Book Reviews

ENVIRONMENT

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION AND NATURE by Bron R. Taylor, ed. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005. Two volumes; 1817 pages. Hardcover; $450.00. ISBN: 1843711389.

The question which animated *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature (ERN)* is: "What are the relationships between human beings, their diverse religions, and the Earth's living systems?" The question is addressed by 518 writers who come from many regions of the world. *ERN* contains a lengthy introduction, bibliography, background to *ERN*, reader's guide, contributor list, and 50-page index. The idea for *ERN* originated in 1997 when Jeffrey Kaplan suggested it to Bron R. Taylor, the editor, at an American Academy of Religion meeting in San Francisco.

ERN is arranged alphabetically by topic with each article being followed by a bibliography. Some topics may surprise such as "Dogs in the Abrahamic Traditions," "Dogs in the Islamic Tradition," and "Rainbow Serpent." Others are more traditional such as "Crop Circles," "Pantheism," and "Ecology and Religion." Entries also include people such as Cesar Chavez, Jane Goodall, and Gottfried Leibniz.

For readers who wonder why some topics are included and others excluded, the editor responds that most of the missing topics were initially pursued but without success. The editor was unable to find writers in parts of Africa. In addition, says Taylor, no encyclopedia can be comprehensive so the "better test of an encyclopedia's efficacy is its success at demarcating the territory to be covered and analyzing carefully a representative sample of the phenomena in question" (p. xxvii).

This is a fine production and provides an excellent resource to those concerned not only about ecology and the environment but also their religious interface. The reader will learn from *ERN* that there is an organization for Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation, that Dorothee Soelle was a German Lutheran environmentalist who was anti-capitalist, anti-nuclear, and anti-war, and muti is a group of practices connected with medicinal use of plants and animals. Many other fascinating facts and insights will enlighten the reader.

If you cannot afford *ERN*, perhaps you could recommend it to your library. It is a valuable resource which should be available in college and university libraries; professional ecologists may desire their own copy. The publisher was offering a discount for early purchase; perhaps other book sites will offer *ERN* at a reduced price, also.

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

FAITH & SCIENCE

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE: Evidence-Based Christian Belief by Ted Burge. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2005. 184 pages, bibliography, index. Paperback; $16.95. ISBN: 1932031936.

An emeritus professor of physics of the University of London, Burge was Dean of the Faculty of Science there from 1982 to 1986. In preparation for ministry, he read theology at Lincoln College, Oxford, graduating in 1953. A year later, however, he became convinced that his calling was to physics. Burge is a member of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Gloucester and is the author of several books on private and public prayer.

The goal of his book is to argue the case that modern scientific knowledge does not conflict with core Christian beliefs. The first four chapters (49 pages) discuss biblical evidences, the next six chapters (35 pages) treat physical, geological and biological evolution, concluding with an up-to-date creation story (chapter 10) which may be worth the price of the book all by itself. Chapters 11 through 18, (95 pages) return to the Bible and philosophical issues, miracles, personhood, prayer, etc. Two brief mathematical appendices on radiocarbon dating and the ages of rocks conclude the volume.

The book has three significant problems. First, Burge has tried to include far too much material. As a result, many topics receive only a sentence or two, where several pages might well be employed to explore all the complexities. Second, he takes only one view of many contentious issues, "This is the way it is and therefore …" Third, both of these flaws are exacerbated by the lack of notes. The bibliography is short—only three pages, and is of little help in this regard.

In sum, I cannot recommend this book for a personal library. But if you find it in a public library, be sure to read chapter 10!

Reviewed by John W. Burgeson, Rico Community Church, Rico, CO 81332.

THE BEAST IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING: Exposing the Lies of Godless Human Science by David Michael Lindsey. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005. 400 pages, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover; $24.95. ISBN: 1589802888.

A better subtitle for this volume might read: "A Discussion of errors made by non-Christians." Lindsey, who holds undergraduate degrees in both biology and chemistry, claims that the second beast of Revelation is "godless science." He addresses four topics: the story of philosophy, evolution, psychology, and evidence for the divinity of Jesus. A Catholic fundamentalist, he is fond of the pejorative adjective (the "degenerate" Diogenes, the "quack" Mesmer, the "fairy tale" of evolution, etc.) and this tone distracts one who is trying to understand and evaluate his claims.

Chapter 1, on philosophy, gives a sweeping overview of almost every philosopher of note (for some reason he

did not mention Pascal), separating the "good guys" from the "godless." The "godless" are almost always characterized by moral failings. Their motivation is always that "they hate God."

