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EDITORIAL

ROUSAS JOHN RUSHDOONY
1916–2001

by Stephen C. Perks

ON Thursday 8th February Rousas John Rushdoony, the American theologian and thinker, died at the age of 84. On the next day, February 9th, R. M. Coie, Rushdoony's son in law, issued the following statement: "A little before noon, his son Mark read 1 Corinthians 15 to comfort him. As Mark finished reading, Rush amazingly and with clear voice began to clearly expound the passage to his gathered family addressing children and grandchildren by name. He reminded them that God's promises were for their children and their children's children. He called them to be warriors for Christ. When he was done speaking, he asked Mark to pronounce the benediction as he often would. When Mark finished, Rush did what he regularly did when preaching; he asked, 'Are there any questions?' About 1 p.m., he fell asleep. Shortly after 9:30 p.m. his breathing became irregular. A few minutes later God called him home."

Rushdoony was born in New York. His parents were immigrants from Armenia. After graduating from the University of California (Berkeley) and the Pacific School of Religion he was ordained as a Presbyterian minister. He worked as a missionary to the Shoshone and Paiute Indians on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Nevada for over eight years and then as a pastor in churches in Santa Cruz, California until 1962.

Rushdoony was the founder of and leading figure in the Christian Reconstruction or Theonomy movement, which came into being after the establishment of the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965 as a means of promoting and propagating Rushdoony's teaching. Through numerous books, articles, position papers and conferences Rushdoony began articulating his theonomic ethics, namely that God's law is the rule of sanctification. All spheres of life were included in this. God's word is to be the governing principle in the whole of life. This school of thought had its antecedents in the Dutch Kuyperian tradition, and indeed was a development of this tradition, particularly in the areas of sociology and apologetics. He wrote many books on a wide variety of subjects, but always with the purpose of bringing the Christian faith to bear upon the subjects he dealt with. His 890 page book *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, which was his *magnum opus*, was a massive exposition of the relevance of God's law for the modern world. He served as an expert witness in numerous court cases involving the defence of independent Christian schools and home schoolers who were being prosecuted by the State for withdrawing their children from the State schools. His stress on the importance of Christian education along with his critique of State education was one of his chief concerns. He was also a champion of postmillennialism and was critical of the dispensationalism of much modern Christianity, seeing it as inevitably having a negative effect of the Christian's assessment of his duty to work for the transformation of the society of which he is a part by the application of God's word to its life and institutions.

Rushdoony's work was controversial. He caused a storm amongst pastors and academics alike by his approach to Christian ethics. In many respects his work was a revival of the

Reformed faith. He took the Reformed principle of the third use of the law, i.e. that the law is a rule of life, and applied it to the modern age. This struck against modern pietist notions of sanctification, notions that were as strong among "Reformed" people as among Arminians. His work was a more genuine revival of the Reformed ethic than the modern evangelical Reformed movement, which was really more of an appreciation movement for certain elements of Puritan devotional piety. It was from this "Reformed" movement that Rushdoony's strongest criticism came. Rushdoony's position was that we are justified by grace through faith that we might serve God in obedience to his law, and that therefore the law of God, as man's rule of life, is the criterion in terms of which sanctification is to be understood. This means that sanctification is Christian growth in a practical way of life under God's law, and this inevitably brought him into conflict with the pietist theories of sanctification that predominate in Reformed and evangelical circles. It also made obedience to God mean something practical that demanded sacrifice in daily living.

Yet despite the torrent of abuse he received because of his postmillennialism and theonomic ethics from pietists who said that the Reconstruction movement does not understand the theology of suffering, the truth was, and still is that the boot is very much on the other foot; that is to say, it is the unwillingness of the Reformed and evangelical community to submit to a life of obedience to God that requires one to subordinate one's own will to the rule of God's *law*, and where there is a conflict make the sacrifice that obedience requires, that most shows that it is Rushdoony's critics on this point who do not understand the theology of sacrifice.

Take the issue of education. Rushdoony worked tirelessly to promote Christian education, both by Christian schools and Christian home schooling, as the only realistic way of obedience for parents in the education of their children. After all, there is not much theology of sacrifice in sending one's children to the local secular humanist State school. But Christian home schooling, for example, as well as showing a practical commitment to the Christian way of life, does involve sacrifice and hard work. Yet there are many Christians, including pastors and theologians, who are happy to criticise the idea that the Church will be victorious and who propagate instead the idea that Christians are not to overcome the world but retreat from it,—because we are in the end times or some such thing—whose daily sacrifice for the faith does not extend even as far as educating their children in the faith. Likewise, many there are who guard their pulpits eagerly and would not have dreamed of having the message that Rushdoony preached articulated in their precious pulpits, whose children are sent to be brain-washed daily in secular humanist schools. In short, those who talk most about the theology of suffering and sacrifice seem least willing to engage in it. The real theology of suffering and sacrifice, the biblical theology, is not that Christians are people who merely suffer, but that Christians are people who overcome the world by their sacrifice of obedience, i.e. obedience to the rule of life that God has given us in his law, even when this means they must suffer as a consequence. The Bible does not teach that suffering for its own sake is good, but that suffering for the sake of the kingdom is the sacrifice that God will use to overcome the world. If we are not prepared to make this sacrifice of obedience when it hurts us to do so, when we have to suffer, i.e. when we have to do something other than what we should like to do,—e.g. make the sacrifice that home schooling involves—our obedience means nothing. Obedience is only ever tested when what is required goes against what we should like to do; that is where the sacrifice comes in. Rushdoony's theology at this point is a loggerheads with the catatonic comfyzone Christianity of modern evangelicalism, which rejects

God's law as our rule of life. The theonomy movement has been criticised endlessly for its "triumphalism" and lack of attention to the theology of suffering by a form of religion (evangelicalism) that consistently refuses to engage in the sacrifice of obedience to God's law that leads to suffering for the sake of the kingdom, which is one of God's appointed means of overcoming the world. Hence the decline of the Christian faith in modern Western societies.

Rushdoony's theology was very practical, yet it was also articulated at an academic level. But it required a response, and it is the duty to respond in faith, obediently to God's word, that the modern Church hates most of all. Rushdoony provided a detailed and incisive analysis and critique of the failure of modern humanism. This was not the problem. Many others have done the same without provoking hostility. But Rushdoony also set out in very clear terms the kind of response this required of Christians, a response that involved sacrifice and work for the kingdom. The catatonic comfy-zone Christianity of modern evangelicalism, Reformed as well as non-Reformed, found and still finds such a response unacceptable. Hence the controversy. Rushdoony articulated on a practical and detailed level what it meant to obey God's law in areas such as education, welfare, politics. His critique of Statism and socialism struck at the heart of the modern evangelical compromise with humanism.

However, his work has had a significant influence—and I think this will be an abiding influence—on modern Reformed/evangelical theology, not only among those of us who willingly acknowledge this influence and recognise the important contri-

bution he made to the development of modern Christian Reformed thought, but even among those who disagree with the Theonomy/Christian Reconstruction school of thought. Many of those who have taken up the cudgels against the Theonomy movement, particularly among the Reformed, have nevertheless had to modify their own theology as a result in the process, a modification that has brought them to a somewhat more consistent acknowledgement of the principles upon which a truly biblical Christian ethics is based, if not to an acceptance of the details of Rushdoony's theonomic position.

Rushdoony was a very learned scholar. He read voraciously and amassed a personal library of over 40,000 books. He had an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of issues relating to theology, philosophy, epistemology, history, sociology, apologetics and many other subjects. He was an outspoken critic of evolutionary theory and helped to promote the modern creation science movement.

He spoke at a number of our conferences here in the UK in the early 1990s. He could be relied upon to speak on most topics from a Christian perspective. He wrote over 40 books and hundreds of essays and articles, a few of which, it is our privilege to say, were written for *Christianity & Society*. His weekly sermons on various books of the Bible were distributed on cassette tape around the world. He will be remembered for his unflagging commitment to the need to re-build society in terms of Christian principles under the authority of God's word and his ability to translate this vision into a practical agenda for action. *C&S*

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE'S SECULAR WRITINGS

by John Peck and Charles Strohmer

[The following article is an excerpt from a new book, Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom for our Complex and Changing World by John Peck and Charles Strohmer (The Wise Press / Master Press, 2000, Chapter Four), reprinted here by kind permission of the authors. For a review of this book see Christianity & Society Vol. XI, No. 1, p. 26f. We highly recommend this book, which is an excellent introduction to the subject of developing a Christian worldview or biblical wisdom. For information on where to obtain the book see the advertisement on page 21.]

WITH apologies to Forrest Gump, life is not so much like a box of chocolates as it is like those superhighways that roam our major cities. Some are eight or ten lanes wide running in one direction. The lanes of life, too, are headed somewhere. Each lane serves a different function, or purpose, and we are all on the road, travelling in those different functions at different times.

In chapter 13, we are going to explore this metaphor more fully, suggesting that there are fourteen or fifteen lanes of life—the religious (in the sense of ultimate faith commitments), the ethical-moral, the economic, the societal, the aesthetic, the biological, and others. We will then explore how the Bible sees their purpose and direction, and what

methods and means we might use in those lanes to bring glory to God. Here we simply want to note that Christians, like everyone else, travel in different lanes at different times depending on what one is doing. A simple illustration would be that when a person is paying bills or investing, he or she is in the economic lane; when throwing a party, in the social lane. Christians, however, because of a split view of life (chapter 2), are accustomed to using Scripture as a map only for what we could call the religious and the ethical-moral lanes. That is, we are pretty sure of the purpose of those two lanes and the direction we need to be going in them, for we know how to use the Bible as the ultimate authority to back us up there. But life is such that we travel in all the lanes,

depending on whether we are at church, at home, at work, at play. So the question becomes: where is the ultimate authority to back up the way we think, reason, and act in the other lanes? Are we driving in those lanes with biblical methods and means? Let's not be too quick to answer "yes" to this. For if we are not sure how the Bible addresses those aspects of life, we are probably headed in some wrong directions. If so, we are going to arrive at wrong destinations—no doubt being quite surprised when we do, as some of us have at times discovered! If our ultimate authority in those lanes is not Scripture, it will be some other source by default.

How then should we interpret the secular writings?

In the previous chapter we noted that our first task is to ferret out the Bible's instructions for what we are here calling life's secular lanes. Next comes interpreting that map for today, lest we find ourselves in a pileup along the highway. At this point, a significant question arises: if most of the Old Testament is to be taken as it stands, without allegorising it, or looking for strained moral lessons or esoteric spiritual experiences in it, shouldn't those of us who are Gentile Christians be keeping things like the Sabbath, the food laws, and circumcision? If not, how then should we interpret the Bible's wisdom for everyday affairs?

The first century Church's response to a small but noisy contingent of high-profile religious leaders provides a clue. The "Judaisers," as they were known, believed that it was not enough for a Gentile just to become a Christian in order to be accepted by God. They argued that a Gentile also had to fully adopt Jewish law in order to become acceptable to God and able to participate in fellowship with their Jewish fellow-believers. So vigorously did the Judaisers press this point that for a while several apostles and other church leaders were swayed by it. This necessitated the "Council of Jerusalem" (Acts 15), which settled the matter only after much soul-searching.

The early Church provides an important clue

The way the early Church addressed this idea and movement helps us understand how we can interpret Old Testament passages for today. Acts 15 records the apostolic Church's recognition that Gentiles do not have to become Jews in order to become accepted by God or to gain admission to the same full Christian fellowship as enjoyed by Jewish fellow-believers. The Council of Jerusalem recognised that God saved and accepted Gentiles just as he did Jews: by grace through faith. Once the principle of "salvation by grace through faith" had been established, the practical question of social intercourse could be addressed. The conclusion was that Christian believers ought to respect certain scruples of their fellow Jewish believers. The conditions are laid down in verses 15 and 29 and deal with the main food laws and chastity.

The principle here (see also Acts 21:25), according to some scholars, is a kind of negative form of the golden rule: "They should not do to others what they do not wish to have done to themselves." Christ's apostles, therefore, do not reject or allegorise Old Testament law on this occasion, nor do they apply it literally; rather, they show us that *through the Gospel* Old Testament ideas and principles could be

universalised and set to work outside the Jewish nation and culture.

The New Testament largely takes the Old for granted as its foundation. Yes, it is concerned chiefly with one particular theme, which might be summed up as how Jesus the Messiah came to reconcile us to God by his death and resurrection. But like the Old Testament, the New cannot leave temporal issues alone. It details the organisational structure for the relief of widows in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 5. It expounds the nature of civil government in Romans 13. Marriage and divorce, in its social as well as its personal contexts, are topics for Jesus, who also makes authoritative statements about taxes, children, inheritances, settling accounts, and many other non-religious matters.

The New Testament is about salvation, but it takes everyday life seriously

Occasionally, Jesus diverts people out of the religious lane into a secular one even when they want the religious map. In one curious circumstance, the Gospel of Luke seems to go out of its way to indicate Jesus' deliberate answering of a religious question with a secular story. Jesus had stopped in Jericho to stay with a tax-man, which stirred up quite a controversy in itself, but "While they were listening [to Jesus], he went on to tell them a parable *because he was near to Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once*" (19:11). Now you can allegorise this parable as a religious "kingdom story," as people do, for the imagery lends itself to that. Yet the fact remains that the parable is a long story about people earning money. In other words, at the centre of Jewish religious activity (Jerusalem) and in answer to a religious question (when and how the Kingdom of God will appear), Jesus tells a *secular* story, a parable about trustworthiness in the economic lane. This is probably not the way most of us would have answered a question about the appearance of the Kingdom! Yet this way of reasoning is normal for Jesus, for he sees life as a whole and God as equally involved in all of its parts. Here our Lord is showing in a quite pointed way how much the economic lane matters to God. Again we are reminded of the importance of our secular histories (chapter 3), and perhaps the most frightening aspect of the parable is that the judged are those who did not fulfil obediences to the king here.

The apostle Paul does not make many explicit references to Old Testament law, but when he does he takes its provisions seriously. In 1 Corinthians 9:9, when he cites Deuteronomy 25:4 in the context of paying preachers, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and he adds, "Is it only for oxen that God cares?" , obviously he is expecting the answer, "Certainly not! This applies to us as well." Paul is not arguing that oxen do not matter. Just the opposite. His interpretation is applicable because oxen are valuable. His argument is what logicians would call *a fortiori*; that is, its reasoning goes: if oxen are important, then all the more so are human workers. He is not ignoring a law because he cannot apply it literally. Neither is he spiritualising, nor allegorising a law that would be otherwise obsolete and therefore not binding. Nor is he reading it through stained glass, bending a religious meaning into it. His argument is forceful because the rational authority (chapter 3) of the law relating to oxen is binding, and his first conclusion is that its principle applies to any worker. Only on that basis does he then apply it to the Christian worker.

The Corinthian church was predominantly a Gentile church, yet Paul is here expounding the Jewish Torah and applying one of its principles *outside* the Jewish nation and culture and *into* a Gentile church's organisational life. (One application today may result from an honest examination of how ministers and workers ought to be paid by churches and parachurch organisations, who frequently assume that skills and services ought to be rendered at a greatly reduced fee, or even provided gratis, simply because those serving are Christians.) In 2 Corinthians 13:1, Paul does the same thing, applying the ancient Jewish provisions regarding testimony in court (Deuteronomy 19:15) to regulate investigations into the everyday activities of a largely Gentile Christian church. The practice also appears in 1 Timothy 5:19.

It is significant that Paul sees no reason to justify this type of exposition with an explanation (although in 1 Corinthians 10:6 he does solemnly remind his readers that the Old Testament narratives, as well as the Law, are applicable to them). It appears as if he and his readers took it for granted that the Old Testament addressed everyday life in their—more modern—times. The challenge they faced, to interpret this “ancient” material for their times, is also the challenge for us today. Again, through the Gospel Old Testament ideas and principles can be universalised and set to work for us in the present age.

Several features help us interpret the Bible's everyday material for our contemporary life

Generally speaking, today's commentators are governed by historical, or even by chronological, interests in their scholarship. So they tend to regard the peculiarities of much of the Bible's secular passages and books as signs of late authorship, when Israel's religious life had lost its momentum. They point out that most passages and books of this kind belong to the last division of the Old Testament canon known as “the Writings” (the first two divisions being “the Law” and “the Prophets”). But some of the Writings, such as Chronicles, use the religious name “Yahweh” frequently, as do later books, such as Zechariah, in the two other divisions. On the other hand, some sections of Genesis do not use the religious name at all. (This might have an explanation in Exodus 6:3, but the subject is complex and involves considering other matters, such as the affinity of Genesis with the Book of Job.) So the historical and the chronological explanations do not help us much with the task we are seeking to accomplish through this book.

The secular writings have close associations with the non-Jewish world

Several other features, however, will help us learn how to drive with the Bible in the secular lanes today, even in our pluralistic society. One feature is that these writings have close associations with the world outside of Palestine. The last twelve chapters of Genesis have an Egyptian setting, and most of Daniel takes place in Babylon. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs are all connected with Solomon, who, far more than any other king, helped Israel become a leading nation geopolitically. And several of the Proverbs (22:20–21, for example) seem to have affinities with the wisdom literature of Egypt. In Solomon's reign the Israelite empire included many small neighbouring nations, and, farther

afield, non-Israelite political and commercial representatives from foreign lands were common at Solomon's court. As one scholar remarks, “Solomon was unmistakably the most secular of Israel's kings.”

Of other books, Ruth is closely connected with Moab; Esther, like Daniel, is set in exile in a heathen court; and Job is the richest man “in the East,” apparently in the Arabian Desert somewhere. These scriptural books, then, show that God's wisdom has a significance outside of the covenant community, outside of those who share faith in the LORD as their God.

They are connected with public affairs and are known as “wisdom literature”

Another feature is that most of these writings belong to a class known as “Wisdom Literature” (this is true even of one of the Psalms, 49, and probably more). Normally we think of “wisdom” as being possessed by people who have exceptional common sense or outstanding good judgment when conducting their affairs with people. Solomon in particular comes to mind, especially that cliff-hanger with the two prostitutes and the baby. “When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice” (1 Kings 3:28).

But to the ancient world, especially that of the Bible, “wisdom” also had a special meaning. It was connected with people in authority in public affairs, especially statecraft, commerce, and the law courts. “The Wise” in any nation were an elite who acted as counsellors to the king. Like Daniel and his three friends, they were responsible and exceptional men attached to the king's court. The Magi who came to worship Jesus were such people. The Bible's wisdom literature is therefore connected with public affairs, with life outside of the Temple and the synagogue, outside of our church-related activities.

They major on the creation, which everyone shares, and on conditions shared by the whole human family

A third helpful feature for today is that in Scripture the instructions for everyday life concentrate on God's work in the creation, such as with seed-time and harvest. That is, they deal with what we all have in common because we all share the same creation. Some of these instructions even have what we today might call science's interest in predictable things. Thus Solomon, who is renowned as a counsellor and a musician and for his jurisprudence, is also noted as having expertise in botany and zoology (1 Kings 4:33).

Another feature is that they address human conditions that are shared by everyone: work and wealth, family and neighbours, economics and politics, and so on. For instance, the king in Israel, unlike many of the surrounding kings, was excluded from exercising the religious leadership of the nation (that is, its cultus, or acts of public worship). The task of his government was to concentrate on political and economic issues. This meant that in dealing with foreigners—people who owed no allegiance to the Covenant of Yahweh—they worshiped other gods—international negotiations and agreements could not be based on a common religious faith or law. They had to rest on whatever principles people had in common simply as human beings.

In these geopolitical situations, of course, standards of right and wrong never developed to the heights found in the prophets, who continually called Israel's monarch and people back to the ideals of Deuteronomy for their nation's corporate life. Rather, a sort of minimum morality was required in global economics and in geopolitical alignments for people to work together satisfactorily. This may seem strange to Christians today, but it was not strange, never mind "unbiblical," to God's covenant people of old. It did not make them feel guilty of "ungodly compromise," as it might (unnecessarily) do to us. Here is a paradox for our time. Applying this insight today would give us a way to lower our sights in the public square without lowering God's standards. In turn, we might just find ourselves becoming more listened to as Christians than ever before.

