

# The Presbyterian Guardian

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WHAT ABOUT  
ECOLOGY and



POLLUTION

?

## A Savior or a Superstar — Who do we worship?

"Who are you, what have you sacrificed?" This is one of the questions asked in the title song of the popular folk-opera, *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Who was Christ? What did he do that was so significant? What did he sacrifice—his life on a cross of bitter disappointment? These are the questions that have been excellently expressed—but not answered!—in this talked-about and listened-to modern opera.

Christ? The opera sees him as a revolutionist, a mixed-up, misguided martyr, an innocent puppet. This is what Pilate thought of him. To all, he was a man, just a man.

Besides belittling Christ, the opera makes Judas the major character. The opera is based on *his* point of view, expressed as if he were looking back on the whole trial and death of Christ. Judas is the hero; after all "he couldn't help it. God *made* him a murderer." This in itself is blasphemy; who are we to question God? Are we supposed to feel sorry for poor Judas?

And what can we say when we hear someone telling us that Mary Magdalene fell in love with Christ? In the opera she says, "I don't know how to love him." How can we as Christians take this? Almost all of Mary Magdalene's part is unscriptural, and openly puts Christ to shame.

One especially blasphemous section is called, "Damned for All Time." In it Judas is shown as he prepares to betray Jesus to the priests. They are in the Temple, and Judas speaks to Caiaphas and Annas:

*Annas you're a friend a wordly man and wise  
Caiaphas my friend I know you sympathize  
Why are we the prophets? Why are we the ones  
Who see the sad solution—know what must be done?*

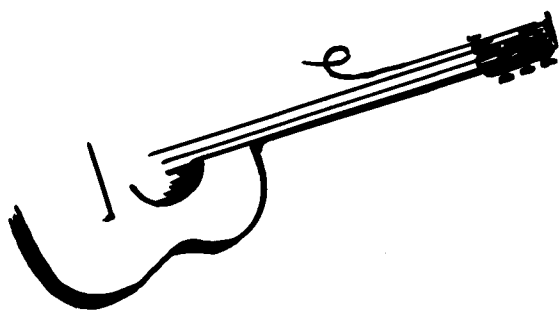
This song has about the "heaviest" music of the whole piece. It's the one song we like best, but as a musical composition only. It is "real hard-gut blues." Yet it's disgusting to hear what it says:

*I came because I had to I'm the one who saw,  
Jesus can't control it like he did before,  
And furthermore I know that Jesus thinks so too,  
Jesus wouldn't mind that I was here with you.  
I have no thought at all about my own reward—  
I really didn't come here of my own accord,  
Just don't say I'm—damned for all time.*

But some of the points made by the authors should be noticed because of their scriptural basis. For instance, "Peter's Denial" shows us the temptation Satan set upon Peter in a realistic way.

Another point quite frequently stressed was the bewildered and misunderstanding minds of the disciples. We can just imagine the confusion that raced through their minds at that time.

The crowd was confused too. Wasn't this Christ the one who would restore the Jews and become their king? The



**JOHN KUSCHKE  
DARYL MARTIN**

beginning of the opera described them as a crowd; toward the end, the "crowd" becomes the "mob."

One of the most realistic parts of the whole opera is "Christ's Crucifixion." Together, the music and the words express the suffering agony that Christ endured as his spirit separated from his body. The pain is really felt!

Why is it, though, that non-Christians are describing Christ (even though it is distorted)? Shouldn't it be done by us "Christians"? Shouldn't *we* be the ones to write and sing about our Lord, our Savior? Shouldn't we be telling the world he *wasn't* "just a man"—he was and is *God*!

This opera is a turning point in expressing what many, many people have believed and will believe about Christ unless the gospel reaches them, unless God in his good time opens their hearts to the truth. Although we, as Christians, cannot agree with what the theme of *Superstar* suggests, we can understand that it is from a humanistic, non-Christian viewpoint. In fact it is a sinful, Satan-inspired point of view. But many questions are brought up, questions which people are desperate to find answers for. It shows us more clearly that *we* have to have these answers. We have to be sure of the ground we stand on.

We *can* be sure. God himself has revealed to us that we are reconciled to him through the righteousness of Christ, given to us at the cost of Christ's blood.

Sadly, no resurrection is mentioned in *Superstar* (it ends with John 19:41). But Christ *has* risen! Let us glorify him as our wonderful Lord and God, Jesus Christ Savior!

Thanks, John and Dede, for the time and effort on this, and for the challenge to Christians. There are, perhaps, other questions that should be considered also: Can Christians use rock music to speak of Christ to today's world? Have any Christians successfully done so?

The editor would be glad to hear more on this general subject from others. And the pages of the *Guardian* are open to discussion of other interests and concerns of young people today. Try us, and see!

—J. J. M.

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# A new approach to biblical authority or, Did that serpent really speak?

THE EDITOR

According to Genesis 3, a serpent, a visible reptile, communicated in comprehensive language to a woman named Eve. Simple story; but did it actually happen? Is this narrative of a strange conversation the infallible record of a real incident in human history? Or is it meant, not literally, but as a symbolic "teaching model" to impress us with the persuasive subtlety of temptation and evil?

Now I may be charged with a journalistic trick to get your undivided attention. Perhaps so. Still, according to a report being submitted to the 1971 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, how you interpret this serpent in Eden is an "open question." The report (on "The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority," *Agenda*, pp. 268ff.) comes in answer to a request by De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland to the member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, and to an overture expressing concern about recent trends in biblical interpretation. (The 1970 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church adopted its answer to the request, part of which was published in the September 1970 issue of the *Guardian*; the full text is in the *Minutes*, 37th G.A., pp. 123ff.)

## Two views of authority

The report to the Christian Reformed Synod notes the existence of two quite different approaches to any question of biblical authority. To some, "the nature of biblical authority is simply and solely that it is divine." That is the nature of God's Word, "and that may not be qualified in any way. Questions concerning its intent, meaning, and applicability arise on the level of interpretation, not on the level of authority" (pp. 273f.).

Others, including the framers of the report, would see "the divine authority of Scripture [as] manifested only through its content as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ . . . 'Nature and extent' refer thus to the divine authority of Scripture as viewed in relationship to its content and purpose." Scripture's authority comes to us "through the *history* of revelation," and "this history of revelation focused on Jesus Christ qualifies the authority of Scripture" (p. 274).

The first view on authority is correct, not because I happen to approve it, but simply because it recognizes the plain meaning of the word "authority." Authority is the right and the power to command and to accomplish. The authority of Scripture is the authority of God its Author who has all right and power over all his creatures.

To be fair, let it be noted that this report does insist that the Bible is "unconditionally authoritative for faith and life," including all aspects of human life (pp. 274f.). Scripture is not to be dissected into what is and is not authoritative. Yet, speaking of the human writers of Scripture, the report says that "the mode in which the Word has come to us . . . affects the nature of its authority" (p. 279).

Again, this is confusing authority with applicability or

understanding. It is not Scripture's authority that is affected by the medium of human authors. The understanding of Scripture is undoubtedly affected by the style, personality, and vocabulary of the human writers. It is confusing, to say the least, to speak of an "unconditional" authority that is simultaneously a "qualified" or "affected" authority.

"The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof" (*Westminster Confession*, I, 4). To confuse this authority with the primary purpose of Scripture (to reveal Christ), or with the way in which God's words come to us, is to confuse a vitally important distinction.

## Two qualifiers of authority

The fact that God's Word comes to us, as the history of the revelation of Jesus Christ, is said to "qualify" Scripture's authority. The report goes on to say that "when passages or texts or phrases are isolated from the purpose of Scripture itself [understood as "the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ"], they no longer retain their authority as the Word of God" (p. 276). Again, we must admit that portions of Scripture in isolation may be seriously misinterpreted and misapplied. But this in no way destroys the authority of God who proclaimed that portion and meant it to be heard and obeyed in its total context.

