5:44). The true God alone has existed from all eternity and has no beginning and no end. Everything else that exists was created by him. This includes both visible and invisible things (Col. 1:16), and God didn't make any other gods. Any person or religion that doesn't submit *wholly* to and *only* to the God revealed in the Bible, is not worshipping the true God.

The term “Trinity”

Although the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible this does not disqualify its use, since it is a term that is used to express something that has been clearly revealed. The Scriptures clearly teach that God is One, however, we find many passages that are equally as clear and teach that there are three divine persons who are all equally God, all sharing the exact same essence. It is this twofold Scriptural emphasis that we are trying to respect when we use the term “Trinity.”

As long as we clearly explain what we mean by the terms we are using, it doesn't make any difference whether we use the word, "Three-Oneness," "Trinity" or "One and the Many" to describe the biblical revelation on the subject. The heart of the matter is to be true to the revelation God has given about himself. According to Calvin, to say, "that *there is a Trinity of persons in one Divine essence*, you will only express in one word what the Scriptures say."¹ B. B. Warfield held that if we maintain the following three things, we will have explained the Trinity completely: (i) There is but one God; (ii) The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is each God; (iii) The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is each a distinct person.² Robert Reymond repeats the same three points in a slightly expanded form. He says:

- (1). "There is but one living and true God who is eternally and immutably indivisible." This disqualifies "tri-theism" (i.e. that there are three Gods).
- (2). "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each fully and equally God." This disqualifies "subordinationism" (i.e., that the Son and Spirit are eternally subordinate to the Father).
- (3). "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each distinct Persons."³ This disqualifies "modalism" (i.e. that God manifests himself in 3 different ways).

The importance of the Trinity for all of life

In God, who is One, there are three Persons, yet the One and the Three are equally ultimate and in intimate relationship with each other. Since God's being exists in this way, it makes this fact central to the workings of God's Kingdom, which permeates every aspect of life in this world. The "problem" of the one and the many is an inescapable fact of life that confronts us in every area and at every level of our existence. This continues to be one of the primary philosophical questions facing every society and every society is a manifestation of man's answer to this question. History clearly shows how people have wrestled with this constant tension and much tyranny and anarchy has manifested itself (in all spheres of life), either by the "one" oppressing those who disagreed with the structure or by the "many" trying to destroy the structure or unity.

Throughout the history of mankind there has been a constant struggle to answer the philosophical question as to what is the relation between the one and the many, or in other words, the relation between unity and diversity. Every society is a manifestation of man's answer to this question for this question stands at the heart of every attempt to achieve peace, stability and unity in society—whether in the family, Church, State, business, *etc.* The true doctrine of the Trinity is central to all our questions about how to understand the world and history. The Trinity alone can resolve the dilemma about whether life is made up of a mass of meaningless, unrelated details or whether it is to be understood according to one universal principle—where everything is

reduced to oneness and the individual details are subjected to the oneness. Only the Trinity can shed light on where the line is to be drawn in the relationship between the universal principle and the many details; or what relationship exists between the structure and the individuals within that structure; or which of these two is to be granted higher authority and thus given the final say? There has always been tension and conflict between whether the structure, unity or oneness (*e.g.* the State), should have priority over the wishes of each individual within the State, or if it should be the other way around (is it the *one* or is it the *many* who has priority?) The way we deal with these two aspects of reality affects every area of our existence, yet the only light able to guide us through the labyrinth of possible paths and avoid the devastating pitfalls, is found in the triune nature of God. While the *One* and the *Many* within God's being is different to the *one* and the *many* we find in the created realm (we must never identify the being of God with his creation), our ability to deal with this tension within the created realm, is found in the nature of God alone.

Of equal importance

In God, the *One* and the *Many* are equally important, which means neither takes precedence over the other because they are both equally ultimate. There is no conflict within God's being and thus there is no conflict between the unity and diversity in God's being. Neither aspect can exist independently of the other, for *together* they form one of the most basic facts of reality. God's being is the ultimate reference point, having ultimate authority and thus, the one and the many that exist in the created realm, have their origin in the creative act of God and are therefore completely under his authority, law and control. Since the creation of the material universe is a revelation of God himself (Rom. 1:20), nothing that God has created can be suppressed at the expense of something else he has created. When this is realised there will be no tension between the one and the many in the created realm. Every manifestation of the one and the many in the created realm is determined and sustained by the eternal One and the Many—God having ordained all the possible relationships, limits and responsibilities for each. The created one and many has its origin and thus obtains its meaning and purpose from the eternal One and Many. We must remember, however, that God is separate from his creation and the One and the Many in the eternal God is to be kept distinct from the one and the many found in this created realm.

All the different manifestations of the one and the many in this world exist in relationship and are governed by the word of God. The only sure foundation for sound interaction is to embrace the one and the many as being equally ultimate and existing in relationship within the boundaries of God's word. We must not be forced into deciding whether either the one or the many is ultimate, for both have their own specific and vital roles to play in the outworking of God's purposes. Both the one and the many, in the created realm, are at all times under the word of God and all people and institutions are responsible to relate in terms of God's revelation, in other words, they are to have biblical relationships. When people act in violation of God's truth (whether the one towards the many or the other way around), relationship is violated. To step beyond one's boundaries (as defined

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1983), Vol. 1, p. 114, (1:13:5).

2. B. B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, edited by Samuel G. Graig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1968), p. 36.

3. R. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), p. 205, 206.

by God's word) is to violate our relationships—with God and each other.

Within the Trinity, we see that Christ, though equal with the Father, submitted himself to the Father's authority and acted only in accordance with the Father's commands. Yet, even when Jesus did this, he was in *essence* still equal with the Father. What we learn here is that God's world is designed to function according to principles of order and structure. For this to happen there have to be some people with authority over other people, yet at no time does this in any way imply that those with greater authority (in some sphere of life) are superior in any way to those whom they have authority over (within that sphere). In the family, God has set up an order, with the husband having authority over his wife and the children being under both the father and the mother, but at no time is the father superior to anyone else (this is the same with the authority structure in the State). With authority comes responsibility and the responsibility in God's Kingdom is one of service, i.e. serving the needs of others. Service in God's Kingdom is not just a cold mechanical thing, but functions within the dynamic of relationship. Christ didn't just obey the Father, but did all his will in the context of intimate relationship. It is God's word alone that shows us how to live in true, intimate relationship with himself and others (1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), however, all that he has said in this regard, we are to do with an attitude of self-sacrifice, deep devotion, love, delight and gladness (Ps. 1:2; 40:8; 119:11, 35; Jer. 15:16; John 10:11; 14:15; 15:13; Rom. 7:22; Eph. 5:2; 1 John 5:3). It is God's word alone that reveals how we are to preserve and nurture our many different relationships (Ps. 19:8; 43:3; 119:105; Pr. 6:23). All authority comes from God and thus has to remain within the boundaries that God has set. Life and relationships are inseparable and the way of relating within every relationship has to be God-glorifying.

At the highest level of being (in the Godhead), we see that relationship is central—the One and the Many are equally ultimate, existing in a union of intimate relationships. In order for the created realm to function in the God ordained way and therefore in a way that glorifies him, we cannot compromise these fundamental truths in any area—family, Church, State, business, etc. The *diversity* and *unity* in life are to be seen as equally ultimate, with neither one trying to dominate the other. Their boundaries and responsibilities have been ordained by God and it is only as we understand each sphere and its role within God's light, that peace, prosperity and harmony are attainable. Relationship is defined and preserved by the law-word of God; to ignore his word, undermines and destroys relationship and thus ultimately, the whole of society.

The Trinity and marriage

The purpose here is not to teach on the whole subject of marriage, but to begin showing the relevance of the Trinity to the marriage relationship. There are many books in our day that talk of the differences between men and women—one book even has a title that says men and women come from different planets. One of the fundamental reasons God has made these differences between men and women is to highlight the importance and necessity of relationship. It is not from isolation and self-sufficiency, but from within relationships that we are conformed more and more into the

image of Christ. The marriage relationship is not a mechanical routine, but requires a life-time of communicating between spouses whereby they reveal themselves to each other. Men do not automatically know what women are like and vice versa. The only way to truly get to know someone is if they reveal themselves to you and you must want to know them, for they are not as you *imagine* them to be. Even after you have discovered the general characteristics of what men and women are like, you still need to realise that each person is a unique individual; thus ultimately, each marriage relationship is totally unlike any other in the world—God meant it to be like this. Part of the reason God said that a new family should leave mother and father (Gen. 2:24), was because the new union needs to nurture and develop its uniqueness and separate identity. A real danger that parents pose towards their children's marriages is to think that their own marriage is the standard that all marriages should be like and so they interfere when their children do things differently. We are not talking about immoral activities, but about the uniqueness of each marriage relationship and the diverse legitimate possibilities of how families may function.

While there is an authority structure ordained by God that makes the man head of the home, this headship has to be defined by God's revelation. In the Kingdom of God, service is the fundamental pillar and the greater authority someone has, the greater their responsibility to serve those under them. The husband is not superior to his wife in any way and he has not been given authority to dominate his wife—the authority he has from God is to be used to serve his wife. Neither the husband nor the wife is more ultimate or superior to the other. This is similar to Christ, who although he submitted himself under the Father's authority, he always remained equal with the Father in essence. Christ's submission to the Father (John 5:19, 30) didn't mean he was inferior to the Father in any way (John 8:58; 10:30). The Trinity shows that in every aspect of God's universe there are different functions within ordained authority structures and that subordination of one towards another within these structures does not mean one is inferior to the other.

There are obvious needs that the husband should fulfil for his wife; however, many other needs can only be discovered through the intimacy of a real relationship. The wife is as responsible to serve the needs of her husband through the means of relationship. It is only godly relationship that can create great strength from a union between two people who are so very different. Both the discovering of and the serving of the needs of the other is possible only from an intimate relationship and the serving of the individual enhances the whole structure of the family. When God's word is the guide for all things, the needs of the individual and the needs of the whole family are never brought into conflict. Both husband and wife need to esteem the other better than themselves, seek the other's benefit by laying down their lives in self-sacrificing service (which is only possible when they are mutually revealing themselves to each other) and truly desire to know each other. You cannot, however, reveal yourself to someone who has no real interest to know who you are. We are to serve our spouse's *real* needs, not what we presume or guess their needs to be. If there is presumption about this then both will be offended. It is possible to give the appearance of living self-sacrificially without ever really knowing what your spouse's *real* needs are. Service is not merely being active or busy, but rather, addressing the real needs of the

other person. This means true service cannot be separated from intimate relationship, which in turn cannot be separated from meaningful and deep communication. Within the triune God we see much discussion amongst themselves as they serve each other and thus we learn that it is through mutual and intimate discussion, that unity of purpose is established—our marriages should reflect this reality. There should be discussions between husband and wife about all things, for the input of both is vital to the union, however, the husband does have the final say and the wife must bow to his decision (quietly and joyfully) even if it differs with her opinion. Obviously we are not suggesting that a wife is bound to submit to her husband's immoral decisions and leadings. Remember, it is as terrible to live with an uncaring man as it is to live with a contentious woman who will not accept any ideas but her own (Pr.19:13; 27:15).

Husbands and wives need to appreciate the differences God has made between the sexes and realise that in God, these two very different people have been designed to unite and form a bond and service within the Kingdom that is very powerful. The reason certain functions are given to one and not to another is not because one is superior to the other in any way. It is God who has designed how marriage is to work. He has given different roles to men and women and equipped them in different ways, so that *together* they might form a powerful unit. It is by complementing one another that they advance God's Kingdom, which only happens through intimate relationship and certainly not by mechanical routine (like programmed robots). The unity of the husband and wife should not destroy their respective individuality and nor should their individuality fight against the necessary unity. Christ's desire was to always glorify the Father and the Father was also always seeking the Son's glory (John 5:22, 23; 7:18; 8:50; 17:1, 5). The example from the triune God is that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are equal in essence, yet they all seek to serve and advance the other within a relationship where the Son willingly placed himself under the authority of the Father and the Spirit placed himself under the authority of the Son and the Father. To love and live like Christ did, we need to do everything he has commanded us to do. We can only truly love God and others when our relationships are governed by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

After our relationship with God, the marriage relationship makes up the heartbeat of society and is a vital component in the outworking of God's Kingdom rule in our midst. If we do not have the example of the Trinity within our view, we will not be able to understand the working together of authority, service, equality, diversity, unity and responsibility. Nor will we realise that the completeness of all things exists in relationship—a relationship of unity and a unity whose base is one of selflessly seeking the benefit of others according to the revealed will of God. The husband serves from a position of authority and love, whereas the wife serves from a position of submission and obedience (Eph. 6:22–25, 28). Both however, have as their focus the glory of God and are to use their respective callings and gifts to further his Kingdom through their selfless service. Men and women are of equal value though they have been given different roles to fulfil in God's purposes; however, they are of *equal* importance in God's Kingdom. The dignity of this arrangement is clearly revealed in the triune God where we see the reality of the division of labour in the outworking of God's purposes.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all have different functions within the glorious plan of redemption; however, this in no way threatens their unity, diversity or equality. What has been said does not exhaust the application of the Trinity to the marriage relationship, but merely illustrates the relevance and importance of having a correct grasp of the triune nature of God if he is going to be glorified in our marriage.

The Trinity and the family

What is more important in a family: the individuals or the family unit? As we learn from the Trinity, both are equally important in God's Kingdom and both have specific functions and responsibilities to fulfil. However, such a balance between the one and the many cannot be preserved in extreme situations if one doesn't have a clear understanding of the triune God.