Such a standard appeals most frequently to prudence and common sense, with little reference to such demanding ideals like generous loyalty and covenant mercy. It takes account of shared, basic human conditions: people tend to overprice when they sell and underprice when they buy; fools won't listen to reason; people's nerves are precarious first thing in the morning, so it's wisdom to remember that when blessing (praising, congratulating) a neighbour. Again, such a standard addresses conditions shared by the whole human family. Romance is another, which, as the Song of Songs suggests, has its ups and downs for the godly as well as for the ungodly. Two others are cruelty and injustice, which people of all kinds suffer. And religious exhortations, the book also explains, are not always much help—Job discovers that wise men who don't realise this make miserable counsellors.

The secular writings say: this is for humanity as a whole

We may say, then, and this is quite significant, that the Bible's secular writings are about how people are, rather than what by the grace of the Lord they may become. They have the typical person's interest in everyday life, rather than in the way that God makes himself known in special events to a special people. A likely translation of the concluding phrase of Ecclesiastes 12:13 sums up the foregoing features and epitomises the concern of this wisdom literature: "This is the sum of man's duty." Literally it reads: "This is all mankind," or, "This is [for] humanity as a whole." It pertains to what all people have in common, created and fallen as they are, before considering the division between those within God's covenant and those who are not.

The Bible's wisdom literature therefore looks at the world as a whole, regardless of divisions of race or religious allegiance. And it does not look at the world in a disengaged way, as a mere spectator. It is always concerned with effective and consistent action within the world. It is precisely this wisdom, as will be shown in the next chapter, which we need in order to function faithfully under God in every aspect (lane) of life, to speak and act with relevance even in a culturally and religiously mixed society.

They share the same basic logic with the Gospel

We mentioned that it is "through the Gospel" that the Old Testament's secular material can be set to work for us. This is another significant point. The Bible's wisdom literature can succeed today because it shares the same basic

logical framework with the Gospel. Let us think again for a moment about the traditional approaches of many commentators (chapter 3). Such work has had outstanding value throughout the Church's history. Depths of devotion have been nourished by allegorical interpretations of the Song of Songs. Evangelists have used appeals from Job's comforters effectively and savingly. I [JP] personally have found the cynicism of Ecclesiastes invaluable for talking about the Gospel in English pubs. And, even stretching a point, we might say that the thought of God's name encoded in the Book of Esther is at least suggestive that the LORD is secretly present in situations from which persons have deliberately sought to exclude him. We cannot imagine anyone doing this so well with Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, or D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, or Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. So how is it that these approaches work so well with particular books and passages of Scripture?

It is because they share same basic logic with the Gospel. A certain framework of thought is found in them—a certain perspective—in the way their ideas are presented. Now this mindset "fits" the Gospel, which has its own inner logic; that is, it works with its own assumptions about the nature of God, the world, and people, although these are assumptions that the world at large does not necessarily hold at all.

How an anti-racist story from the Wisdom literature shows relevance today

In the larger and more complex secular writings of Scripture it may be difficult to see their resonance with the Gospel at first. We can get acquainted with it in a more familiar and simple example from the New Testament "Parable of the Good Samaritan," which is presented in a literary form that is entirely characteristic of the Wisdom style. The Hebrew word for this style of writing is *mashal* (pronounced "maw-shawl"; the plural is *meshalim*). The word is translated as "proverb" in the book we have with that name.

We usually think of proverbs as pithy little sayings. Honesty is the best policy. A stitch in time saves nine. More haste, less speed. But there is much more to it. Basically the word meant "a comparison," and its impact depends on the principle that the rules which govern one aspect of life have parallels, comparisons, in other aspects. So, "faint heart never won fair maiden," we immediately know, is not about a weak cardiovascular pump! Anyway, a *mashal* could be a pithy saying, but also much more. The *meshalim* of the Wise might be quite extended passages like those found in Proverbs 1–8, where wisdom and folly are compared to two different kinds of women. Or they could be stories, what we call parables (the Greek word from which this comes, *parabole*, was the normal translation for *mashal*). Jesus was, of course, a master of the Wisdom style; in fact, Paul calls Jesus "Christ . . . the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24).

As it stands, the Parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to a thoroughgoing good neighbourliness. Some of its sting, however, is in its bald secularity, is in, we might even say, its anti-religious nature. Jesus implies by it that devotees of religion do not have a monopoly on kindness. What's more, being religious might even hinder showing kindness and compassion (handling bodies and wounds could disqualify a Jewish priest from serving in the Temple). In using the Wisdom style, Jesus is echoing those words from Ecclesiastes: "This is [for] all mankind." No exceptions.

Jesus had a “Cross-shaped” conception of neighbourliness in his everyday wisdom

The parable works for today because it has a conception of good neighbourliness that “fits” the Gospel *even though the parable is not itself religious in form*. That is, good neighbourliness for Jesus is not just about lending the lawn mower to someone who is one day going to lend you an electric drill, or watching your friend’s children after school because she is going to babysit your daughter on the weekend. It’s not just about chatting over coffee, or even caring about local amenities. It is about putting oneself out, taking risks for a person in distress. It may even mean making sacrifices for your enemy. It is caring about people rather than about their race or religious allegiance, or your own taboos. It means giving in a special way: not just expending effort or contributing money, but making an open-ended self-commitment that may even involve others in the task. In this parable, therefore, Jesus uses the Wisdom style to give us a look at an everyday situation through the same set of values and attitudes that took him to the Cross. By this we see that the Gospel extends outside religious life.

All Jesus’ parables, being part of the Wisdom style, disclose this same way of looking at common, everyday life. Thus we run across wisdom for folk who are managing estates, doing accounts, losing things, making bread, waging war. It is not that Jesus went around looking for religious lessons, jotting down useful sermon illustrations. No. For him the illustrations came naturally. They came out of his way of seeing the world’s life as being shared by the whole of humanity *and being informed by the Gospel in the process*. This is why the Bible’s secular passages and books can succeed today. It is why we can learn to interpret and apply them anytime, anywhere, for the Gospel has a relevance to all ages and cultures.

Again, merely to allegorise the Bible’s secular literature is to lose its possible practical application for today’s world. This is true even with “the best” allegories, such as Augustine’s interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Augustine, the great fourth/fifth century North African scholar, expounded the parable like this. The robbers were evil angels. The victim was Man lost in sin, going down from the City of Peace to Jericho, the City of the Curse. Jesus was the Good Samaritan. The inn was the Church. The two pence were the two sacraments of Baptism and Communion.

Well . . . Even granted that Augustine had a theological purpose in mind here, many of us feel an unnaturalness in that last one, an application rather different from what Jesus intended. But Augustine was, to put it mildly, no fool. Many of his ideas are astoundingly current. And one has to admit that his other images fit beautifully. In its day the allegory spoke powerfully, as it has for many highly intelligent and godly people since. What is the reason for its success? The allegory “fits” the Gospel. Nevertheless, his approach here, being allegorical, is different from the approach to the Bible’s wisdom literature that we are presenting in this book.

The Bible’s secular literature is based on the fear of the Lord

The view of the universe as being a reflection of the shared world of temptations and priorities, of choices and motives, of service and loyalty, of hating and loving, and so on colours all the biblical writings of “the Wise.” It is largely

what they meant by “wisdom,” and it has a Gospel-way of looking at life. It is therefore much more than pithy sayings. It is always an intensely practical way of looking at things. And at its base is the all-pervasive significance of the spiritual dimension of faith, love, commitment, and, above all, an acknowledgment that the entire creation comes from the hand of “the LORD”: the God who sustains all, who orders the destinies of people and nations, who has revealed himself in the history of one, and who has pledged himself specially to his chosen people. Thus “the fear of the LORD”—due regard for the absolute authority of Yahweh over all of life—is the foundation principle of biblical wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). Please note: this is vital and fundamental, because it is the only starting point for any understanding of the secular world that has a hope of corresponding with the Gospel.

Jesus insists that this is the only way of interpreting Scripture

Our Lord makes this clear when explaining how Scripture itself can be misused. You could, he said, know what is in the Bible and interpret it wrongly if you did not have the right base, or starting point, for your “wisdom” in the matter. To the Jewish leaders who were in dispute with him, he declared, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.” Now they certainly knew the text well enough, so what was wrong? Jesus later said, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. Yet these very Scriptures testify about me.” It is not clear if Jesus is telling them to search, or if he is saying that they already do so. For our purpose here that is not important. His point is, “You can do what you like with Scripture; it will only speak truly to you if you read it in relation to me.” Thus “the fear of the LORD”—the Lord Jesus Christ—is the basis of wisdom even in understanding Scripture itself.

The rest of the New Testament bears the same message. Paul is beset by people who preach a “gospel” that turns out not to be the Gospel (Galatians 1:6–9). In Colossians he also condemns the teaching of a “hollow and deceptive philosophy,” one founded on “human tradition and the basic principles of this world,” in place of one that is founded on Jesus Christ (2:8), and he says that we should see things from the viewpoint of heaven (3:2). James likewise talks about the wisdom that comes from below or from above (3:15–17). And Peter refers to Paul as writing with the wisdom that God gave him, explaining that some people who have not received instruction in the Gospel distort Scripture and what Paul says (2 Peter 3:15–16). These are all ways in which the New Testament reminds us that all of Scripture is based on the fear of the LORD, and that if we do not interpret it on that basis, life will go wrong.

Without the fear of the Lord, a God-less wisdom takes over

Many distortions thus exist today, even within Christendom. For instance, if, instead of seeing life as based on the fear of the LORD, we see life as primarily a matter of morality, or of personal fulfilment, or even of meeting human needs, it may lead us to think of sin simply as a moral misdemeanour between human beings, or of salvation as gaining an integrated personality, or of love as a response to the demands of any situation. Then Jesus Christ himself gets to be regarded as a means to some other end, like solving personal

disputes, or making people happy, or providing things.

Further, if our view of life is not based on the fear of the LORD it will subtly deviate from the biblical meanings of familiar concepts. “Truth” may become pictures recorded by television cameras. “Faith” may become, as someone said, “A yearn in soft focus,” or working through a decision, or merely having a gut feeling or confessing a Bible verse. “Love” may become what two consenting adults make. “Impartiality” may become a refusal to make moral decisions at all. “Tolerance” may become complete indifference, a capitulation to the most intolerable situations. “Freedom” and “liberty” may become a license to do anything “as long as I’m not hurting anyone.” Words like these have profound connotations and implications (chapters 14, 18, 19), and yet they get tossed about in the media with little meaning-reflection. Many listeners would find it difficult, if asked, to say what they mean by words like “justice” and “mercy.” And few people would know their biblical meanings.

All of this is to say that the fear of the LORD must have a power even over the way we think about our secular ideas and beliefs and over *the language we use to express them*. That is, we must have the same source of wisdom, one based on the fear of the LORD, for the secular lanes as we have for the religious one. The mind abhors a vacuum. If our wisdom for life from Monday through Saturday is not based on the fear of the LORD and instructed from Scripture, a “secular secular” mindset, rather than a “biblical secular” one (to coin a couple of phrases), takes over and gives meaning and direction to much that we understand and do in everyday life. Whether we are talking about crime prevention, or teachers’ unions, or artistic expression, or education standards, or government spending, or retirement security, or any other non-religious area, we will by default develop an analytical process based on a “secular secular” mindset if we do not have one that is based on the fear of the LORD; that is, a “biblical secular” one.

This is largely the situation today

This is largely our situation today *as Christians*. Our loss of secular discourse with Scripture has meant that we have incarnated the basic assumptions, attitudes, ideas, means, and methods of the world’s thinking about secular life. This has quite serious practical ramifications, for it means that we Christians are not usually saying anything fundamentally different from what the world already hears from within its own way of seeing life, from its own prophets. As a result, the world does not see anything really different from us at all. Like the car license plate frames and refrigerator magnets (chapter 2), we replicate how the world does life, stamp it with the name “Jesus” or with a Bible verse, sell it, and assume that that is all it takes for our efforts to be based on the fear of the LORD.

Harry Blamires got many Christians thinking about this vital piece of the puzzle in the early 1960s, with his perceptive diagnosis: “There is no longer a Christian mind.” Blamires was not arguing that Christians no longer think. His contention was that they think about culture from a frame of reference and a set of criteria and evaluations that they had absorbed over the years from the “secular secular” way of seeing everyday life. Thus their whole analytical process for reflecting about their contemporary situations excluded truly Christian thought about it. By Blamires’ time, this was

happening to believers by default, because not only had the mind of modern man been secularised, the modern Christian mind had succumbed to the secularisation process as well. Thus there was no longer a pool of thought in which to think Christianly about modern culture, no uniquely Christian theory of life to throw its weight around in the public square. There was no established Christian teaching tradition—no packed contemporary field of discourse, to use Blamires’ phrase—to tap into for thinking and writing about, for critiquing and solving the problems of, everyday life.

Forty years before Blamires’ *The Christian Mind*, an astute British clergyman, G. A. Studdert Kennedy, already had his finger on the modern Christian pulse. “A very large number of [Christians],” he wrote, “are dissociated personalities. They are one person on Sunday and another on Monday. They have one mind for the sanctuary and another for the street. They have one conscience for the church and another for the cotton factory. But they will not acknowledge the conflict.” (Kenneth Leech in *The Eye of the Storm*, [San Francisco: Harper] quoting Kennedy, p. 2).

What is said about history? It repeats itself because no one’s listening? As Blamires himself said, it is difficult to do justice in words to the gravity of our loss, the loss of secular discourse with the Bible. One cannot characterise it without having recourse to language that sounds hysterical and melodramatic. Yet we would do well to ask ourselves why most of the acclaimed thinkers and prophets of our time are non-Christians. Christians may simply brush this off, saying, “Well, what do you expect? The world applauds its own.” Maybe. But in not a few cases, the popularity and wide influence of the secular prophets is due to their being incisive and penetrating. That is, they reason more clearly and consistently within their way of seeing than we do about their way of seeing. As a result, our Christian voice on social problems or political issues or international matters often pales before theirs. After all, our Lord himself said that the children of this generation are wiser than the children of light.

One may object, “Hold on. I don’t think like that. I don’t take my cues from the world. I attend Christian conferences and read Christian books.” Unfortunately, in our time that does not guarantee one a “biblical secular” perspective. Blamires’ point is that our loss of reasoning with the secular literature of Scripture is so thoroughgoing and longstanding that, as difficult as it may be to accept, the arguments, analyses, and “plans for action” promoted in our Christian books and conferences are most likely carried out within a “secular secular” frame of reference, quite without our knowledge, or even the knowledge of those who developed the material. Not even our leaders, thinkers and conference speakers, nor our pastors, escape this. Not even those of us who write books trying to address it! This is what we are up against as Christians influenced by the inveterate and ubiquitous presence of the secular worldview alongside our loss of secular discourse with Scripture.

A case in point: the world of Christian business

The force of the argument can be felt in the overheard wry comment that the only difference between a Christian businessman and his secular counterpart is that the former is in church on Sunday. The implication being that during

the week there is little difference between the two in the way they run their businesses. Quite a reason for this is found in the “stained glass window” effect. Sunday after Sunday the businessman receives a steady diet of instruction that touches on religious and moral matters only. That is, there is little or no instruction from the pulpit, or from Sunday school, or from his Bible study group, that unpacks the wisdom of Scripture for the forty-to-fifty percent of the waking hours where his mind is on his work. To the degree that this is so, he will by default grapple with a big percentage of his life solely from within “secular secular” discourse about it. This usually becomes quite irritating, for he knows that some aspects of work should be different from how they are, and yet he can’t quite figure what direction to go. Sometimes he becomes intuitively restless for biblical wisdom here. He may even talk to his minister about it. And one Sunday morning, a message might resound from the pulpit about honesty and ethics in business dealings or about morality in the workforce. And if he dialled up a radio station, he might find a Christian program about money management, or advice on employer-employee relations. But by and large, such instruction derives from the Bible’s religious and moral teaching. And that’s not scratching him where he is itching.

As much as one hates to admit it, this leaves that Christian without much that is uniquely biblical about business theory. So good business practices for that Christian become reduced to not telling lies, not breaking contracts, not flirting with secretaries. Fair enough. We need moral people doing business. But even non-Christians can drive fairly well in the ethical-moral lane. Our point is that the Bible’s religious and moral instruction, as vital as it is, is not enough to make Christian business theory much different from the world’s. For instance, I[JP] find that when I start talking to Christian business people about making contracts that are generous in nature, they do not understand. This is because they are not thinking of business as a liberating process, which is how the Bible sees it, in part, because business by the Book is Gospel-shaped. This means that it is partly a rescue, a saving, operation.

Further, doing business by the wisdom of the Book would instruct people in such matters, believe it or not, as building design and advertising, workers’ rights versus duties, and the use of natural resources. That is, such wisdom would help business people in the aesthetic, social, and biological lanes, respectively. Yet most Christian business people are not accustomed to digging into Scripture this way, nor are those who teach them. (Sections throughout this book offer ideas for theorising in these areas.)

All of us are stuck in this condition

This is not to pick on Christian business people or our instructors in the faith. It merely highlights the business world to identify a condition all of us are stuck with, whether we are artists, pastors, teachers, nurses, journalists, designers, shop managers, economic analysts, you name it. We used the world of business merely to show that all who follow Jesus Christ are called to think different and to act differently *outside the sanctuary* from those who have another object of faith. Monday through Saturday is not a Sabbath rest for Christians from thinking and acting differently from those who do not follow Jesus Christ. When Philippians 2:1–8 calls us to have the mind of Christ, surely this does not mean for

religious activities only. When the Bible calls us to know the will of God and to do it, surely that includes Monday through Saturday.

We are not in the least suggesting that the Bible can be used for answering all business questions. We cannot expect it to answer questions about what computer software to use, or what health care benefits to choose, or what new products to develop. Neither are we suggesting that the Bible can be used to answer all questions about psychology, technology, ecology, education, politics, or art. But the Bible does concern itself with secular life. More than we may have thought. And we are suggesting that every Christian can have recourse to the Bible’s marketplace wisdom in ways never dreamed of.

If the Saviour God made this world, it is surely ridiculous to have one mindset for understanding religious life and the Gospel and a different one for understanding everything else. What makes this so serious is that we live in this world alongside other human beings. We cannot prevent our thinking and our lives, or that of our children’s, from interacting with others. Further, God has ordained that, willy-nilly, we have at this point in time to be dependent on non-Christians and their inter-social arrangements for our daily needs. We vote from the same list on election day, rely on the same police, service our cars at the same garages. Christian schools still use many of the same textbooks as other schools, and Christian supermarkets will not be all that different from others, even if the employees say “God bless you!” at the checkouts.

But there is a way out

In both Great Britain and the United States we find ourselves in societies that, because they are still living off of Christian capital, are in crisis between biblical and secular ideals. In this ethos, one ‘thing is absolutely certain: if we do not have a wisdom based on the fear of the LORD, if we do not choose and cultivate an understanding of the world that fits the Gospel and the Word of God, we shall by default find our thinking at the mercy of one that does not. As the next chapter will show, this will make many aspects of God’s will and revelation for everyday life today both unintelligible to us as Christians and inaccessible to our societies. C&S

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ALPHA AND THE OMEGAS?

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PART IV: 9. GLORY TO GOD ALONE (concluded)

THIS last Pillar of the Reformation is a doxology of truth: Glory to God Alone. Doxologies are a confession, a statement of truth and a hymn of praise, that God is God. The word “doxology” derives from the Greek words “doxa” [glory] and “logia” [word]: glory-word. Through Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone and Christ Alone the cry is “Yours Alone is the Glory, O God.”