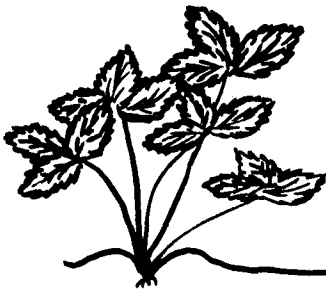
This statement is far reaching indeed! Taken as it stands, it would mean that the Seventh Commandment loses its absolute authority over all men if its relation to Christ's saving work is not kept fully in view. No! The Seventh Commandment remains binding on all men whether it is understood in relation to Christ or not. The adulterer is guilty, on the authority of God who issued this commandment, whether that sinner ever comes to hear about Christ or not.

The report would also qualify the authority of Scripture in terms of what is sometimes called the "human element" in Scripture. It says, "inspiration does not, for example, 'correct views of the structure and working of the universe which are relative to a particular historical epoch' (H. Ridderbos, *The Authority of the N.T. Scriptures*, p. 61). Yet the Word written by men is the authoritative Word of God, for the intent of Scripture is not, for example, to teach the physical structure of the universe or to provide concepts of psychology. . . . Therefore, the Old Testament can speak of the liver or even the kidneys as the seat of an emotion or passion. Today in psychology we need not of course speak in this way" (p. 278).

Of course we need not speak this way. Psychologists speak, or think they speak, with scientific precision. But is it an erroneous view of the workings of the universe for us

(continued on page 72)

The congregation at worship.



## The "Strawberry Method" works in Novato

It was Bruce Hunt who called it that. From a living church in one area, a branch reaches out until it can take root in some new location, there to become a living organism itself. Strawberries work this way, apparently churches can also. At least, it worked in Novato.

One of the most recent efforts to establish a new Orthodox Presbyterian Church has come to fruition in Novato, Marin County, California. This new church was sponsored by the Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Berkeley. The success of this outreach has been due to God's blessing through the vision, prayer and sacrificial giving of the Lord's people in Berkeley. The Rev. Richard M. Lewis, pastor of that church, also gave unstintingly of time and energy to prepare the ground for the work to follow.

Early in 1970, two young couples living in Marin County, twenty-five miles north of the Golden Gate, were traveling seventy miles each Lord's Day to worship with the Berkeley congregation. The Williams family were members of the Goleta church, and the Cantwells had been in Chula Vista before transferring to Berkeley. For nearly a year Mr. Lewis made the same trip each week to conduct a Bible class with these couples and a few friends.

Then in May 1970, at the invitation of the Berkeley session, the Rev. Robert H. Graham came to Novato to work with these families. For several Saturdays, members of the Berkeley congregation joined in conducting a door-to-door program of invitation and information. Over four thousand calls were made during the next ten months in a city of twenty-six thousand. Results were not spectacular, but were encouraging.

Then the calendar of events began to move rapidly: *April 30, 1971.* The session of the Covenant Church came to Novato to examine thirteen individuals for membership in the church. These, with others who were already members of Orthodox Presbyterian churches, hoped to make

Sunday school picnic at Pioneer Park, Novato.



up the new congregation in Novato.

Anticipating their organization as a church, the group chose Bob Williams and Jerry Cantwell as its prospective ruling elders. They also desired to call Mr. Graham as their pastor. And they approved a budget of \$11,700, voting unanimously to be a self-supporting congregation from the beginning.

*May 8, 1971.* The Presbytery of Northern California approved the request of the Berkeley session to divide that congregation and to organize the Novato branch as a separate church.

*May 13, 1971.* At a service conducted by the Presbytery, the congregation at Novato was formally received as a church. The pastor was installed, and the two elders ordained.

*May 16, 1971.* This Sunday saw the celebration of the sacraments in the Novato Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Seventy-five people were present to rejoice in this newest of "strawberry" plants. Mr. Graham writes: "The service was a great blessing and unique in my thirty-nine years in the ministry. Twenty-one charter members were received. Six children were baptized and one adult. The Lord's Supper was administered for the first time. There were a number of moist eyes in the group as the charter members joined hands to sing *Blest Be the Tie that Binds.*"

After an interview with Mr. Graham, the local paper described the new church this way:

"The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a denomination which adheres to the historic Standards of Presbyterianism, namely, the Bible as God's infallible Word and the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as the systematic summary of what the Bible teaches.

"The church is conservative in its view of the Christian faith. The church, it contends, must hold to the authority of Holy Scripture, to the deity of Jesus Christ, to salvation through the shed blood of the Saviour and to the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave on the third day after His burial.

"But this church, the Rev. Robert Graham who

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*Graham gives instruction to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Weidauer.*



*The ordination of ruling elders Cantwell and Williams.*

now leads the group says, is not in the rut of dead orthodoxy or empty ritualism. It believes that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is relevant to our day. Not until men are right with God will they be right with their fellow men.

"The racial, social and political problems of America will never, Mr. Graham says, be resolved by revolution and the interference of the church in the war in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia; or by involvement in anti-draftboard picketing and so-called "Peace" movements; or by "presumptuous" mandates to Washington in support of Red China.

"The Orthodox Presbyterian Church believes that it is the prime duty of every true church of Jesus Christ to proclaim from Scripture God's only message of salvation, says the Rev. Graham . . ."

It has not been all smooth sailing here in Novato as the new plant sought to get its roots down. Several United Presbyterians showed interest for a time but then fell away. Political conservatives, fed up with the "social gospel," did come out but departed when they found that the group was not following any "far right" political line. Others came for a time but faded away when they found a consistently Presbyterian witness being taught.

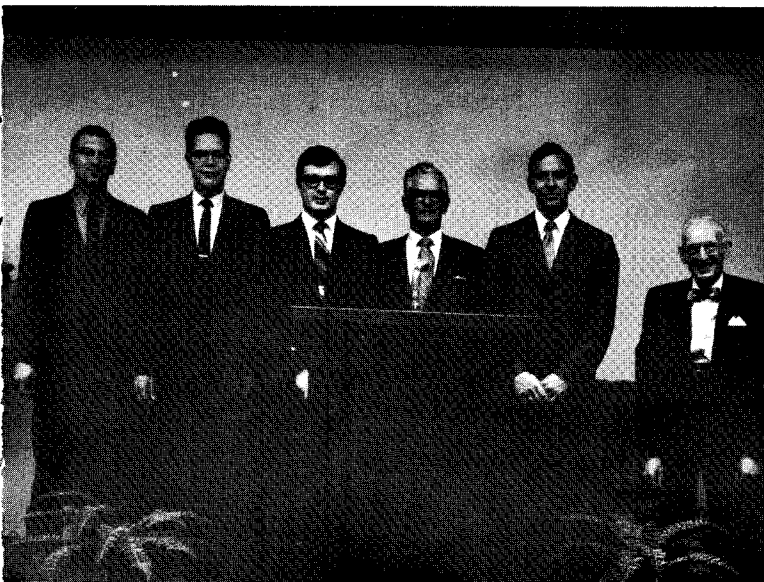
The story of the "strawberry method" in Novato should be an encouragement to other congregations to work actively in spreading the gospel in outlying areas where their members happen to be living. Mr. Graham closed a recent newsletter saying, "The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126:3). We are glad too, and pray that the Lord will continue to do good and great things in Novato to the glory of his Name!

*Representatives of the Presbytery of Northern California at official reception of the new church. Left to right: Pastors Champness and Lewis, new elders Jerry Cantwell and Bob Williams flanking pastor Graham, and "Scotty" Neilands, moderator of Presbytery.*



*Graham talks after worship service with Bob Williams, Mr. Heyn, and sailor Stephen Wimmer from Lincoln, Nebraska, OPC.*

*After church: Fern and Ric Reynolds with daughter Carol. Mrs. Reynolds serves as organist.*



## A Response

Since the writer of the "Reply" admittedly has attempted not to discuss the merits of the issue about which I wrote (see first paragraph of the "Reply" in the April issue of the *Guardian*), there might seem to be little reason for me to respond. After all, I simply do not care to discuss my article (in the March issue of the *Guardian*), as a "study in forensic art" (I was not writing for lawyers). However, I shall respond, because in the "Reply" some matters were raised that I wish to answer, and this gives me the opportunity both to clarify and expand my original thoughts.