Although the father and the mother have authority over the children, the children are still to be seen as people whose value is equal to their parents'. When Christ submitted himself to Mary and Joseph's authority, did this make him inferior to them? (Lk. 2:51). Never! Parents are not to see themselves as superior to their children, but are to serve them and one of the ways they do this is by training them to obey God and to serve him and others. Each individual within the family is as important as the family unit, thus both of these aspects (unity and diversity), have to be protected and nurtured. Parents have a responsibility to fulfil the needs of each unique individual under their care and form a special and meaningful relationship with each one, as well as respecting the unique needs of the whole family unit. The value of the individual as well as the value of the whole family unit must be equally nurtured—to ignore either one will bring about the destruction of the whole. We are not to guess at what the respective boundaries and responsibilities are, but to find these in God's revealed word. The humanist philosophers try to make us choose whether the one or the many is the most important aspect and then focus on that at the expense of the other. They don't know how to maintain the balance of holding both as equally important, because they have no understanding of the Trinity. It is only because the triune God has graciously revealed himself to us, that we can know that holding to the one and the many as equally ultimate is the only possible way to achieve success.

When a husband and father seeks to relate to his wife and children in the way God has said he must, he will be seeking their interests above his own. He will love and provide for all their needs with a self-sacrificing love—a love that is defined by God's revelation. Only God has absolute authority: every other authority is derived from God and is therefore subject to him and cannot go beyond what he has decreed. When a father relates to, controls and instructs his children in a way that contradicts God's revelation or goes beyond the stipulated authority boundaries, then he will be provoking his children to wrath (Eph. 6:4).

The Trinity and work

Every society is a manifestation of the religious beliefs of that society and their religious beliefs are nothing other than a reflection of their god. Thus it is obvious, when looking at

the condition of a particular society, to see whether they are worshipping the only true God or a perverse, man-made idol. The fruit of false beliefs will be seen in a society's everyday life. What people believe about work determines what kind of life they will experience in their society. The fruits of a truly biblical view of work have had a profound impact upon the world. Christianity has established the eternal dignity of work because God has revealed himself to be a worker (Gen. 1:1; 2:2). Societies who live in rebellion against the true God will have perverted views about work, often denying its dignity, for example, the Buddhist's image of god is both fat and inactive. Now, since people aspire to be like their god, work will have no dignity in a society where their god doesn't work.

Humans are created in the image and likeness of the true God; thus to work hard is to glorify him, while to be lazy perverts his image in us. Moreover, we see that God the Father doesn't just work for himself, for all he does is firstly, for the benefit of the other members of the Trinity and secondly, for the benefit of his Creation. The same is true with respect to the work the Son does and the work the Holy Spirit does—their focus and motive is beyond themselves. Thus, imaging God and bringing glory to his name doesn't only mean working for our own benefit, but includes seeking the benefit of others, which has priority over seeking our own benefit.⁴ Seeking to benefit others above ourselves must be defined by God's word, and certainly doesn't mean neglecting one's responsibilities towards one's own family (1 Tim. 5:8). God honouring work exists within and flows out from loving, communicating relationships. Work is to be seen as one of our primary *moral* responsibilities before God and thus one of the primary ways we love and serve him (John 14:15; Col. 3:23, 24). May the Lord give us hearts that sincerely desire others to be helped and prospered through our efforts. The genuineness of a Christian's profession of faith can be evaluated by his attitude towards work: he should be glorifying God by *diligently* labouring to support himself and his family with his own hands, while also doing all he can for the benefit of others.

The Scriptures tell us that God neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. 121:4). We see that the more responsibility we have, the harder we ought to work, whereas in the pagan view of life, the more authority a person has, the less he works. Work modelled on the triune God honours the division of labour and acknowledges the diversity of callings, abilities and gifts that people have, believing that when each person uses what they have to serve one another, everyone benefits and the Lord is glorified (which is always the primary goal of all our work). It is important to take note of the fact that God was complete within his triune nature and didn't need to create the world in order to find fulfilment, yet he still created the world. What we learn here is that we too should be seeking how to increase our responsibilities and our labours for the Lord and not trying to reduce them. When we increase our responsibilities we at the same time increase our work load, but this is what glorifies our triune God. From the beginning God has expected people to work hard for him and his Kingdom (Gen. 1:28; 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 11:23; 2 Thes. 3:8).

The Trinity and the nation

It is only God's word that can prevent us from living under a totalitarian dictator or in the chaos of mob rule. That God's word alone is able to deliver us from the philosophical dilemma created by our need for unity in life, together with our need to protect the individuality and diversity in life, is as true for the political realm as it is for any other realm. Philosophers have made either the unity or the diversity in life the ultimate reality and those who deny the triune God have no example of possible co-existence between what appears to them to be two contradictory options. Moreover, they are unable, given their basis of authority (i.e. autonomy), to present structures and boundaries so that both the one and the many can play their own vital, interrelated and inseparable parts without destroying each other—only the revelation of God's nature and law can show us these vital specifics.

Without the doctrine of the Trinity we have no way of answering questions like: who should have the ultimate authority, the people or the nation (represented by the civil government)? Who can best provide that which is necessary for maintaining a just, prosperous and efficient social order? Many wars and revolutions have been fought over such questions. The interests of the individuals within a nation and the interests of the nation itself are not to be brought into conflict with one another and unless both are carefully guarded we will bring an end to them both. The functioning of the individual as an individual is a vital component in any nation (and in the Kingdom of God) and there needs to be room for him to express his uniqueness and pursue his freedom and calling under God. Yet the aspirations of the individual cannot deny either the existence or the importance of the unity that is necessary for a nation. Within the nation there is also the question of authority and how is this to fit into the working of the whole? Is it the unity, i.e. the State or some elite group that is to control the many, or are the many to have the final say over national unity? The Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, all held to the idea that unity (the one) had to prevail in the State and this unity flowed from the philosopher-kings—an elite group who would direct the thinking of the many and thus shape the many. Without the doctrine of the Trinity, one either assumes a position where the unity (which could be the Church, State, *etc.*) forces the many into subjection, or where the many deny the authority of the Church, State or any other unity. There is only one place to find a solution to this problem.

The perverted goal in our day is to somehow unify the whole world under one controlling institution or body. It is believed that the solution to all our problems will be found when everyone is controlled by one elite group like the United Nations or something similar. This will not solve the tension though, for the argument will never be settled by either group—neither by those who believe the "one" should be the ultimate basis for determining all things or by those who believe the "many" should be the basis.

For example, when many nations join into one union, what gets legislated when there is a tension between what is best for the union and what is best for any particular nation within the union? How do we get balance between the unity or structure (the one) and the individualism or diversity (the many)? This tension was one of the causes of the American Civil War.

4. Mt. 20:28; John 10:11–13, 15; 13:34; 15:13; Rom. 5:6–8; 15:1; 16:4; 1 Cor. 10:24, 33; 13:5; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:20, 21; 1 Pet. 2:21–24; 1 John 3:16; 2:6; 4:11.

When a nation chooses some individuals to rule over them it must be done in the full understanding of the boundaries and liberty we find revealed in the Scriptures—God has clearly told each group what is expected of them. Rulers are to be servants of the people they have authority over. Society needs God ordained order and structure and this cannot be avoided, but at all times, *everyone's* actions are to be done with a view to building the relationships within that society. To walk in violation of God's revealed will means to violate relationships too and to destroy relationships is to destroy society. In God's Kingdom, our focus shouldn't be upon our rights, but upon our responsibilities. Everyone's responsibilities are laid out in the Scriptures. The people in a nation have responsibilities towards their rulers and the rulers have responsibilities towards the people, and all are ultimately responsible to God to walk within the bounds he has set. When one of these groups seeks to make itself ultimate, it is then walking in violation of its relationships—with God, people and all of Creation.

What we see happening time and again is the "one," either in the form of king, president or parliament wants to manipulate and control the rest of the population, until such time that the "many" rise up in revolt and implement their own terror and tyranny upon all those that disagree with them. Some claim that the wishes of the "many" are of more value than the wishes of the minority and so if there is a clash between these two groups, the majority (many) are correct. Thus, in the business world, it is believed that workers, since they are many, have more say and authority than management. The State makes policies whereby the laws favour one group above another because justice is not an immovable

standard, equally applicable to all people, but rather is determined by what will "benefit" the most people or those who make the laws.

We cannot assign ultimate authority to any person, institution, committee or organisation in this realm—God alone has ultimate authority and he has given us a revelation that thoroughly equips us for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, see too, Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1 section 6). We can never decide what to do by looking to our own "wisdom" to answer the question, "What is best for most people?" (or something similar to this), and feel justified in ignoring justice for others who don't happen to fit into the group we have defined as "most people." Such behaviour arises because there is confusion at the most basic level—that is, not knowing how to come to terms with the real tension in life between the one and the many. When there is a conflict of ideas (between these two groups), which group is ultimate or should be given primacy? There is no answer to this question outside of the triune God of the Bible, and life will swing from extremes on the one side to extremes on the other when God and his revelation are ignored.

We have only touched briefly on a few areas of life where the tension of the one and the many is fairly obvious; however, this tension affects every aspect of our existence and we need to be aware of our responsibility to conform every area of life to God's truth. The biblical teaching on the Trinity is not an irrelevant doctrine reserved for in-house debates between stuffy professors, but is of incredible significance for every person and all of life and thus we need to bring *all* our thinking and living into line with this reality (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5). C&S

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THE DEGENERATION OF LIBERALISM

by Robin Phillips¹

“For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.”—2 Peter 2:18–19

“Men must be governed by God, or they will be ruled by tyrants.”—William Penn

An Unexpected Twist to Orwell

HARDLY a week goes by without a British columnist having recourse to mention George Orwell. Whether the subject is compulsory ID cards, the growing Nanny State or a surveillance system to rival that of any communist country, the words “Orwell warned us” remains the recurring theme.²

While twenty-first century Britain may be doing its best to turn Orwell into a prophet, there is one point where, for all his genius, George left us manifestly unprepared. Although it is an aspect overlooked in contemporary discussion, it is also the key to understanding the current situation. The point is simply this: the reign of Big Brother is being introduced to Britain from the liberalism of the far left, a tradition that has historically championed Orwell’s defence of civil liberties and free expression.

This observation is particularly germane when considering the new corpus of offences restricting speech, religion, public debate and, in some cases, even thought itself, to that cluster of ideas which the liberals have designated “politically correct.”³ The State’s eagerness to function as guard-

ian, not simply of law and order, but also of the ideologies of its citizenry,⁴ was made patently obvious last year when New Labour tried to push through legislation as part of the Religious Hatred Bill which would have made it an offence to criticise different religious truth-claims.

Even without the impetus of such a law, UK police currently operate under “guidance” that defines a “hate incident” so broadly that it can include debating another person about their lifestyle.⁵ Although this guidance has no statutory force, and has been called “pseudo-law” by one distinguished constitutional lawyer, it can influence the policy of police constabularies provided it does not lead to an actual charge being issued.⁶ The effect is that simply to express certain viewpoints is at least treated as criminal.⁷

It was this tendency to police beliefs that Dr. N. T.

4. See Steve Doughty, “Don’t impose your morality: Catholic Archbishop attacks gay rights bill,” *Daily Mail*, 28 November, 2006, available online at www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=419067&in_page_id=1770.

5. See *Hate Crime: Delivering A Quality Service—Good Practice and Tactical Guidance*, published by the Home Office Police Standard Unit and ACPO, 2005, available online at www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/Hate%20Crime.pdf. See also Mark Steyn, “What is a crime? It’s a matter of opinion,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 December, 2005, available online at www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2005/12/13/do1302.xml.

6. See Francis Bennion’s fascinating article “pseudo law,” available at www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/fb/2006/2006-003-jp-police-powers.pdf.

7. See The Christian Institute’s *Update* Issue 9, Spring 2007, page 4, for a report on a number of instances where this occurred, available online at www.christian.org.uk/pdfpublications/update9_apr07.pdf.

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2. See, for example, Deborah Orr, “New Labour New Britain: How they changed our nation,” *The Independent*, 23 April, 2007. Available online at http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article2474442.ece.

3. See Anthony Browne, *The Retreat of Reason: Political Correctness and the corruption of public debate in modern Britain* (London: Civitas, 2006).

Wright, the Bishop of Durham, lambasted in an address to the House of Lords on 9 February, 2006. Dr. Wright referred to a new class of crimes which “have to do, not with actions but with ideas and beliefs.” He said:

People in my diocese have told me that they are now afraid to speak their minds in the pub on some major contemporary issues for fear of being reported, investigated, and perhaps charged. My Lords, I did not think I would see such a thing in this country in my lifetime . . . The word for such a state of affairs is “tyranny”: sudden moral climate change, enforced by thought police.⁸

From religious organisations that must now navigate the increasingly complex labyrinth of gay rights laws⁹ to Christian Unions that are being forced to admit atheists into their ranks¹⁰, it is clear that today’s liberals are making sure Big Brother does more than merely watch us: he’s checking out our credo.¹¹ Chesterton was surely prophetic when he conjectured that “[w]e may eventually be bound not to disturb a man’s mind even by argument; not to disturb the sleep of birds even by coughing.”¹²

Illiberal Liberalism

It is instructive to note that this dogmatic intolerance of dissent, while putting public debate into a state of paralysis, has come to Britain in the package of “tolerance,” “equal-

ity,” “human rights” and even—heaven help us—“freedom.” These were, of course, the values of classical liberalism championed by the humanists of the Enlightenment.¹³ But while the contemporary liberal still likes to think of himself as operating within the ideological legacy framed by such men as Hume, Locke, Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau and Mill, the totalitarian utopia towards which he strives would presumably be anathema to these defenders of freedom in so far as it is the ultimate betrayal of genuine liberal values.