It should be no surprise that Reformed truth ends with a doxology; that of Glory to God Alone. The glory of God is the most eminent of truths: “the nature and acts of God in self-manifestation [revealed in] what He essentially is and does.”¹ For God works according to the counsel of his own unchangeable and righteous will, for his own glory. This is seen clearly in the Book of Revelation where there are a series of doxologies: 4:8–11; 7:12; 11:13; 15:4; and 19:12. Of these doxologies, some are a rejoinder to the majestic character of God, whilst others are evoked by the judgements of God. And, overall, the greatest revelation of the glory of God is the completion of his eternal purposes as shown in the last chapter of the Holy Scriptures.

But, it is glory to God *alone*: “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” [Ex 34:14] and “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” [Is 42:8]. Here, the word *alone* is an apt synonym for the word *jealous* and its exclusivity of God’s glory. And in this way too, *jealously* can be used as a synonym for *alone* in the Five Pillars: Scripture Jealously; Grace Jealously; Faith Jealously; Christ Jealously; and Glory to God Jealously. Phrasing the Five Pillars in this way demonstrates the two-way nature of these truths. God is jealous regarding Scripture, Grace, Faith, Christ and Glory, and, we must be jealous for the Lord and his holy name as revealed in these truths.

The Glory of God and Confessionalism

With the glory of God firmly in view, we can revisit some of the points that I made in Part I. Regarding creeds, James Packer, in “The Thirty-Nine Articles: their place and use today,” believes that

facing and dialoguing with the Thirty-Nine Articles will help Anglicans both to relearn and reapply some basic biblical truths . . . [they] have great theological strength and value, and are

permanently important in the ecumenical quest for the unity of the faith . . . With scholars generally, [he] believe[s] that the Anglican Articles are a skilfully framed, high-quality creed.²

But taking Packer’s comments about the ecumenical theology of Macquarrie with the ecumenical theology of Gumbel, and, Packer’s comments on ASB liturgy (even more pertinent regarding Common Worship) with the liturgy of HTB’s “Toronto Blessing,” then the former “is calculated to ensure that the Articles will never shape Anglican theology again”³ whilst through the latter, the Articles “must henceforth seem increasingly anomalous and anachronistic.”⁴ Packer later added, ten years before the “Toronto Blessing,” that “the problem of where the Articles fit into the modern Church of England cannot simply be laughed off. It is too serious. It is at heart a problem of integrity.”⁵

Packer remarks that “creedal and confessional statements emerge at times of crisis in church life, when it seems that, unless the apostolic faith is clarified afresh, error will simply overwhelm it.”⁶ It is a tragedy that Packer has endorsed Alpha, for, from what I have shown, it negates the creedal statements of the Thirty-Nine Articles that support the Five Pillars of the Reformation. It was, and remains, my hope that Packer will return to his uncompromising Reformed roots and deliver a 1950s anti-Keswick type message against Alpha. However, because Packer has endorsed Alpha, we must ask whether he has the firm conviction that he once had when he said that

the Articles are true enough, profound enough, biblical enough, evangelical enough, and magisterial enough to sustain such a role amid the babel and bustle of present-day theological work, and that we greatly need them fulfilling it amongst us. They have been silent too long.⁷

If the Articles, and I would add the WCF, with the framers’ use of Archbishop Ussher and the Irish Articles, have been silent too long, what purpose can the Articles, or for our present purposes the Five Pillars of the Reformation, fulfill? Packer provides five uses: declaratory, didactic, denunciatory, disciplinary and doxological.⁸ Taking his point that “Declaration not only divides; it also unites”⁹ with my plea for a “ten seas” Confessional Conference in 2002, the 450th anniversary of

1. W. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Zondervan, USA, 1952), p. 153.

2. James Packer, *The Thirty-Nine Articles: their place and use today* (Latimer House, 1984), p. 20.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 23.5.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 28f.

Ibid., p. 25.6.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Ibid., p. 51.

9. *Ibid.*

Cranmer's invitation to Bucer, Calvin, Melancthon and Bullinger, there must be a rejection of Archdeacon Lawson's keynote address, to this year's Anglican Evangelical Assembly, regarding his call to end divisions and work with high-church Anglicans.¹⁰ Let the primary Articles which support the Five Pillars of the Reformation be declared that there may be division and unity. Be jealous for the glory of God.

As to the didactic aspect of the Articles, if they are categorised according to primary and secondary truths of the Five Pillars of the Reformation, they will include, as I said in Part I, sanctification, creationism and the person and offices of Jesus Christ as primary issues and have ecclesiology and eschatology as secondary issues. Scripture Alone would relate to the nature of revelation, including the preservation of the manuscripts of the Testaments. Grace Alone describes the character and decrees of God, Creationism and the nature of man in his fallen state. Faith Alone, through dealing with justification and sanctification, leads to the nature of society and the place of God's law word in it. Christ Alone has respect both to the nature of the person and office of Jesus Christ and the false presumption of accepting other people's unscriptural christs and salvations. Let there be jealousy for the Glory of God.

The denunciatory use of the Articles is for "creedal statements . . . [to be] used . . . in conjunction with Scripture, as a yardstick for identifying heresy and a weapon for combating it."¹¹ As I said in Part I, is not a great part of the world following frantic heresies, both old and new ones, even though there is an acceptance of the ecumenical creeds? Regarding their disciplinary aspect, there needs to be a re-exercised usage. Let there be jealousy for the Glory of God.

With their doxological use, Packer limits this to the liturgical use of the ecumenical creeds "as a celebration of God's mighty acts of creation and redemption corresponding to the recital of historical deliverance in the Psalms."¹² But this is a limiting doxological usage, for the Five Pillars aspects of the 39A and WCF can be used in a doxological and liturgical practice. Be jealous for the Glory of God.

DOXOLOGIES AND THE FIVE PILLARS OF THE REFORMATION

Glory to God Alone for Scripture Alone

As if answering Gumbel and his exhortation of Hort and "Dei Verbum," Rushdoony has said that

the denial of the Received Text enables the scholar to play god over God. The determination of the correct word is now a scholar's province and task. The Holy Spirit is no longer the giver and preserver of the Biblical text; it is the scholar, the textual scholar . . . The issue of the Received Text is no small matter, nor one of academic concern only. The faith is at stake.¹³

I mentioned in Part I that the crux of the issue is the status of the sacred *apographa*. But with the acceptance that God has both inspired and preserved his word, then with Dean John Burgon, there is the assurance that

THE BIBLE is none other than *the voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne!* Every Book of it,—every Chapter of it,—every Verse of it,—every word of it,—every syllable of it,—(*where are we to stop?*)—every letter of it—is the direct utterance of the Most High!—Well spake the HOLY GHOST by the mouth of the blessed Men who wrote it.—The Bible is none other than *the Word of God*: not some part of it, more, some part of it, less; but all alike, the utterance of him who sitteth upon the Throne;—absolute,—faultless,—unerring,—supreme.¹⁴ [All emphases in original]

How can you but burst into doxological praise.

Glory to God Alone: For He has immediately inspired the Testaments.

Glory to God Alone: For He has preserved and kept pure the Testaments in all ages.

Glory to God Alone: For we receive the Testaments as authentic.

Glory to God Alone: For His Testaments are inerrant and ultimate in character.

Glory to God Alone for Grace Alone

And as if to answer Gumbel again, with his proclamation of Baconianism¹⁵ and its implicit denial of Original Sin, Dean John Burgon has boldly stated that "He who surrenders the first page of his Bible, surrenders all . . . Nay, you and I cannot in any way *afford* [emphasis in original] to surrender the beginning of Genesis; simply because upon the truth of what is there recorded depends the whole scheme of Man's salvation."¹⁶ With the surrender of the first page of the Bible to evolutionism comes the triumph of freewill. But, as Martin Luther¹⁷ has said,

If, now, the endeavour and effort of "free-will" is not sin, but is good in God's sight, it can certainly glory, and in its glorying confidently say: this pleases God . . . [However,] Paul here [Romans 3:21-26] says that men are wholly devoid of this glory. And experience proves that they are. Inquire of all the "free-will"-endeavours throughout the world, and if you can show me one who, seriously and from his heart, can say of any of his efforts and endeavours: "I

14. John Burgon, *Inspiration and Interpretation* (J. H. & Jas. Parker, 1861), p. 89.

15. It is perhaps pertinent to point out that Lord Bacon, on whom Forster and Marston and Gumbel base their evolutionary creationism on, was an Imp of the Rosicrucians and any advocating of the separation of between science and theology must be understood from this perspective. H. Spencer Lewis, *Rosicrucian Manual* (Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC, USA, 1948), p. 27f.

16. Burgon, *op. cit.*, p. 50f.

17. I would remind James Packer of what he wrote in 1957: "To accept the principles which Martin Luther vindicates in *The Bondage of the Will* would certainly involve a mental and spiritual revolution for many Christians at the present time. It would involve a radically different approach to preaching and the practice of evangelism, and to most other departments of theology and pastoral work as well. God-centred thinking is out of fashion to-day, and its recovery will involve something of a Copernican revolution in our outlook on many matters. But ought we to shrink from this? Do we not stand in urgent need of such teaching as Luther here gives us—teaching which humbles man, strengthens faith, and glorifies God—and is not the contemporary Church weak for lack of it? The issue is clear. We are compelled to ask ourselves: If the Almighty God of the Bible is to be our God, if the New Testament gospel is to be our message, if Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever—is any other position than Luther's possible? Are we not in all honesty bound to stand with him in ascribing all might, and majesty, and dominion, and power, and all the glory of our salvation to God alone? Surely no more important or far-reaching question confronts the Church today." Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (James Clarke, 1957), p. 60f.

10. *Church of England Newspaper*, 5 May 2000, p. 2.

11. Packer, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

13. Rousas Rushdoony, *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. 12 NO 2, 1989, p. 8f.

know that this pleases God,” I will confess defeat, and yield you the palm. But I know that none will be found. And if this glory is wanting, so that a man’s conscience dare not say with sure confidence: “this pleases God,” it is certain that he does not please God . . . Thus I prove, on the testimony of their own consciences, that “free-will,” being without the glory of God, is, with all its powers, efforts and endeavours, perpetually guilty of the sin of unbelief. . . . And, finally, if we believe that Christ redeemed men by His blood, we are forced to confess that all of man was lost; otherwise, we make Christ either wholly superfluous, or else the redeemer of the least valuable part of man only; which is blasphemy, and sacrilege.¹⁸

Yes, we are bound in all honesty to stand with Luther and ascribe all might, and majesty, and power, and *all* the glory of our salvation to the God who is Jealous.

Glory to God Alone: For the manifestation of the glory of God’s eternal power and wisdom, in the beginning, to make out of nothing all Creation.

Glory to God Alone: For God did this in the space of six literal days, and all was very good.

Glory to God Alone: For the high mystery of predestination affords both praise and humility.

Glory to God Alone: For Christ the only sacrifice, died not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men.

Glory to God Alone: For it is only by the grace of God that we can turn to faith and calling upon God.

Glory to God Alone: For it is only by the grace of God that we may have a good will.

Glory to God Alone for Faith Alone

In answer to the narcissistic and hedonistic Alpha gospel, which is bereft of the Law regarding repentance and sanctification, McIlvaine has said that “the gospel plan of promoting sanctification is just the opposite of holding in obscurity any feature of the doctrine of justification. It is simply to preach that doctrine most fully in all its principles and connections; in all its grace and all its works . . .”¹⁹ In reviewing the issue of Lordship Salvation, S. Lewis Johnson, writing in 1989, comments that John Stott “insisted that one must ‘surrender to the Lordship of Christ’ to be saved.”²⁰ In apparent agreement with the position of John Stott, James Packer writes, in an accompanying essay, that

the view that saving faith is no more than “belief of the truth about Christ’s atoning death” is not new. It was put forward in the mid-eighteenth century by the Scot Robert Sandeman . . . Sandeman accused leaders such as Whitefield and Wesley of destructive legalism for teaching that justifying faith includes desire for a new life in Christ, and for saying that without this desire there is no true faith and thus no salvation . . . [Packer concludes that] the narrow intellectualism of Sandeman’s view of faith dampened life-changing evangelism.²¹

And as Greg Bahnsen has said, in *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, “It is an unfortunate sign of current-day confusion [that] . . . salvation by grace is made to exclude sanctification according to the law, faith is portrayed as the antithesis of Christian obedience, and love is used to suppress the demands of the

18. *Ibid.*, p. 291, 318.

19. McIlvaine, *Righteousness by Faith*, as quoted in Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology* (Church Book Room Press, 1945), p. 209.

20. S. Lewis Johnson, “How Faith Works: the volcanic issue of ‘Lordship Salvation,’” *Christianity Today*, 22 September 1989, p. 21.

21. James Packer, “History Repeats Itself” *Christianity Today*, 22 September 1989, p. 22.

law . . . God’s authoritative word makes the point vivid and emphatic that grace, faith, and love are not at odds with God’s law; in fact, they *require* [emphasis in original] obedience to it.”²²

Glory to God Alone: For by the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon apprehension of your mercy in Christ, we have repented and have been turned unto yourself.

Glory to God Alone: For the moral law, a perfect rule of righteousness, forever binds all.

Glory to God Alone: For the works which God would have His people to walk in are commanded in his Holy Scriptures.

Glory to God Alone: For these works are from your gift of a true and active faith.

Glory to God Alone: For these works are accepted by God in Christ.

Glory to God Alone for Christ Alone

In contrast to the confusing and contradictory Christology of Gumbel, with its acceptance of other people’s sincerely held unscriptural christs and salvations, James Denney, in *The Death of Christ*, writes that he

cannot agree with those who disparage this [Galatians 1:8], or affect to forgive it, as the unhappy beginning of religious intolerance. Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament has any conception of a religion without intolerance. The first commandment is “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,” and that is the foundation of the true religion. As there is only one God, so there can only be one gospel. If God has really done something in Christ on which the salvation of the world depends, and if He has made it known, then it is a Christian duty to be intolerant of everything which ignores, denies, or explains it away. The man who perverts it is the worst enemy of God and men; and it is not bad temper or narrow mindedness in St Paul which explains this vehement language, it is the jealousy of God which has kindled in a soul redeemed by the death of Christ a corresponding jealousy for the Saviour. It is intolerant only as Peter is intolerant when he says “Neither is there salvation in any other.” (Acts 4:12)²³

Glory to God Alone: For Christ, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father.

Glory to God Alone: For Christ, who took man’s nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

Glory to God Alone: For Christ, very God and very Man, who was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile us to his Father.

Glory to God Alone: For Christ, who did truly rise again from death, and took again his body appertaining to perfection and ascended into heaven.

Glory to God Alone: For Christ, in whom there is salvation and in no other name.

This is the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is jealous concerning his word, his grace, his faith and his glory.

Gumbel, Roman Catholicism and Not Glory to God Alone

But having reread *Questions of Life* many times, I would add that I still have problems finding people who have read the book, and from my criticisms of its negation of the Five Pillars of the Reformations, I can honestly say that Alpha cannot offer Glory to God Alone. I concluded Part I by saying that “The glory is not to God but to man: ‘gratifying

22. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1984), p. 233.

23. James Denny, *The Death of Christ* (The Master Christian Library, v6, The Death of Christ), p. 82.

the pride of man's reason and will.' Thus the house of Alpha is a house where God is excluded and man is exalted by 'rationalism and humanistic calculations'." I continued to say that "This international house of Alpha will add to the increasing acceptability of Roman Catholicism within Protestantism." In my view, there will be three consequences of this growing acceptance: the omega of individualist ecumenicalism, the omega of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism and the omega of political ecumenicalism. It is these three consequences that I now want to develop to show them as omegas of Alpha.

10. THE OMEGAS OF ALPHA

Ecumenicalism and Syncretism

In the previous chapter I used the word ecumenicalism in three different contexts. It may seem that I have stretched the meaning of the word beyond its church unity context. If it is accepted that ecumenicalism is solely concerned with church unity, then this limits the religious nature of unity and denies the fact that religion is a foundation both for private and public domains. If instead it is accepted that religion, the presuppositions that form the basis of belief, whether animistic, atheistic, deistic, polytheistic or monotheistic, is the foundation in private and public domains, then it can be accepted that ecumenicalism is an appropriate term for certain activities within those domains.

This is further established when it is seen that the contemporary usage of the word "ecumenical" is not in accordance with its New Testament meaning. In its classical Greek meaning, of "inhabited world," it had a geographical meaning with a separation between the cultured and the uncultured. The New Testament "reverts to its etymology and designates the entire inhabited world."²⁴ But it is apparent that ecumenicalism has reverted to a form of the classical Greek meaning of a cultured "inhabited world" that developed from the nineteenth century *oecumenique*: "that which is concerned for the unity and renewal of the church."²⁵

And yet this movement to unite differing doctrinal and liturgical beliefs is syncretism. It is usual to view syncretism mainly in terms of fusion between opposing beliefs, like Christianity and Animism. But it also holds true of opposing rites within Christianity. For example, the attempt by Calixtus (not one of the three popes or one anti-pope of that name) to unite Protestants and Roman Catholics, during the Reformation is deemed The Syncretistic Controversy. Sufficient similarity occurs between syncretism and ecumenicalism for them to be considered as interchangeable. However, as generally syncretism is considered as a negative term and ecumenicalism is favoured positively, I will be using the latter to reinforce the fact that religion pervades private and public domains.

Omega of Individual Ecumenicalism

In one way *Questions of Life* is an autobiographical book, as Gumbel has revealed much of himself. It is mainly from what he has said in the book that I will present Gumbel

himself as the example of Alpha's omega of individual ecumenicalism.

One of the problems that ecumenicalism continues to face is the issue of resolving contradictory beliefs. This is true for Gumbel personally, as I have already shown. Before he was a Christian [and God is his Judge], he was "totally ignorant about the Christian faith,"²⁶ even though he had "read and heard the Bible endlessly"²⁷ and attended "chapel regularly and studied the Bible in RE lessons."²⁸ Furthermore, he was "at times an atheist and at times an agnostic"²⁹ who "had intellectual objections to the Christian faith and, rather pretentiously, [he] called [himself] a logical determinist."³⁰ It must have been pretentiously because there is determinism and various logical [analytical/empiricist] philosophies, but, no logical determinism.

When Gumbel's friends became Christians, whilst he was at Cambridge University reading law, he embarked on "a plan to read the Koran, Karl Marx, Jean-Paul Sartre . . . and the Bible."³¹ It was whilst reading the Bible on one of those occasions that "it came alive and [he] could not put it down."³² But, he says that although he was not a Christian yet, "the reason [why the Bible] did not make sense to [him before] was that [he] did not have the Spirit of God to interpret it."³³ Gumbel "very shortly afterwards came to put [his] faith in Jesus Christ."³⁴

In *Questions of Life* there is no mention of how his intellectual objections were overcome. Neither is there any mention of repentance, or the law, which leads to Christ. There is a prayer of contrition that includes an understanding that his conscience is knowledgeable of the "wrong in [his] life" and that "[he] now turn[ed] from everything which [he] know[s] is wrong."³⁵ But did not Paul do wrong things yet in a good conscience? [Acts 23:1] There is such a thing as a dulled or calloused conscience? [1 Tim 4: 2]

Drawing from my criticisms in the previous four chapters we can draw together the individual ecumenicalism of Gumbel. He says that he is "very happy to be called catholic, or evangelical, and charismatic and a liberal . . . providing we have all those [he is] happy with it but [he is] not happy with having just one"³⁶ Presumably he is not happy with one label because that would make him an extremist. As "people who criticise Alpha [are] from the fringes; from extreme fundamentalism, extreme liberalism, extreme catholics,"³⁷ then, one label is an extreme but all labels are acceptable and not extreme. From this self-confessed individual ecumenicalism, it is not difficult to see how it has outworked into *Questions of Life* and Alpha. Regarding the Scriptures, he advocates the work of Hort, the Hortian science of textual criticism and Vatican II Council's *Dei Verbum*. He propounds Baconianism with the separation between the "How?" of science and the "Why?" of theology, together with the evolutionary creationism of Polkinghorne and Forster and Marston. An implicit consequence of evolutionary creationism, as demonstrated by Forster and Marston, is the denial of original sin. This aptly explains why Gumbel states that we have only a "propensity to do evil."³⁸ Regarding Justification,

26. Nicky Gumbel, *Searching Issues* (Kingsway Publications, 1994), p. 12.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 124. 28. *Ibid.*, p. 69. 29. *Ibid.*
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 11. 31. *Ibid.*, p. 69. 32. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 125. 34. *Ibid.*, p. 70. 35. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
 36. Andy Peck, "The alpha phenomenon," *Christianity*, May 2000, p. 18.
 37. Gumbel, *The Church of England Newspaper*, 6.3.1998, p. 5.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

24. Evertt Harrison, (ed.), *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Baker Books House, 1994), p. 177.

25. *Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.*, 1987, Vol. 7, p. 958.

there is no pronouncement that by faith we are *accounted* righteous and his explanation of justification does not preclude Roman Catholicism's belief of preserving and increasing the grace of justification through good works. This approach to justification continues through to an antinomian sanctification. The foundation of this is a hedonistic lifestyle, for he argues that a relationship with God transforms our enjoyment of *this* life, with an implied self-actualisation and self-fulfillment. In tandem with this liberal justification and sanctification, is a Christology that accepts the unorthodox Christologies of the atheism of Tolstoy and Tillich, the "Death of God" atheism of Moltmann and the Christological Mariolatry of Forrest.