The "Reply" is directed against a straw man. The writer thinks that my argument is "against the validity of an activity because of some abuse or misuse of the activity." Yet it is precisely what I have done that he concedes: "We, naturally, join in rejecting the non-Christian activities of some encounter groups." Mr. Semisch writes:

"The only purpose the argument serves is to demonstrate the invalidity of the improper activity; but it in no way bears upon the issue of the propriety of groups where the improper activity is absent." Exactly. Nowhere did I intend to reject the idea of groups *as such*. Nor did I condemn all confession groups. (Note that I wrote: "There is a biblically legitimate form of confession group . . .") The writer of the "Reply" shows that he has missed the point when he describes my article as a "discussion of the propriety of groups." It was not. Instead, it was a discussion of *one* abuse in *some* groups.

To oppose groups in general (as the writer seems to think I did) is like opposing sunsets or motherhood. God structured a group-type society from the creation. I did not oppose groups as improper; I wrote: "It is not the idea of a group that must be opposed, but the distortion of the biblical idea." What I opposed is exactly what Mr. Semisch also wants to oppose—the "abuse" of groups. All sorts of group work may be biblical and, therefore, profitable. It is a Christian task to develop every form of group that is compatible with and, therefore, useful to the kingdom of God. But it is also our task to detect and to warn

against every abuse of group processes. Fundamentally, I think that the writer of the "Reply" and I want the same thing—to reject "the non-Christian activities" of any group that engages in them.

The long discussion in the "Reply" of my series of rhetorical questions about groups shows again that its writer missed the point. My article was not intended to be "a scholarly discussion of the propriety of groups"; rather, it was written as a popular article focusing on *one* abuse. In passing I did make an attempt to give a few guidelines to help the reader evaluate other abuses that might possibly appear in some groups. A "scholarly discussion"? Why, the very idea that such an article, written in a popular style, could be so interpreted surprises me. The reason that I wrote about this subject in the first place was because repeatedly I had been urged to do so by concerned laymen in a number of churches. The length of the article was limited by space considerations, so that the guidelines could not be worked out in detail. They were merely suggestive. Questions rather than indicative statements might have been corny, I'll admit; but "scholarly" (and, therefore, deserving of such an extended critique), never!

Again, that I was not careful about using a *legal* definition of "slander," although interesting, is a matter that does not bother me too much. As I said, the style of this article was popular. Therefore, I used the same non-professional sort of language that is found in the biblical passages that I cited. The last thing that I want to do, however, is to quibble about legal language with a Philadelphia lawyer, so I shall be happy to be instructed about the exact modern-day legal terminology that I should use to describe that which Paul opposed.

I do not think that whenever one is in a group "he must of necessity be talking about another, and not only talking but 'slandering.'" Of course, we may talk about ourselves or about other members of the group, or about persons outside of the group without slandering (or whatever term is more accurate). But I am objecting to those groups in which the kinds of activities that I described (e.g., voicing "personal resentments and complaints") go on;

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EDITOR

JOHN J. MITCHELL

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groups in which the name and character of one who is not a member of the group is abused (slandered?). This is not only allowed, but also encouraged by some groups. And I still think it is extremely difficult to bring people who need "therapy" (I'll not argue the medical model here) together for "confession" without such abuses occurring.

I am surprised at the "Reply." Why was it written? Why has a lawyer consistently ignored my careful qualifications "some, often, may," etc.)? Is it because he thinks I have launched a personal vendetta against a particular church or organization? This might seem to be his motivation from what he says in the last paragraph: "I would hope that Dr. Adams will search out those of whom he has written." Let me say plainly that the abuses of which I have spoken are public, and that my article had to do with trends and movements. I have not written against persons, but about principles. To cite one instance: when the professor of a non-Presbyterian seminary in the midwest personally told me of the week-end-long marathons to which he "subjected" his students in a required course, I may say that I did not remain silent about the matter. I do not think that there are any grounds for the last paragraph of the "Reply."

With respect to "slandering" another in a private counseling session, may I make it plain that when one party comes alone for counseling, it is a cardinal rule of mine not to allow that party to speak critically about any other person; the stress is entirely upon the counselee's own responsibilities before God. Some of the personal remarks in the "Reply" therefore seem irrelevant.

I think that I might have been

clearer in adding the word "such" to the last sentence of the next-to-last paragraph, and to the very last sentence in the article, making them read: "The problems with such therapy and encounter groups . . ." and "Such encounter and therapy groups . . ." It is conceivable that a Christian group may engage in biblical activity and call it "encounter" or "therapy" (although in the light of the general understanding of those terms, it is difficult to imagine why they would want to use them). But I certainly concede the possibility. I hope that I have clarified my intentions by this brief response.

—JAY E. ADAMS

## Further Reply

The response of Dr. Adams is most welcome since it further delineates his position with several important admissions. We learn that he is not against groups per se, which is no surprise, since a Sunday school class or a family is a group. We have to wait until the final paragraph of his response to learn that he is not against all therapy or encounter groups, which is, of course, the point of his article and my reply. Dr. Adams is not a straw man (his word), for my reply was obviously directed to him. He originally declared therapy and encounter groups "unbiblical," and it is a wholesale alteration of that position to limit it with the addition of the word "such." This dramatic change is nearly hidden in his response by his interesting but wholly unnecessary admission that he is not against all groups, a view I never considered at issue.

Further, to learn that a popular article does not require careful choice of words is instructive. Either that is an admission he was careless, which he justifies because it was a popular article; or he denies being careless and his reference to the style of the article is beside the point. Slander is, after all, a legal term. Webster defines it in legal terms, and Dr. Adams now confesses it is legal language. One would normally expect that a professor who teaches seminary students to preach would be careful to use words accurately. He states that he does not want to "quibble about legal language"; but the term slander is his choice, and it is hardly quibbling to expect him to use it accurately. His response is more clever than instructive for it avoids the issues raised in my

reply, and he does not deal with the biblical illustrations I advanced.

Differences of opinion serve a valuable function. My reply was stimulated because I was alarmed that Professor Adams eliminated the honest disagreement of other Christians expert in counseling and group work by terming their endeavor "unbiblical." My hope and expectation was to evoke a response that would so clarify his position as to quiet my alarm, and to deal more thoughtfully with enormously important issues than were demonstrated by the irrelevant, immaterial and unfair modes of argument he originally offered. Regretfully, my expectation was optimistic. He has drastically limited his thesis, but he failed to confront the issues with an open response. I hope my reply has served to caution those who otherwise would unquestionably adopt the original article that it is unsupported by valid argument and contains serious confusions between such distinct activities as bringing charges against a person, and seeking help for a problem. There are, after all, groups functioning in Christian circles that appear to come within Professor Adams' attack, and the opprobrium of carrying on an unbiblical activity called for a response. To have the limitation of the original position by the addition of the very important word "such" has justified my reply.

I would like to comment on his position that when a party comes to him for counseling he refuses to permit that person to speak critically of another. His stress is entirely on the person's own responsibilities before God. This sounds very spiritual; but it is one more confusion of distinct functions. If a woman comes in for help, her marriage being on the verge of divorce, you can help her individually by having her face her own responsibilities. She may confess her own sin, be led to repentance, and receive other spiritual guidance, all without a word concerning her spouse. However, if the husband beats her, commits adultery, is sadistic to the children, and so on, you will never begin to save the marriage until you know those facts. There is a very real difference between the two functions, and the refusal to learn all of the facts leading to the marital split is virtual withdrawal of the helping hand to one of society's most distressing problems.