Chapter 2, "Darwinian Evolution, a Fairy Tale for Unbelievers," points out "eight fallacies." In order, these are: (1) Life originated all by itself for no purpose; (2) Mutations are good; (3) Life's only purpose is replication; (4) Those who produce the most offspring are the most fit; (5) Given enough time, anything is possible; (6) Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny; (7) Homologous features prove common origin; and (8) The fossil record proves evolution. Lindsey, despite his science degrees, does not appear to understand the proper use of the word "prove." To his credit, he accepts long ages of the earth and universe and gives the young earth creationist movement no credence.

Chapter 3, on psychology, is one long *ad hominem* argument against Freud, Jung, and Joseph Campbell. Behaviorism, also, along with its advocates, comes under his sharp pen. For example, Lindsey writes, commenting on Freud's death: "It is just and right that Freud should die of oral cancer because … so many malignant lies against God came out of his mouth" (p. 245). Among his claims is that "… Freudian Psychoanalysis is the dominant secular religion within the profession of mental health today" (p. 245). However, the basis for that claim is a 1974 citation.

Chapter 4, "Evidence that Demands a Verdict," is the most interesting, for it gives insight into the fundamentalist Catholic world view. Lindsey makes many claims here, such as, demon possession is real. He thinks that most persons demon-possessed fully consent and thus show no outward signs, that there are scientifically verified cases of possession and exorcisms, that observed attributes of the possessed include speaking in unknown languages, tremendous body strength, foul odors, knowing secrets, levitation, and so forth. He "proves" that the devil exists by pointing to coincidences, the events of 9/11/2001 (911 is an emergency phone number), the first workable PC, the Apple, priced at $666.66 (I note here that the Apple was preceded by the IBM 5100, a much more likely candidate for the first such machine). Other such numerics are discussed, but he makes his strongest claims for "… the many prophecies and warnings of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (p. 290). In particular, he claims that the 1,846 prophecies in La Salette, France, and the 1,917 prophecies in Fatima, Portugal, have been 100% accurate.

After a discussion of biblical evidences, he claims that dead persons have been raised many times, with "documented evidence" that these miracles actually happened. He claims there are many Christians who have died yet their bodies have not decayed. His list of these (p. 308) totals over seventy persons, the latest, Charles Makhlouf, dying in 1898. He claims the scientific sureness of sacred stigmata, for miracles involving the Eucharist, one as recently as 1991, when a communion host began to bleed. Finally, he presents the Turin shroud, claiming scientific evidences to its authenticity. He also claims that ESP and other paranormal events are real and can be scientifically "proven."

What will I do with this book, which presents data and arguments for which I find little credence? I shall keep it—next to the books of Duane Gish and Henry Morris. I recommend it only to those who have an interest in other belief systems.

Reviewed by John W. Burgeson, Rico Community Church, Rico, CO 81332.

History of Science

VICTORY AND VEXATION IN SCIENCE: Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, and Others by Gerald Holton. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. 229 pages, index. Hardcover; $35.00. ISBN: 0674015193.

Holton is a member of the physics and history of science departments at Harvard. He has written extensively on the history of physics and is probably best known as an Einstein scholar. In the 1960s, he helped develop the *Project Physics Course* and more recently coauthored the textbooks *Physics, the Human Adventure* with S. G. Brush and *Understanding Physics* with D. Cassidy and J. Rutherford.

Holton's most recent book is a collection of fourteen essays based on earlier publications and presentations. As described in the preface, the emphasis of many chapters is on "the larger *contexts* within which a specific research result is obtained, above all the context of personal interactions that can lead either to success or disagreement, to victory or vexation." Most of the chapters are about historical topics (four of those are related to Einstein). The last four chapters are about current issues, but those are also placed in historical context. There are occasional cross-references between chapters, but the essays are mostly self-contained.

In Chapter 10, Holton reviews his approach to the history of science, which he calls "thematic analysis." He explains how he moved away from early influences toward positivism by what was called the "Vienna Circle in Exile." Although scientists usually only discuss the phenomenological and analytical components of their work when presenting it publicly, their presuppositions can be important in the private phase of their work. Holton has used this third component to better understand the work of many scientists. He claims that modern scientists have been committed to a relatively small number of "themata," concepts such as simplicity, causality, and reductionism. Since many of these commitments do not change, Holton believes that science advances through evolution rather than by revolution.

The essays on the history of science contain insightful chemical analysis. The passages about Holton's interaction with many of the important figures are the most interesting. For example, he describes how he worked with Helen Dukas, who served as Einstein's secretary for twenty-seven years, to archive Einstein's papers after his death. It was an encounter between Holton and Heisenberg that led him to study the interactions between Einstein and Heisenberg over quantum mechanics. Holton also knew B. F. Skinner, P. W. Bridgman (his doctoral advisor), and Paul Tillich as colleagues at Harvard and worked with I. I. Rabi on the Project Physics Course.