As to Gumbel's empathy towards Roman Catholicism, he not only refers to the Redemptorist Forrest, but also favourably refers to Father Maximilian Kolbe and Father Romero Cantalamessa, the Pope's confessor. And this empathy still continues today. On the Alpha website and at a New Frontiers International Conference, "Does the future have a church?" in November 2000, he made favourable comments towards Cardinal Schönborn and his book *Loving the Church*. Gumbel said that he had "read a fascinating book by Cardinal Schönborn called 'Loving the Church'."³⁹ He adds that "Cardinal Schönborn is the Archbishop of Vienna and general editor of the Catholic Church Catechism." In searching for Gumbel's quote from the book the only reference I could find was one sentence, which had the same subject matter but not identical wording. So if only one sentence is referred to the rest of the book must be fascinating in a positive sense. Either side of this sentence is reference to the Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin praying to God for us and the Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels.

As to Schönborn, he joined the Order of Preachers, in 1963, studied for a doctorate in theology at Le Saulchoir, Paris and was ordained on December 27, 1970. He was a member of International Theological Commission, from 1980–1991 and Secretary of Commission of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to edit the new Catechism of the Catholic Church (1987–1992). As to this new Catechism, James McCarthy, who was a Roman Catholic, has "indexed . . . the 2865 numbered paragraphs of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*" in his book *The Gospel According to Rome: Comparing Catholic Tradition And The Word Of God*.⁴⁰ Although a Dominican, Schönborn has sub-titled his book as *Spiritual Exercises Preached in the Presence of Pope John Paul II*. And what is this Church that is to be loved? He says that "the plan of our meditations will follow a text from the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church."⁴¹ In fact, these meditations are replete with references drawn from *Ad gentes divinitus, Catechesi tradendae, Dominum et vivificantem, Fidei depositum, Gaudium et spes, Sacrosanctum concilium and Summa theologiae* and "constant reference will be made to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*."⁴²

The "Shepherd of Hermas," which I mentioned in Part II regarding Westcott's acceptance of extra-canonical books in the *Codex Sinaiticus*, is referred to regarding the Church.⁴³ The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is proclaimed.⁴⁴ As to whether the acceptance of "one

man [Adam] can have disastrous consequences for *all* men?" Schönborn further asks "Is it *fundamentalism* to accept the idea of a *real* deed on the part of our first parents?" [emphasis in original]. He answers that "It would be fundamentalism to take the symbolic language of the Bible literally."⁴⁵ Although this fundamentalism could be within Roman Catholicism, it is more than probable that Schönborn is referring to Protestant fundamentalism. And as to Protestantism, Schönborn says that "in Latin America the [Roman Catholic] Church is going through a deep testing at the hands of the sects."⁴⁶ Elsewhere he writes that "However glorious Saint Peter's basilica may be, the wounds of the reformation, the divisions in faith, went deeply into this work and disturb our pleasure in its magnificence."⁴⁷

All this is continuing evidence of the individual ecumenicalism of Gumbel. He would not be recognised as an evangelical by the founders of the Evangelical Alliance in 1850s and neither by Packer in the 1950s. But today he is recognised as an evangelical and Alpha is accepted by the Evangelical Alliance. Let us not be in a haze about Arminianism, particularly in this Pelagian form, which is closer to Roman Catholicism than Reformed Christianity.

Omega of Ecclesiastical Ecumenicalism

That there is an omega of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism regarding Alpha is best explained by drawing from two Anglicans who have endorsed Alpha. They have different track records and have different reasons for ecclesiastical ecumenicalism.

An Alpha brochure has stated the aim of Alpha as "to present the core truths of the Christian faith around which Christians of every denomination can unite,"⁴⁸ thus the individual ecumenicalism of Gumbel, when worked out through Alpha, will lead to ecclesiastical ecumenicalism. Sandy Millar, the Rev. Prebendary of HTB, has said that "It is not now any longer just an Anglican church or a Methodist church or a Salvation Army church or a Roman Catholic church, it is an Alpha church."⁴⁹ And any endorsement of Alpha is also an endorsement of Alpha's omega of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism. This holds true for the endorsement by Rev. Packer, Professor of Theology, Regent College, Vancouver, and Rev. Dr Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Packer and Carey have different theological backgrounds, even though they have both lectured at Trinity College at some time in their lives. I have shown Packer to be critical, albeit from a historical perspective, of Alpha regarding Faith Alone and Christ Alone. As to what I have said in Scripture Alone, Packer has stated that

ii. Is the Bible *infallible* (Westminster Confession I.v) and *inerrant*? Yes, within the limits of its intended assertions . . . (Jehovah's Witnesses are happy with both adjectives!) . . .

iv. Does the inspiration attach only to *autographs*, or to *copies* and *translations* too? To the latter, so far as their meaning corresponds to that of the autographs; though no inspiration attaches to textual and translators' errors and misprints!⁵⁰

39. Christoph Schönborn, *Loving the Church* (Ignatius Press, USA, 1998).

40. James McCarthy, *The Gospel According to Rome* (Harvest House Publishers, 1995), p. 3.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

41. Schönborn, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

48. *Alpha: God Changing Lives* (Alpha Head Office, Holy Trinity, Brompton, no date), p. 8.

49. *Focus*, 12.7.1998, p. 8.

50. James Packer, unpublished handouts, as cited in Alister McGrath, *To Know and Serve God: A Biography of James I. Packer* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), p. 185.

And as to Grace Alone, Packer has said that the crucial issue is “whether God is the author, not merely of justification, but also of faith,”⁵¹ but this is emasculated by his suspension of judgement on evolution and creation:

I believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, and maintain it in print, but exegetically I cannot see that anything Scripture says, in the first chapters or elsewhere, bears on the biological theory of evolution one way or the other. On that theory itself, as a non-scientist, watching from a distance the disputes of the experts, I suspend judgment, but I recall that B. B. Warfield was a theistic evolutionist. If on this count I am not an evangelical, then neither was he.⁵²

Yet, overall, with this majority of historical acceptance of the Reformed Five Pillars, Packer has still endorsed Alpha.

McGrath says that “For Packer, the old Keswick teaching showed what happened when good intentions were married to poor theology,”⁵³ yet why has Packer ignored Alpha’s “good” intentions and poor theology? McGrath further comments that “Packer was quite convinced that an evangelicalism which lacked any sense of theological basis would lapse into Pietism or Pelagianism.”⁵⁴ Yet why has Packer ignored the Pelagianism of Alpha? Then regarding the establishment of common ministry between Anglicanism and Methodism, McGrath remarks that “For Packer and others, Methodism had become deeply influenced by a theological liberalism which they had no desire to see spread in the Church of England.”⁵⁵ But why has Packer ignored the theological liberalism of Alpha or how Gumbel mirrors the liberal Methodist Donald England?⁵⁶ Why, when the Nottingham NEAC, of 1977, “threatened to undo [Packer’s] work . . . [through] a relativistic mindset, which could pervade every aspect of theology”⁵⁷ does Packer still endorse Alpha, even though Alpha has undone his work?

Packer has said that “The Alpha course is a most engaging way of passing on the basics of Christianity. It is a tool for evangelism and nurture that I highly recommend.”⁵⁸ But for Packer to actually mean this he must deny his previous Reformed work and faith. And I must say that in all honesty that I cannot accept that reason for endorsement. The real answer, I believe, is that for which Packer has endorsed *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* [ECT], whilst holding to the Reformed position: ecclesiastical ecumenicalism. McGrath comments that

In many ways, Packer here [ECT] adopted the same set of principles in relation to dealing with Catholicism in 1994 as he had in his earlier dealings with Anglo-catholicism within the Church of England around 1970 . . . In Packer’s view, the present needs of both church and community in the western world called out for some collaboration across denominational divides . . . that the “slide into secularism and paganism that is so much a mark of current culture” demands that there should be some kind of “alliance” of all who love the Bible and its Christ.⁵⁹

But McGrath writes for, or on behalf of, Packer, that “The Catechism [of the Catholic Church] is unequivocal in

its endorsement of the leading themes of traditional orthodox Christian doctrine.”⁶⁰ But this is not true. This is the same Catechism and Schönborn that Gumbel praised. And the same McCarthy of *The Gospel According Rome* compares the Catechism’s Catholic Tradition regarding Salvation, Mass, Mary and Authority against the Word of God and finds the former seriously wanting.

The ECT document states that

. . . The two communities in world Christianity that are most evangelistically assertive and most rapidly growing are evangelicals and Catholics . . . As evangelicals and Catholics, we dare not by needless and loveless conflict between ourselves give aid and comfort to the enemies of the cause of Christ. The love of Christ compels us and we are therefore resolved to avoid such conflict between communities and, where such conflict exists, to do what we can to reduce and eliminate it . . . Nonetheless, we are not permitted simply to resign ourselves to differences that divide us from one another . . . In this connection we warmly commend and encourage the formal theological dialogues of recent years between Roman Catholics and evangelicals . . . Together we contend for the truth that politics, law, and culture must be secured by moral truth. With the Founders of the American experiment, we declare, “We hold these truths” . . . [I]n view of the large number of non-Christians in the world and the enormous challenge of our common evangelistic task, it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community . . . We do know that this is a time of opportunity and . . . of responsibility for evangelicals and Catholics to be Christians together in a way that helps prepare the world for the coming of Him to Whom belongs the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.⁶¹

Masters states that “Catholics are seen not as the objects of evangelism, but as fellow evangelists . . . [and] to say it is not theologically legitimate to ‘proselytize’ Catholics is the clearest imaginable way of saying that there is no difference in the reality of their experience of salvation. These ‘evangelicals’ are so certain that all Catholics are saved (even if their trust is in works, Mary, the mass, and the Church), that it is *wrong* to attempt to win them from Rome.”⁶²

This aspect of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism, within Alpha churches, concerns conservative evangelicals, who while “not advocating official collaboration between denominations” see, like ECT, Alpha’s empathy towards Roman Catholicism and Roman Catholicism’s acceptance of Alpha, as an opportunity for “conservatives [to] form an alliance across the denominations, to fight [political] liberalism and radicalism.”⁶³ But, as with the tragedy of ECT regarding witnessing the truth to Roman Catholics, so too is the tragedy of Alpha. Witnessing the truth to Roman Catholics is impaired, if not unofficially prohibited, by Alpha. Firstly, in presenting the truth of evangelicalism, that is Reformed Christianity, there will have to be an implicit or explicit arguing against Alpha. Secondly, because Alpha has permitted and encouraged Catholic Alpha this has created a *de facto* ECT agreement, not between prominent individuals, but between denominational churches.

And yet, in my view, it is not just a tragedy, it is a double tragedy, particularly for the conservative Roman Catholics. I cannot prove it, but the circumstantial evidence suggests that the Roman Catholic Church has sold out its conservative

51. Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (James Clarke and Company, 1957), p. 58.

52. James Packer, *Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem* (Latimer House, 1878), as cited in Alister McGrath, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

53. Alister McGrath, 1997, p. 97.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

56. BLQ.

57. McGrath, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

58. Alpha.org

59. McGrath, *op. cit.*, p. 270f.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

61. Peter Masters, *Evangelicals Who Approve Catholic Salvation* (Sword & Trowel, 1994), No. 3 p. 27–29.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 25, 27.

63. Alister McGrath, 1997, p. 271 and 272.

believers in order to embrace and restrain a “successful Protestant evangelism.” An exchange of letters in the *Catholic Herald* indirectly reveals the situation.

... I thank God for the courage of those who ran an Alpha course in my parish and changed my life and the lives of dozens of others. As you [*Catholic Herald*] said in your editorial of June 2 2000 on evangelisation: “The evangelisation of England is something that every Catholic is called to do.” Alpha is one method and is proving successful in many Catholic parishes. (David Palmer, Director of Catholic Evangelisation Services)⁶⁴

... although Alpha uses Catholic terminology, it is diametrically opposed to the Catholic faith. . . .” Scripture is not the Church’s sole point of reference. The supreme rule of faith derives from the unity which the Spirit has created between sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church in a reciprocity which means that none of the three can survive without the others.” (Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 55 . . . Graham Moorhouse)⁶⁵

... Alpha, of course, does not cover the fullness of the Catholic Faith; if it did it would not be “basic” . . . It is essential that Alpha be followed promptly by sound and relevant Catholic teaching A further series which goes deeper has been given by Fr Ramiero Cantalamessa, preacher to the Papal Household, called “Drink from the Wells of the Church . . . (David Palmer)⁶⁶

... A true conversion of the heart to Christ would of necessity involve a hatred of heresy, and consequently a horror of promoting it. ALPHA promotes heresy! Principle among its multiple heresies is Sola Scriptura, a doctrine so patently daft that it sets up an insurmountable barrier to faith for anyone of more than minimal intelligence . . . (Graham Moorhouse)⁶⁷

... However I can state that Alpha does not hold the Bible to be the sole source of authority, which Mr Moorhouse quotes as “principal among Alpha’s multiple heresies . . . Alpha contains nothing that is directly opposed to any Catholic teaching. It needs follow up . . . [Mr Moorhouse’s] comments are factually incorrect, personally insulting and malevolently expressed. (David Palmer)⁶⁸

And you may ask whether the Roman Catholic Church would make such a sacrifice? She has made greater sacrifices. Speaking of the under-appreciated role that the Jesuits played “in moving the New Englanders to rebel against their mother country in 1776,”⁶⁹ F. Tupper Saussy writes that “Sacrificing [the Superior General’s] own (just as Saturn, the father-god of Rome devoured his own children) in order to defeat an enemy short of coming to blows, this is a great General’s legitimate obligation.”⁷⁰

As for Packer and like-minded conservative Protestants, they must both hold fast to the Sovereignty of God and not make alliances, or suffer the consequences of alliances, as did King Jehosophat. As atheistic Communism could not destroy the sovereign God’s Church then neither can pluralistic Consumerism because God is sovereign.

But Packer’s omega of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism is different from Archbishop Carey’s. In many ways there is a similarity between Carey and Gumbel, at least from the

theological perspective. [Regarding their upbringing, one left an East End of London school at fifteen while the other went to Eton.] Both of them want to have a Christian faith that is Catholic, Liberal and Evangelical. Writing in a letter to the *Church Times*, in 1987, Carey states that “Evangelicals, Catholics and Liberals must work together at embracing a faith which is both ‘Catholic and Reformed’.”⁷¹ However, although Carey “had the great fortune to be grafted into a lively evangelical Anglican church whose worship and life flowered around the Bible and Anglican worship,”⁷² he later came to disparage evangelicalism.

The real strength of Catholicism lies in its spirituality, which will always remain a rich attraction. Whereas evangelicalism will constantly appeal to the young and unattached, its weakness perhaps lies in a largely immature spirituality and a relatively weak theology of symbolism and sacramentalism In short, evangelicalism is more like a tribe of like-minded families grouped around an experience of salvation than a cohesive body united in faith and doctrine.⁷³

Of himself he says that his

heart beats in time with the evangelical love of Jesus and a deep devotion to the biblical tradition, but whose head cannot go along with received evangelical teaching . . . for liberalism is a creative and constructive element for exploring theology today.⁷⁴

With the rejection of “received evangelical teaching”—[can one do this and still have a heart beating with the evangelical love of Jesus?—there is only Liberalism and Catholicism, not “Catholic and Reformed.”

In a private letter to me, of 8 February 1986,—I do not believe or see evidence to the contrary that he has altered his views—whilst Principal of Trinity College, he wrote that

Words like “inerrancy,” “infallibility” I find difficult and I refuse to use them. I prefer a word the Bible uses of itself—trustworthy. I do not hold to a plenary view of Scripture—if by that you mean that its view of inspiration is that it is authoritative for everything. Scripture’s main concern is to lead people to God: it is not to pontificate about science, cosmology, church order etc.⁷⁵

It is not surprising to read in *I Believe in Man*, by Carey, written six years prior to my letter, that “The Christian faith has nothing to fear from a theory of evolution . . . [but] we must say a firm ‘no’ to . . . the danger of assuming that the Genesis story is merely historical and factual account of man’s origin.”⁷⁶ As I pointed out with Gumbel, this has an impact on the doctrine of sin. Thus Carey says that the Fall “narrative is passed over by the rest of the Old Testament and is obviously not considered by it to be significant or determinative for the doctrine of man.”⁷⁷ Later, he asks what is the significance of Adam for Paul? Answering, Carey states that “Adam is very significant for Paul’s doctrine of salvation, but unimportant for his doctrine of sin.”⁷⁸ And so Carey makes a significant distinction between the importance of

64. David Palmer, *Catholic Herald*, 8.9.2000.
 65. Graham Moorhouse, *Catholic Herald*, 1.9.2000.
 66. Palmer, *Catholic Herald*, 8.9.2000.
 67. Graham Moorhouse, *Catholic Herald*, 22.9.2000.
 68. Palmer, *Catholic Herald*, 29.9.2000.
 69. F. Tupper Saussy, *Rulers of Evil* (Ospray Bookmakers, USA, 1999), inside front flap.
 70. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

71. George Carey, *Church Times*, 20.11.1987.
 72. George Carey, “The Sharpest Sword,” *Leadership Today*, April 1988, p. 24.
 73. George Carey, “Parties in the Church of England,” *Theology*, July 1988, p. 268f.
 74. *Ibid.*, p. 269f.
 75. George Carey, *Private Letter*, 8 February, 1986.
 76. George Carey, *I Believe in Man* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), p. 16.
 77. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 78. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

salvation and sin, with a similar evolutionary impact on the necessity of Grace as stated in Articles IX and X of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

With this brief exposition of these two aspects of Scripture and Grace, it can be seen how close Gumbel resembles Carey. It also provides a background to understand Carey's involvement with ARCIC, acceptance of the Second Vatican Council, Anglo-Catholicism and liberal theologians. These views have been summarised by Carey in a short article, *Face To Face With Rome*,⁷⁹ based on his book *The Meeting of the Waters: a balanced contribution to the ecumenical debate*.⁸⁰ His first point is the "Changing Nature of the Catholic Church." Carey's case is that "since Vatican II (1958-65) there has been a complete change of tune ["from Rome being the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church"]."⁸¹ But has she made a complete change? Dr McCrea Cavert,⁸² former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches [USA] comments that

the Decree [on Ecumenism: *Unitatis Redintegratio*] does not really reconcile its ecumenical outlook with its assumption that the Roman Catholic is the only true Church. This assumption is explicit in the statement that "it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fulness of the means of salvation can be obtained" (3). Associated with this is the further assumption of the primacy of Peter and his jurisdiction over the whole Church. These assumptions seem to indicate that the Roman Catholic understanding of ecumenism is unchangeably Rome-centred.