—DONALD A. SEMISCH

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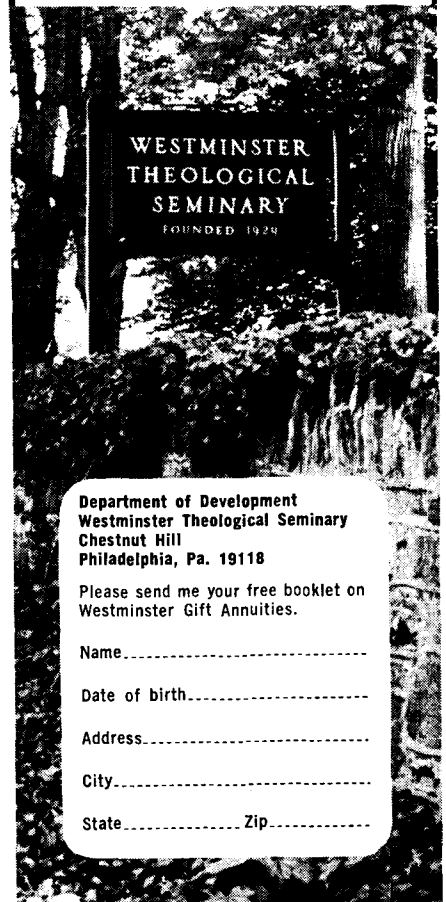
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# Whence Man?

DAVIS A. YOUNG

In the previous article we examined several biblical texts that bear on the question of man's origin. We attempted to show that the idea of man's evolution from animal life is completely incompatible with proper interpretation of these texts. Nonetheless there may be Christians who do not feel that it is so necessary to study these texts in such detail. They might object that it is not really so important how man originated, but rather it is important that we present the gospel of Christ to a fallen world. Why waste time arguing about how we got here when there are souls to be saved?

In this article we want to develop the thesis that *the matter of origins is absolutely critical to our understanding of the gospel of Christ*. The nature of man is very much at the heart of the gospel. If we have an incorrect understanding of that nature, then we must also have a defective interpretation of the gospel that would save that nature.

## Importance of origin in Scripture

First, let us observe that if Scripture teaches the special creation of man as opposed to evolution, then the Christian is bound to believe that teaching. It does not matter how strongly the extra-biblical evidence appears to favor some other view of origins, nor does it matter whether or not we think the question of human origins is important. What Scripture teaches is what is important.

We often hear that if just one text of Scripture teaches a doctrine then that doctrine is established and is to be accepted. How much more then ought we to be impressed by the stress Scripture lays on the special creation of Adam! On this doctrine there is no lack of texts.

In the face of this abundance of Scripture data, therefore, we cannot say that the matter of origins really isn't that important, or that the Bible is mistaken on this point. If we do so, then we have a very low view of God's Word. In belittling the importance of one doctrine or admitting the possibility of error at one point, we may just as well ignore other doctrines or charge them with error also—perhaps even the heart of the gospel itself.

We must realize that our view of origins is directly connected to our view of the gospel. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that mankind did evolve from some sort of pre-human animal life over a period of millions of years. Let us also accept the idea, as put forth by theistic evolutionists, that God has providentially directed this entire process of man's evolution. Then, let us consider the nature of such an evolved being with particular reference to the presence of "evil" within him.

## Violent "evil" in animals

To discuss the nature of an "evolved man," we must rely to a large extent on current scientific opinion about the nature of evolving animals in general. It is widely believed that animals have various behavioral and social patterns or instincts that characterize the existence of particular species. For example, many animals have very strong

territorial instincts and will seek to defend their territory against intruders. Most dogs become antagonistic when another dog or even a person strays across a certain boundary. A battle between the intruder and the defender may ensue. The same can be said about fish, birds, or other animals. The point here is simply that the trespassing of property boundaries by intruder animals is a natural thing. There is nothing unusual about this sort of action. It is not a sin against the law of God, but is simply the way of life among these animals.

Moreover, the "hostility" or "hatred" and the violence on the part of the defender are also instinctive. This responsive action is expected. It too is part of the way of life and cannot be thought of as a sin, for it is the natural manner for the animal to react. Hostility and infringement of territorial rights are part of the very fabric and structure of animal life. The animal cannot be condemned for behaving in such an "evil" manner, since he is behaving only in accordance with his natural instincts.

Many animals also demonstrate a certain social hierarchy, pecking order, or social stratification. Each member of a certain group has his place within the group, and usually the group has its recognized leader. At times lower members of the group may attempt to move up the social ladder or even attempt to become "Number One." Such attempts to take over leadership will be answered with repressive or hostile measures. The pretender to leadership either wins, or is firmly dealt with and put back in his place. We must again insist that such actions in the animal realm can only be regarded as instinctive. They are natural and cannot be regarded as some kind of sin.

God would hardly punish a bird who sought to take by force the position of leadership from the top bird of the flock. This power struggle among animals, like the defense of territory, is but one aspect of the way of life for the bird.

## Violent "evil" in man

If we think of man as having evolved from the animal kingdom, then we have no difficulty seeing that man's strong sense of property ownership and defense and the presence of social stratification and authority structures have been brought along via man's evolution from an animal heritage. If human evolution were true, then there would be little reason to doubt the derivation of these social patterns from the animals.

The existence of these patterns in animals and in man, however, is not the point of concern. Rather the question must be raised concerning the meaning of the actions of individual animals or men in the context of these structures or patterns.

We have noted that among animals there are individuals who, for one reason or another, trespass the boundaries of a neighbor's territory or challenge the authority of a group leader. Those whose boundaries are crossed or whose au-



thority is challenged will naturally retaliate. Such actions and reactions are simply part of the way of life for such animals. No sin against the law of God is involved.

Now it is not difficult to see that an evolved human race would also have individuals who trespass boundaries or challenge established authorities. And it is not difficult to see that an evolved human race would have individuals whose normal response to such trespass or challenge would be some sort of hostile retaliation. Further, if these actions are to be expected in an evolved human race, then it is clear that such actions are simply a part of human nature.

#### "Natural sin" in man

It would be human nature, therefore, to liquidate a political opponent who sought to seize the reins of government from your hands. It would be human nature to curse angrily at someone who stepped on your flower garden. It would be human nature to try to overthrow governmental authority occasionally. These would be the "normal," "natural," expected actions derived from our animal ancestry.

If this is human nature, then we can hardly be blamed for it. We are that way through the evolutionary process. But that process was providentially controlled by God, according to the theistic evolutionists. Thus our human nature, with its "natural" instincts of trespassing, of challenging authority, and of violent retaliation, has been "given" to us by God.

If this were indeed so, then the hostile actions of human beings could not rightly be regarded as sins. They could not fairly be punished with eternal destruction if God were responsible for having allowed man to evolve in this way. But the exceeding sinfulness of sin really consists in the fact that man, originally and by created nature, was fully capable of keeping God's law perfectly. He was created utterly free of hatreds and hostilities. But an evolved man would have been, "by nature," incapable of keeping that law perfectly since it is diametrically opposed to such "natural" instincts of violence.

#### Evolution distorts the gospel

Acceptance of an evolutionary view of man's origin will certainly lead to a distortion of the gospel. Within an evolutionary framework, violence is not contrary to human nature, nor can sin be understood as a true transgression of God's law. Sin would be nothing more than an unpleasant characteristic of human nature, a remnant from our animal ancestry, a shortcoming that we should strive to eliminate from society.

The sinner as an individual, when confronted with his sin and his violent attitudes, could legitimately claim that God is ultimately responsible for these sins. If humans evolved, under God's providential control, how can they be guilty before God for the natural outworkings of their evolved human nature? We may have guilt feelings, but true guilt for sin would be nonsensical.

And what would we make of the statement that Christ died for our sins? Does Christ's death now change our biochemical structure so that we no longer follow these instinctive behavioral patterns? Is our being born again, being given a new heart of flesh and spirit, just a higher step in the onward process of evolution?