This is a point that has not been missed on the old fashioned liberals who still remain among us. For example, in his book *The Retreat of Reason*, Anthony Browne argues that the dogmatic, bullying posture of the contemporary liberal is a betrayal of the true liberalism and rationalism of the Enlightenment.¹⁴ We find a similar theme in the work of the lesbian and self-proclaimed leftist Tammy Bruce, former president of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organisation of Woman, and author of *The New Thought Police: Inside the Left’s Assault on Free Speech and Free Minds*¹⁵ and *The Death of Right and Wrong: Exposing the Left’s Assault on Our Culture and Values*.¹⁶ In these works, Bruce uses a liberal platform to critique left-wing anti-intellectualism, thought totalitarianism and inverted racism, being careful to insist that she is not a conservative. Similarly, the British commentator Melanie Phillips is careful to tell us that, though “styled a conservative by her opponents,”¹⁷ she is really defending the liberal values of the Enlightenment. “. . . liberalism,” said Phillips at a recent conference, “. . . has so badly undermined itself and departed from its own core concepts that it is now paralysed by moral and intellectual muddle . . . What we are living through in the west is nothing short of a repudiation of the Enlightenment, a repudiation of reason; and its substitution by irrationality, obscurantism, bigotry and clerical totalitarianism—all facilitated by our so-called ‘liberal’ society, and all in the name of ‘human rights’.”¹⁸

Nor is it merely a handful of liberal intellectuals on the fringe who have been challenging the encroachment of left-wing totalitarianism. When Tony Blair’s New Labour gov-

8. “Moral Climate Change and Freedom of Speech,” speech in the House of Lords, February 9, 2006, by the Bishop of Durham, Dr N. T. Wright, available online at www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_HOL_Moral_Climate.htm

9. See Melanie Phillips’ article, “A law that turns sexual tolerance into tyranny,” *The Daily Mail*, 19 June, 2006. Available online at www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/newscomment.html?in_article_id=391320&in_page_id=1787

10. On Christian Unions, see information posted by the organisation Christian Concern For Our Nation at www.christianconcernforournation.co.uk/University/index.php. Also see John-Henry Westen’s article, “UK, Canada Ran Neck and Neck in 2006 Race to Exterminate Religious Freedom” at www.lifesite.net/ldn/2007/jan/07011704.html

11. See my article “Dawkins and the Rise of Militant Atheism,” available online at robinphillips.blogspot.com/2006/11/dawkins-and-rise-of-militant-atheism.html

12. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy: The Romance of Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 1908), p. 113. Chesterton’s words are a pretty good description of the Protection From Harassment Act 1997. Worded so vaguely that almost any form of repeated conduct can become a crime, it gives the crown authority to prosecute anyone causing a person “alarm or distress” if this involves “conduct on at least two occasions.” Because such conduct “includes speech,” and because it is not necessary to demonstrate that the person causing distress has used abusive or insulting words, merely disturbing a man’s mind by argument could become a criminal offence if another person finds it distressing. The penalty is six months imprisonment or an order preventing the person from repeating the offence on pain of 5 years behind bars. It is now used routinely against peaceful protestors. The anti-intellectual implications of the Serious Organized Crime and Police Act 2005 is equally disturbing. Although this Act is most known for removing freedom to demonstrate outside Parliament, it also includes a section on “harassment intended to deter lawful activities.” Under this act, it is an offence to cause alarm or distress to “two or more persons” by “harassing” them. “Harassment” is defined as seeking “to persuade any person . . . to do something that he is not under any obligation to do.” This means that if I try to persuade two or more people to change their philosophical views, then because they are under no legal obligation to do so, in theory I could be taken to court for harassment if the other person finds my axioms sufficiently distressing. (See George Monbiot’s article “I’m pleased the case against this ranting homophobe was dropped,” *The*

Guardian, October 3, 2006, available online at www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1886185,00.html. See also my article “The Orwellian Legacy of Tony Blair,” available online at <http://robinphillips.blogspot.com/2007/05/good-bye-tony-blair.html>. See also Peter Kitchens, *The Abolition of Liberty* (Atlantic Books, 2004).

13. Hence, it should come as no surprise that the term “liberal” derives from the Latin *liber* meaning “free.”

14. “. . . the Enlightenment, and advocates of liberty and freedom of thought such as Mill, Locke and Voltaire, started the opening up of the human mind and gradually put an end to ‘politically correct’ religious beliefs, allowing free and open dissent. During the last century, the human mind has become more open than any previous period, but it is now closing down again . . . Coleman described PC as the intersection between the left and the liberal, but added that the hard-line ideology of PC triumphed over the *laissez-faire*, rebellious liberalism. The result is that PC turned ‘the liberalism of the 1960s into a dogmatic and conformist, even bullying, ideology . . . Liberals of earlier generations accepted unorthodoxy as normal. Indeed the right to differ was a datum of classical liberalism. The Politically Correct do not give that right a high priority. It distresses their programmed minds’.” Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 29, 30, 32. See also P Coleman, “What is Political Correctness? The Pros and Cons,” *Quadrant Magazine*, Australia, March, 2000.

15. Crown Publications, 2003.

16. Three Rivers Press, 2004.

17. See www.melaniephillips.com/biography/

18. From “Liberalism v Islamism” presentation at the Neo conference, Stockholm, Sweden, 11 May, 2007. Available online at www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=510

ernment began to be perceived as a threat to Britain's ancient civil liberties, it was the nation's mainline liberal newspapers, notably the *Independent*, the *Guardian* and the *Observer*, who unleashed the harshest criticisms of his "Orwellian" assault on "liberal values."¹⁹

The liberal community is, therefore, divided between two kinds of ideologues: those, on the one hand, for whom the appellation "liberal" is, strictly speaking, an anachronism since they would deny freedom using the rhetoric of liberal values. These I will refer to pejoratively, but also descriptively, as "illiberals." On the other hand, there are old fashioned liberals who keep crying out, "What has happened to the values of the Enlightenment? Aren't we supposed to be *liberals*?" Rather confusingly, the latter group—which I will refer to as classic liberalism—is often now associated with conservatism, as they seek to conserve the genuine liberalism of our pluralist humanist society.

In this essay I will attempt to chart why liberalism has fractured into this matrix. I will propose that the totalitarian agenda of the postmodern illiberal, while on the surface at complete odds with the values of classical liberalism, is also the logical corollary of the man-centred ethics of the Enlightenment. While agreeing with classical liberals like Browne and Bruce that the emerging totalitarian thought-control represents an anti-intellectualism significantly contrary to the rationalism of eighteenth century liberalism, I will also suggest that these developments are simply the fulfilment of where the Enlightenment project had inevitably to lead.

The Self-Destruction of Epistemology

As soon as the, so called, "Enlightenment" happened,²⁰ its days were necessarily numbered by virtue of its own philosophy. It could no more sustain itself than a car can keep driving indefinitely without stopping for fuel. Moreover, from its very onset, the Enlightenment could only exist to the extent that it was parasitic on some of the very ideologies it claimed to repudiate. We will consider how this

was true in the area of epistemology (theory of knowledge), aesthetics and ethics. Understanding these dynamics will then put us in a position to appreciate how the contemporary illiberal can stand in the wake of the Enlightenment at the same time as holding to an ideology antithetical to the Enlightenment's main principles.

We start with the observation that the entire Enlightenment project was man-centred rather than God-centred. In the area of epistemology, this led to the theory of empiricism. Empiricism, put simply, was the belief that the only legitimate form of knowledge was that which could be derived through the senses of man. Only through man's experience of the world can we ever know anything. The empiricists thus denied the earlier view that such things as our sense of right and wrong, our awareness of beauty, rational intuition,²¹ and so on, are not derived solely from sense observation but were ingrained in our very make-up as human beings made in the image of God. Those who held the latter view had acknowledged that experience and training is needed to awaken, refine and cultivate these innate ideas, while denying that the ideas themselves are actually created by the senses. The empiricists, on the other hand, argued that experience does not simply awaken these fundamental ideas within us, but creates them *ex nihilo*.

Although empiricism owes much to Francis Bacon (1561–1626), it was really John Locke (1632–1704) who first systematised its principles into a philosophy—I was going to say coherent, but thought better—system.²² Locke taught that every person enters the world with a *tabula rasa*—a blank slate, upon which experience will write. Expanding on the Aristotelian maxim that "there is nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the senses," Locke argued that all the ideas in the mind (including ideas of justice, love, beauty, God and truth) are either the products of direct sense-impressions (as a photographic film responds to light) or else the result of the mind reflecting on the data presented to the senses. The mind brings to such reflection only that which it has previously received through sense observation.²³

Locke's empiricism stressed the fundamental dependence upon experience of anything we can say or think about its objects. As A. C. Grayling points out, "on the Lockean view the world is colourless, odourless, and silent until a perceiver chances by, when it produces in him visual, olfactory, and auditory experiences."²⁴ Yet Locke also tried to be a realist, asserting the independence of the objects of experience from the experience of them. That is to say, he believed we could discover truths about a real world that existed external to our minds and experience. These two strands within his thought created a tension of which Locke was himself aware. Put simply, there was no guarantee that

19. See Henry Porter, "Blair laid bare: the article that may get you arrested" (the *Independent*, 29 June, 2006), available online at <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article1129827.ece>; Simon Carr, "If you still think you live in a liberal and democratic society, then please read on" (the *Independent*, 15 April, 2006), available online at http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_a_1/simon_carr/article357776.ece; Andrew Grice, The Legacy: Tony Blair, Prime Minister, 1997–2007 (the *Independent* on Sunday, 11 May, 2007), available online at <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article2530768.ece>; Henry Porter, "Blair's new laws leave us at the mercy of future tyrants" (The *Observer*, February 19, 2006), available online at <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1712998,00.html>; Henry Porter, "The Limits of liberty: We're all suspects now" (the *Independent*, 19 October, 2006), available online at <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article1902830.ece>; Henry Porter and Tony Blair's debate, "Britain's Liberties: The Great Debate" (The *Guardian*, Sunday April 23), available online at <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/focus/story/0,,1759344,00.html>; Henry Porter, "How we move ever closer to becoming a totalitarian state" (the *Observer*, 5 March, 2006), available online at <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/constitution/comment/0,,1724047,00.html>; Henry Porter, "Only a constitution can save us from this abuse of power" (the *Observer*, 2 April, 2006), available online at <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1744984,00.html>.

20. This is not to deny that the Enlightenment occurred gradually, even imperceptibly at first. Yet it happened none the less. On the gradual evolution of the Enlightenment, see the beginning of Norman Hampson's book *The Enlightenment: An evaluation of its assumptions, attitudes and values* (Penguin Books; 1968).

21. Rational intuition refers to instinctive principles of logic or common sense. The principles of rational intuition function like the axioms in geometry which cannot be deduced from prior premises but have to be assumed before any organised thinking can occur.

22. See J Gibson, *Locke's Theory of Knowledge and its Historical Relations* (Cambridge, 1968); P. Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles* (Cambridge, 1985); J.W. Yolton, *Locke and the Way of Ideas* (Bristol, 1993); R. I. Aaron, *John Locke* (Oxford, 1963); D.J. O'Connor, *John Locke* (New York, 1967); I.C. Tipton (ed), *Locke on Human Understanding* (Oxford, 1977).

23. See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Niddich (Oxford, 1975).

24. A. C. Grayling, ed., *Philosophy 1: a guide through the subject* (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 513.

all human ideas of things genuinely resembled the external objects they were supposed to represent. Locke's tactic was simply to dismiss this sceptical challenge as not being worth considering. It wouldn't be long, however, before other philosophers would begin being more consistent with the implications of empiricist epistemology.

Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753) exploited these tensions within Locke's theory of knowledge and pressed empiricism one stage further.²⁵ He "pointed out that if the empiricist analysis of human knowledge is carried through rigorously, then it must be admitted that *all* qualities that the human mind registers . . . are ultimately experienced as ideas in the mind, and there can be no conclusive inference whether or not some of those qualities 'genuinely' represent or resemble an outside object."²⁶ Human perceptions are not automatic photographs of an external reality, he said, for the mind is only aware of its own perceptions and has no way to ascertain whether these perceptions represent the objects that are assumed. This led Berkeley to his famous thesis—stated in all seriousness—that there is no external, material world. Trees, rocks, houses, and the like are simply collections of "ideas." Yet, at the same time, Berkeley argued, there is objective content to these ideas because God is the one who produces these ideas in our minds. You and I really do exist, because we are ideas in God's mind.

Berkeley saw himself as rescuing philosophy from the scepticism towards which a consistent Lockeanism would lead: ". . . for Berkeley the world is just as we perceive it to be even when we are not perceiving it, because it is always and everywhere perceived by the infinite mind of a deity. The deity perceives the universe by thinking it."²⁷

God was actually quite a useful concept to Locke and Berkeley to save them from the implications of complete scepticism. As Norman Hampson points out, "both Berkeley and Locke, as Christians, assumed that individual sense-impressions had an objective content that was guaranteed by God."²⁸

It isn't hard to anticipate the next step. Get rid of God and nothing is real, not even our ideas. That is exactly what the philosopher David Hume (1711–1776) did.²⁹ Disagreeing with Berkeley's idealist solution, Hume realised the logical implications of the man-centred epistemology of empiricism

by pointing out that, on the basis of this methodology, there is as little justification for asserting the existence of mental beings (including God) as there is to assert the independent existence of matter. After all, if the only form of knowledge is that which we derive through our senses, then we cannot have objective knowledge of the self since it eludes direct sensory input. What we describe as our "self" is merely a bundle of "different perceptions which succeed one another with inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement."³⁰ Furthermore, according to Hume, we can have no knowledge of causality, the presumed basis for all inductive knowledge, since all we observe is one particular event followed by another particular event. We observe a person throwing the ball and then the ball flying through the air, but we do not actually observe the law of cause and effect.