Carey also makes the false assumption that Rome has "a new attitude to Scripture": At the Second Vatican Council this two source theory of revelation (of the Council of Trent) was rejected."⁸³ As with Gumbel, Carey does not appear to have read the Documents of the Second Vatican Council. For, *Dei Verbum* [Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation] clearly states

Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the Church . . . It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.⁸⁴

The third point of Carey concerns "the influence of the charismatic movement." He states that he is "not ashamed to acknowledge the importance of charismatic renewal in [his] own life."⁸⁵ But elsewhere Carey has said that "its [charismatic renewal's] theological significance . . . lies less in its doctrine of the Spirit than its fresh approach to matters of ecclesiology, particularly worship."⁸⁶ And again to the contrary, Carey's statement is not true even by the standards of certain charismatic ex-Roman Catholics. Sandy Carson, a charis-matic ex-Roman Catholic priest comments that

79. George Carey, "Face To Face With Rome," *Today*, April 1985.

80. George Carey, *The Meeting of the Waters* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1985).

81. George Carey, "Face To Face With Rome," *Today*, April, 1985, p. 11.

82. Walter Abbott SJ, (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (The American Press, 1966), p. 369.

83. Carey, "Face To Face With Rome," p. 12.

84. Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 117f.

85. *Ibid.*, April 1985, p. 12.

86. George Carey, *The Two Catholic Churches: An Anglican Reflects*

the thrust of Nick Cavnar's article [*Why are Catholic Charismatics getting so "Catholic"?*] is that of justifying the emphasis which Catholic Charismatics place on the sacraments, devotions and doctrines peculiar to the Catholic Church. The rationale is "because they find Jesus there." But Jesus is not in any sacrament of itself, nor can He be experienced as a result of adhering to any unscriptural devotion or doctrine. All of us who experienced the new birth and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, while in the Catholic Church, received as a result of faith in Jesus, not because of any alleged grace inherent in a sacrament . . . Religious emotion is not the verification of truth. I have not participated in any Catholic sacraments, devotions or doctrines for thirteen years, and yet I believe I have a deeper relationship with Jesus now, than when I was a loyal "Roman citizen." Living by Scripture alone has brought me deliverance, victory and fulfillment.⁸⁷

Carey's last point is "what we have in common." Here he accepts the work of Küng and Barth in establishing a commonality between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. But the commonality is between liberal forms, and not conservative forms, of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

Hans Küng's theology elicits antithetical responses that are never dispassionate. This is true of Küng's understanding of the uniqueness of Christ. On the one hand, the German Bishops' Conference . . . objected to Küng's christology because they felt that his method "from below" and his emphasis upon categories reduced Jesus' uniqueness to that of a St Francis . . . On the other hand, members of the "pluralistic theology of religions" group criticize that Küng's view of the uniqueness of Christ presents an insurmountable obstacle for the Christian dialogue with other religions . . . Küng was invited, however, to join the opposition group to the pluralistic theology of religions [Claremont, California. 1986] but he declined.⁸⁸

And there is similar criticism of Barth regarding his unorthodox modalist "wholly other" God, a subjective view of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and a denial of a historic Fall and historic Redemption.⁸⁹

So, what is the omega of Ecclesiastical Ecumenicalism regarding Alpha? I mentioned earlier the similarity between Carey's beliefs on Scripture, evolution, sin and grace to what I have said concerning Alpha and Roman Catholicism. There is also a commonality in the acceptance by both Gumbel and Carey of Roman Catholics as "fellow Christians." Furthermore, they both dislike extremes in Christian belief. Gumbel dislikes extreme liberals, Catholics and evangelicals, whilst "The Archbishop of Canterbury plead[s] . . . for a return to 'sanity' in religion and for the extremes of literalism and liberalism to be rejected."⁹⁰ There is also a similarity between Alpha/Catholic Alpha and ARCIC/Toronto Communiqué, regarding Gumbel and Carey. Alpha's aim "to present the core truths of the Christian faith around which Christians of every denomination can unite"⁹¹ is not only similar to the Syncretistic Controversy of Calixtus

(New Blackfriars: February, 1987), p. 107.

87. Sandy Carson, *Charisma*, April 1985.

88. Karl-Josef Kuschel and Herman Häring, (eds), *Hans Küng: New Horizons for Faith and Thought* (SCM Press Ltd, 1993), p. 171.

89. Cornelius Van Til, *The New Modernism: An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner* (Presbyterian and Reformed, USA, 1946, 1947 and 1972).

90. Ruth Gledhill, "Turn from religious extremes says Carey," *The Times*, 15 May 2000, p. 6.

91. *Alpha: God Changing Lives* (Alpha Head Office, Holy Trinity, Brompton), no date. p. 8.

but has ground-level parallels with ARCIC. Both Gumbel and Carey plead for a Roman Catholic Church that is a figment of their imagination. They are either dazed like rabbits before the lights of the Roman Catholic Church and do not see what is beyond the lights or they are amazed and seek those bright lights.

The Toronto Communiqué states that Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops “were struck by the extent of interchurch collaboration, particularly . . . joint pastoral care in which Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy and lay people are involved.”⁹² Although there is no reference to Alpha/Catholic Alpha, they nonetheless fall into the category of “joint pastoral care in which Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy and lay people are involved.” And whereas the problem of ECT and Packer concerns the presentation of the Gospel to Roman Catholics, here the issue is not only the presentation of the Gospel to Roman Catholics, but also the development of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism into political ecumenicalism. Furthermore, while ARCIC/Toronto Communiqué is between Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, Alpha/Catholic Alpha is between all types of denominational Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church via Catholic Alpha.

Finally, acceptance of the ministry of the Redemptorist Father, Tom Forrest, who first suggested to the Pope the idea of calling the 1990s The Decade of Evangelization, and Father Romiero Cantalamessa, the Pope’s confessor, and Cardinal Schönborn, who was once a Preacher to the Pope and general editor of the Catholic Church Catechism, implies also an acceptance of the authority on which their ministry is based. For their ministry is not based on Scripture Alone but on “sacred tradition, sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church,” that is, the Roman Catholic Church. We must ask, therefore, whether Gumbel implicitly accepts, together with Carey’s explicit acceptance, the May 1999 ARCIC statement “recognizing the Pope as the overall authority in the Christian World” and accepting him as “a gift to be received by all Churches.”⁹³ If Gumbel and Alpha have this implicit acceptance of the authority of the Pope, then do, or should, the Alpha churches also accept the authority of the Pope? It is in this manner, of ground level rather than inter-church committee groups, that Alpha poses the danger of an omega of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism. But let us not be dazed by the stature and wiles of the Roman Catholic Church.

Omega of Political Ecumenicalism

It is both disconcerting and dangerous to hear people refer to religious beliefs as though there are no political consequences. Politics is the expression of religious beliefs: religious beliefs cannot be kept private. The public domain of politics cannot be a neutral or vacuous domain of beliefs, for some manner of religious beliefs has to provide the basis for the expression of each form of politics.

In this respect, the impact of Alpha in Protestant churches will consequentially weaken the remaining link between the uniqueness of the evangelical faith and the establishment of

it in law, through the Coronation Oath. It will take time for this to occur. But Gumbel demands that if Alpha does not work, it must “be run three times a year . . . Run it at least nine times properly before [saying] ‘it doesn’t work’.”⁹⁴ This means that even if Alpha does not work, then for 45 weeks of the year for three years there will be an incessant “drip-drip” feed of ecclesiastical ecumenicalism across the Protestant denominations.

Although there are no examples of such developments, an example of what is to come is evident from Rostrevor, Northern Ireland.⁹⁵ There “Roman Catholic[s] and Protestant[s] pray and work for renewal and reconciliation all over Ireland and abroad.”⁹⁶ Cecil Kerr, joint leader with his wife at the Christian Renewal Centre, Rostrevor, writes that at

one such gathering [of Roman Catholics and Protestants] in Belfast which brought together people from Ireland North and South and Britain, God spoke a simple but powerful word of prophecy: “This is not an easy peace that I would give you, my children. It cost me the Cross to reconcile you to the Father. You must humble yourselves before each other, listen to each other’s pain . . .”

This ecumenicalism has bred the unbiblical notion that the death of Jesus Christ was for the reconciliation of Roman Catholics and that this reconciliation is the “acceptance” of each other’s beliefs, particularly salvation. Kerr moves from “the most precious and most costly jewel [of forgiveness] that Christ is offering [them]”⁹⁷ to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the North/South Implementation Bodies. With the implication that all this is the result of Christ’s costly jewel of forgiveness, Kerr continues that “the ghost of de-commissioning [has] raised its ugly head again.”⁹⁸ This implies that forgiveness should not involve de-commissioning, for Kerr says that “over many centuries in Ireland no de-commissioning of guns ha[s] been carried out.”⁹⁹ But the logic of this beggars belief, for if there was no de-commissioning during the centuries of unforgiveness, why, on Kerr’s terms,

94. Andy Peck, “The Alpha Phenomenon,” *Christianity*, May 2000, p. 17.

95. I have tried to access the web address www.crc-rostrevor.org but encountered repeated difficulties, so I have been unable to determine whether Kerr actually runs Alpha courses. However, there is circumstantial evidence that either he does or would support Alpha’s aim and programme. This circumstantial evidence is based on Kerr’s ministry of reconciliation between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and, a web site (www.kingdom-come.org/newsagent/bread305/page04.htm) that links Kerr and the Toronto Blessing. Kerr is also linked with Fr. Peter Hocken through their shared platform addresses at the 1995 Evangelical Catholic Initiative: Conference of Renewal leaders [www.evangelicalcatholic.kingdom-come.org/emmaus.htm]. Kerr is also mentioned in Hocken’s book *The Glory and the Shame* (Eagle, 1994, p. 74), which also has a foreword by Michael Green and recommendations from Roger Forster and Clive Calver. One of the concerns that I have about the book, and thus the direction of charismatic ecumenicalism, is Hocken’s comments that “Subversion of the work of the Spirit occurs through subordination of the spirit to human powers of mind and will, instead of submission of these powers of the human soul to the Spirit” (Hocken, 1994, p. 187) and “the first principle for the interaction of different movements of the Spirit in the Church is mutual recognition and respect in Christian *koïnomia* . . . we should add as means of divine life the sacraments, in which the church community enacts the Word of life, especially the dominical sacraments of baptism and eucharist” (Hocken, 1994, p. 182 and p. 190).

96. Cecil Kerr, “Building Bridges of Hope in a Divided Community,” *Prophecy Today*, Nov./Dec. 2000, p. 11.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*

92. “Toronto Communiqué,” *The Church of England Newspaper*, 23 June 2000, p. 6.

93. Richard Bennett and Michael de Semlyen, *Century 21: Biblical Unity or Papal Conformity* (Spirit of 88 May/June 2000), p. 3.

should forgiveness not involve de-commissioning? But he further implies that this forgiveness should excuse the procrastination of the IRA. This form of political logic, I believe, will become common. With the mutual support between Hocken and Kerr, and, the recommendations of Green, as “Adviser in Evangelism to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York,”¹⁰⁰ Calver, representing the Evangelical Alliance, and Forster, who have all given their full endorsement of Alpha, I do not foresee any reason why Alpha should not sanction the ministries of Hocken and Kerr.

This also bodes ill for the termination of the Reformed faith as established in law and the Protestant throne. Packer still appears to have some semblance of a Reformed faith, even though he has signed ECT. However, I do not believe that he would advocate such a termination. But, I do believe that both Gumbel and Carey, for the theological reasons previously mentioned and their respective empathy towards Roman Catholicism, would accept the repeal of the Act of Settlement. Writing in the late nineteenth century, Wylie says in *Which Sovereign: Queen Victoria or the Pope?* That “The Reformation, in the first place, was a battle between two faiths or churches. But in the second place, it was also a battle between two policies or governments.”¹⁰¹

Thus the Act of Settlement,¹⁰² is not a body of law devised by a church, but a system of polity enacted by a State: a Protestant Throne, a Protestant Legislature and a Protestant Nation.

However, nearly a century later, an Act of Parliament gave public toleration to Roman Catholicism in 1777 in Ireland and a year later in England. A half-century further on, in 1829, came the Catholic Emancipation Act. Wylie comments that

It was said, first of all, that the Act was demanded in the interest of Toleration. It was nothing of the kind. The Romanists enjoyed as perfect toleration in creed and worship as the Protestants. The question was not one touching admissibility to office. But it is objected, Exclusion from office on the ground of difference in religion is persecution. Of course we grant it is. But here no one was excluded from office on the ground of difference in religion. The constitution denied to the Romanist a seat in the legislature, not because he was religiously disqualified, but because he was politically disqualified. The Romanist was excluded not because he was a bad subject.¹⁰³

But in my view this was, and is, a mistake. The ground of exclusion should have remained on grounds of religion, because it was religion that made one politically disqualified.¹⁰⁴ The same argument is used today by Roman Catholics, like Lord Rees-Mogg,¹⁰⁵ for the repeal of the Act of Settlement.

100. Hocken, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

101. J. Wylie, *Which Sovereign: Queen Victoria or the Pope?* (The Protestant Alliance, no date), p. 23.

102. I am writing this from the UK perspective but each country will have its own development of the political aims of the Roman Catholic Church. This is true even of the USA. Note: F Tupper Saussy, *Rulers of Evil: Useful Knowledge About Governing Bodies* (Ospray Bookmakers, USA, 1999), p. 97ff. and 129ff.; Charles Chiniquy, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* (Robert Banks & Sons, 1896), p. 479ff.; Avro Manhattan, *The Vatican Moscow Washington Alliance* (Chick Publications, USA, 1982), p. 327ff.; and Paul Blanshard, *Freedom and Catholic Power* (Secker and Warburg, 1952), p. 13ff. and 244ff.

103. J. Wylie, no date. p. 137.

104. Stephen C. Perks, *A Defence of the Christian State* (The Kuyper Foundation, 1998), p. 163ff.

105. Lord Rees-Mogg, *The Times*, 13 January 1994.

He says that it contravenes the whole spirit of the age and whatever steps necessary for its abolition should be taken. Nevertheless, I would be disqualified for standing for election in the State of Vatican City, even in the spirit of the age, not because I was politically disqualified, but because I was religiously disqualified. If the State of Vatican City advances religious discrimination, why should she expect different with a Protestant Throne?

The 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act, however, recognised Roman Catholics only on political terms and not on religious terms. But if there is recognition and acceptance of Roman Catholics on religious grounds, so that there are no longer two faiths but one ecumenical faith, not two churches but one ecumenical church, it is logical that there should be one ecumenical government. And with the increasing number of Alpha courses in the UK, there will be an increasing submerging in Alpha and its omegas of individual and ecclesiastical ecumenicalism leading through to political ecumenicalism, as indicated by Kerr and his syncretistic acts.

Returning to the quarter century after the Catholic Emancipation Act, there occurred what Wylie calls The Papal Aggression of 1850:

The moment the [Roman Catholic] Hierarchy entered, all other law, rule, and authority in the country fell before it in the eyes of the whole Roman Catholic population, and it alone remained the one legitimate power in the land . . . [The Roman Catholic Hierarchy came] not merely to sacrifice or teach: they [came] to *govern*, and their power to govern is recognised and submitted to by the whole Romish population.¹⁰⁶

Writing today of this event, Gerard Noel, in the *Catholic Herald*, comments that

[Cardinal] Wiseman eventually won over English hearts. But, it was a long battle. Perhaps the initial shock was salutary. Above all English Catholics learned a lesson which it hoped will be heeded today as much as ever. Anglican susceptibilities must never again be similarly outraged. True ecumenism owes nothing to triumphalism, exclusivism or sectarianism.¹⁰⁷

And to celebrate the “Restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy” and the “Feast of the Beatified Martyrs of England and Wales” a Mass was held at Westminster Cathedral. Presiding at the Mass was Cardinal Dannels, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, who read a special salutation from the Pope. This described the Restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy as “a special intervention of Providence in the unfolding of God’s saving plan”¹⁰⁸ of England.

Wylie continues that besides seeking the removal of the Act of Protestant Succession, another scheme had “been mooted, which, if carried into effect, will have far-reaching consequences, indeed . . . It is nothing less than a proposal to erect ‘A European Council with the Pope as President’.”¹⁰⁹ As if written today, excepting the word “monarchs,” Wylie comments that

The pretext for this bold proposal is the inflammatory condition of Europe at this hour, and for some time past. Its nations are continually on the brink of war, their armies have grown to be

106. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 165f.

107. Gerard Noel, *The Catholic Herald*, 5 May 2000, p. 5.

108. *The Catholic Herald*, 12 May 2000.

109. J. Wylie, no date. p. 335f.

enormous, and should conflict arise the destruction of human life would be prodigious . . . Let there be established a great European council, consisting of monarchs and their ministers, and let that council have power to bring all international quarrels to its tribunal, and give judgment on them . . . This proposal is a very specious one. It has come from the Roman side . . .”¹¹⁰

It still remains a specious proposal a century later, even with the alleged additional economic argument. As Adrian Hilton argues

The truth of the matter is that since joining the EEC in 1973, Britain has amassed a trade deficit with Europe of hundreds of billions of pounds. Fewer than half of Britain’s exports go to the EU, and only a quarter of overseas investments are with the EU. Additionally, less than 5 per cent of investment into Britain is from the EU. Over this same period, Britain has achieved an enormous trade surplus with the rest of the world, and 75 per cent of its overseas investment continues to go outside the EU . . . If nations like Israel and Mexico can have free trade with both NAFTA and the EU, it is bizarre to assert that Britain may not.¹¹¹

And as if Wylie had said it today, it is still true that the idea of the “European Council” has come from the Roman side:

A German colleague of Jacques Delors described the idea of a united Europe as “essentially a Catholic concept” [*Financial Times*, 22 May 1995], of which an inevitable result would be the subjugation of Britain’s Protestant ethos to Roman Catholic social, political and religious teachings.¹¹²

Hilton continues that the understanding that the EU is a “Catholic concept” gains belief from an address of Cardinal Maria Martini of Milan. Speaking at the European Parliament, on *Remembering the Origins of the Process of European Integration*, Martini

outlined the importance of a single faith (Catholicism) and emphasised that religions must not support nationalisms (i.e. the Church of England must not defend the English Constitution) and Europe must recognise the “primacy of the divine” (i.e. the primacy of the Pope). His address included demands for a new welfare state, on the model of Roman Catholic social doctrine, and his rejection that European integration was ever about economic and monetary issues alone.¹¹³

It is not surprising, then, that the Vatican has bestowed sainthoods on de Gasperi, Scuman and Adenauer for founding the EC on Roman Catholic principles.¹¹⁴

I return to Wylie and his prophetic insight and foresight. Speaking of the Roman Catholic Church, he says that

her main ambition is to acquire political ambition . . . She has found her way, after sixty years’ skilful and persistent plotting, to the foot of throne, leaving in her path, alas! many a melancholy wreck. Between her and the throne is now only the Act of the Protestant Succession. We may well tremble when we think that this is the one barrier betwixt us and a Popish reign.¹¹⁵

110. *Ibid.*, 336f.

111. Adrian Hilton, *The Principality and Power of Europe: Britain and the emerging Holy European Empire* (Dorchester House Publications, 2000), p. 152.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Church of England Newspaper*, 10 December 1999.

115. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 310f.

But I believe that the Church of Rome envisaged that it could not remove the Act of Protestant Succession by political means when England still had the religious resources of conservative evangelicalism within the Church of England and non-conformist churches to resist any such overtures.¹¹⁶ In this respect, the Church of Rome had to weaken the Church of England and non-conformist churches by religious means first. A century on from the 1890s of Wylie and the Church of Rome in England has gained the advantage, through religious ecumenicalism, and weakened the evangelical faith in conformist and non-conformist churches. And, in my view, if battles are lost and not won, then Alpha has contributed to the final loss of the evangelical battle to the Church of Rome. Well may we tremble that this one barrier between us and a Popish reign is *de facto* removed.