There is just one chapter where Holton misses the mark. His strong criticism of Michael Frayn's play *Copenhagen* is misguided. Somehow he missed that the main

theme of the play is uncertainty, especially about people's motives. Instead, he seems to think that Frayn endorsed Heisenberg's version of what happened during his 1941 meeting with Bohr.

The four essays on current issues offer some interesting perspectives. Holton's discussion of a justification for basic research is a good start. He calls for a concentration of resources in areas that are likely to serve national needs, but he does not discuss the difficulty and politics of deciding what those areas are. Holton explores the roots of the postmodern "war on science" by studying two historical incidents of Romantic revolts against science. An essay based on how different perceptions of what is good science affect the careers of women in science is thought-provoking. For example, research by Holton and his colleagues found that women tend to place more value on comprehensiveness and to have fewer publications. Finally, Holton advocates teaching science in a way that makes connections with other fields, which is an approach that he used in his own textbooks.

Victory and Vexation in Science provides some revealing glimpses into the work of several scientists. Anyone who reads this book will be impressed by the breadth of Holton's research. The only drawback of this breadth is that it resulted in a book that lacks a sharp focus.

Reviewed by Alan J. DeWeerd, Associate Professor of Physics, University of Redlands, Redlands, CA 92373.

MAIMONIDES by Sherwin B. Nuland. New York: Schocken Books, 2005. 234 pages, appendix, chronology, bibliographic notes. Hardcover; $19.95. ISBN: 0805242007.

Nuland is a clinical professor of surgery at Yale University. He is the author of nine previous books, including *How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter,* which spent thirty-four weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list and won the National Book Award.

Moses Maimonides (1138–1204) was arguably the greatest rabbi since Gamaliel, the teacher of the apostle Paul. The Maimon family (Maimonides is the Grecianized form of the name) lived in Spain, until Moses was thirteen years old. His father, Rabbi Abraham Maimon, moved the family to Morocco when a new Muslim dynasty less friendly to Jews conquered Spain. There Maimonides began to write a variety of apologetical and theological works. In 1168, after a dangerous escape from Morocco, the Maimon family settled in Egypt. There Maimonides, already well-known and respected for his learning amongst the Jews of the Mediterranean world, acquired even greater stature through the works for which he is most noted, viz, a *Commentary on the Mishnah*, the *Mishneh Torah*, and *The Guide for the Perplexed*. In mid-life he became a noted physician, rising to the position of court physician to the Sultan in Cairo. In later life he wrote several medical treatises. Moses Maimonides died in Egypt at the age of 66.

I chose to review this book hoping to learn more of Maimonides' efforts to reconcile his faith, Talmudic Judaism, and science in his day, the science of Aristotle as known in Arabic translation. While Nuland's writing is direct and clear, I was disappointed to find that he had very little to say about *The Guide to the Perplexed*, where Maimonides deals with scientific issues. It is perhaps only natural that a Jewish physician like Nuland would emphasize Maimonides' contributions to Jewish thought and to medicine; still, I would have appreciated more on Maimonides the man of faith interacting with the challenges of science.

This book might be a good preliminary read for anyone intending to read *The Guide for the Perplexed*. In itself, the book has little or nothing to offer the Christian dealing with the same intellectual difficulties Maimonides faced.

Reviewed by Robert Rogland, science teacher, Covenant High School, Tacoma, WA 98405.

THE CHURCH AND GALILEO by Ernan McMullin, ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005. 391 pages, bibliography, index. Hardcover: $60.00; paperback: $30.00. ISBN: 0268034834 (cloth); 0268034842 (paper).

The Church and Galileo is a collection of thirteen papers from a major conference on Galileo and the Church held at Notre Dame University in April 2002. The editor, Ernan McMullin, is John Cardinal O'Hara Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. McMullin is widely acknowledged to be the dean of Galileo scholars in the United States.

The book is organized chronologically. Part I, The Storm Gathers, contains two essays laying out the Church's developing hostility toward Copernicanism prior to the publication in 1610 of *The Starry Messenger*, Galileo's account of his telescopic discoveries. In this work, which was widely read in Italy and elsewhere in both Catholic and Protestant Europe, Galileo argued strongly that his observations were demonstrations of the truth of Copernicus's heliocentric views and a refutation of the geocentric system of Ptolemy.