Hume showed, in fact, that in the end we cannot really know anything objectively. Empiricism, when pressed to its logical consequence, naturally leads to scepticism. In establishing this, Hume paradoxically undermined the very basis for empiricism, for as Tarnas pointed out, "he ended up casting into question the objective certainty of empirical science altogether. If all human knowledge is based on empiricism, yet induction cannot be logically justified, then man can have no certain knowledge."³¹

Few, if any, empiricists are consistent with their epistemology,³² and Hume was no exception. Realising that he couldn't live on the basis of his radical position, Hume escaped from the dilemma of total scepticism by saying he still *believed* in the self and the law of causality even though he couldn't objectively verify their existence.³³ Like philosophers before and after, Hume lived in the tenuous polarity between the conclusions of his philosophy, on the one hand, and his instinctive common sense on the other.

You can imagine what the next step was. Give up the common sense. This brings us to the radical anti-abstractionism of Nietzsche (1844–1900) and the nihilistic movement, then to the existentialism of Sartre (1905–1980) and finally to the relativism of Postmodernism.

Postmodernism is often seen as representing the abandonment of the Enlightenment. On the surface, this seems obvious: the Enlightenment said there is universal truth; Postmodernism says we each make our own personal truth; the Enlightenment said we should be rational, Postmodernism says no one can be rational because everyone has a subjective bias; the Enlightenment said there is such a thing as the good, the true and the beautiful, Postmodernism says that in a world without God nothing can have any meaning—everything is relative to the individual. While Postmodernism

25. See Berkeley's *Principles, Three Dialogues and Notebooks*. Also see A. C. Grayling, *Berkeley: Central Arguments* (Open Court Publishing Co., 1986); *Berkeley: Critical and Interpretative Essays*, Colin Turbayne (ed) (University of Minnesota Press); D. M. Armstrong, *Berkeley's Theory of Vision* (Melbourne, 1960); K. P. Winkler, *Berkeley: An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989); J. Foster & H. Robinson, *Essays on Berkeley: A Tercentennial Celebration* (Oxford, 1985); C. B. Martin & D. M. Armstrong (eds), *Locke and Berkeley: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London, 1968); G. Pitcher, *Berkeley* (London, 1977); W. E. Steinkraus, *New Studies in Berkeley's Philosophy* (New York, 1966); I. C. Tipton, *Berkeley: The Philosophy of Immaterialism* (London, 1974); K. P. Winkler, *Berkeley: An Interpretation* (Oxford, 1989).

26. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (London: Pimlico, 1991) p. 335.

27. *Philosophy I: a guide through the subject*, ed. A. C. Grayling (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 513.

28. Hampson, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

29. See H. H. Price, *Hume's Theory of the External World* (Oxford 1940); V. C. Chappel (ed), *Hume* (London, 1966); R. J. Fogelin, *Hume's Skepticism* (London, 1985); N. Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, second edition (London, 1949); John Passmore, *Hume's Intentions*, third edition (London, 1980); G. Strawson, *The Secret Connexion: Realism and David Hume* (Oxford, 1989).

30. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, book I, part IV, sec. vi
31. Tarnas, *ibid.*, p. 339.

32. Kreeft and Tacelli point out that "Not all empiricists are subjectivists and relativists, but they should be; for if truth is empirical, and what is empirical is determined by my subjective experience, then truth is subjective and relative." Peter Kreeft & Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, ILL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), p. 365.

33. Hume even went so far as to acknowledge that after "relaxing the bent of mind," whether through dining, playing a game of backgammon or having three or four hours amusement with friends, when he would "return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further." David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature Book One* (Fontana/Collins, edited by D. G. C. Macnabb, 1962, originally published in 1739), p. 318.

strikes at the heart of all the Enlightenment's idols, it is also the fulfilment of where such idolatry must eventually lead. Once Locke wrote as he did, making man's empirical perception the epistemological starting point, Sartre's maxim "everything is absurd" was inevitable, as was the postmodern axiom "all truth is relative." Or, as Douglas Wilson once put it, Postmodernism is simply what happens when the modernist corpse begins to rot.

The Self-Destruction of Aesthetics

What occurred in the area of Epistemology also happened in the arena of aesthetics. The philosophers of the Enlightenment were particularly keen to prevent artistic relativism arising out of Empiricism. In the wake of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment was highly conscious of its Greek and Roman heritage, not least in the arts. This gave the culture a sense of absolutes, as well as making it part of the training of eighteenth-century intellectuals to be aware of the difference between "good art" and "bad art." No one was ready to open the floodgates and say that the whole show was just a matter of personal taste.

However, this commitment to aesthetic absolutes was in tension with the philosophy of empiricism, which said that there are no abstract universals. John Locke wrote "all things that exist are only particulars" and that "*general and universal* belong not to the real existence of things . . ." ³⁴ This means that when I look at a rose and reflect on its beauty, the beauty of the rose does not really exist—what exists are merely a number of petals, leaves and a stem. The quality we call "beauty" is simply in our minds. The corollary of this is that what may be beautiful to you is not beautiful to me. It would take some two hundred years for Western art to begin reflecting this aesthetic relativism, and a walk through any contemporary gallery will show the process all but complete. ³⁵ At the time of the Enlightenment, however, inconsistency was a luxury people could still afford. They could simultaneously insist on objective standards of aesthetics in practice, even while chipping away at the philosophical edifice on which such objectivity hinged.

Being full of tensions, the philosophy of the Enlightenment was akin to a cheap sweater with a loose thread: once you start pulling the thread, the whole project falls apart. While the areas of epistemology and aesthetics illustrate this principle, it is the Enlightenment's approach to ethics where this progression is the most striking.

The Self-Destruction of Ethics

The Enlightenment, especially after it became a populist movement, was characterised by values such as equality, tolerance, liberty, human rights and justice. The French *philosophes*, as they were called, campaigned against religious persecution in the name of tolerance, against slavery in the name of equality, against totalitarian monarchy in the name of human rights, for prison reform in the name of justice and human dignity, against censorship in the name of liberty,

against superstition, fanaticism and prejudice in the name of reason.

In one sense, it was nothing new to promote these values, which the Christian tradition had actually pioneered. ³⁶ The innovation lay in the fact that these values were now being advocated within an explicitly man-centred worldview.

Having abandoned any theistic grounding for ethics, there were generally two approaches people began to take. One approach was to say that ethical values are self-evident or derived from a universal natural law. The other approach (more consistent with empiricism) was to ground ethical imperatives in some form of implicit or explicit utilitarianism.

A muddled mixture of both approaches can be seen in the *Encyclopédie* edited by Diderot. ³⁷ One of the entries, written by de Jaucourt, is on the subject of *Natural Liberty* while another, by the same author, deals with *Natural Equality*. De Jaucourt roots both natural liberty and natural equality in a universal standard of natural ethics that is independent of any man-made jurisprudence. From this starting point de Jaucourt is able to claim that all men are equal and, moreover, that everyone is possessed of a natural liberty, which he defines simply as the right to act as they wish—both with themselves and their possessions—within the boundaries of natural law. These boundaries, he announces to us, include not acting in a way detrimental to one's fellow men and not acting contrary to the government. De Jaucourt then uses this as a platform to attack slavery.

Obviously, this approach to ethics was hard to sustain within the materialistic worldview of the Enlightenment. In the absence of any transcendent standard in which to ground natural law and universal human rights, we end up, like de Jaucourt, having to simply decide by fiat what its boundaries and injunctions actually are. ³⁸ This was one of the reasons why the utilitarian option became increasingly favoured as the Enlightenment progressed. Hobbes, in the seventeenth century, had set the pattern by suggesting that the prohibi-

36. See John Coffey, "The Myth of Secular Tolerance," Cambridge Papers, Sept. 2003, available online at www.jubilee-centre.org/pdfs/The_Myth_of_Secular_Tolerance.pdf

37. The *Encyclopédie* is the perfect place to go to obtain a pulse for the popular arm of the European Enlightenment. It consisted of seventeen volumes, put together in France under the supervision of Diderot, during the years of 1751 and 1772. This *Encyclopédie* attempted to catalogue the whole of human knowledge. It was a noble undertaking with its aim to create "a universal and rational dictionary . . . to bring together the knowledge scattered over the surface of the earth," as Diderot wrote of it. The *Encyclopédie* has almost become synonymous with the Enlightenment, for it offered more than what we think of an encyclopaedia offering. Not only did it give the latest facts about everything under the sun, it was full of "enlightened" interpretation. It was rather like a massive editorial on all aspects of life. So controversial were many of the viewpoints that the writers were frequently in trouble with the censor. Indeed, Diderot even had to spend some time in prison as a result of his controversial opinions. Nevertheless, the message of the *encyclopaedists* did get out and that message was that we should view reality in a whole new way, with man rather than God at the centre.

38. "Not even the right of political self-determination, on which the democracies so vigorously insist, is self-evident; it presupposes objective rights grounded in a transcendent moral order that secular political scientists blur. The entire corpus of human rights is today in peril, because none of the divergent contemporary philosophical theories can sustain fixed and universal rights; yet secular juridical scholars hesitate to return to a Judeo-Christian grounding for rights." Carl Henry, *Twilight of a Great Civilisation* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988), p. 24.

34. John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (first published in 1690).

35. See my article "Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder," available online at <http://robinphillips.blogspot.com/2007/02/objectivity-of-beauty.html>.

tions against stealing had evolved out of man's discovery that thieving was a nuisance and hindrance to all human endeavour. In the interests of social cohesion, therefore, man decided it was reasonable not to steal. That was more or less the principle to which all the subsequent utilitarians appealed: society works better when people are moral. As Gene Veith put it,

Utilitarians decided moral issues, not by appealing to transcendent absolutes, but by studying the effect of an action upon the system. Stealing is wrong, not because the Ten Commandments say so, but because stealing interferes with the economic functioning of society. Something is good if it makes the system run more smoothly. Something is evil if it interferes with the cogs of the vast machine. Practicality becomes the sole moral criterion. If it works, it must be good.³⁹

In the end, even utilitarianism turned out to be a cheat for the same reason as the natural law approach.⁴⁰ In the absence of any transcendent standard of ethics, how can we know that we ought to follow utilitarianism? This question can be answered in one of two ways, either by reference to the principle of utility, which would be merely to beg the question (assuming the very thing you are trying to establish), or by appealing to some moral umpire higher than utility. In light of the fact that utility is itself supposed to furnish just such an umpire, to argue for the morality of utility based on any higher ethical standard would merely prove that utility is not, after all, the first principle of ethics. Some thinkers tried to rescue utilitarianism from collapsing under its own weight by bringing the theory of natural law to its assistance. And to their credit, using a leaky bucket to catch the water from another leaky bucket does actually work . . . but not for very long.

Eventually utilitarianism simply warped into pursuing whatever makes *me* happy. It was not long, in fact, before all the Enlightenment values began tumbling down. Within a man-centred worldview, human rights inevitably deteriorated into competition for rights; liberty, unloosed from responsibility, began degenerating into moral anarchy; sexual, economic and family ethics were reduced to utilitarianism which was itself reduced to doing whatever makes *me* happiest as an individual; Christian charity was replaced by its empty parody of tolerance while tolerance itself became little more than licence. The result was a moral vacuum which the neo-morality of illiberal tyranny rushed to fill.

The New Earth Turns Bloody

This process of filling the ethical vacuum began as early as the French Revolution. The background to the French Revolution had been the Enlightenment's tremendous opti-

mism about what could be achieved as society was unloosed from its theistic shackles. There was a sense of moving forwards towards an eschatological climax, where science and humanism would usher in a new era—even a new heavens and a new earth. As Enlightenment spread, so it was thought, the old order would be overthrown and replaced by a secular Utopia. This is exactly what the French Revolutionaries thought they were doing as they attempted to institute a new era (they even redrew their calendars to make the year of the Revolution Year 1). This was indeed the New Earth of secularism, but instead of flowing with milk and honey it flowed the colour of blood.

As the old order was overthrown and those with the anti-establishment ideology come to power, the values of secularism were forced on an unwilling populace. The Revolution attempted to use brute power to usher in the secular theocracy implicated by the Enlightenment project. Under the banner of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," the movement that began with such high ideals eventually deteriorated into a régime of terror and thought-police with little resemblance, on the surface, to its Enlightenment pedigree.

These developments should not have come as a surprise. Human beings crave control, authority, absolutes—in short, they crave theocracy. If society rejects God, it cannot be long before it rejects liberty and instinctively seeks a secular theocracy to fill the void. As Francis Schaeffer pointed out:

The humanists push for "freedom," but having no Christian consensus to contain it, that "freedom" leads to chaos or to slavery under the state (or under an elite). Humanism, with its lack of *any* final base for values or law, always leads to chaos. It then naturally leads to some form of authoritarianism to control the chaos.⁴¹

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, when unhinged from their Judeo-Christian moorings, logically led to the guillotine. If the attributes of divinity do not belong to the Creator, they will be attributed to man or man's systems, including the attribute of omnipotence. The state cannot, of course, become all-powerful, but the revolutionary feels compelled to try as soon as the reins of power are safely in his hands. This can be seen wherever the spirit of revolution has flourished. Few people realise, for example, just how much Fascism was seen as the permissive, iconoclast and hedonistic option to its original advocates.⁴² It is true that in retrospect we associate Fascism with steel fences, concentration camps and excessive control, just as we associate the French Revolution with the guillotine, yet both began as an avant-garde movement seeking to loosen oppressive restrictions and bring freedom.

exterminating handicapped people since they were, quite truthfully, a drain on the economic system. What if killing one innocent person would make a hundred people happy? On the basis of utilitarianism, it is hard to know how to handle such questions.

41. Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1981), pp. 29–30. "To assume that man's mind is as ultimate as God's, and therefore to conceive of the universe as a world of chance, requires one to posit the locus of sovereignty apart from God somewhere else in a universe that is greater than both man and God. As it happens, men have posited two basic possibilities for the source of sovereignty apart from God: the individual or the state." Lawrence Pratt, "The Politics of Pragmatism: Threat to Freedom" in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*, ed. Gary North (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 1976), p. 121. See also Rousas John Rushdoony, *This Independent Republic* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1964), p. 15.

42. See Gene Edward Veith Jr., *Modern Fascism: Liquidating the Judeo-Christian Worldview* (Saint Louis: Concordia Scholarship Today, 1993).

39. Gene Edward Veith, *Postmodern Times* (Wheaton ILL: Crossway Books, 1994), pp. 33–34.

40. There were other reasons as well. For example, one of the hardest practical problems for a utilitarian is how to navigate between the collective happiness of mankind as a whole vs. the happiness of specific individuals. If we say that both should be given equal priority, then what happens when these two goals conflict, as they inevitably will? For example, what if hurting a hundred people would make me happy? Why would that be wrong? Suppose we say it would be wrong because the happiness of the majority is what really counts. In that case, what do we do when the existence of certain people or groups is draining the happiness of the whole? Hitler believed he was justified in

"The Revolution," commented Eugene (Fr. Seraphim) Rose, "like the disbelief which has always accompanied it, cannot be stopped halfway; it is a force that, once awakened, will not rest until it ends in a totalitarian Kingdom of this world. The history of the last two centuries has proved nothing if not this."⁴³

A Terminal Philosophy

We have seen that the Enlightenment's approach to epistemology, aesthetics and ethics is, at best, a terminal philosophy, containing in itself the seeds of its own self-destruction. Having established this principle, we are now in a position to better understand the continuity and discontinuity that exists between today's illiberals and their Enlightenment forebears. Just as there is continuity and discontinuity between the rationalistic empiricism of Locke and the radical scepticism of Hume or Postmodernism, and just as there is continuity and discontinuity between the aesthetic values of the Enlightenment and the nihilistic decadence of postmodern art, and just as there is continuity and discontinuity between Rousseau's doctrine of the Noble Savage and the Reign of Terror's brute savagery, so there is both continuity and discontinuity between the classical liberalism of the Enlightenment and the tyranny of today's illiberalism. Put simply, those who wanted to champion human rights and liberty as free-standing values unhinged from any transcendent ethical framework, necessarily planted a self-destruct mechanism on the very values they sought to uphold.

There may be little resemblance between a body newly dead and the rotting corpse a month later, yet the latter is what the former will inevitably become if it is left unburied.

Secular Theocracy Today

Of course, the contemporary illiberal will not admit that the inevitable rot has set in. Like the characters in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, he continues to use the principled rhetoric of his predecessors even when the substance has been sucked dry. As Rose noted:

The Liberal still speaks, at least on formal occasions, of "eternal verities," of "faith," of "human dignity," of man's "high calling" or his "unquenchable spirit," even of "Christian civilization"; but it is quite clear that these words no longer mean what they once meant. No Liberal takes them with entire seriousness; they are in fact metaphors, ornaments of language that are meant to evoke an emotional, not an intellectual, response—a response largely conditioned by long usage, with the attendant memory of a time when such words actually had a positive and serious meaning.⁴⁴

Like Orwell's animals, who brought slavery under the banner of equality and liberty, the contemporary illiberal is all too happy to welcome any and every erosion of freedom provided it is done in the name of one of his ethical axioms and, more importantly, as long as it does not remove any of his own cherished freedoms.

To their credit, the advocates of today's secular theoc-

racy are more nuanced than those of the French Revolution. Instead of the guillotine they have political correctness; instead of the reign of terror they have mass media at their disposal. They have also added to the pantheon of secular virtues new axioms, which are even more notorious for their entropy. Look how quickly the virtue of multiculturalism degenerated into competition for group power.⁴⁵ Look how quickly diversity became a charter for uniformity.⁴⁶ Look how quickly the rhetoric of victimhood gave rise to the tyranny of the minority.⁴⁷ Unlike the Christian ethical system, which remains ever fixed in the solidity of the transcendent unchanging God, the liberal's ethical base is characterised by a constant ethical flux.

We live in a world where the ethical entropy has all but run its course. The humanitarian liberalism of the Enlightenment has warped into the inhuman illiberalism of today, with results that would do even Orwell proud. As the *laissez faire* liberalism becomes the new orthodoxy and permeates our institutions of power, it can no longer rage against the establishment, yet because its orientation is intrinsically revolutionary, the only option is to revolt against those beneath its power structures—those, for example, who still dissent from the grinding uniformity it demands.

As illiberalism begins venting its revolutionary zeal on those who refuse to be squeezed into the status quo, the stage is set for a conservative counter movement. That is the point at which secular liberalism becomes unstable, for all totalitarian regimes must eventually end in mass discontent and therefore revolt.

This presents the advocates of sanity with a tremendous opportunity, but it also carries with it an enormous danger. The opponents of illiberalism are all too willing to arm themselves with the principles of classical liberalism and fight against symptoms rather than causes. Thus, many conservative apologists are now urging their liberal opponents to simply be better liberals, more consistent with the Enlightenment values they claim to cherish. If the liberals are ever convinced by such an argument, all that would happen would be to simply wind up the clock three hundred years and then watch the whole cycle unwind again. This is because liberal values can never be sustained without first going back and re-establishing a pre-Enlightenment epistemic base. The biblical terminology for that process is called repentance, and therein lies the difference between freedom under God or enslavement under man disguised as liberty. C&S

45. "Multiculturalism today, however, has largely lost its ideals, given our postmodern context, and has rapidly degenerated into a search for group power. Todd Gitlin, the cultural critic, has traced out the path of this disintegration by showing that as commonalities became exhausted, differences had to be enlarged. What followed this breakdown was often not the embrace of other cultures but an ugly censoriousness towards other groups and viewpoints." David Wells, *Losing Our Virtue* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998). See also Richard Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1994). See also Paul Edward Gottfried, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt: Toward a Secular Theocracy* (University of Missouri Press, 2002).

46. See Anthony Browne, *op. cit.*, chapter on diversity. See also Ross Clark, *How To Label A Goat: The silly rules and regulations that are strangling Britain* (Harriman House Ltd, 2006), chapter on diversity.

47. See David Wells, *Losing Our Virtue* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1998) and Michael Ovey "VICTIM chic? The rhetoric of VICTIMhood," Cambridge Papers, March 2006, available online at hwww.jubilee-centre.org/pdfs/15-1%20Victimhood.pdf

43. Eugene (Fr. Seraphim) Rose, *Nihilism: The Roots of the Revolution of the Modern Age* (Platina, CA: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994), pp. 29–30.

44. Eugene (Fr. Seraphim) Rose, *Nihilism: The Roots of the Revolution of the Modern Age* (Platina, CA: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994), p. 24.

Reviews

EVANGELICALS AND TRADITION: THE FORMATIVE INFLUENCES OF THE EARLY CHURCH

BY D. H. WILLIAMS

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REVIEWED BY STEFAN LINDHOLM¹

D. H. WILLIAMS has in short space written about a huge subject—the evangelical Free Church in North America—but what he says can easily be generalised to movements and contexts beyond North America. As a matter of fact it has very much to do with a lot of things going on in the contemporary church scene as we will see shortly. This breadth is remarkable because the book still holds together as a unity. Let me first give a general outline of the chapters and ideas before examining some ideas he brings up.

In the introduction² Williams makes it plain that this is a book coming out of his engagement with the so called “ressourcement theology” (*nouvelle théologie*), originally a francophone Roman Catholic movement: a conscious attempt to go back to the sources of Christian literature, especially the church fathers. It is a call “Ad fontes!”—to the sources. He sees this broad based movement as the “extraordinary work of the Spirit in our time” (xv.). Hence, for Williams, theology, practice and Church stand in a close relationship. In the introduction he also starts to unpack the concept of tradition. He says his intent is “. . . not to argue for the legitimacy of tradition but to illumine its place within Christian thought and practice so that Protestants of all stripes can see the value and necessity of its resources for appropriating the faith today” (xviii.). Indeed he thinks an evangelical renewal can happen through an “. . . intentional recovery of Protestantism’s catholic roots in the early church’s spirituality and theology” (*ibid.*).

The first chapter goes on extending the meaning(s) of tradition. Here he shows the primitive and early Church idea of tradition and its essential relation to the community of believers and the formation of the Scripture. The basic meaning of tradition is “to hand over” the teaching that was

given to or by the apostles (2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:23 etc.). Close to this meaning of tradition comes the “rule of faith” (*regula fidei*) which was a non-formal way of summarising the substance of Christian teaching. Later it was expressed (without being reduced to one formula) in the early creeds. Williams shows from the sources that revelation and tradition were synergetic and not opposed to each other in the primitive and early Church. From this discussion he defines tradition in two ways: (1) as memory of the Church and as (2) development of doctrine. A free Church that is trying to disestablish itself from these and other related meanings of tradition loses its identity and becomes mere pragmatism (as seen in his constant critique of “seeker-sensitive churches”) or sectarianism (he is a Southern Baptist after all).

In the second chapter he goes on emphasising the role of the church in relation to the formation of the canon. By doing this he critiques over simplified and neat explanations he says evangelicals have about how the Scriptures came to be normative, independently of the Church. The tension between Scripture and tradition that modern evangelicals often feel is not identical to the relation between the two in the first centuries. The canon was formed in a community of believers, in a living tradition of faith. Hence, this community became essential for the formation of the normative body of texts, since in their midst the distinction between Christian and non-Christian text emerged in a long and untidy process that went on till the fourth century.

In the next chapter this “co-influence” of church and Scripture is further elaborated. He says that the authority of the Bible in the early Church was *not* based on an inspiration theory, but the conviction that God was speaking in these Scriptures to the Church. The patristic idea was also the view largely taken over by the mediaeval Church. Here he looks at the view of scriptural authority that the Reformation, and especially the post-Reformation, theology provided. In this school of thought scriptural authority is said to be based on theories of inspiration and infallibility. These theories he judges as misguided, since they claim the infallibility of the *text*, whereas the early Church believed in infallible *intention* in virtue of the Holy Spirit’s work. Hence the Fathers were not fearful about inconsistencies in the Bible as the evangelical-fundamentalists often have tended to be. Inconsistencies were seen as good for the formation of character and rather an expression of our dim intellects than a deficiency of the texts or the intention(s) behind it. In line with this, Williams recommends us to go back to a more ancient way of understanding the nature and interpretation of the Scriptures. He says that the insistence on the historical has made evangelicals misunderstand the spiritual side of the Bible. The remedy for this one-sidedness is a revival of a spiritual

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2. The book is part of a series called ‘deep church’, a term originating with C.S. Lewis

way of reading, incorporating allegorical imagination. We will return to these claims shortly.

Having felt some of the criticism of the Protestant legacy he goes on in the fourth chapter to investigate its view of Scripture. His conclusion is that Protestants have been too much protesters. He thinks they have not developed into a positive way of theologising and put an unnecessary wedge between Scripture and tradition. As a way forward he points the reader to the joint declaration of justification between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. He shows how a “re-reading of the reformation” (a rather big scholarly movement in the last decade) is needed. Further, much of our misunderstanding of the Protestant legacy comes out of the post-Reformation era, which is also known as “Protestant Scholasticism,” or in the English speaking part of the world as Puritanism. The Reformers, on the contrary, Williams contends, were far more in line with classical catholic understanding of Scripture and tradition as being in a symbiosis with each other. The way Luther argued with the papists was not to point to the *sola scriptura* principle, but to show how the papal church had deviated from the “Great tradition”—what had been confessed by all Christians.

In the last chapter, Williams becomes more practical and wants to help the evangelicals to appreciate tradition by showing where to look and provides ample examples from the Church Fathers. Many of these are potentially a great theological and spiritual help for a generation that has lost or never had any substantial theological legacy. In the post-script to the book Williams shows that the way forward is international ecumenism for evangelicals. As a matter of fact, what he is trying to do is to advocate “. . . a new reform of the old reforms that gave birth to the various families of faith known as Protestantism” (p. 136), even if this book could be “but a beginning.”

Williams is suggesting that we should go back to an ancient way of reading, more open to allegorical interpretation, and a churchly over an academic way of reading Scripture. At the same time, he is claiming that he is not writing an apologia (p. 79) for allegorical interpretation, but I honestly find it hard to imagine what else such an apology would look like if he were to write one.

The backbone of the early Church’s conception of interpretation was: (1) the mystical character of the Scriptures and (2) its transformative intent on the reader. By implication every text can have more than one meaning, layers of meaning, where the spiritual is at the centre and the historical (the letter) at the surface. Spiritual Bible readers should therefore aim to penetrate beyond the “letter” to the spiritual meaning of the text, conveyed in allegorical interpretation. When one reaches the centre, one is also transformed in the process of getting there. Vice versa, a person who is open for the spiritual will not be able to reach beyond the letter.