Christ died for sinners, died to satisfy the holy and righteous justice of the perfect creator God, died to pay

the penalty of the sinner's true guilt before God, died in order to give life and make man free from both the guilt and power of sin. This is what the gospel is as the Scripture presents it; this is the good news that abnormal, unnatural, exceedingly sinful and fully guilty man needs.

Again we offer a challenge to the theistic evolutionists to show that sin, as understood within an evolutionary viewpoint, is compatible with the heart of the gospel as it is given to us in the Bible.

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## Do you sing the Amen?

When a person sings, or says, "Amen" he is saying that the words he has just sung are true, and that he is *happy* that what they teach is true.

But not all people and churches agree with the teachings of the hymns they sing. Bishop Pike, with a measure of honesty all too rare today, frankly expressed what many of these people believe and practice. He admitted that he could not, in good conscience, *speake* the Apostles' Creed because he could not affirm many of the truths in it. He could not truly say of these, "I believe . . ." However, Bishop Pike did feel that it was all right to *sing* the Creed!

Evidently the Bishop felt that when one sings certain words, he is not affirming their truth but is merely joining in some kind of esthetic good feeling with fellow Christians (including, I suppose, those who had lived in earlier ages and did believe and confess these things).

If *you* believe, as did the reformers, that when you praise and thank God in song, you must do it with the whole man, mind and heart both; and if you have therefore taken care to choose and sing hymns whose words *and* esthetic content you can honestly affirm, then why not join with others of the Lord's congregation in those final two chords of majestic resolve and say from the heart, "So be it, Lord!"

—ROBERT D. JEWELL

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## What church does Dr. Van Til belong to?

**NORMAN SHEPHERD**

About once every eighteen months or so, those of us who are members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia hear an impassioned plea by one of its senior and most respected members. Dr. Cornelius Van Til, Professor of Apologetics at Westminster Seminary, asks the presbytery to find some way for him to become a member of Calvary Church in Glenside, the church where he regularly worships with his wife. He would like very much to think of that church's pastor as his own pastor, just as his wife does.

### Origin of a strange request

To understand this seemingly strange request, we must go back into history. Dr. Van Til has been in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church from its earliest days. But before that he was a member of the Christian Reformed Church. In that denomination it was his cherished privilege to belong to the Spring Lake congregation in Michigan and to be its pastor at the same time. When he became a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, he discovered to his sorrow that he could no longer belong to a local congregation. He was told that he was now a member of presbytery, as are all ministers of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. But a pastor is not listed on the roll of the congregation he serves.

What made the situation worse for Dr. Van Til was the fact that, as a professor, he did not have a pastoral charge. He could, of course, sit next to his wife at church. But on the night of the congregational meeting, while his wife was upstairs voting, he had no choice but to stay downstairs to help clean up after the congregational supper. History has compounded the grief. To this day Dr. Van Til is still wiping dishes; but now both his wife *and* his granddaughter are upstairs voting!

Unfortunately his good will and good humor have served to mask the genuineness of his periodic plea. Not even membership in so august a body as the Presbytery of Philadelphia is adequate consolation.

It is true that those of us in the East do hear occasionally of isolated instances further west where Presbyterian practice has crumbled, and ministers have held or are holding membership in particular congregations. To date, however, Philadelphia Presbytery remains a bastion of pure Presbyterian tradition, although younger voices have recently been raised to champion Dr. Van Til's cause. Of course, it is not merely a matter of tradition. More or less compelling arguments are advanced, both for Christian Reformed practice and for Orthodox Presbyterian.

### A way out of the dilemma?

The purpose of this article is to suggest that Dr. Van Til and others suffering with him may have the best of both worlds without sacrificing the genius of either. Implementation of the suggestion may not get Dr. Van Til out of the kitchen; but it would serve to get his name on a church membership roll. And that would also serve to



improve the statistical profile of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church! Some of you may not realize it, but because ministers are not enrolled in local congregations, they are not included in the total membership of the denomination as reported by the General Assembly.

In various places the Bible speaks of the church of Jerusalem or the church of Antioch. What were these churches?

It would appear that our Christian Reformed brethren understand these to be local congregations, comparable for example to Trinity Christian Reformed Church on Lawrence Road in Broomall. Here all the people, including the deacons, elders, and pastors, hold their membership and conduct the work of the church. The local congregation not only serves its immediate area, but also has the responsibility of calling missionaries to serve at home or abroad. From time to time the officers of this local church may call together the officers of other similar churches for classical (presbytery) meetings, or for the broader synodical meetings (general assemblies).

This seems quite reasonable, but it does have its problems. For example, one can hardly think of all the Christians in Jerusalem or in Antioch coming together for worship in one place. Most likely the church of Jerusalem met for worship in several locations simultaneously. These "local" meetings are spoken of in the Bible as the church in someone's house.

Parallels to this are seen in the Netherlands today. In a large city like Amsterdam, there is a local church, the Church of Amsterdam-Center, but it meets for worship in several different church buildings. Each of these congregations elects elders who serve on a consistory (session) for the Church of Amsterdam-Center as well as to meet individual local needs.

Because the church of Jerusalem apparently met in a number of different locations, Presbyterians have been more inclined to look upon it not as a local church but as a presbytery. After this biblical pattern, for example, the Presbytery of Philadelphia has a number of congregations scattered about the metropolitan area. But geographical boundaries of many presbyteries have been broadened to embrace several counties and in some cases even several states. Still, the presbytery is thought of as the ecclesiastical equivalent of the church of Jerusalem, and ministers belong to the church on this level while elders and deacons belong to the church on the local level. So, Dr. Van Til

belongs to the Presbytery of Philadelphia while Mrs. Van Til belongs to Calvary Church, Glenside.

### Is a presbytery a church?

The problem with this arrangement is quite clear. The presbytery really isn't the church. The presbytery is made up of office-bearers; but a church has many members who are not officers. As office-bearers, the members of a presbytery do much of the work of the church, but they do not carry on the full range of activity. For example, the presbytery does not conduct regular worship services; it does not ordain ruling elders or deacons; it does not administer the sacraments.

It might appear that, with all their respective advantages and defects, the views of the local church in Christian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian church order are doomed to conflict until one or the other collapses. At the moment there is a good bit of life in both. What hope can we give Dr. Van Til?

Perhaps the solution to the impasse lies in appreciating the reality of the *church* of Jerusalem in the New Testament. This appreciation would imply a revision of the Christian Reformed understanding of what the local church is. But our immediate concern is to see what the implications are for the Orthodox Presbyterian view.

### A Church of Philadelphia

First of all, instead of thinking in terms of the *Presbytery* of Philadelphia with its several "local churches," we would have to think of the *Church* of Philadelphia with a number of particular congregations. Some of these might be large and wealthy enough to have buildings; others might be small and meet in a store or someone's living room.

We would have no need for the unbiblical concept of a "chapel." Each congregation meeting for worship, witness and service would be just as much "church" as any other group, even if there were no office-bearers for that particular group. Its officers would be those of the Church of Philadelphia. As the gifts were found in members of particular congregations, the men with the gifts would be elected to office. Meanwhile, each congregation would contribute to support the ministerium and be served by the teaching and ruling elders and the deacons of the whole Church of Philadelphia. This might also prove to be a way of coming to grips with the "dollar-gap" where a church is obviously manifest, but lacks the resources to form and sustain a "church" as we ordinarily think of it.

Such a metropolitan church would probably cover a smaller area than is now characteristic of a presbytery, and would have fewer congregations. In some areas there might be only one congregation with at least two or more elders. In larger churches, the several congregations would draw closer together in terms of mutual concern and shared resources, and at times could meet together as one church for worship.