But there is no trembling, as evangelicals such as Wylie did a century ago, at the prospect of the repeal of the Act of Settlement by the Evangelicals of today. Pluralism has gripped today’s Evangelicals. Bebbington, an acknowledged scholar on the subject of evangelicalism, states that “it becomes clear that Evangelical religion in Britain, despite the four constant elements [activism, biblicism, crucicentrism and conversionism] . . . has altered enormously over time in response to the changing assumptions of Western civilization.”¹¹⁷ However, if the four characteristics of evangelicalism are constant, why has evangelicalism changed? As evangelicalism is said to have changed, “in response to the changing assumptions of Western civilization,” then the four characteristics of evangelicalism have remained constant in name only. And on reading through Bebbington’s book, it is clear that evangelicalism is pluralistic.

Pluralism, where equal worth is given to contrary positions, is evident not only within evangelicalism, but also within Alpha and Roman Catholicism. The pluralism within Alpha occurs through its acceptance of the Christologies of Tolstoy, Tillich, Moltmann and Forrest. And this pluralism, which is ecumenicalism by another name, is imbibed by evangelicals and permeates the relationship between theology and politics, activism and biblicism. There is a relationship between the arguments set out in John Coffey’s article *How Should Evangelicals Think about Politics?*,¹¹⁸ which calls for principled pluralism, and Alpha. Coffey requires that states are non-confessional so that all religions benefit from civil liberty and equality. Although Alpha’s aim is to introduce core truths about which Christians can unite, it is still a non-confessional faith. This can be seen from the individual ecumenicalism of Gumbel. The non-confessional faith of Alpha allows for the different denominations and beliefs, and you only have to see Roman Catholicism or the atheistic Christologies of Tillich and Moltmann in this context, to benefit from religious civility and equality. If there is a non-confessional faith then this will develop into a non-confessional political ecumenicalism. The weaknesses, inconsistencies

116. G. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868* (Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 218ff. Besides popular protests, new Protestant societies were formed during the crisis and party political advantage could be gained from No-Popery. Also some Roman Catholics held that the independence of English Roman Catholicism would be denied by the restoration of the hierarchy.

117. David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (Routledge, 1993), p. 19.

118. John Coffey, “How Should Evangelicals Think About Politics?” in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. LXIX, No. 1.

and directions of principled pluralism have been demonstrated by Stephen Perks, in *A Defence Of The Christian State*¹¹⁹ and in the responses of the advocates of Theonomy and National Confessionalism in *God And Politics*.¹²⁰

With this fascination for political ecumenicalism, the Evangelical Alliance [EA] resolutely determined that “a united Europe can, and does, work.”¹²¹ Under the banner of the EA, the President of the EA, Sir Fred Catherwood, “dismisses the whole sovereignty issue as a non-argument in his book *Pro-Europe?*” and the EA “is content to carry editorial equating Euro-sceptics with ‘millennial madness,’ and states that the single currency is logical.”¹²² Much the same message is being propounded by Archbishop Carey. David Samuel comments on Archbishop Carey’s speech to the European Parliament in 1992 that Carey

used the same language as Cardinal Hume in his critique of the “free enterprise culture” and endorsed Jacques Delors . . . in his assertion that “the new Europe needed a set of shared spiritual values.” Dr Carey’s criticism of the institutions of the West, says Andrew Brown in *The Independent*, largely followed the analysis of the Pope . . . [A] year later . . . The Archbishop told Delors that a majority in Britain see their destiny in Europe, but something is restraining them. Now Delors and Carey believe they have found the remedy. It is a *shared spirituality*.¹²³

119. Stephen Perks, *op. cit.*

120. Gary Scott Smith, (ed), *God and Politics: Four Views on the Reformation of Civil Government* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1989). I would add that a difference in argument between the advocates themselves of Theonomy and National Confessionalism is whether the United States in 1789 was a Christian nation. The former argue positively and the latter argue negatively.

121. The Evangelical Alliance’s Publications & Resources brochure 1996, as quoted in Adrian Hilton, 2000, p. 11.

122. *Evangelicals Now*, May 1997 and *IDEA Magazine*, April/May 1977, p. 5, as cited in Adrian Hilton, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

123. David Samuel, *European Union and Roman Catholic Influence In Britain* (The Harrison Trust, 1996), p. 6f.

But Carey’s pro-EU beliefs, which include a shared spirituality, negate Article XXXVII of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

Of the Civil Magistrate

The Queen’s majesty hath the chief power in the realm of England, and other dominions; unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

And with similar beliefs of individual and ecclesiastical ecumenicalism between Carey and Gumbel, this shows the possible end to which might lead. For there is no reason why ecumenicalism should stop with ecclesiastical structures and not work its own logic out into the political arena as well. Thus, in addition to what I listed in Chapter 1 on the attributes of Alpha, there needs to be recognition of the possible effects of Alpha’s logic in terms of political ecumenicalism, not because Gumbel or Alpha material intend such consequences—I have no reason to suppose they do—but merely because “ideas have consequences,” and where such consequences are least understood and recognised, they tend to be all the more effective. But let us not be fazed by submitting to the Scriptures in all areas of life.

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GLORY TO GOD ALONE

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KARL POPPER'S SCIENTIFIC ENTERPRISE

by Colin Wright

PART II: CRITICISM AND THE GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE

Cumulative acquisition of unanticipated novelties proves to be an almost non-existent exception to the rule of scientific development. The man who takes historic fact seriously must suspect that science does not tend toward the ideal that our image of its cumulateness has suggested. *Perhaps it is another sort of enterprise.*¹ —Thomas S. Kuhn

INTRODUCTION

In the first article in this series we looked at Popper's *criterion of demarcation*—the criterion that distinguishes genuine scientific theories from pseudo theories. Popper maintained through all his publications and teaching from 1919 till his passing in 1994 that that criterion was falsifiability. That is, a theory is *genuinely scientific* if a condition can be stipulated under which the theory would be regarded as having been falsified. For example, the theory "All ravens are black" is genuinely scientific because a specific condition can be stipulated under which it would be falsified, namely, the discovery of a single non-black raven.² On the other hand, the theory "God exists" is a metaphysical rather than a scientific statement, because no criterion can be established under which it would generally be agreed that the statement was false. Whatever "facts" are thrown against this belief make no difference; people continue to believe. Similarly with Marx's theory of history: the "facts" can always be made to fit the theory. In fact, Popper had stumbled onto something significant here that he nevertheless continued

throughout his life to ignore. For unless he was prepared to maintain that intelligent people were firmly committed to these so-called non-scientific theories for no good reason, he would have to admit that lurking behind them was another kind of rationale than the scientific one he espoused. Such people were simply outworking very real but nevertheless hidden presuppositions about the nature of reality. Popper's problem was not that he did not see this, but that he did not accept the validity of such presuppositions. Only logic or reason figured in his estimate of things. Tragically he could not see that this stance itself was a presupposition of his own thinking that escaped critical scrutiny. To this extent Popper's own philosophy was not a critical one but a dogmatic one.³

If Popper brought to the debate on the nature of scientific pursuit a revolutionary view on the demarcation between scientific and other theories, he could not do so in isolation. His theory both coloured, and was coloured by, his theories about the nature of knowledge itself and the process by which it was gained. It is to these two issues that we now turn our investigation in this essay.

THE NATURE OF SCIENTIFIC PURSUIT

Having asked the question *What distinguishes genuine science from pseudo-science*, we now turn to a quite different question: *What exactly does a scientific theory give us?* or, *What kind of enterprise are we engaged in when we do genuine scientific activity?*

By his principle of falsification Popper had closed the door to the idea that science could be advanced by collecting "facts" and deducing theories from them. This was the

1. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970) p. 96. But the italic emphasis is mine.

2. A firm believer in the theory might well argue that the non-black creature is simply not a raven. Why? Because all ravens are black. This type of argument is not unusual in natural science, or even in theological science. *All* natural scientific theories have enough such (acknowledged) counter-instances to falsify them. The real question is not whether they are true or false but rather how, when and why we should abandon them.

3. Despite constant prompting from his opponents, Popper never produced a single instance of a possible falsifier of his theory for demarcating genuine from pseudo-science. This implies that his theory was itself unscientific!

4. Also often referred to as Lord Verulam, Bacon (1561–1626) became Lord Chancellor of England. Verulam is the Latin name of St Albans in Hertfordshire.

method pioneered by the great Francis Bacon⁴ in his famous *Advancement of Learning* (1605) and *Instauratio Magna* or *Novum Organum* (1620). In the latter work he stated: “Truth therefore and utility are here the very same things; and works themselves are greater value as pledges of truth than as contributing to the comforts of life.”⁵

J. R. Rushdoony’s comment on this aphorism is so telling it deserves quoting in full:

Bacon denied the primacy of ideas; instead of approaching the world from the perspective of a philosophy, a world-view, or a theory, Bacon proposed that the new science let the “facts” determine science, and a pragmatic concept of “truth” then be forthcoming as the theory.

Bacon’s position, the priority of factuality, and the pragmatic standard of truth, represented no less a philosophy than the Scholasticism he opposed. Plato had held to the priority of the idea: Aristotle had tried to maintain a dialectical tension between form and matter, idea and brute fact; Bacon stood Plato on his head and asserted the priority of the fact, and derived, ostensibly, his truth from the fact. All three positions are equally philosophical. The idea that facts are both prior and self-interpreting is as much a faith as Plato’s, Aristotle’s, and Aquinas’ positions had been. Like them, Bacon tried to remake the world in terms of his own idea.⁶

Although Bacon was by and large ignored by the upcoming generation, his idea gained a strong hold on popular opinion regarding the nature of scientific pursuit. Even today it is generally the theory that is instilled into the young at school. And even those who know better use it quite shamelessly when it suits their purpose.

Nevertheless, it was not Francis Bacon’s theory that Popper set out to discredit, or philosophical pragmatism in general. Popper was interested in the work of the Vienna Circle—the logical positivists. For they were vociferously and successfully arguing that facts—neutral, brute facts—were central to science; that these brute facts, what they called empirical facts, are the only facts there are, and that they are the source from which theories are deduced and the touchstone by which they can be verified, that is, proved to be true. As long as they continued to give credence and add respectability to the priority of fact they played into the hands of the Adlers, the Freuds and the Marxes of this world, that is, the pseudo-scientists. The fact is, facts can always be made to fit a theory, however preposterous the latter. Popper saw this clearly; the positivists never did, and continued to insist that the pseudo-scientists and metaphysicians were simply guilty of using meaningless language in their formulations.

For Popper, then, there must be another way of coming by theories, and another way of pursuing science.

POPPER’S NEW WAY—CONJECTURES AND REFUTATIONS

Popper’s starting point has already been made clear; *theories cannot be proved to be true*. They can only be shown to be false.

As he clearly stated on one occasion: “No theory has been shown to be true, or can be shown to be true.”⁷

The implication of this is clear for the pursuit of science: *it cannot be a pursuit of truth*. Ironically, this is precisely what Popper did want it to be, just as did the positivists, but this dialectical tension in his theory will have to await investigation until the third part of our series in which we will attempt to criticise Popper’s theory from a Christian perspective. Right now our purpose is merely descriptive.

Popper took refuge in a fragment that has survived from early Greek philosophy of the writings of Xenophanes: “There never was nor will be a man who has clear certainty as to what I say about the gods and about all things; for, even if he does chance to say what is right, yet he himself does not know that it is so. But all are free to guess.”⁸

So what Popper and Xenophanes are saying is: The truth is out there, but we have no way of finding out what it is; even if we did stumble upon it, we would have no way of determining that it is, in fact, the truth. Perhaps to some extent we can, however, say what the truth is not. All we can do is guess or conjecture, and devise tests to see if our guesses bear any relation to the facts.

Popper often explained his theory of scientific pursuit in a simple formula:

$$P_1 \rightarrow TS \rightarrow EE \rightarrow P_2$$

That is, we begin with a puzzle, or problem, P_1 . We proceed to formulate a tentative solution TS to this problem. Next we seek to examine this tentative solution, to put it to the test—a process of error elimination EE. As a result we arrive at a second and, according to Popper, a better guess, a closer approximation to the truth with problem P_2 . Thus scientific method is basically a process of trial and error or, as Popper prefers to call it, trial and error-elimination.

The process is clearly quite opposed to that of the positivists and the Baconians. They used facts to prove a theory true; Popper used facts to try and prove a theory false. The validity of a theory for the former consists in its truthfulness; for Popper it consists in its ability to withstand severe tests or attempts to prove it false. This is very important. Popper also, as we have said, wanted his scientific pursuit to be a quest for the truth, even though he denied it could be attained. But it is the process of severe testing—the attempts to disprove—by the scientific community that constitutes science for Popper. Scientists spend their time trying to falsify the guesses of their colleagues (and their own, of course). They engage in a process of *Conjectures and Refutations*.⁹

This is what science is about for Popper—a *methodology*. He never seems to have raised the question of what *constitutes* a scientific puzzle. Neither does he show any interest in how we select from among the available puzzles, that is, in what constitutes a *significant* puzzle. He does not make a radical distinction between naïve or pre-theoretical and scientific or theoretical thought. Science is by definition *the Popperian method of solving problems by critical analysis and discussion*.

5. *Novum Organum*, Book I, Aphorism 124.

6. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Nutley, Craig Press, 1971) p. 272. This is one of the really great books of the twentieth century and arguably Rushdoony’s finest work. Unfortunately only about a fifth of the material Rushdoony wrote for this work ever appeared in print.

7. K. R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979) p. 21.

8. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London, A & C Black, 1892) p. 116.

9. This is the title of one of Popper’s best known and most widely read volumes.

WHAT MAKES ONE THEORY BETTER THAN ANOTHER?

Popper had a clear idea about the goal of scientific method. It was to asymptotically¹⁰ approach the truth by continually refining our explanations or theories. We need to remind the reader once again that this was severely at odds with Popper's scepticism as he expressed it repeatedly through Xenophanes' dictum.

Scientific pursuit is a development as well as a process. Knowledge improves and broadens as we apply our critical method to the problems of the scientific community. That is why we have quoted the assertion of Popper's rival, Thomas Kuhn, at the head of this essay. Kuhn insists that no example of this type of development can be found in the historical records. It is, he claimed, another sort of enterprise. Kuhn was acknowledged during his lifetime as the most knowledgeable expert on the history of scientific thought. Popper never answered Kuhn on this point.

Kuhn always maintained that a new successful theory always *supplanted* its former rival; it was never a development of the former ruling theory. Indeed, Kuhn maintained, the two theories were virtually incomprehensible to one another. He described them as incommensurable.

Popper, on the other hand, was insistent, as was his successor Imre Lakatos who refined Popper's methodology, that new successful theories were accepted as such precisely because they explained all that the old theory explained and then some. There was progress in the cultivation of scientific knowledge. For Popper, the growth of knowledge, specifically *how* it grew, was the main burden of his epistemology or theory of knowledge. Notwithstanding certain historical setbacks, and Popper singled out Christianity as a leading setback, scientific pursuit has been an historical process of knowledge accumulation.

This principle of the accumulative nature of scientific pursuit coloured Popper's view of the criteria for distinguishing theories. His view was unashamedly evolutionary.¹¹ Theory B is better than theory A if:

- Theory B explains all that theory A explains
- Theory B explains some things that theory A could not explain
- Theory B stands up to severe tests under which theory A failed.

We have serious reservations about this which will be discussed in the last instalment.

POPPER'S EPISTEMOLOGY OR THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Francis Schaeffer once¹² defined epistemology as the science of "how we know, and how we know we know." In many ways this is an accurate definition—at least as far as tradi-

10. That is, constantly getting nearer but never arriving or being able to arrive. You know, what you feel is happening when a preacher says "finally" for the umpteenth time. In mathematics it is what happens when you keep halving something: it gets nearer to zero but can never quite make it.

11. The subtitle of his book *Objective Knowledge* was "An Evolutionary Approach," and he spelled this out very clearly in its p.

12. See Francis Schaeffer, *He Is There And He Is Not Silent* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972) p. 9. Schaeffer repeated this interminably in a series of discussions broadcast on the radio in the early seventies.

tional approaches to epistemology are concerned. But as far as Popper was concerned, this approach to the subject was entirely wrong, and had led the Western intellectual tradition up a blind alley. It is in his book *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*, published in 1972, that he sets about to systematically debunk the traditional view.

What, then, is wrong with the traditional view? Primarily, it is the fact that it is *subjectivist*. By this he means that "knowledge¹³ has been regarded as a specially secure kind of human belief, and scientific knowledge as a specially secure kind of human knowledge." Popper has quite accurately extracted the essence of traditional epistemology, particularly from the time of the Enlightenment. From this time on the task of relating this firmly-held view to an increasingly humanistic world-and-life view became more and more problematic. Particularly, the empiricist notion of the manner in which the world was split asunder into the knower and the known made this view ever more difficult to justify. Empiricism had postulated a world out there to be "known," and a world in man's head where all is "known." The two worlds are totally divorced, the only link being man's sensations or feelings. The great and urgent question becomes, how far can we trust these sensations to give us an accurate representation of what is out there? This is still a burning issue with most of Western philosophy. Indeed we would maintain that without a radical change in the basis of Western thinking, away from the humanistic nature-freedom presupposition, there is no solution to this dilemma.

David Hume (1711–1776), one of the earliest adherents of this view, took the seemingly logical step of philosophical scepticism. He denied that we could be certain of anything, and that we simply had to live with this. We were back in Plato's cave¹⁴ of shadows, but with the added advantage (or disadvantage) of now knowing that we were in the cave.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) took a radically new departure. He accepted the fact that knowledge could not be secured if it relied on, and was in fact given in, sensations. But knowledge, he declared, was *not* given in and by sensations. Sensations are merely the chaotic stuff which impinges on the mind from outside, and from which the mind *creates* knowledge within itself. In particular, Kant asserted that space and time were most definitely not real physical properties of the external¹⁵ world at all. They are categories or structures of the human mind, tools that the mind uses to create order, structure, and meaning out of the chaotic and meaningless sensations that enter the mind through the five senses. The world as we know it is not out there at all; it is in our mind only, indeed it is the creation of our mind.

Kant's attempt to resolve the problem comes to its philosophical fruition in Derrida's *deconstructionist* philosophy, in which there are no absolutes¹⁶ at all and all reality is reality within the mind only. In "real" life this now manifests itself in some frightening ways. For instance, the U.S.A. Supreme Court some years ago decreed that the Constitution means whatever the Supreme Court declares that it means. In fact it can no longer be certainly ascertained what any law means or how one ought to conduct oneself with

13. K. R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979) preface.

14. Plato, *Republic*, Book VII (Penguin Classics edition, 1971, p. 278)

15. That is, everything external to the human mind.

16. Except of course Derrida's own philosophy!

respect to laws. Their meaning is dependent on the subjective state of mind of those in power at the time. A law may well mean one thing today and another tomorrow.¹⁷ Church life has not remained unaffected by this subjectivist-relativistic philosophy. It is clearly demonstrated when the only answer that can be elicited to a carefully formulated and biblically-based argument is “Well, that’s *your* interpretation!”¹⁸

Popper had an even more radical solution to the problem than did Kant. He simply denied that human experience had anything to do with genuine knowledge. Knowledge was just not about what human beings were supposed to know at all.¹⁹ It was certainly not about establishing how we can be certain of that knowledge. He regarded this as the “subjectivist blunder” that had troubled Western thinking since the time of Aristotle.²⁰ Popper’s solution to the traditional problems of epistemology was, quite simply, to ignore them as irrelevant and mistaken.²¹ And he concluded:

The quest for certainty, for a secure basis of knowledge, has to be abandoned. Thus I see the problem of knowledge in a different way from that of my predecessors. Security and justification of claims²² to knowledge are not my problem. Instead, my problem is the growth of knowledge: in which sense can we speak of the growth of or the progress of knowledge, and how can we achieve it?²³

His concept of the task of epistemology is clearly spelled out. “Epistemology,” he asserts, “I take to be the theory of *scientific knowledge*.”²⁴ In an earlier passage he defines it this

17. In his *Law’s Empire* (London, Harper/Collins, 1991), Ronald Dworkin, Professor at Oxford and New York Universities, struggles heroically to justify the attempts of the judiciary in the United States of the Sixties to extract modern civil rights from the constitutional documents.