But of course this begs the question: What is the basis then for the subject of the exegesis? Expounding the meaning of the text? Can we be safeguarded from a constant *eisegeisis*, inserting a meaning into the text? Williams’ response would be that “the rule of faith” or the *analogia fidei* (Rom. 12) is the guide. This means that the substance of faith embodied in the creeds and the Church’s tradition will serve as the interpretive guide because they emerged from and together with the canonical Scriptures. This should not be taken as a simple example of reading the creeds back into the Scrip-

tures because many acclaimed scholars of the twentieth century showed the importance of the *regula fidei* in the canon process. The rule of faith is a summary of the overarching story of the Scriptures. Williams somewhat misleadingly uses “meta-narrative” for such an overarching story and lays himself open to much criticism of the postmoderns that Christianity is no more than an ideology. It would have been much more fortunate if he had used the term “mega-narrative.” In any event, the use of the *regula fidei* in the interpretation is not necessarily a bad one since it is the substance of the earliest expressions of the faith. There is a good case for these being chronologically before or at least originating at the same time as the earliest texts and some of them also found their way into the canonical writings (e.g. 2 Tim. 3:16; Phil. 2:5–11).

But then again, can a text be used in any manner as long as it is used in alliance with the rule of faith? Of course not. It seems that Williams is not taking seriously the classical distinction between using or applying the text and interpreting its meaning. Of course they are connected, viz. the interpretation (often) gives direction for what the content can be used for or applied to, but it is not a straightforward mechanical matter. For Williams the meaning of a text is most clearly shown in its use or application, which could be another way of saying that the *text itself does not have meaning* that can be interpreted before it is applied. If the centre of the Bible is the spiritual, beyond the text itself, the text is dispensable in a manner not too unlike Karl Barth’s approach to the Scripture. The Word of God is not the word of God until it becomes the word of God when it is read. Here the focus is on the effect not the origin of divine revelation. What this means practically is that there is no meaning of the text that can be applied. It is instead spiritualised application all the way. So even if the rule of faith is a good and probably necessary guide for both interpretation and application it cannot be the only guiding principle. If taken at face value, it seems like a denial of the sufficiency of the text to convey the divine oracles. Text interprets text. Application of the biblical text to life is the art of the preacher. But of course there are no good preachers without their first being good exegetes of the text!

This criticism aside, I think there are many healthy warnings for the evangelical in Williams’ book. The historical can often be the only thing that concerns the evangelical and often in the form of “Bible difficulties” or “proving the historicity of . . .” The Scripture has been reduced to evidentialist apologetics. What is all too often forgotten here is that the authority of the word also lies in the effects and the power of it (here Barth was right). Another way of taking Williams’ criticism would be to emphasise the narrative or mythical character of the texts instead of emphasising the spiritual (in his sense of it). If there is something the evangelicals have needed it is this—to appreciate the biblical narrative and be transformed by it.

Certainly, the Reformers, Calvin not the least, were very aware of this. So instead of burdening the Reformers for having historically made the break with a deeper appreciation of the Scriptures we can actually look to them more directly for guidance because of their continuity with and appreciation of the Church Fathers. It should be noted that the Reformers themselves did not all reject allegorical interpretation without qualifications. To begin with, there are examples of allegorical interpretation in the Bible, so a

faithful interpretation of these would be to take allegory seriously as a literary genre (see Gal. 4). Often the texts themselves suggested allegorical interpretation even if that was not explicitly stated, and this was the way the reformers tended to interpret those texts. A most vivid and probably capricious example of this is Luther's exposition of the Song of Songs, which is a thoroughgoing politico-allegorical interpretation, using the text to do political polemics against papists and sectarians. For moderate examples see for instance the Reformed scholastic way of dealing with divinely decreed harlotry (Hos. 1–2).

What the Reformers critiqued was an un-historical way of reading the Bible and they started to stress the historical over the mystical and spiritual. It could be argued that this later led up to the emergence of biblical criticism in the nineteenth century, which stressed the historical over the supernatural. Be that as it may, most Reformers held the spiritual and the historical in tension. As a matter of fact, the idea of divine accommodation in John Calvin would be seen as some sort of intermediate position between the extremes of historicism and spiritualism in hermeneutics. He said that God was in the Scriptures accommodating to our capacities; he was speaking about his incomprehensible nature and decrees in ways that we can actually understand. Hence the historical and material becomes the place for the manifestation of the spiritual. This approach is potentially theologically and spiritually fruitful because it would solve many of the alleged inconsistencies moderns have tried to solve without selling out to the a-historical tendencies of allegorical interpretation. In his act of accommodating himself to our capacities, God is using feeble human beings and earthly circumstance to reveal his glory. This means that the stooping down will look human when it is talking about the divine, and most so in the act of accommodation *par excellence*, the incarnation of the Son who is God manifested in the flesh. We must ask why Williams is not presenting this eminent side of Reformation theology?³

I have already talked about Williams' view of the Reformation and Scripture but I would like to further assess his view of the Reformation as such, and in particular the post-Reformation. To begin with one has to look at the groundbreaking research of Richard A. Muller,⁴ who never grows tired of showing that Protestant scholastics did not give in to rationalism. What did happen was that the Reformers' insights were now taken to the academy. In general there was more continuity between the Reformation and the post-reformation than discontinuity both in content and method than Williams is willing to admit. A renewed study of the Fathers and the mediaeval era, with the critical lens of a Protestant, saw the light of day. So instead of a foe,

3. It is also strange that Williams with all his impressive knowledge of historical theology does not make much of the greatest of the mediaeval theologians, who carried on much of the patristic hermeneutics—Thomas Aquinas and Nicholas of Lyra. Aquinas did not deny the spiritual and mystical character of the Bible but claimed that all such interpretations should be grounded in the historical and literal interpretation. Was this maybe a preamble to the Reformation or was it a part of the great tradition of the Church? See for instance Eleonore Stump's "Biblical commentary and philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (eds.), (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

4. See especially his magnificent achievement, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol 1–4, (Baker Academics, 1987–2003).

Williams should be able to find a friend in the Protestant scholastics' view of Church and tradition.

But contrary to Muller's and other researchers' results (David Stenmetz and Heiko Obermann), he gives voice to a stereotypical view of post-Reformation theology as if it was soaked in arid rationalism. Of course there were theologians who embraced rationalism, but generally it really did not happen until the eighteenth century. Just being rational cannot possibly mean being rationalistic. The mainline Protestants after Luther and Calvin stood firmly against the rationalism of Descartes, which forever changed the face of academia in so many other areas. There were of course a number of theologians who gave in to it, but generally there was a deep consciousness that an ontology which wants to preserve the majesty of the Godhead and the integrity of Creation cannot be reduced to immaterial ideas and material extension. By and large, ever since the early Church, the basic framework was an often uneven mix of Neo-Platonism and moderate Aristotelianism. Especially the later school of thought has proved successful in preserving and elucidating central theological concepts like being, substance, essence and person. Even Luther and Calvin, despite their sometimes vehement rejections of philosophy, found good instruments in this common philosophical toolbox.

But in the Reformation and post-Reformation times there were of course also more radical groups that wanted to break away from tradition and philosophy altogether. The Anabaptists were one of these groups. I believe Williams is correct in tracing modern evangelicalism back to these more radical strands of the Reformation. The biblicism, the separatist spirit and the low view of common culture are things in common in both. Strangely enough, Anabaptism has had a theological revival in the influential works of Stanley Hauerwas. I am unsure about the real connection between this form of Anabaptism and the historic one. It is safer to say that modern evangelicalism exhibits more similarities with historic Anabaptism than Neo-Anabaptism does. Williams' main charge against post-Reformation theology, I believe, should therefore be marshalled against these more extreme groups in their strong rejection of tradition (among other things).

The main problem Williams has with the Protestant scholastics though, is their alleged view of scriptural authority based on the theory of inspiration. This led to the kind of biblicism he is arguing against based on the Reformation slogans *solus christus* and *sola scriptura* (p. 60). Biblical authority rested on the fact that the Spirit breathed into the authors so that their writings became the Word of God, not from some external proof or theory. The Scriptures were seen as self-authenticating (*autopiston*). Therefore the actual text (*autographa*) is inspired by God not merely in substance but also in words. This is far from the rationalistic inspiration theory that Williams is attributing to them.⁵ On the other hand the Protestant scholastics knew of the important distinction between the revelation of God and the biblical scriptures—they are not formally identical, but they cannot be separated. This should make them free of the charge of "book worship."

Williams does not deal with the aforementioned Mull-

5. The kind of theory he alludes to looks more like those of B.B. Warfield of the Princeton School, whose rational approach to theology was evoked by the Higher Biblical Criticism of his day. Still this does not necessarily render his writings less powerful and true.

er's work in *Evangelicals and Tradition*, but he does in another related article,⁶ where he deals specifically with the Reformation and tradition. I think it is worth mentioning this here because it is fully in line with what he is trying to do in *Evangelicals and Tradition*. First, he starts off with the abhorrent example of John Gill, an eighteenth century Baptist preacher who argued for an "either/or" approach to scripture and tradition ("unwritten traditions"). Such biblicism, Williams says, "... would be recognised by most Protestants today" and I do not deny it.⁷ He then goes on to show how the post-Reformers misunderstood the view of the matter presented in the Council of Trent. In the Counter-Reformation the Roman Catholics (especially Robert Bellarmine) exaggerated the original meaning of the council's stance on Scripture and tradition and so did the Protestants. This gave rise (for the first time in the history of theology) to Protestant writing and publishing on the "doctrine of Scripture." Before then theological systems often started with the Trinity or God; now (as in the Westminster Confession) theology started with the doctrine of scripture.⁸ But what possible value does it have to bring this up as an argument against post-Reformation theology? It seems that, with his developmental view of doctrine (like John Newman and Yves Congar), Williams should be in a position to appreciate the need and utility of this doctrinal newcomer. What damage could a doctrine of Scripture do since it is the cognitive foundation of theology? As a parallel case it can be pointed out that Williams does a good job in his book in showing that the early church actually had a teaching about the doctrine of the justification by faith even though there was not proper doctrine about it until the Reformation. But why should he even try to gather such a teaching if he did not think a dogmatic treatment was a good thing? He does not lament the emergence of Roman Catholic treaties on Tradition and the Church.

Moreover, Williams is saying that the doctrine of Scripture became a formal and "independent dogmatic locus." This was hardly the case, since the relative independence of this teaching was always imbedded in the greater theological prolegomena (preface or introduction to theology). A prolegomena should not be seen as an independent "natural theology" or as a philosophical prerequisite of theology proper. Rather, a prolegomena as such reflects the overall unity and character of the dogmatic system as a whole. Throughout the system relative support is taken from the Fathers in all the Protestant scholastics, a point not mentioned by Williams.

At the end of the day, Williams seems to be able to slip through most of the difficulties raised in this article so far. Why? Because of a broadly Anglican-Wesleyan framework of tradition and Scripture where "sola" in *sola scriptura* means

"first and foremost" and not "only", as if there were no other means to theological knowledge (p. 66). In Wesleyan theology, Scripture is assisted by reason, tradition and experience as guides to truth. With this Williams is pointing out something trivial about theology: it cannot merely be repetitive in language or concept-use when expounding and applying the content of Scripture. If theology is to be more than faithful repetition, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation would thereby never have been formulated. Reason and tradition in particular played a part in the formulation of the early Church creeds, but this hardly proves that Scripture is not to be taken as both primary and sole judge of faith. When it comes to judging the truth of any theological statement it was always Scripture that was the arbiter of truth and falsity, indeed it is the "norm of all norms" (*norma normans*). If it proves anything, it is that the Scripture is replete with ideas that man can spend a lifetime trying to expound with the help of reason, experience and tradition without letting his results be more important than the Scriptural content.

In conclusion I would like make a few comments on the positive power I believe *Evangelicals and Tradition* has. The book itself is an exemplification of the multifaceted crisis in contemporary evangelicalism. It is powerfully talking right into that crisis. The question that is being asked worldwide among evangelicals is: Where do we go from here?

If the reader of this article intuitively associates Williams with movements like the Emerging Church, he is right. The way forward for the Emerging Church generation is (partially) to look backwards in a kind of "ancient-future faith" (Robert Webber). Beyond the affinities with Emerging Church, Williams has maybe even deeper relations to the work of such men as Mark A. Noll, Alister McGrath and Gerald Bray, who have worked hard to incorporate the confessional and traditional into evangelical theology.

In the book there are numerous arguments against the so-called "seeker sensitive approach" to Church primarily exemplified by Willow Creek. A seeker sensitive approach thinks of church as a mere tool for evangelisation. This is signalling a thin ecclesiology, endemic to much evangelicalism. In essence Williams is trying to do within the realm of Church history what people like the late Stanley Grenz and Robert Webber tried in systematic theology—to reshape the future of evangelicalism in the light of the past and in dialogue with other Christian traditions. The dialogue Williams is engaged in involves the Roman Catholics and the World Council of Churches—both of which have historically had frosty relationship to evangelicals—in order to find a deeper *sensus catholicus*. His main concern is the Church and not the academia. I think Williams' greatest virtue (but perhaps also his greatest problem) is in this. He is pointing out a real need among evangelicals: a fuller picture of the Church. We may differ in how far we can go with his ecumenical and theological solutions, but certainly a look backwards, to the fathers of faith, is a necessary ingredient in a revived evangelical ecclesiology.

Tradition can be seen as the roots, the identity of any community. In the plethora of faith communities of the universal Church we find a varied root system, some of which go deeper than others. Evangelicalism has not taken enough advantage of this root system, through which biblical faith is transmitted. Even if Williams often seems to be putting Church and tradition over Scripture, I think evangelicals can learn a lot from him in that the church and

6. "Scripture, Tradition, and the Church: Reformation and Post-Reformation" in *The Free Church and the Early Church: Briding the Theological Divide*, D. H. Williams (ed.), pp. 101–128.