It is virtually impossible to have a young people's organization in a small congregation with only one or two teenagers. Why should these young people not meet with others from the same metropolitan church in a single Machen League of Philadelphia? And, instead of being served by a committee of the presbytery, they could be ministered to by a pastor of the church who had special responsibility for

youth work in that church, but was not tied to a particular congregation.

### A "Session" of Philadelphia

Secondly, we would have to think of the presbytery, not as the church on a higher level, but as the "session" of the Church of Philadelphia. The elders would still bear primary responsibility in the particular congregations where they and their families worshipped. But as presbyters for the metropolitan church, they would also be responsible for the spiritual welfare of all the congregations in that church. The presbytery would arrange to celebrate the sacraments when all the congregations met together for worship. The presbytery would continue to receive and dismiss ministers, as well as admit candidates to the ministry and eldership.

Perhaps most beneficial would be the organization of presbytery meetings, not around committee reports as at present, but around reports from particular congregations concerning the work of the Kingdom in each local area. All ministers, whatever their work, as pastors, evangelists, or teachers, would report regularly concerning their ministry.

If unhealthy situations develop, either with congregations or with office-bearers, these would more readily come to the attention of the Philadelphia "Session" which could then move to take disciplinary measures. With the presbytery in more direct contact with the work of each congregation, its prayer could be more fervent and effectual.

Thirdly, it may be necessary for ministers to break away from the idea of serving one particular congregation. They could be supported from a common fund of the Church of Philadelphia, and move about within the church as their particular teaching gifts are needed. There might be more or fewer ministers than there are congregations within such a church, depending on the need, the opportunity, and the resources. A man with particular gifts to serve the youth would not need to restrict his ministry to one congregation. A teacher with keen insight into a particular area of Scripture could deliver a series of sermons to benefit several congregations in turn. A minister who is an effective itinerant evangelist could exercise his gift where there is no existing congregation without having to take time to drum up his own financial support.

### A Church for Dr. Van Til

Fourthly, we must still ask the question, what church would Dr. Van Til belong to? The answer is simply, the Church of Philadelphia. Instead of putting his name on the roll of Calvary Church in Glenside, we would place the names of all the members of the particular congregations together with all the names of the office-bearers on one membership roll of the Church of Philadelphia. Dr. Van Til and his wife would belong to the same church, and both would have several pastors to serve them as members of their own flock in time of need.

The members who meet regularly together in a particular congregation might want to incorporate as a legal entity to hold property; but ecclesiastically they would hold membership in the metropolitan church.

This idea is really not alien to the present Orthodox Presbyterian Form of Government. There is apparently such a thing as a "roll of presbytery." In cases where a particular congregation is dissolved, members who wish to remain in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church have their names placed

on this roll, at least temporarily. (In a recent action, the Presbytery of Philadelphia named two presbyters as its agents in enrolling members on this "roll of presbytery" until they can be organized as the Emmanuel Church in South Philadelphia.)

Although some of the implications of a new appreciation of the *Church* of Jerusalem have been drawn out here, the attempt is by no means complete. There are doubtless numerous questions that would need to be dealt with. We cannot overlook the ecumenical implications, however. This revised conception of the "local church" helps to remove some of the objections that have been raised by Christian Reformed brethren and others holding similar views against the Presbyterian practice. At the same time, Presbyterians are able to retain the genius of their own position. Whatever will serve to draw Calvinists of differing national backgrounds together in more effective service of the Christ of the Scriptures, in opposition to the apostasy of the modern professing church, is deserving of consideration.

It is not immediately clear whether Dr. Van Til will be entirely satisfied with this. But at least he may be encouraged to know that some of his Presbyterian colleagues are trying to come to terms with what is dear to him without sacrificing what is dear to them. May the Lord be pleased to grant him many more happy years among us!

*Professor Shepherd is also a non-member of any "local church," but holds membership in that august body known as the Presbytery of Philadelphia. This article is intended to provoke discussion on a significant question that needs careful—and cool—study.*

### **Biblical authority**

*(Continued on page 63)*

to speak of the sun's "coming up"? Is it an error for weather forecasters to speak of the four winds? Is it a mistake for us to talk of "gut feelings" and "heart pangs"? We do speak this way, even as did the biblical writers—and where is the error in that? *It is erroneous to suggest that inspiration failed to protect God's written Word from whatever faulty views its human writers may have held!*

### **A new criterion for interpretation**

Obviously, the report is deeply concerned with problems of understanding or interpretation. In fact, it is the existence of the "new hermeneutics" that has brought the whole subject to the fore. Certain writers in the Reformed world have allowed their principles of interpretation to lead them into denying the historicity of certain events or persons in the biblical record. The framers of this report want to avoid any loss of the historical reality of the redemptive events recorded in Scripture. Some of the best portions of the report deal with this particular area of concern.

Yet the report also wants to allow a rather wide flexibility in interpretation of Scripture. The solution to this dilemma is contained in what is probably the worst conclusion of the whole report. The report calls upon the churches to "maintain the clear witness of the creeds to the authority of Scripture as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ [but not to its authority as the Word of God the author?], a revelation rooted in the historical reality of redemptive events as revealed in Scripture [but what about non-redemptive events revealed in Scripture?], yet honoring such freedom of exegesis [i.e., interpretation]

or diversity of insight as does not conflict with our forms of unity [i.e., creeds]" (p. 298). In other words, any interpretation is to be allowed in the church so long as it does not question the historicity of basic redemptive events or *does not happen to contradict the creeds!*

And therefore, the question of the talking serpent is an open one. Since the creeds do refer to Adam and Eve as real persons, this must be maintained; but since the creeds neglect to say anything about the serpent, you may hold whatever view you please.

If this conclusion is adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, it would have two rather obvious implications. It would freeze the creeds indefinitely, since any new light on the biblical basis for any creedal statement would be outlawed if it contradicted the present statements in the creeds. That is elevating a man-made set of documents to a position of infallibility!

But this conclusion would also prevent the church from preventing any erroneous interpretation, however serious and harmful it might be, so long as that error did not happen to be refuted in the existing creeds. To suppose that the creeds deal with all possible errors is to suppose a good deal more than the authors of those creeds ever claimed. But this too would be to make the creeds, not the Scriptures, the final criterion of truth and error.

### **A better suggestion**

Among all true Protestant churches, especially those that are Reformed, the basic principle of biblical interpretation has always been that Scripture is its own interpreter. Who else but the Author of the Word is capable of explaining that Word? So, if one portion of Scripture is unclear, we seek for clarity elsewhere. If two meanings are possible in one place, we search out the correct one in some other place. We study the use of words and phrases throughout the Bible and then apply that understanding in particular passages. These are some of the ways in which Scripture interprets itself.

But it is also true that the reader of Scripture should receive it as both the divine Author and the human writer intended it. Or, as this report quotes from Calvin who speaks of Genesis 1: "Moses wrote in a popular style things which, without instruction, all ordinary persons endued with common sense are able to understand" (*Comm. on Genesis*, Gen. 1:15, 16, quoted in the report on p. 281). Beautiful! Would that more of us would approach the Scripture in that common-sense way.

So, when you read those words of Moses, written in his "popular style," found in Genesis 3, what do you understand? What would the Israelite wandering in the Sinai desert have thought Moses meant? There is no reason whatever for any such "ordinary person" to doubt but that Moses (and therefore, God) meant for us to understand that a real snake spoke audible words to Eve.

Is this matter of the talking snake all that important? In itself it is not a large matter. Yet the approach to Scripture advocated in this report is an important matter. Perhaps the most vitally important issue confronting Bible-believing Christians today is, "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

Certainly there are some things in Scripture we shall not understand perfectly until we reach the state of glory, and perhaps not even then. But for now, our goal is to follow those simple but noble Bereans who searched the Scriptures to find out the truth. "Thy word is truth"!