18. The extent to which the Christian Church has succumbed to humanistic philosophy is frightening. I would argue that modern Protestantism, not least its so-called evangelical wing, is now in a worse condition than was the Roman Church in 1518 when Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg. And much of the fault lies now, as it did then, at the feet of the clergy. The ability of certain sections of this constituency to rehash and mouth a few tired old theological formulas does not constitute true Christianity or spirituality.

19. And yet Popper uses the traditional subjectivist view of knowing as a human activity time and time again, even when debunking it. As, for instance, when he asserts that “A bacteriologist knows how to prepare . . .” (*Objective Knowledge*, p. 117)

20. K. R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979) preface.

21. Although I have not quoted Popper to this effect directly, he used the words “ignore” and “irrelevant” in this context on numerous occasions. See especially his essay “Epistemology Without a Knowing Subject” in *Objective Knowledge*, pp. 106–152. While such epithets as “irrelevant” and “mistaken” are often the last refuge of those who have no other defence against an unpalatable argument, it can be said to Popper’s credit that he does try to rationally defend his accusations.

22. That is, what is it that makes this subjective knowledge worthy of belief and how do we establish this “scientifically.”

23. K. R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979) p. 37.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 108 (emphasis in the original).

way: “The fundamental problem of the theory of knowledge is the clarification and investigation of this process by which, it is here claimed, our theories may grow or progress.”²⁵

Popper redefined the *theory* of knowledge by redefining the *nature* of knowledge. It is no longer what man knows but what is contained in objective, that is, outside of the human mind, documented statements—what is contained in books and libraries. More importantly, what is contained in *theories*. Because theories for Popper are the results of rational-critical debates about the guesses and conjectures men have about the way things are.

In his essay “Epistemology Without a Knowing Subject” Popper conducts some thought-experiments²⁶ to demonstrate his thesis that real knowledge is to be found in his objective sense:

Experiment (1). All our machines and tools are destroyed, and all our subjective learning, including our subjective knowledge of machines and tools, and how to use them. But libraries and our capacity to learn from them survive. Clearly, after much suffering, our world may get going again.

Experiment (2). As before, machines and tools are destroyed, and our subjective learning, including our subjective knowledge of machines and tools, and how to use them. But this time, all libraries are destroyed also, so that our capacity to learn from books becomes useless.²⁷

At first glance, there is something appealing about this argument. But it is deceptive, presupposing a number of hidden assumptions that are highly questionable. We shall have to engage these in our third and final instalment.

CONCLUSION

In the limited space at our disposal much has had to be omitted that we hope will not be taken as an indication of any attempt to distort Popper’s view of the scientific enterprise. Furthermore, this is meant to be a popular exposition of the leading features and no way comparable to what might be expected by way of thoroughness and depth in an article for the *Journal for Unified Science* or *Philosophia Reformata*.

Hopefully our two essays have given the broad sweep of the most important and salient features of this great thinker of our times. Our final evaluation to appear in the next issue will attempt to evaluate in an acceptable and constructive manner the positive as well as the negative aspects of Popper’s thought. C&S

25. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

26. Thought-experiments are not real experiments at all. They are *theories* with a peculiar feature: they are *never tested*, and with *no intention* of being tested. What’s more, they go against the grain of everything modern humanists see as the crowning glory of their science. Thought-experiments go back to Aristotle, who got into a whole heap of trouble through using them.

27. In Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge*, p. 107f.

EVANGELICALS WHAT?

by Paul Wells

THE Federation of European Evangelical Theologians (FEET) convened in summer in Germany at the “New Life Centre” near Altenkirchen for about the twentieth time. The theme was to be the situation and the future of the Church in Europe in 2000.

In his opening address the president, I. Howard Marshall, the renowned New Testament scholar from Aberdeen, brushed a heart-warming picture of what the Church should be, from an evangelical point of view, in 1 Timothy 3:15, 16. Our God is the living God, the Church is his pillar, set out before the world to indicate where God is to be found, and that with a magnificent confession of Christ “who appeared in the body and was taken up into glory.” Marshall spoke for 15 minutes and one could have listened to him for an hour!

FEET, as the name suggests, is an association of theologians who profess to be evangelicals. Obviously the word “evangelical” is difficult to interpret. In the Anglo-Saxon world the word is defined by the definitions provided by James Packer, John Stott, and Martin Lloyd-Jones. Stott and Lloyd-Jones have both written books on the subject and even they propose different meanings! Lloyd-Jones invented the famous maxim “guilty by association” which meant that evangelicals in pluralistic churches were guilty because of their association in the church with more liberal brethren. His message was separation for the sake of purity.

The principle seemed clear, but to put it into practice was not at all evident for many pastors holding evangelical views in churches such as the Church of England or Scotland. In Holland propositions such as that of Lloyd-Jones are impossible to contemplate for ministers in the Gereformeerde Kerken. Pastors in the Reformed alliance in those churches are obviously doctrinally closer to people in evangelical movements than to some of their colleagues in the national church, but it is no reason for them to leave their church! Much better that links between evangelicals in the national church and those without in the evangelical movements, which are often para-ecclesiastical, be reinforced.

Evangelicals are essentially children of the revivals of George Whitefield and John Wesley, of Charles Spurgeon and the “old Princeton” of which B. B. Warfield was an advocate in the USA. His Dutch counterpart was Abraham Kuyper, who proposed a world and life view of Christianity in which the believer should experience renewal in Christ, in the context of a total movement of creation-fall-redemption. The writer of this article feels that he is an evangelical, but also a Reformed and Calvinistic Christian, but above all a biblical believer. Badges are hard to wear!

Evangelicalism can be resumed in five points established by *The Fundamentals* published in the USA from 1910 to 1915:

Scripture is God’s word, men are sinful, salvation is by the atonement of the cross, and is appropriated by faith alone and Jesus will return to judge the world and establish a new creation.

The problem today is the fact that Christians who are evangelicals exist in all sorts of churches. In fact, some evangelicals in “free churches” are closer in their beliefs to believers in the “State churches” or the “national churches” than other members of those churches. Evangelicalism cuts across denominational lines. As Francis Schaeffer said, the lines are not drawn today between the churches, but in the churches, between those who believe in the gospel, the evangel, and those who don’t.

At the start of the twenty-first century we are faced with a new problem. “Evangelicals,” true believers, exist in all churches, including the Roman and the Orthodox church. This is painful to admit for us. I do not like the episcopal system of these churches and I think the papacy is corrupt, but I have to admit that in these churches there are people who hold to the same “fundamentals” as I do. The question is how do we work together across denominational lines as believers.

The FEET conference dealt with two pressing problems which are very real for evangelicals in all kinds of churches. What is an evangelical? and what should an evangelical do in a church which is unfaithful? Should one remain in a church which is unfaithful to the gospel, or should one get out? No satisfying answer was given to this question at this conference. I went home with the same questions I had at the start.

It was very discouraging to hear about the catastrophic decline of the State Church in Germany. Helge Stadelmann, from the Theological Seminary in Giessen, told us that the national Church in Germany had shrunk in the latter part of the twentieth century from 43 million members in 1950 to 27 millions in 1997. We might shrug our shoulders at this frightening fact. But we have to admit that in the realm of the god-Euro, this is happening all around us.

However, it was encouraging to hear about the wonderful things the Lord has been doing in the state churches in Scandinavia. And most of all the way evangelicals are prospering in Romania. We heard from Paul Negrut how Emmanuel University in Oradea has received recognition from the Romanian government and the enormous prospects for the growth of the evangelical church in that country.

The classical solutions which have always been proposed to the problem of unity or purity of the Church, that of separation from a particular denomination or that of

forming a “church within the church,” were discussed, but no magical solution came out. The great puritan theologian, John Owen, chaplain of Oliver Cromwell, suggested getting out as the solution. Martin Lloyd-Jones says in his book *The Puritans* that the “church within the church” has never done any good. So today we are still no more advanced on this question than in the sixteenth century! Could not a deeper reflection on what the Church is help us, particularly at the beginning of a millennium which will be post- or anti-Christian?

Evangelicals so named still have two problems to solve:—what is an acceptable doctrine of Scripture for them?—what do we do in terms of the church?

As long as these problems are unresolved, and who can solve them?, the name “evangelical” will always be woozy.

Several years ago James Barr, in his anti-fundamentalist writings underlined all the weaknesses of evangelicalism. What have “evangelicals” done to reply to his criticisms? In many cases they have not become more biblically Calvinistic, they have become charismatic. Is not that the root of many of our problems in the churches today?

If we want to be “evangelicals,” to remain faithful to the great doctrines of grace taught in the Bible, by our Reformed fathers, we are all the same very much embarrassed by those in our churches who do not profess the faith in the same way as we do. I came away from this conference thinking: what then is the church, and what do we have to do to be an evangelical church?

The only answer to these question is that we become biblical Calvinists. C&S

Book Reviews

FAKING IT: THE SENTIMENTALISATION OF MODERN SOCIETY

BY DIGBY ANDERSON AND PETER MULLEN

London: The Social Affairs Unit, 1998,
viii + 217 pages, £15.95, ISBN 0-907631-75-4

REVIEWED BY RUBEN ALVARADO

I have spent many a moment in recent years pondering one simple question: “Whatever happened to the English?” You know, stiff upper lip, stoic reserve, laughing in the face of danger, and the like. It seems that lately nothing could be worse than the emulation of such virtues. While Scotland and Wales pursue the development of a national identity, the English seem to be doing everything they can to lose one. This national complex has found expression in particular in a rather interesting psychological phenomenon that foursquare opposes the received English tradition: I speak of sentimentality, what Jane Austen referred to as “sensibility.” One saw it in the trial a few years back of the nanny Louise Woodward in the United States, where the question of guilt or innocence took a distinctly secondary place to the question of whether mean-spirited Americans should stand in judgment of a nice teenage English girl. One saw it as well with the otherwise tragic death of Diana, where it seemed that everyone tried to outdo each other in expressing—and this is the key, outwardly, publicly expressing—emotion, perhaps with the thought that “what I am doing is just what Diana would have done in my place.” Such an un-English spectacle! But that was the whole point. It was as if everyone was saying “We reject our past, our heritage, our image in the history books, and we demand to be seen as a people that can express themselves even if what we express is fathomless triviality.”

To my mind this same attitude came to expression in the 1997 parliamentary elections. Labour campaigned on little else than “let’s change our attitude to Europe, to Britain, to the past;

let’s be cool Britannica, put on sunglasses and throw that self-restraint stuff in the Thames.” Actual policy differences were few and far between, with the exception of “Europe,” which in a nutshell expressed the difference in attitude. For if there is one thing that separates the English from the continent, it is attitude. At bottom, it is an attitude of self-reliance vs. reliance on government. It is an age-old distinction with deep historical roots, which is why the shift in favor of the continental attitude is so striking. It finds its parallel across the Atlantic in the United States, where the Democratic Party is carrying out a similar transfiguration of the national psyche.

Yes, it is the age of feel-good leadership, and Messrs Blair and Clinton are its most gifted exemplars. Substance is irrelevant, in fact ludicrous. Nothing matters but image and appearance. It is this trend that *Faking It* so mercilessly exposes. And if the repetition of phrases like “sentimentality,” “fake,” “sham” becomes somewhat monotonous—the inevitable result of the book’s comprising a series of separate articles—that repetition also signals the pervasiveness of the problem. This is anything but an innocent phenomenon. It is the sign of what Johan Huizinga observed way back in the 1930s, with the rise of fascism (and what parallels can be drawn between the contemporary period and that one!), in what he described as the weakening of the capacity to judge. It seems as if people no longer have a mind of their own, that they allow their minds to be taken over by some collective spirit that moves everyone in the same direction and plants the same thoughts in everyone’s heads. One then no longer exercises a critical judgment but allows oneself to be subsumed, and thus intellectually annihilated. Is this the contemporary version of religious ecstasy? Perhaps.

The heart of the book and the heart of the problem finds expression in Nicholas Capaldi’s article “Evading personal responsibility: the sentimentalisation of social policy.” Capaldi makes the crucial observation that fake behavior has its roots in the Pelagian world-view and that the “stoic” tradition of self-restraint in fact has its roots in the Augustinian alternative. “Sentimentality is a perversion of Christianity. Specifically,

sentimentality is *Pelagian*. Pelagius was a fifth-century British monk who both denied the doctrine of Original Sin and affirmed that our free will was sufficient to allow us to save ourselves . . . The denial of the doctrine of Original Sin is of fundamental importance. The constant tension in Western civilisation has been between those who think that salvation is possible in this life (utopianism) and those who deny it. Sentimentality is an inevitable by-product of the former.” Sentimentality is simply a veneer over uncontrolled, irrational, appetite-oriented behavior, in which people, selfishly seeking their own interest, cloak that pursuit in emotion which is designed to eliminate accountability and disengage the critical faculty. If one accepts the Pelagian’s tenet that human beings are intrinsically good, then one gladly accepts this subterfuge because the alternative—that these people actually really are what one deep down suspects—is too horrible to contemplate. Such a conclusion would validate the Augustinian notion of inherent human evil.

But the real danger lies in accepting Pelagianism as a sort of civil religion. For in that case this subterfuge takes on public, national, even totalitarian dimensions. It becomes an exercise in group-think where everyone repeats the “party line” even though privately everyone knows it is a lie. This is what politics in the United States at least has come to. And this Clinton phenomenon can be carried, who knows how far? It was precisely this kind of emotivism that Hitler used to smooth his way to power. The way it is used by the Clintonistas to paper over untold depths of corruption, and the way such-like misbehavior is not only tolerated but applauded, speaks volumes about the intellectual and spiritual level of the electorate. We know from the Scriptures that the anti-Christ when he comes will take a similar line: “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:9–12).

If Capaldi’s article exposes the spiritual core of sentimentality, Mark Steyn’s article “All Venusians Now” comprehensively summarizes the cultural and political upshot. I can do no better than to string together some direct quotes: “These days almost every subject has been taken out of politics and appropriated to the realm of feeling: health, education, the environment, gun control, drugs policy . . . There’s no point trying to *think* about these issues; *feeling* is all.” “The presiding genius of the age is John Gray, author of the psychobabble best-seller, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* . . . Life is from Mars, the media is from Venus—and when the latter runs up against the former, it inevitably ends up adapting life to the teary plot structures it understands.” “For most people, news is something that crops up in between sitcoms, soap operas and commercials, and it is not surprising that, over the years, it should have absorbed the same techniques as its colleagues.” “When pop culture congratulates itself on its boldness in ‘examining’ homosexuality or racism or abortion, what it usually means is that it has bestowed an approved status on certain groups; you can ‘examine’ these subjects, but only in a narrow way—and heaven help anyone so unenlightened as to beg to differ.” “That’s the distinguishing feature of media sentimentality: its intolerance of any dissenting views, and the ferocity with which it squashes them. There is a kind of sentimental fascism abroad.”

This is what is so chilling about this development. Sentimentality is the absolute opposite of what it pretends to be. It exudes compassion, but in fact it is a cloak for the most debased and vile forms of corruption and decadence. Take the instance

of abortion: “With ‘reproductive rights’, say, all you need to know is one cold, impersonal statistic: between 25 and 30 per cent of all pregnancies in the US now end in abortion. That couldn’t make it plainer: abortion is typically not an ‘agonising personal decision’, only a routine form of contraception. But the distraught aborter agonising publicly over her agonising personal decision sits so much better between the soaps and talk shows. Without a culture of sentimentality, it would not be possible for a civilised society to tolerate abortion. We would understand all too well what it really is.”

Sentimentality serves as a cloak to hide the truth, and the one who dares ask for the truth is then branded an unfeeling scoundrel. It is the world turned upside down.

As Steyn notes, it is the current crop of politicians who are most adept at channelling this predilection for tears to their own ends. Vice president and presidential candidate Al Gore is a master at this. The reader will have to pardon me, for I am again going to quote Mr Steyn at length. My excuse is that, in an election year like this one (in the US) such things cannot be repeated enough. The message exposing the cant and hypocrisy simply *must* get through.

“Al Gore’s brazenness knows no bounds. He pioneered the fashion for touting stricken relatives as the basis for public policy: in 1992, it was his son, who was nearly killed in a car crash; in 1996, it was his sister, who died of lung cancer. Gore ‘loved her more than life itself’, he told America in a hushed voice on live television. Then he paused. ‘Tomorrow morning, a 13-year-old girl will start smoking. I love her, too.’ By this time, the gaps between words were big enough to smoke half a pack of cigarettes during. ‘And that is why’, he continued, ‘until I draw my last breath I will pour my heart and soul into the cause of protecting our children from the dangers of smoking.’

“No network news anchor covering the speech saw fit to mention a speech Gore made in 1988, four years after his sister’s death: ‘Throughout most of my life, I’ve raised tobacco’, he proudly told a North Carolina audience. ‘I’ve hoed it, I’ve chopped it, I’ve shredded it, spiked it, put it in the barn, stripped it, and sold it.’ No television correspondent pointed out that in 1990, six years after his sister’s death, Gore was still taking campaign contributions from the tobacco industry. And why would the networks mock Gore as a fake? He speaks their language.

“When a print journalist belatedly caught up with Gore and asked him why, if he was that devastated, he’d remained a tobacco farmer, the Vice-President’s answer was ingenious: ‘I felt the numbness that prevented me from integrating into all aspects of my life the implications of what that tragedy really meant. We are in the midst of a profound shift in the way we approach issues. I really do believe that in our politics and in our personal lives, we are seeing an effort to integrate our emotional lives in a more balanced fashion.’ Nobody has mastered the feminisation of political discourse more thoroughly than Gore. Even his habit of speaking. Very. Slowly. Seems to play well with the ‘soccer moms’, reminding them of a concerned grade-school teacher taking the time to explain to little Johnny why eating too much candy is bad for you. Of Bob Dole’s economic plan, Gore said: ‘It’s unconscionable. That means it’s wrong, and it shouldn’t happen.’ Thanks, Mr Vice-President. For tomorrow’s Word-of-the-day, Al Gore defines ‘patronising.’ In contrast to Clinton, who declares that every American child should have the right to go to college, Gore seems determined to keep the entire electorate in kindergarten.”

I could go on quoting from this book endlessly. Anthony O’Hear’s article “Diana, queen of hearts” nicely summarizes the kind of impressions I expressed above on the transformation of modern England. Diana was and is the battering ram for replacing old English virtue with new English drivel. “Because

of her life and even more because of her death, what it is to be British has changed, irrevocably . . . What [Diana] stood for was the elevation of feeling, image and spontaneity over reason, reality and restraint. The Britain of our fathers and grandfathers, the Britain of World War II has been replaced by the New Britain in which the mother of the future King publicly weeps at the funeral of a vulgar and self-publicising Italian dress designer.”