7. In order to keep the borders of faith creeds, statements and confessions are useful for the Church. It is an historical fact that faith communities that have denied the need of any such declaration on the basis of *sola scriptura* either become a sect, a social club, or die after a few generations.

8. This is actually not true. Take for instance the "Father of Protestant Scholasticism," Girolamo Zanchi. His magnum opus would have been the *Summa Theologia* of Protestantism had he not died before its completion. It began with a long treatise on the Trinity and then moved on to God.

the Great Tradition are containers, guardians and administrators of divine revelation.⁹ Tradition is not infallible, but he who has no tradition has no past and no memory; he suffers from spiritual and theological amnesia. In this sense tradition can be seen as a collective of Christian memories: some beautiful, others painful, but all very necessary for the identity of the Christian Church. *C&S*

9 For a good treatment of the Great Tradition see Alister McGrath's article, "Engaging the Great Tradition: Evangelical Theology and the Role of Tradition" in John G. Stackhouse Jr. (ed.), *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (Baker Books, 2000), pp. 139–158.

Film Reviews

BOOMER CHURCH:
Saved! AND *Jesus Camp*

REVIEWED BY T. E. WILDER¹

Two films, *Saved!* (2004), a fictional drama, and the documentary *Jesus Camp* (2006) examine a type of evangelicalism that is widespread in America and the films discover remarkably similar characteristics in it. Both find an experience centred, voluntarist and spectacle-oriented religion with an intense focus on group participation and moralistic commitment. This type of religion sees itself at odds with the culture around it, even in combat with it, and it is this trait that particularly offends the liberals who made these films. Yet at a deeper level this evangelicalism is a capitulation to that culture.

Saved! is the second film directed and co-written by Brian Dannelly and also his second teen film with a homosexual theme. In *He Bop*, a short made four years earlier, a "Sixteen year old Ryan Walker struggles to find his gay identity guided by the spirit of his dead grandmother." Drawing on his own experience in a Baptist high school and using a cast of Hollywood brats, he has now made a satire on boomer evangelicalism set in a suburban Christian high school.

One would expect this sort of film to misfire seriously. It is very hard to capture the feeling of a religious subculture, its cant phrases and the peculiar ways its members interact. Much of a sect's behaviour is based on codes and conventions accepted and understood only by the members, and even if it is reproduced by the actors it remains mysterious to a film audience. Furthermore, someone with an axe to grind, as is evidently the case here, is usually driven to exaggerate, distort and vilify. This also would be picked up by the actors, producing many false notes. But this movie works, and except for the moralising liberal closing, offering the audience some sense of a happy ending through acceptance by the characters of the conventional "liberating" attitudes, the movie manages to keep its target group reasonably in focus. What made this unlikely success possible?

Tim Wilder was born and spent his early life in Colombia. He graduated from Bemidji State University in Minnesota and studied at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and the University of Minnesota. He manages a website for material on Christianity and culture: www.contra-mundum.org.

The verisimilitude is not to be credited to the cast, although they are competent enough. The principal character of high school student Mary is played by Jena Malone in her 23rd acting credit, having 13 years in television and feature films behind her. Mandy Moore plays Mary's best friend turned adversary, and this is her 12th credit. Other major characters are played by child actor and sometime Michael Jackson toyboy Macaulay Culkin, and Eva Amurri (daughter of Susan Sarandon and director Franco Amurri) as the school's sole Jew. The only cast member who seems to come from the real world is one of the boyfriend characters played by Patrick Fugit of Salt Lake. He is also the one actor that does not seem to belong to the ensemble, appearing reserved and more mature than the others. This group at best has only heard vague rumours of Christianity and certainly cannot be contributing personal knowledge to their performances. The fact is that this movie could just as well have been made using the cast from any teen movie or television series.

The explanation is simple. This is not a film about fundamentalism (*n.b.* the filmmakers think it is), or pentecostalism, or confessional Christian communities, or ethnic Roman Catholics, but about Boomer Evangelicalism. Boomer Evangelicalism is to Christianity what a rock song with some lyric changes is to a psalm. All the film makers had to do to capture it was to add to their moralising plot the typical teen movie characters and clichés and include numerous references to Jesus in the dialogue. Once again, one might suppose that this would be a scenario for failure. But the funny thing, and the point of much of the satire, is that behind the mouthing of religious sentiments these characters are no different (no better) than anyone else. The motivations and the rationalisation for underhanded behaviour are common and comprehensible to human nature in general. Nor are the specific religious beliefs any sort of barrier between the action and the audience. Christianity, in its theological evangelical meaning, does not exist in this movie. There is no grace; everything is good works and merit. Even repentance and conversion come across as a form of effort and work—that is, moralism—which is at the heart of liberalism as well.

The plot is about students at a Christian high school and a couple of adults, included for a small amount of inter-generational interaction and as examples of adult hypocrisy. The type of religion is mildly charismatic Arminianism (the only "tongues" is a put on performance by the lone Jew) with an emphasis on emotional group worship, manipulated "decisions" to recommit or to get saved, with the understanding that this commitment has to be sustained by will power to avoid loss of salvation. This is backed up by youth organisations, small group meetings and plenty of peer pressure. We never see a church or church service, however, nor at any point do we see a complete family. The religious activity takes place in school assemblies, unsupervised youth group meetings and individually. The one para-clerical individual is "Pastor Skip," a sort of school chaplain, parent of one of the supporting characters and a failed husband who is engaged in a flirtation with the widowed mother of Mary. This seems headed for a full-blown affair despite the moral qualms he has about what he is doing. Outside his role the religious practice is dominated by teenage girls and the peer pressure that they can bring to bear.

Other than Pastor Skip the male characters are: Mary's

boyfriend who discovers he is “gay” and is sent off to an institution for a cure, where in the company of similar cases he makes a full commitment to a lifetime of homosexuality and rebels against the authority of the group at home; the son of Pastor Skip and would-be boyfriend of Mary who believes that his father’s religion is a self-destructive mistake; and the crippled brother of the principal believer/hypocrite at the school who is sure that he is not a Christian and is principally interested in smoking and sex with the Jewish girl at the school.

Inside the school students move through an oestrogen cloud. All the teachers shown are women, the girls dominate activities and do all the planning and the only male authority is the chaplain, Pastor Skip, played by Martin Donovan, who clowns and tries to play the part of cool teenager to be accepted, to the embarrassment of his son. (The film may not intend this as a criticism. Brian Dannelly’s next project is said to be about a wimp who goes to boot camp and is made into a man by a tough female drill sergeant.) Mary’s mother, acted by Mary-Louise Parker, strives to look below her age and is incapable of taking adult responsibility (until this also is resolved in the happy ending).

The influential and dominating character at the school is a senior girl who goes about with a clique of supporters whom she bosses and who eventually turn on her, as is standard in teen movie and TV plots. She is also the most earnest Christian, always trying to get others saved or more committed, but eventually is revealed as a hypocrite, because from the point of view of the film this religion is dysfunctional and only hypocrisy can result from the attempt to maintain that level of commitment to the distorted values that it demands.

The life of the students is shallow and fairly licentious. Most share with Bill Clinton the idea that anything short of sexual intercourse is OK because it does not cross the technical sin boundary. The school assemblies are geared toward emotional experiences, with singing, swaying, arms waving in the air and dramas on stage. The extras botch these scenes as they look like metronomes tipping side to side. School sponsored entertainment includes Christian rock bands and dances. (The film pointedly makes them look like typical high school gym dances.) Here the film works against itself. The more the students are shown to be like everyone else in their tastes, entertainment and socialising the more the phoniness of this subculture is underlined. But at the same time it shows that the students are not oppressed or restricted by their religion, but find it compatible with the usual suburban high school experience.

A significant element is the Christian rock music (for example that of the band hired for the prom). This music came into evangelical circles starting in the late sixties, but much more in the 1970s as it was adopted by the 1960s generation. I first heard of rock in church in 1969 when a cousin showed me a youth publication of his United Methodist denomination with a rock band “liturgy.” He thought that was very daring and said it certainly could not be done at his congregation. Only two years later I was performing with my electric guitar in evangelical churches of various denominations. By 1971 typical small towns had evangelical coffee houses or rock concerts with full bands in complete sixties dress and hair attended by similar audiences. Where this sixties youth culture with its dress and music was not accepted in existing churches the fans of the new practices

simply started their own church and para church groups. Almost always there was a charismatic aspect to the doctrine, which because of its historical origins meant Arminian theology as well.

Larry Norman was the breakthrough artist and icon of this change. He saw himself as part of the counter culture. In an interview with CCM Magazine he was asked to think back to 1969, and his first Capitol Records release:

Upon This Rock was written to stand outside the Christian culture. I tried to create songs for which there was no anticipated acceptance. I wanted to display the flexibility of the gospel and that there was no limitation to how God could be presented . . . I used abrasive humor and sarcasm as much as possible, which was also not a traditional aspect of Christian music. I chose negative imagery to attempt to deliver a positive message, like “I Don’t Believe in Miracles” is actually about faith.

“I Wish We’d All Been Ready” talked about something I had never heard preached from a pulpit as I grew up. “The Last Supper” and “Ha Ha World” used very surreal imagery which drug users could assimilate. My songs weren’t written for Christians..

I was singing directly to the disenfranchised. People who hated church and doubted God’s existence could get an emotional and intellectual buzz off of my songs. These songs were self-contained arguments. I felt that someone needed to fight for the dignity of the skeptic, to befriend him and recommend that he take a closer look at God. (<http://www.ccmcom.com/features/858.aspx>)

By around 1973 Larry Norman was touring under the sponsorship of InterVarsity, and the counter culture was part of the establishment. In 2005 he was still playing the rebel, sporting the same *I am Curious* girl hairdo and mocking the ways of his parents’ generation.

But today all manner of evangelical churches have a combo up front, often featuring some old doofus hailing from the sixties. By the end of the seventies the new forms and music were entrenched internationally, even behind the Iron Curtain. I don’t know when the dancing became accepted, but it followed the music.

This new culture entered even more easily into the less organised types of Pentecostalism. The movie *Marjoe* (1972) documents the ease with which it could travel as long as certain stereotypical pentecostal behaviour was exhibited.

The youth culture that is presented in this film as the normative and oppressive Christian lifestyle was abhorrent to Evangelicals before the late sixties and still is where people cling to their fundamentalism. The religious culture of this film, then, presupposes an Arminian, experience centred religion, activated by emotional manipulation, maintaining the old evangelical stress on high commitment by all members, but with the addition of twentieth-century regimentation (think how often the word “mobilise” comes up in the planning of church “campaigns”) and its surface expression altered by the adoption of the sixties youth culture’s music and attitudes (even “protests” as moral commitment) as the medium of that experience.

What was once the music of rebellion and for breaking restraints is now the music of the establishment, yet by its bacchanalian nature it continues to be subversive of restraint and embodies the inner contradiction of Boomer Evangelicalism. This is the religious milieu of no small number of people and the film’s satire is on target for a substantial segment of American, even world, religion. Because this form of religion is essentially sixties youth culture set to

Arminian lyrics it presents no problem for the actors to represent it convincingly. There is nothing the actors have to know except how suburban teenagers behave and then say their lines.

Mary, the principal character, gets pregnant while trying to cure her boyfriend's homosexuality. Though a senior in high school she has no idea where babies come from until the government forces the school to offer a sex education course. In the movie the only place where she can go for help is the Planned Parenthood centre that she previously picketed. Of course the boyfriend is not cured by her ministrations and his parents send him to a group home for treatment. The inmates, including the boyfriend and his new male "life partner," steal the institution's van and crash the school's prom. This, part of the film's happy ending, is represented as a liberation in an "I'm OK, You're OK" moment. Mary, meanwhile, compares herself to the biblical Mary whose excuse of a virgin birth is good but can't be used twice. Her belief evolves into a self-accepting liberalism: the world could not just be an accident, so there must be a God, or something, out there, or inside us. But it is Mary's pregnancy and the resulting birth that is the saving event of the film. It brings Mary to outgrow her religion, her mother finally to grow up to adult responsibility and the homosexual boyfriend and father of the baby to complete his self-acceptance, while Pastor Skip's son reveals a wisdom and tolerance discovered apart from his father's religion. Liberalism is offered as salvation and this is especially focused on sex, where people learn to accept the need to indulge their natural urges, including homosexual ones, and make these, not Jesus, the force behind interpersonal bonds. This is portrayed as an easy salvation, however. All that the characters must do is to allow themselves what they want anyway and let others do the same. At the same time they can simply let go of their religious obsessions which only clouded their minds and brought them hypocrisy and pain anyway. They can continue their suburban lifestyle and even remain religious, as long as that religion is not taken to carry with it transcendent moral norms. Salvation comes to these Boomer Evangelicals when they move that last twenty percent of the distance to the full acceptance of the sixties youth culture.

The filmmakers profess puzzlement at the hostility toward their movie with its "faith affirming" message. But every affirmation of faith is a denial of another faith's affirmations. "I'm OK, You're OK" is a denial of "One Way." The real message of the movie to Christians is the one on the Jewish student's car bumper sticker: "Jesus loves you: Everyone else thinks you're an asshole."

Brian Dannelly has put together the elements of commercial success: a proven teen movie formula with a new twist, and a moralising message in no way offensive to the movie audience. In fact it allows the viewers to feel superior and justifies their gonad driven lifestyle as realistic and mature. On top of that Dannelly gets to advance his personal agenda. The production budget was \$5 million and it grossed \$9.6 million.