# Ecology, pollution, and Christianity in a post-scientific age

NOEL K. WEEKS

In the midst of all the concern about the fate of Christianity in a scientific age, it may seem strange to talk about Christianity in a *post-scientific* age. Nevertheless it is my belief that we are moving into a post-scientific age, and Christians need to be aware of the subtle changes in the thought of the non-Christian world.

## The scientific faith

The changes are subtle and are changes in attitude. There is a growing loss of faith today in the scientific hope. This hope and trust in science was a genuine religious faith. It had the aspects both of belief and of the practical application of that belief.

The belief was simply that the whole world could be understood by man. At the basis of all physical reality was the ultimate particle or atom. The nature and character of these atoms was understandable, so it was asserted, in terms of simple mathematical laws. All the more complex substances were composed of atoms. Thus the operation of all living organisms was to be understood through understanding the operation of their atoms.

Such an understanding involved the possibility of control. If we knew how atoms operated, we could influence and control their motions. If we could control atoms, we could understand and control the larger compounds. Biology would be a branch of physics; psychology would be interpreted in terms of biology; and the social sciences would be reduced to a combination of physics, biology and psychology.

The vision based on this scientific faith was truly immense and awe-inspiring. All disease could be eliminated through biology. All natural calamities could be averted through a right use of physics. All human hates, perversions and ignorance could be eliminated by a correct application of the laws of psychology. That was the hope and vision of the religion of scientific optimism.

The scientist in such a cult could be indifferent to contemporary social and political crises. The politicians were seen as ignorant, though well-intentioned men conducting a holding operation until the scientist solved all the problems. The scientist-priest was working on the ultimate solutions and had no time for temporary remedies.

## Assumptions of scientific faith

One of the more important assumptions in this scientific faith is that the universe is *not* ultimately mysterious. There is a possibility of man's coming to understand the basis of all reality and the processes by which larger entities are built up from the atomic units.

The dream of ultimate mastery over evil, whether physical, biological, or human, also involves assumptions. One is that man is ultimately capable of overcoming all his problems. If we knew enough biology man could eliminate disease; enough meteorology, and he could control storm and drought.

*Science* was to learn whatever man needed to know in order to achieve this mastery over evil. *Technology* was the



application of this knowledge to the elimination of evil. It follows then that science and technology must inevitably improve the state of man. The scientist, and all who looked to science as the hope of salvation, could ignore the temporary problems and focus on the future vision.

The scientist and the technician worked for the ultimate solution. Thus it follows from the premises of the scientific faith that there could be no possibility of science and technology producing problems themselves! By definition, science and technology were overcoming man's problems.

In contrast to this utopian view of science, the Bible promises no final mastery by sinful man over the creation. This world is under God's curse. Man struggles against it, and by God's grace succeeds in part, but the world continues to defy man and to bring forth thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17-19). Man's problems are far deeper than a lack of knowledge about the motion of atoms.

## Entering a post-scientific age

It is my conviction that this scientific faith is dying. One can see this in many ways. All the sciences have come to acknowledge that the world is more complex than once believed. There is growing pessimism as to whether man can solve all the mysteries.

Possibly reflecting a loss of faith in science by the people, government itself is reducing the amount of money devoted to scientific research. Does anyone still believe that science offers any hope for the solution of the problems of war and of welfare?

Perhaps the most significant evidence of the loss of faith is the "ecological crisis." Pollution has been with us a long time. Why is it that only now we are hearing much about it?

It is my contention that faith in science and technology forced the scientific humanist to ignore the fact that science and technology were bringing evils on man rather than removing them. By the axioms of the scientific faith, there could be no science-generated problems. It was not until the faith began to decline that technology-generated pollution could even be acknowledged.

This creates an embarrassing problem for the humanist. Will he now admit that he was wrong to put his faith in human scientific endeavor? No, he will not. Amazingly, it is Christianity that is being blamed! The Judeo-Christian teachings are responsible for pollution, we are told.

Now one can hardly claim that Christian ethical teaching has had a dominant influence in the business world, let alone in the use of technology by industry. Yet the latest ecological pundits are charging that the Bible taught man to subdue and dominate creation, and this attitude is the source of all our pollution problems. This is pure nonsense, and we should say so!

We see in this the common tendency of non-Christian thought to see all authority as tyranny. The command to Adam (Genesis 2:15) was to work and to guard the garden. The double command is significant; it speaks not of ruthless exploitation, but of careful use. To be sure, there has been selfish exploitation. But this is no more sanctioned in Scripture than is cruelty to one's wife.

Put the blame where it belongs! Man, sinful man, has acted ruthlessly and irresponsibly with God's gifts. He has used the power of science to multiply destruction. The humanists shut their eyes to the damage because it did not fit their scientific religion; forced to see the damage, they now blame it all on the Scriptures!

#### The Christian's response

How shall we react to all this? The one thing the Christian should not do is simply to join the ecological bandwagon! A "Christian" crusade against detergents or for population control through abortion is even more superficial and foolish than the humanist's attitudes. It is time for the Christian to show that this creation is God-cursed because of man's sin, to show the real source of the problems in the sin of man.

The scientific hope was a delusion. There is no return to Eden except through the work of Christ (Hebrews 2:8). The scientist has labored and has thorns and thistles for his labor. We could have told him so. The solution does not lie in more concern for ecology in the application of technology, even though that may do some minor good.

We must ask the embarrassing questions: Was our overuse of insecticides, with all the damage that caused, due to the belief that all biology was ultimately reducible to chemistry, and thus the solutions to biological problems had to be chemical ones? Is the consumer-oriented society with its waste disposal problems the product of the teaching that all man's problems have a physical solution?

Can the theory that traces all man's problems to a physical source deal realistically with problems of greed and selfish exploitation? Can it punish such things if man is not responsible ethically? Will the humanist politician, having promised material luxury for all, now have the courage to tell his constituents that he cannot fill in the tidelands so they can build summer homes? Will industry and government, with their hopes in atomic power generation, really cool and aerate the water they use before returning it to the rivers—and pay the higher costs involved?

Will a society that has belittled physical labor and multiplied "labor-saving" devices now acknowledge that work is good and God-given? Will it agree that it is not

always better to replace a man with a machine? Will it challenge the vicious cycle that raises wages so men can enjoy more luxury goods—which can't be repaired because the wages of repairmen are too high, and which must then be discarded (increasing the waste disposal problems!), and which must then be replaced by new ones shoddily made by a machine because it costs too much to employ good craftsmen (which machine in its turn must be powered by electricity generated at the expense of streams and atmosphere!)?

What a tragedy it would be if Christians merely mouthed the slogans of humanist ecologists instead of striking at the root of the problem!

#### The current confusion

As yet the failure of the scientific hope has had limited effect on our society. Ecology is in the news, movements for a new "life-style" are "in," but scientific research continues.

What would happen if a change in the intellectual climate led men to conclude that science and technology were to blame for our problems? Many young people already think so and are striving to live with nature rather than to crush it, a mood much like that of Eastern philosophies. They see the universe as ultimately mysterious and even religiously alive; why bother about science and technology in such a spiritual universe?

What would happen if a decline in the scientific faith, plus a political reaction to the mindless radicalism of certain universities and scientists, finally led to a cut-off in the money? Would science survive as a domain for amateurs? I do not know the answers. All I can do is note the signs of a declining scientific hope, and point to the tendency of non-Christian thought to violent, irrational fluctuations.

What would happen if science died? I suggest that the task of preserving science and technology in a new Dark Age might well fall to the Christians. A contradictory statement? Not really, since science and technology are not evil in themselves. The non-Christian may come to blame these tools for the problems created; Christians should blame the sinfulness of the workmen using the tools.

The search for ultimate knowledge and mastery was a delusion. But Solomon, as part of his God-given wisdom, spoke of the trees of God's creation, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop that grew from a crack in the wall. God made these things, and God made man able to appreciate and understand them. Christians can study the universe, delighting in the Creator who made it all. In that sense, Christians will be doing science long after the unbeliever has abandoned the chase for the rainbow of scientific hope and is off for another futile utopia.