Faking It's other articles similarly punch holes in received wisdom and provide food for thought for famished minds in a range of subject areas: medicine, education, environmentalism, literature, music, even eating. The authors have done a bang-up job. The final article offers a fine exposition of the origins of sentimentality in Christianity. Sentimentality has filled a vacuum left by the departure of Christianity from the public square. It is this knowledge which underlies the feeling one gets while reading this book, a feeling of—despair? Because one sees that the only antidote to Pelagianism is full-blown Christianity; the only antidote to works religion, which summarizes all of our misguided contemporary political and cultural efforts, is salvation by grace through faith. And that seems to be the one solution the public cannot accept. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [will let], until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thess. 2:7). God is still restraining the full outbreak of lawlessness. The ultimate question is, how long will he continue to do so? How long will he suffer those who have deliberately turned away from him? And the Antichrist, when he comes, will he bite his lip and choke back the tears as he champions lawlessness and persecutes the righteous? It is looking increasingly likely. *C&S*

HEART OF THE WORLD, CENTRE OF THE
CHURCH: COMMUNIO ECCLESIOLOGY,
LIBERALISM AND LIBERATION
BY DAVID L. SCHINDLER

T. and T. Clark/Wm B. Eerdmans, 1996, £29.95,
ISBN 0-567-08541-4, xvii + 322 pages including indices

REVIEWED BY STEPHEN J. HAYHOW

“Christians should seek to live at the heart of the world,
from the center of the Church.” (p. 1)

THIS is a book about the Church’s interaction with the world and with culture. The author is David L. Schindler, Gagnon Professor of Fundamental Theology at John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, Washington, D.C., USA.

The thrust of the book is to apply the *Communio* Ecclesiology that has emerged out of Vatican II. After Vatican II two groupings emerged within the Roman Catholic Church: first the liberal wing (*Concilium*), including Hans Kung and Karl Rahner; then on the more conservative side, Henri de Lubac, Jean Danielou, and Hans Urs Von Balthasar. The *Communio* Ecclesiology represents the fruits of the conservative wing of post-Vatican II Catholicism. David L Schindler writes from within this position, and is heavily influenced by Von Balthasar.

Ecclesiology

Now, what is the *Communio* Ecclesiology, and why might it be of significance to Reformed Christians? *Communio* is the communion that eternally exists between the persons of the Godhead; *Communio* is, therefore, love. The core of the *Communio* Ecclesiology is, to quote Schindler, “that being re-

ceives its basic order and meaning from love” (p. xi). Schindler explains the importance of this in forming a world-view: “The Christian’s mission in the world, consequently, is to be present *as church*, and thereby to assist in drawing into *communio* all of nature and all of the anthropological (political, economic, cultural) orders that extend nature into culture. The Christian’s fundamental purpose, in all aspects of his or her ‘worldly’ existence, is to assist in manifesting the beauty, truth and goodness of being, the fullness of which is revealed in God in the person-love of Jesus Christ” (p. xi).

Love is the goal of creation. As Schindler says, *communio* is given the broadest sense in that it reveals the relatedness of all reality. The foundation for this *communio* (i.e. communion) is the inter-relations of the persons of the Trinity: God is communion of persons, or *Persons in Communion*, to borrow Alan Torrance’s title.

Why is *communio* specifically an ecclesiology? How does the Church fit with all of this? Schindler replies: “. . . created being realises the integrity to which it was originally called only in the *communio* which is the Church” (p. xii). The exegetical basis put forward by Schindler for this astounding statement is Col. 1:17–18: “. . . before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. Now the Church is His body, he is its head.” Schindler exegetes this passage to mean, “In a word, all things have their predestined integrity in and through Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 1:2), hence in and through Christ’s body and bride, the Church” (p. xii). Christ is the central meaning of all of reality, and thus his body, the Church, is integral to a world-transfiguring faith. Whether Paul’s argument that Christ is the centre of all reality *necessarily* entails the Church occupying that place with Christ is not convincing from this passage alone. Another text that might come closer to this exegesis is Eph. 1:22–23, “And he put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”

Paul very clearly sets out a connection between Christ being the head of *all things* and head of his body, the Church. Paul seems to be drawing a parallel between the relationship of Christ to all creation, and his relation to the body, his Church. This exegesis is worthy of further study, outside of the scope of this review.

Schindler postulates that the love that is the meaning of all creation is manifested sacramentally through and in the Church, his body. He quite deliberately says that he is *not* subsuming everything into or under the Church. One of the drives behind the new ecclesiology since Vatican II is to renounce the older-papalism. Instead, Schindler draws upon a parallel between the hypostatically united divine and human natures in the one person of Jesus Christ (following the Council of Chalcedon), and the world’s relation to the Church. In Christ, the human (worldly) exists only in relation to the divine. Hence, the world only truly exists in relation to the Church. This places the Church at the center of world transformation. The problem I have with this is that there is no exegetical evidence of this connection between the divine nature of Christ and the Church. It is difficult to determine whether Schindler is paralleling the *relationship*, i.e. that the relation between the divine and the human in Christ is the *archetype* for the *relation* between the Church and the world. Rather this reads as a re-statement of the classical Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church as the continuation of the Incarnation, although Schindler puts it somewhat differently.

Communio

Communio is the reception of love, and the model is to be located in the inter-Trinitarian relations of the various persons of the Trinity. This is the model for all human *communio* (i.e.

communion). But furthermore, *communio* is the foundation for the specifically Catholic world-view in total. This world-view, says Schindler, has been developed as a result of the work of Vatican II and the papacy of John Paul II. While Schindler's opening discussion of *communio* is complex and would be difficult to summarise here, at the core is the idea of seeing the hypostatical union as the "model" for the interaction of the Church and the world. The Church is clearly not seen as just another institution. The Church is the key to the *transfiguration of the world*. In this *espousal* (p. 21) to Christ, the world is changed in total. "The espousal is meant to include human beings, not only in their individual but in their social nature as well: in their nature as extended into culture and hence into academic, political, and economic structures and institutions" (p. 21).

So, as individuals, who make up the Church, become more and more "married" to Christ, thus the impact necessarily carries with it a cultural impact. Moreover, the scope of this espousal is cosmic, for redemption is universal, in that it is cosmic.

Thus the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a microcosm of this transfiguration. In fact what goes on at the Communion is but an intensified "version" of what is becoming true of all creation. When bread is blessed in Communion and that bread "becomes" the bread of life to us, so the purpose of the whole creation is encapsulated. All of creation is to be offered back to God, in Christ, to the glory of the Father (p. 22).

Liberalism

So much for the meaning of *Communio* and the centrality of the Church. The main theme of the book is to show how the *Communio* Ecclesiology of the Church is at odds with modern Liberalism. The first half of the book interacts with Catholic scholars such as John Courtney Murray, and the neo-conservatives Richard Neuhaus and Michael Novak. Schindler discusses aspects of culture, politics and economics from a *communio* perspective. It is impossible to introduce, in detail, all of Schindler's work. But I want to both commend and criticise his thesis at various points.

First of all, the most obvious strength of Schindler is that he clearly understands the need for a *presuppositional* approach. It may surprise readers of this journal that there is such a strong presuppositionalist strain in some modern exponents of post-Vatican II Catholicism. Sometimes, in places, Schindler reads like a "Roman Catholic Van Til"! He blasts at the pretension to neutrality common within liberal philosophy, and as worked out in the neutral political theory of Murray, and the neo-conservative economics of Neuhaus. Schindler is adamant: there is no neutral ground, and this is precisely the Catholic (read Christian) controversy with Liberalism. Once the ground is given to "neutrality," liberalism, as a social idea, implies pluralism, for underneath pluralism is neutrality. Thus, Schindler writes, "they create a kind of empty forum within which all world-views, including that of Catholicism, can now compete in terms of their own inner persuasiveness" (p. 35).

This sets the backdrop for Schindler's analysis of John Courtney Murray's argument for the freedom of religions under the articles of the US Constitution. Murray argues for neutrality. But Schindler rightly exposes the presuppositions that underpin this view. Even the US Constitution's neutrality, as claimed by Murray, would itself presuppose a certain religious world-view. Thus Murray cannot escape the "myth of neutrality," and has merely replaced one world-view with another—his own! For Schindler this exposes the core of the matter: such neutrality implies and engenders religious indifference (p. 65), not religious commitment to God.

Schindler discusses the work of Theodore Hesburgh's idea of a Catholic university. Schindler attacks Liberalism and its

claims to neutrality (p. 145). A Catholic university, he argues, is not a basic university with Christianity over-laid, but is catholic (read Christian for "Catholic" for broader appeal) first and foremost. Its goal is to develop a "catholic mind" (p. 147). So the call to holiness that encompasses the whole life also includes the intellect and thus to the idea of the university (p. 149). Schindler warns us that we need to criticise the method of modernity, of Cartesian philosophy and thus of the whole naturalistic and mechanistic world-view, and that means we start with *communio*.

Secondly, economics. Free market economics, as expounded by the neo-conservatives, assumes the drive of self-interest (p. 108ff) as the basis for the market. For example, I am driven to meet your needs as my customer, because of the drive to fulfil my own needs (self-interest). But, Schindler asks how this fits with a *communio* view, a call to love in all things. How can self-interest be a valid source of motivation, for it is the very antithesis of love, which is self-giving! How can an economics constructed on self-interest be reconciled with the Gospel? Schindler replies with a complex argument built upon the concepts of creativity and receptivity. As creatures, in the image of God, we respond to God's creativity receptively—that is our fundamental posture as the image of God. We are only creative ourselves because we have first received from him. Thus we should be looking to extend to others because *we are ourselves only, ultimately, receivers from God*. I give, being myself first a receiver. The goal of economics must be service of the other, rather than self-interest (p. 123). This should not be construed as a criticism of the free market as such, so much as a criticism of the liberal justification of self-interest as the personal driver in the market. The producer is bound, by the market, to serve the customer. If he does not serve the customer's needs or requirements, then he rules himself out of the market. So the free market actually *forces* a focus upon the need of the *other person*, in order that my needs be met. That's the nature of the market. But self-interest cannot be of the essence of the market.

Schindler is not advocating socialist intervention, or anything of that nature. But, here's the problem: if servanthood is of the essence of love, then does this not fit the *communio* model anyway? As Christians with a concern for a godly economics, we must not give way to accepting self-interest as a valid motivation for operating in the market place. As those who believe in the free market and in the capitalist economic model, as that which stands closest to Scripture, we need to heed Schindler's warning.

Schindler understands the spirit of capitalism as "doing" (p. 103) and thus as enterprise. This over-balance has given birth to modern society's restlessness and tireless acquisitiveness. We have lost, says Schindler, the sense of leisure and contemplation—everything is geared towards a ruthless pursuit of enterprise. This section left me thinking that a criticism might be that too little weight is given to the cultural mandate (Gen. 1:26–28) in Schindler's discussion. But, at the same time, as those who take seriously the cultural mandate, we do need to heed this warning. We need this qualifier to a perversion of the cultural mandate that gives way to a humanistic version of the mandate.

We need the balance and proportion that Schindler calls for. That means we need time, we need leisure and prayer and contemplation. Christians must resist the frantic pace of secularised, and covetous capitalism. In fleeing the well-known errors of state socialism, we must be careful not to run into the arms of an adulterous capitalism.

Thirdly, in placing *love* (i.e. *communio*) as the centre in Christ of the Christian world-view, and as the ecclesiological position, Schindler might be construed as implying that love is somehow a premier attribute of God. The fact is that God's love is holy, righteous, pure, all-knowing etc. God is not more love than

justice, he is all of these in perfect proportion. So, as long as we see *Communio* in strong, Biblical terms, then there is much to learn here.

Fourthly, while this review has been largely positive, the reader needs to be aware of the obvious and strong commitment to established Roman Catholic dogma. These are not acceptable to the Protestant reader, and with good reason. Schindler exhibits a high estimation of Mary in a redemptive capacity. Many of Schindler's arguments are based upon the authority of papal encyclicals and councils. These will not convince the Protestant reader for obvious and valid reasons. However, these defects do not render Schindler's work useless to Reformed Christians. There are too many strong similarities and shared presuppositions for that. *C&S*

THE COMPANY OF THE PREACHERS:
A HISTORY OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM
THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THE MODERN ERA

BY DAVID LARSEN

Kregel, 1998 UK, 894 pages including index, hardcover,
ISBN: 0-8254-3128-x

REVIEWED BY CHARLES WEBSTER

This is a massive tome and at first glance the prospective reader could well be excused for by-passing it. Although attractively and colourfully bound, 894 pages on preaching may not appeal instantly to anyone other than a real enthusiast. Such an immediate reaction although understandable, would be a mistake however. This is a highly readable book that will prove a gold mine to the experienced preacher and novice alike. Indeed, it is so easy to read that its acceptance could should be found well beyond the circle of those involved in the preaching ministry. The seven page introduction, entitled "The Postulates of Preaching," deals with the importance of preaching *per se*, plus the importance of the history of preaching, and the importance of preaching in our contemporary situation. This brilliantly sets the course and the tone for all that follows. The author, emeritus professor of Preaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois is clearly the master of his subject. With great skill he takes the reader through a sweep of history of preaching from the Old Testament prophets, through the New Testament and on into the Church history up to and including the twentieth century.

A chief characteristic of the book is the potted biographies of the preachers assessed and quoted. It is so well researched, so replete with references, so conspicuous in its comments, so incisive in its criticism and so thorough in its assessments, that the book could be described as an encyclopaedia of preaching.

As regards the future of preaching, in pointing the way ahead, Larsen draws from the history of biblical preaching and gives a number of clear directives for the preacher:

—Stand staunchly with the classical biblical faith and its worldview, espousing confidence in the Scriptures through its positive proclamation and a vigorous apologetic.

—Uphold the cruciality of systematic biblical exposition with a strong dedication to modelling the study of a passage in its context with appropriate application.

—Loyally practice the necessary wedding of sound exegesis to lively exposition.

—Increasingly become a devotee of the most careful and responsible hermeneutic with its relentless commitment to

finding the original meaning of the text with the help of all available tools and resources.

—Continue to seek to know the filling of the Holy Spirit, the divine author of Scripture, upon whom we must totally rely at every stage of sermon preparation and delivery.

—Remain an avid student of the craft of preaching, seeking to grow in every aspect of its practice.

—Be open to cultivate skills in new forms, as in the present renewal of interest in the narrative portions of Scripture and their more effective presentation.

—Be unwavering in your conviction of the essential Christ-centeredness of preaching and to neglect no portion of revealed truth and to avoid no doctrine, for all is profitable.

—Never step back from the quest for excellence as those called by God to preach.

—Conscientiously and wholeheartedly seek that integrity and uprightness of character and conduct which will never bring the gospel or our Lord Jesus into disrepute.

—Remember humbly that you are an heir of faithful heralds through the ages and that we stand on their shoulders as we fulfil the task of our time.

—Rest in the power of Almighty God, our divine sovereign, whose we are and whom we serve. "The battle is the Lord's," and he will have the victory over all principalities and powers through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and, "the word of our testimony" (Rev 12:11) The outcome is not in doubt. Thus preaching has a great and glorious future.

The reviewer wishes to make only one minor criticism. The book is poorly proof read. There are a considerable number of miss-spellings and misprints. Hopefully these will be corrected in any future editions of the book.

The book is highly recommended and should be essential reading for all who believe they are called to preach. *C&S*

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I was interested to read David Estrada's discussion of the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church." It is useful, having scaled the dizzy heights of sophisticated theology, to take a look at the key issues with reference to the practical day-to-day ways of living the Christian life.

I like to ask myself what my simple, unsophisticated, unintellectual, Hungarian Catholic peasant grandmother would have made of the high theology which is the stuff of the Declaration. Had she gone down the road to visit the local Slovene Lutherans in the nearby town of Murska Sobota, she would probably not even have noticed them, let alone understood them. I take the view that the issues between Catholics and Lutherans on justification are far short of primary, to the extent that none of the contentious doctrines do not deceive those who are in a state of sin into working when they ought to be repenting. As far as my fellow Catholics are concerned, I cannot name even one who has been so deceived.

What I do know about my grandmother is that she would have clearly understood the difference between good and evil, the difference between the state of grace and the state of sin and of the necessity of going to confession whenever she fell into the latter. She would have been fully clear that she must always hate sin and love God. She would have believed in the Eucharist as identically the same sacrifice as that of Christ, containing the real, true and substantial presence of His Body and Blood. She would have understood the sacraments as being truly channels through which the grace of God is communicated to the soul, and that good works

done in the state of friendship with God attracted fitting rewards in the afterlife.

What I find particularly telling about Estrada’s article is his endpiece on the Diet of Ratisbon. He focuses on the issue of whether righteousness is imputed or infused, and that the former was taught by some of the greatest theologians in every age. I do not know whether either doctrine was ever taught to my grandmother or whether it would have made the slightest difference to her way of Christian life if it had been. For Estrada’s article raises at this point the question of why this issue is being debated in our day between Christians of different denominations where before the sixteenth century it would have been debated between Christians within the same communion. This leads us to a second question: if it was once an issue between Christians within the same communion, what is it that prevents them from re-establishing that communion even while these issues remain outstanding?

I would venture a twofold answer. The first part of the answer is that the key event of the Reformation which occasioned the rupture of communion was the controversy over the Eucharist. The irreducible essence of the Catholic faith is the same as that of the Eastern Orthodox: that the Eucharist is one and the same sacrifice as that which Christ offered at Calvary, in the consecration of which the bread and the wine are changed by the Holy Spirit into the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. All the Reformers denied the sacrificial character of the Eucharist and all affirmed Eucharistic doctrines that the bread and wine continue to exist after the consecration. All of them also denied the common Catholic/Orthodox doctrine that the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace rather than mere symbols of faith.

These are secondary or lesser issues, since they go not to the identity of Christ (which is primary), but to what He has instituted at His discretion for divine worship, Christian life and salvation. Now, He could conceivably and quite reasonably have made institution of ecclesial and sacramental systems independently of the manner in which grace is applied. He was quite able to have instituted a Catholic ecclesial and sacramental system with a view to the mere imputation of righteousness, or else a Protestant system in which righteousness was to be infused. The reason why the Reformers rejected the Catholic approach to both is standardly attributed by Catholic commentators to the influence of nominalism, which was the dominant philosophy at the universities at which Calvin and Luther did their higher studies. It is interesting that Colin Wright, in his article on Karl Popper, identifies opposition to metaphysics as a key principle of the Logical Positivism of the Vienna School.

Scepticism about metaphysics is characteristic of nominalist philosophy, and in so far as Luther and Calvin subscribed to it, they could not but have had difficulty with the then traditional doctrine of the Eucharist and with the Catholic side of the justification argument. The concept of substance with regard to the former, and the concept of an imperceptible creative act by which the sinner is really *made* righteous by God, are not easy for the nominalist mind to handle and are all too easy for it to reject. Which is not a problem if Protestantism wins the case on both counts. But if the Catholic faith wins on so much as either point alone, nominalism is already as discredited as Logical Positivism. I contend therefore, that the Reformation would not likely have occurred but for the influence of nominalism.

The second part of my answer concerns the tertiary issue of the government of the Church which is in good order in primary (Christological) and secondary (sacramentology) matters. The second barrier which prevents Lutherans from acceding to full communion in the Catholic Church is the legacy of the terms on which the Reformers rejected the authority of the Pope. It will, I hope, become clear that they would have been laughed to scorn had the Mediaeval and Renaissance Church not remained silent on the Biblical truth (in Romans 9–11) concerning God’s eschatological plan for Israel. The Church down the centuries has been dominated by the false doctrine of Replacement Theology which denies or at least ignores the truth that God will restore the Jews to the land

of Israel and then convert them as a nation. This is historically the last temporal event which Scripture prophesies before the emergence of the Man of Sin and the Last Judgement.

The Reformers, in perfect sobriety, branded the Pope as the very Man of Sin of whom Paul wrote relative to the *parousia*, a man perfectly and fully animated and energised by Satan who would draw to himself all those who, having rejected the salvific truth of God, would be destined for eternal damnation. In order for the Reformers to have been right, the Last Judgement would have had to be literally imminent if not up to a thousand years overdue. The clear implication of 2 Thessalonians 2 is that the function of the Man of Sin in God’s plan for the world is to do what physical death does the rest of the time: by preternatural *deception* to separate out those who are to be alive and destined for a goat-side seat at the Last Judgement. What this has to do with Israel is that it is Scripturally impossible for the Pope or anyone else to be the Man of Sin as long as the nation of Israel remains unconverted. I contend, therefore, that reverent attention to the Jewish roots of our faith is liable to weaken the credibility of the Reformation and strengthen that of Catholicism.

Yours faithfully
Michael Petek

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