Jesus Camp has a broad resemblance in content to *Saved!* Once again there are the choreographed "spontaneous" group worship experiences, the rock music and stage productions, the intense moralism, public protests, female dominance and dysfunctional families. This time the subject is children, not teenagers. Where it differs is the extensive filming of tongues and the tears and intense emotionalism

that go with it. This would have been dramatically excessive for *Saved!* as well as uncomfortably out of tone for teen entertainment. The effect on many viewings is outright shock.

Jesus Camp is a documentary. As such it has even greater potential for propaganda than a dramatic film while projecting objectivity. Watching documentaries, in fact, is a much better way to see how the camera chooses, judges and lies than is the viewing of dramatic films. *Jesus Camp* is no exception, with a very clear and underlined agenda, which the makers went out of their way to add to the movie.

They deny this. In a published response to Ted Haggard, who made some sort of criticism of the film, they say:

When we heard that Pastor Haggard has described us as having an "agenda" we were alarmed. Of course, there are plenty of filmmakers that do make films with a political or personal agenda, but our conscience is clear that we aren't among them. We filmed with an open mind and with a beginner's eye (neither of us are Evangelicals) that allowed the story to emerge in a natural way. (http://www.jesuscampthemovie.com/haggard_response.html)

The film begins and ends with footage of the central plains landscape filmed from a car window and accompanied by excerpts from talk radio that focus especially on Bush's nominations to the Supreme Court. These nominations are the ultimate battle ground for liberals, since for decades they have relied on an autocratic left-wing court to issue what are effectively decrees overthrowing the laws made by representative governments when these laws stand in the way of the leftist agenda. Loss of control of the Supreme Court means loss the left's veto power over democracy. Beginning and ending with this, and not with the subject matter of the *Jesus Camp* is an obvious overlay of a political agenda on the film.

Not content with that, the film keeps injecting editorial comment from a liberal talk radio show, *Ring of Fire*, hosted by Mike Papantonio, the paradigm of the liberal bigot incapable of self-criticism or doubt. To him whatever he believes is therefore self-evidently true. He is particularly horrified in any breach of the liberal monopoly on the content of education. There are other "editorial moments" such as cutting from the pledge of allegiance to the Christian flag to the pet dog's response to this proceeding.

The filmmakers also love to film the eyes of the main subject, Becky Fischer, in the rear view mirror of her car as she drives through town. This is a movie cliché for fear and paranoia. What it does for this film is hard to say. It mainly struck me that she is a good driver, aware of her surroundings and carefully checking the traffic at intersections.

So when the directors say that they don't have a political agenda, the claim is absurd, yet, ironically, probably sincere. As with Papantonio their own values seem self-evidently right and so could not be an "agenda."

The people behind this are Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady. Their company, Loki Films, is New York based, but both have a background in British television. They say: "Our collaboration is dedicated to making films that evoke a deeper understanding of the human experience with all its complexities, high stakes and humour." New York City clings to the extreme southeast tip of the state of New York. It is far from typical of the state as a whole, let alone the United States as a whole. When a New Yorker ventures out into America his reaction is often shock followed by con-

tempt or hatred of what he sees. Then he may return home to encapsulate his experience in some essay or work of “art.” Compared to the track record of their predecessors Ewing and Grady come much closer to their idea of themselves as open and unbiased.

The film is about the work of children’s minister Becky Fischer. The two distinctive things are her method and her beliefs. The method is that of activity focused through performance, illustrations, iconic objects, participation in a group context and emotionalism, all mixed with teaching.

I do not come to these two films as a neutral observer. Just as I was a participant in a small way (and without talent) in the Christian rock music scene of the early 70s, I also view children’s ministry from an inside perspective. My mother was a specialist in this area, travelled internationally as a speaker at “spiritual emphasis” school events, wrote child evangelism materials, trained teachers and wrote a Bible curriculum for elementary schools. I underwent all the techniques before anyone else. It left me with a loathing for manipulation and pressure to achieve “spiritual” results, and for testimonies, forced witnessing and devotional regimens. I therefore tend to react strongly when viewing this post video-tape revolution updating of all the techniques.

“This generation particularly,” Fischer explains, “is a sign and sound generation, and so it is very difficult for them to sit down with a book and a tablet and pencil and try to learn the way we learned. They learn visually; they learn by demonstration; they learn by modelling.” When she speaks she will bring twenty visual object illustrations to use throughout the talk. When children are told to renounce some sin, it is painted on a porcelain object and they smash it with a hammer. Children are also urged into many weepy cathartic experiences of the Pentecostal type and tongues speaking.

I think that this last matter is new. Previous generations of Pentecostals had tongues in their church services, but they did not, as far as I know, include this as an activity for children’s groups. There was a distinction between childhood and adult spirituality that has completely gone in the religion of *Jesus Camp*. The children also give testimonies, exhort and command in the name of God, and preach sermons.

“I can go into a playground of kids that don’t know anything about Christianity,” Fischer explains, “lead them to the Lord in a matter of just no time at all, and just moments later they can be seeing visions and hearing the voice of God, because they are so open.”

One girl, especially featured in the film, lists her spiritual gifts: “Discerning of spirits, definitely prophecy . . . I can speak in tongues, I can hear the Lord . . . I can talk to him and I can understand what he is saying to me” (from a Deleted Scene on the DVD).

She also explains her idea of a true church:

God is not in every church... Certain churches, they’re called dead churches, and the people there, they sit there like this: [sits up straight and speaks in monotone] “We worship you God. We worship you God.” They sing like three songs and then they listen to a sermon. Churches where God likes to go to are churches where they’re jumpin’ up and down, shoutin’ his name, and just praising him . . . They’re not quiet, they’re “Halleluya God.”

Believing that they possess mature judgement, the children are confident and articulate.

There is also a new style, and it is the boomer style of rock music and performance. The rock is hard and high energy. Choreographed song and dance goes with it. In the performance in the film the boy dancers had a sort of war paint over their faces. I think that this was intended as combat camouflage, but having just seen Beresford’s *Black Robe* it reminded me of Iroquois paganism. The girls were painted with a snake-like marking that perhaps was intended to represent lightning. One of the girls explains that her favourite music is “Christian heavy metal rock and roll.” She distinguishes between dancing in the flesh and dancing for God. The difference seems to be a subjective one of how she feels about it. Pagan as so much of this seems, Fischer and her followers are adamantly opposed to the occultism of Harry Potter.

Method, obviously, is not separate from content. Here is a religion that builds on the long tradition of American revivalism. It is Arminian, emotionalistic and centred on moving the will. But in *Jesus Camp*, the whole adult boomer phase of this religion is reproduced at the childhood level, with the children filling as many roles as possible. Presiding over and managing the participation is Becky Fischer.

There are men at the Jesus Camp serving as cabin counsellors. They sit in the meetings, and jump up and down with the children, but otherwise seem passive. They are not like the usual camp counsellors who are teenagers or college students working a summer job, but middle aged. They wear a tortured expression of emotional intensity. Exceptions include a pro-life organiser who makes a presentation, and later in the film takes some of the children on a protest trip to Washington, D.C., and someone from South Africa who leads the porcelain cup smashing.

The other adults in the film are mothers who are engaged in home schooling, taking children to meetings or discussing how they make decisions for their children’s education and training. No men are shown in the home discussions and they are scarcely mentioned in this decision making. One child admits that while his mother will not let him see Harry Potter films “I watch it at my Dad’s,” so to some extent these families are the product of divorce. How common it is and to what extent this explains the female leadership is unexplored by the film.

We are left somewhat in the dark here. Maybe the husbands are active, but they are at work and that is why they are absent from the filming. In one case we learn from a deleted scene that the father is a marine in Iraq. The mother expresses the hope that the “heavenly Father” will take the place of the the absent earthly father. But why do the women speak as though they alone are the decision makers? Female dominance is something that feminists are unlikely to challenge and that may be why the film makers neglect to investigate this area.

The pattern is familiar from American black culture. Women have all the responsibility and manage things. Men, when they show up, are performers, usually as musicians, or as pulpiteers or some combination. (Rocker Little Richard alternated between the two careers.) In this way this religious culture is also a break with the previous generation.

In contrast to *Saved!* the participants in *Jesus Camp* are racially integrated and international. The great irony of the film is that in the face of this triumph of diversity, avowedly their ultimate value these days, the liberals recoil in horror, demanding that only one view—theirs—have a voice. The more attentively the film is examined the more this liberal

New Yorker shock at what is different and alien to their values emerges as the true subject of the film.

Reviewing the film for the Memphis *Commercial Appeal*, John Beifuss says:

Now, I sympathize with the directors' agenda; and I enjoy hooting at nine-year-old boys with killer mullets dancing to godly hip-hop ("Hey homey! We're kickin' it for Christ!") as much as the next kneejerk liberal. But even so, "Jesus Camp" is tainted by an ethnographic condescension that makes this Chicago-born Memphis resident want to say to the filmmakers: "Yankee, go home."

This is a movie in which shots of American flags and "God Bless the U.S.A." signs are supposed to be as ominous as hammer-and-sickle insignia in a "duck and cover" propaganda film; even the word "Missouri" seems expected to elicit knowing sniggers. This attitude does a disservice to the seriousness of the subject, which focuses on the phenomenon of "Jesus camps" (in particular, the "Kids on Fire" camp in Devil's Lake, N.D.), where young children are essentially indoctrinated into becoming right-wing warriors in the culture war.

The weirdest footage in the film is of now-disgraced Ted Haggard (extended in a deleted scene on the DVD), who constantly interrupts himself to address the camera and ask if they are "getting good footage," attempts to interview the crew, or just chases them around the stage. He delivers such lines, apropos of nothing, as: "I think I know what you did last night. If you send me a thousand dollars I won't tell your wife."

While Haggard later tried to dissociate himself from the other people covered in the film, he is shown talking to the boy preacher, and he says, "That's fabulous" and asks him what he thinks is the reason he gets good audience response. He advises the boy to "Use your cute kid thing." Whatever his differences with the Jesus Campers he is with them on their worst tendencies.

Ted Haggard's presidency of the National Association of Evangelicals is played up. What the NAE is and why it exists is not explained. The NAE grew out of the effort to defend against the campaign by the then Federal Council of Churches, now the National Council of Churches, to deny civil rights to evangelicals. The Federal Council had the power to call the State Department and have conservative missionaries denied visas and to deny evangelicals access to radio broadcasting. This was quite illegal of course, but only through the use of an organisation capable of publicity and

political pressure were the evangelicals able to stop this abuse of power by liberals.

An intense moralism and indoctrination of children in their duties dominates Fischer's teaching. There is no gospel in the film. (This may be the fault of the film editing, and not entirely the teaching; we can't know. We see Fischer preparing a slide of the text "The wages of sin is death," but where is "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"?) Rather, there is focus on marshalling the will of the children to resist the blandishments of the devil, and to engage them in activism, passing out tracts, "witnessing" and participating in pro-life demonstrations. This zeal for a path of obedience is a carry-over from the earlier fundamentalism, not due to the antinomian Larry Norman, in spite of the dominance of his worship style and type of music.

This emphasis on dedication and duty is a consequence of the doctrine. As free-will Arminians, they must hold that every moral issue, and every possibility of defeat or victory turns in the end on the act of the will choosing for or against the good, and so everything that can impact the will to move it toward the good is legitimate and necessary. Put another way, they don't trust in a Sovereign God and wait on the freedom of the Spirit. Children cannot develop at their own pace and let responsible roles come with the arrival of maturity. Everything must be moulded to insure that the proper outcome is an engrained behaviour from a young age.

Norman Greenbaum's satiric "Spirit in the Sky" plays over the credits. Featured in a half-dozen other movie sound tracks, and many times on television, it obviously resonates with popular perceptions. It's point appears to be to portray Christians as arrogantly self-righteous: "Never been a sinner, I never sinned. I got a friend in Jesus. So you know that when I die. He's gonna set me up with the spirit in the sky." (Actually Greenbaum is a Jew with only vague ideas about Christianity, and his reason for mentioning "Jesus" is that he thought it would sell better than anything Jewish.) While its inclusion belies the filmmakers claim to objectivity, the song's point applies to Boomer Evangelicalism. To a disturbing extent it is a religion of moralism, not grace.

Liberal response to the film was quick and strong. Vandal attacks and hate mail persuaded Becky Fischer that she needed to close the camp for several years for the safety of the children. C&S

THE ECCLESIASTICAL TEXT: TEXT CRITICISM, BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND THE POPULAR MIND

by *Theodore P. Letis*

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Address

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If you wish to give under the Gift Aid scheme please fill in the Gift Aid form. If you wish to give regularly by standing order please fill in the standing order mandate. If you wish to give regularly by standing order under the Gift Aid scheme please fill in both forms. Please send this form to: The Kuyper Foundation, P. O. Box 2, TAUNTON, SOMERSET, TAI 4ZD, ENGLAND.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Name of Charity: THE KUYPER FOUNDATION

Details of Donor:

Title Forename(s) Surname

Address

..... Post Code

I want the charity to treat (**delete as appropriate*)

* the enclosed donation of £ as a Gift Aid donation

* all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations

Signed Date

NOTES: (1) You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the charity. (2) You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year. (3) If in future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1). (4) If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return. (5) Please notify the charity if you change your name or address.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To (name of *your* bank)

Address of your bank

Please pay	Bank	Branch Title (not address)	Sorting Code Number
	The HSBC Bank Plc	Taunton	40-44-04
for the credit of	Beneficiary's Name	Account Number	Quoting Reference
	The Kuyper Foundation	7 1 1 7 9 1 0 1	
the sum of	Amount	Amount in words	
	£		
commencing	Date of first payment	and thereafter every	until further notice in writing and debit my account accordingly
		Due date and frequency	
Account to be debited		Account Number	

Signature(s) Date