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*Noel Weeks is completing his doctoral studies at Brandeis University. A native of Australia, he expects to return home this summer to take up a teaching post there. We appreciate his taking time to write this article (and an earlier one on "The Roots of Evolutionary Theory"). We pray God's richest blessings on him and his wife, the former Gwen Cummings, in their future service to the Lord "down under."*

# The Paradox of Pollution

A. KENNETH AUSTIN

We live in an ecology-minded age. There is increasing concern over man's abuse of his environment, over his pollution of the air and the water. This concern has prompted demands for new laws to curtail such abuse; suits are being filed against guilty industries; moves are being made to require automobiles and aircraft to employ devices to reduce the emission of pollutants. Pollution has become a political issue as candidates and officeholders are asked to state their positions and indicate their support of more stringent measures to control this environmental murder.

All of this is proper. We ought to be extremely exercised over the problem. It affects every man, woman, and child, and failure to act now casts an ominous shadow over the future.

## The Paradox

Yet in the midst of all this environmental alarm a strange and inexplicable paradox exists. Side by side with the rapidly growing concern over the pollution of our natural resources, there is a conversely growing lack of concern over the pollution of the human mind and body. Is it not indeed quizzical that some individuals are such zealots in their opposition to environmental pollution, but simultaneously such libertarians in the use of drugs or the distribution of pornography?

In the case of drugs, for example, a sizeable element of today's high school and college youth is experimenting with narcotics. Some of them advocate the easing of restrictions regarding drug use—that marijuana, at least, ought to be legalized. Others go even further and call for the abolition of all regulatory drug laws. The body belongs to the individual, they claim, and he ought to have the freedom to do with it as he pleases. They even regard this pollution of the body as a right. And yet some of these same drug users among today's youth are the most enthusiastic disciples of stricter regulations to curtail the pollution of our water resources. How strange this desire to license the pollution of the bloodstream and to prohibit the pollution of the water streams!

There is also a move afoot for the relaxation of the regulations regarding pornography. Although some of today's young people may support liberty in this area, let us not absolve the older generation of blame. What more could we expect when the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography published the conclusions it had reached? In essence the report asserted that there is no evidence that exposure to pornography plays a significant role in contributing to the delinquency of our youth. Neither is there any evidence that exposure to pornography adversely affects one's attitude toward sex. Furthermore, most adults believe they should have the liberty to read and see obscene materials if they so choose. As a result, the Commission recommended that all federal, state, and local legislation against pornography be repealed.

What kind of muddy reasoning is this? Surely there is some truth to the old adage that he who wallows in filth is bound to get dirty. Up jumps this paradox again. How can people be so concerned about the pollution of the

air and so unconcerned about the pollution of the mind?

In short, there is no reason to expect the drug user or the consumer of pornography to be the least concerned about the pollution of his natural environment. He doesn't care about the pollution of his own mind or body, so why should he care about the abuse of his physical surroundings? He may, however, vigorously object to inhaling contaminated air or drinking impure water; but his concern betrays inconsistency. The staunchest champion of anti-pollution action should also be a leader in the fight against the pollution of the mind and body.

## The solution

The answer to the problem of pollution lies in the Christian faith. God placed man on the earth as the crown of creation. He instructed man to exercise dominion over his physical environment, to subdue it, to enjoy it, to make it serve him (Genesis 1 and 2). Man was made the steward of his surroundings with the moral obligation to handle responsibly this God-given physical gift. Here lies the basic motivation for the Christian's concern over the pollution of his environment. God requires him to meet his responsibility in the proper use of that which has been entrusted unto him. Pollution is a moral problem and the Christian violates his charge if he allows such abuse.

Just as the Scriptures disclose the relationship between God, man, and the environment, they also clearly reveal man's responsibility to handle aright his own person. The Christian is obliged to treat his body with respect. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit and is to be kept free from defilement (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19). The Bible states explicitly that "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8). Therefore, the inordinate use of drugs is immoral for the Christian.

The Christian is also accountable for what enters his mind. How can pornography be harmless when the Bible states "that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28)? In Romans 1, Paul cites homosexual practices as one of the signs of gross degeneracy (verses 26, 27). Such things as adultery, fornication, incest, homosexual relations, and rape are all prime subjects of obscene materials. Yet we are informed that even extensive exposure to them has relatively little or no effect upon our sexual mores. In striking contrast, God commands us to set our minds upon the good, the pure, and the holy (Philippians 4:8).

In the final analysis, the Christian is the one who can exercise consistency in the fight against pollution. He is morally bound to oppose both the pollution of the physical environment and also the pollution of the mind and the body. Only within the context of the Christian faith does the paradox of pollution disappear.

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## Here and There in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

**Harrisville, Pa.** — The Ohio Presbyterian meeting here on April 24 heard the Rev. John Thompson describe his work as missionary-at-large for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. Newly elected officers of the presbyterial are Helen Cover, Lois Armour, Alvera Billingsley, and Dorothy Rea.

**Middletown, Pa.** — The Philadelphia Presbyterial met here on April 29. The Rev. James Petty described the problems and methods used in reaching the student population in Philadelphia through the Church of the City—a group meeting in borrowed and cramped quarters but with heartwarming fellowship and concern. Mrs. Richard Gaffin challenged those present to pray and to witness themselves using the power Christ gives. New officers include Mmes. Will Ferguson, John Fisher, Paul Kent, James Hilton, Jane Kresge, Leonard Brown, Ruth Wright. Those attending included representatives from Emmanuel Chapel in Philadelphia.

**Kenosha, Wisc.** — The Orthodox Prebyterian Chapel here has had to move. They now meet, ten minutes away from the old location, in the Garrett Langvad Community Center of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois. Attendance is now averaging in the thirties. Mailing address: P. O. Box 194, Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096.

**Winner, S.D.** — The Richard B. Gaffins, missionaries to Taiwan, visited the Orthodox Presbyterian Church here on March 28. A fellowship dinner allowed greater opportunity for becoming better acquainted (an arrangement that missionaries unanimously appreciate). Men of the church have done

extensive work to complete a basement addition to the church. Prayers for the congregation are sought as its present pastor, the Rev. Robert Sander, leaves early in June.

**Philadelphia** — The Presbytery of Philadelphia appointed the Rev. William Krispin and ruling elder Robert Meeker as its representatives in receiving and enrolling new church members in the South Philadelphia area. The presbytery also approved the continued employment of Wilson Cummings as an assistant to Mr. Krispin in the work of Emmanuel Chapel.

## New Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

**Hsinchu, Rep. of China** — The first presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan was constituted on March 1, 1971. Four pastors, with elders from three congregations

## Japan Presbytery notes 25th Anniversary

**Meiji, Japan** — The Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Church in Japan, meeting at Gakuin University on April 28, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. In a memorial declaration, the presbytery expressed its appreciation to the missions of the Christian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian Churches

## Harry Meiners gone to his Lord

**Las Cruces, N.M.** — The Rev. Harry H. Meiners Jr., long-time stated clerk of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, died early on May 9; he had suffered a severe heart attack some months earlier. Harry had been confined to a wheelchair for many years as a result of polio, but his constant good humor was a blessing to many. He will be missed by his own church and by all those who have known him.

and delegates from three missions were present, as were six licensed preachers and interested observers. The new church acknowledged the Westminster Confession and Heidelberg Catechism as its subordinate standards, and adopted a first draft of a form of government. The Rev. Samuel H. P. Chu was elected moderator, elder T. J. Chung was chosen stated clerk, and Christian Reformed missionary William Kosten was named treasurer. Orthodox Presbyterian missionary Egbert W. Andrews served as constituting moderator.

"who have struggled with us in the task of evangelistic outreach in East Japan for the past twenty years." The presbytery gave all praise to God for his grace in the past, and consecrated itself to renewed effort in the future, both in its own area and hopefully in overseas work as well.

