

appeal to higher criticism. He then goes on to identify my view of accommodation with the views of Rofé, Bultmann, and other extreme critics. This is more than misleading, it is misrepresentation of a very serious kind. My view of accommodation is not wildly liberal but a development of John Calvin's view of accommodation, and it stays in principle within his view.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Rüst says: "Accommodationism leads to unnecessary or even destructive offenses, particularly if moral accommodation is included." Since Jesus understood the implicit permission to divorce-for-any-reason granted in Deut. 24:1-4 as a moral accommodation to the rude cultural mores of the times (Matt. 19:8/Mark 10:5),<sup>3</sup> Rüst's statement makes the accommodationist view of Jesus even more to be shunned than mine. If, on the other hand, Jesus was right in recognizing moral accommodation in the Old Testament, then for followers of Jesus there must be room for accommodation to merely scientific matters as well.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Examples of the private interpretations of concordism can be found in "The First Four Days of Genesis in Concordist Theory and in Biblical Context," *PSCF* 49, no. 2 (June 1997): 85-95, also available at [www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1997/PSCF6-97Seely.html](http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1997/PSCF6-97Seely.html).

<sup>2</sup>See Paul H. Seely, "The Date of the Tower of Babel and Some Theological Implications," part VIII "Gracious Divine Accommodation to Limited Scientific Knowledge," *Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2001): 32-8.

<sup>3</sup>The majority of commentaries on Matt. 19:8 and Mark 10:5 explicitly say that Jesus saw Deut. 24:1-4 as involving a concession or accommodation. Those remaining silent on the issue give no evidence of disagreeing with the others on this point.

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## A Further Response to Discher and Madden

Madden and Discher's "What Intelligent Design Does and Does not Imply" (*PSCF* 56, no. 4 [2004]: 286-91) and "What Would Count as Defeating Naturalism? A Reply to Van Till" (*Ibid.*, 296-8), continue the vein initiated by Discher in "Van Till and Intelligent Design" (*PSCF* 54, no. 4 [2002]: 220-31) and "Is Howard Van Till's Response to 'Van Till and Intelligent Design' a 'Right Stuff' Response?" (*Ibid.*, 240f), which they cite as demonstrating their accuracy (pp. 296, 298, note 2). This ignores three critiques, two very negative, by Krause, Blount, and me (*PSCF* 55, no. 1 [2003]: 68-70). In "On Discher's Reply to Van Till," I termed his second paper "dishonest" and "sophistry." Why this needs to be said by Van Till to be relevant (p. 296) escapes me.

Their definition of materialism (pp. 287, 289, 296), criticized by Van Till in "Is the ID Movement Capable of Defeating Naturalism? A Response to Madden and Discher" (*PSCF* 56, no. 4 [2004]: 293), is no longer relevant for it ignores complexity theory, also known as deterministic chaos. Systems are readily rendered unpredictable. The authors would profit from James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (Viking, 1987), for they apparently did

not understand Van Till's reference to the weather, even though problems with weather prediction are probably the most common example given of chaos. However, much simpler matters can yield nonlinear results and unpredictability.

The authors write: "If it were the case that ID science made a legitimate claim that Darwinian natural selection is unable to explain ... we would be left with a choice between" hoping for scientific progress or rethinking materialism. Consider the situation in which no one can currently present a natural process whereby A has become B, but, of course, ID interventionism can (miraculously?). Obviously, we do not have the required scientific knowledge. But the authors require more for their dilemma: it is impossible to get from A to B by any natural process. This means not just that we will not know, but cannot know of a natural process. To illustrate the matter, of geometry I can confidently say that we will never prove the last theorem. It has been demonstrated that the number of theorems is infinite. But this cannot allow me to declare that a certain theorem will never be known. Yet this requirement is analogous to what the authors require. To continue my analogy, proofs hold only for specific sets of axioms. Axioms may be added or altered. Scientific disciplines are more obviously open-ended, with continued dependence on auxiliary hypotheses beyond the core theory. Euclid's original five postulates and five common notions were similarly dependent on "hypotheses" derived from the diagrams. Hilbert's axiom set is complete, not needing outside information. But such a shift in science with its underdetermined theories and auxiliary hypotheses will not occur, at least not till our glorification.

To apply this to Darwinism, now neo-Darwinism, we find ongoing changes as information arrives from genomics, proteomics, and other areas of discovery. This renders their requirement essentially impossible unless we observe the "designer" zap some creature into an entirely new form. I will expect this, to use the vernacular, when pigs fly.

There is, I believe, another deep problem that the authors have not perceived or, having perceived, deny. Materialism/scientism/ontological naturalism is clearly incompatible with ID, as with my non-ID theism. However, a noted philosopher (whose name I cannot recall) stated that materialism is one of four consistent philosophical views. This means that ultimately it cannot be disproved by anyone. This does not mean that all materialistic positions are consistent. Also, materialism involves more than the simple claim that only matter exists. To be sure, materialism has its problems, but so do all other ultimate philosophical positions. Hence, the aim of disproving materialism by ID is a will-o'-the-wisp, something pursued by those who do not recognize human finitude. I class it as an intellectual task paralleling building a perpetual motion machine.

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