Part II, The Storm Breaks, contains seven essays covering various aspects of the twenty-three years from the publication of *The Starry Messenger* and his trial for heresy in 1633. Part II deals with the political landscape in Italy prior to 1616, when Galileo was formally enjoined not to teach or hold to the cardinal doctrines of Copernicanism; with Galileo's efforts to show how Copernicanism could be reconciled with Scripture properly interpreted; with the details of the 1616 injunction and with Galileo's obedience or disobedience to that injunction (a matter of debate); and with his trial in 1633. Part II also offers analysis and critique of the Church's later response.

Part III, The Aftermath, contains four essays. One deals with Galileo's "relapse," the publication of his *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* (widely circulated by 1616 but not actually published), in which he argues for his view of the relationship between science and Scripture. Another essay describes censorship of astronomy in Italy, recounting the Church's two centuries-long coming to terms with Copernicanism. The last two essays deal with twentieth-century efforts by the Church to "rehabilitate" Galileo while dispelling "the Galileo myth," i.e., the Catholic Church's belief that there was no real warfare between science and religion behind the Galileo affair, only misunderstanding on both sides.

Unless the reader has an interest in the history of science, this book is too expensive to purchase. Most of the essays will be appreciated only by those already intrigued by the Galileo affair. But if you can find *The Church and Galileo* in your library, by all means read chapter 4, "Galileo's Theological Venture," by McMullin. You will find that Galileo's attempt to reconcile the results of observation and experiment with the text of Scripture was, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to the efforts of evangelicals in science today. In the *Letter to Castelli* and, most importantly, the *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*, Galileo advocated two approaches toward reconciling science and Scripture when they seem to be in conflict. He maintained that sometimes Scripture speaks of natural phenomena in language accommodated to the experience and understanding of the layperson and has nothing to say about the true nature of things. Galileo affirms that, in other instances of apparent contradiction, Scripture does indeed make statements regarding the true nature of things. In such cases, provided that the results of observation and experiment are conclusive, he urges us to look beyond the conventional or easy reading of Scripture for an alternative interpretation. He sets the bar high for the latter approach, affirming that we should always accept the traditional theological interpretation unless there is a genuine demonstration that contradictory scientific propositions are true. Contemporary evangelical scientists who have wrestled with hot-button topics like the age of the earth, evolution, and cosmology will resonate with Galileo's efforts; they may even find help to resolve tensions in their own thinking.

Theologians in Galileo's day did not take kindly to being lectured on how to interpret the Bible by a professor of mathematics. Evangelicals in science today may identify with that experience, too.

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Origins & Cosmology

THE ANCESTOR'S TALE: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution by Richard Dawkins. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. 614 pages, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover; $28.00. ISBN: 0618005838.

With this book, Richard Dawkins replaces the late and lamented Stephen J. Gould. His writing is dramatic, argumentative, humorous, even poetic. He connects "wonder" to the evolutionary story in a way which inspires. His peculiar views on religion should not place an obstacle to Christians (or anyone else) from enjoying this book. Generally, he refrains from expounding his philosophy. In one instance (p. 550), he quotes Kenneth Miller (Brown University), a dedicated Christian, with approval as he finds agreement with him in their distaste for Intelligent Design Theory.

The book is an expanded "just so" story in the tradition and structure of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Dawkins describes evolution in a series of over fifty "tales," told by the farmer, the Neanderthal, the gorilla, the mouse, the Galapagos finch, the grasshopper, the sponge, and many other characters. He brilliantly conceived this book as a backward trek in time, beginning with us, and including other lines of descent as we encounter them in a trip to the past.

He begins by talking about hindsight, a position often assumed by historians in which one's appetite for patterns and propensity to see the present as the inevitable result of the past sometimes blinds them to the fact of contingency—a random change in the past could have changed the present immeasurably. Dawkins argues that biological evolution has no privileged line of descent or designated end; in this, of course, he writes from his underlying nontheistic philosophy. There are those who argue differently, but this is not their story.

At some point in history, there must have existed a common ancestor of both humanity and any other species one might think of—aardvarks, for instance. Dawkins coins the word "concestor" for such beings; the oldest concestor is the ancestor of all life forms that have ever existed on Earth, present and extinct. Moreover, at some time in the past, there must be a moment when two animals of the same species existed: one of whom is the ancestor of all humans and no aardvarks; the other an ancestor of all aardvarks and no humans. Any two modern species can be substituted in the above statement; it remains true.

The book is a series of forty "rendezvous," each with a different concestor. Something special, perhaps the origin of language, happened 40,000 years ago. But *Homo sapiens'* most recent common ancestor, discussed at rendezvous 0, is earlier. The date is in controversy but is at least tens of thousands of years ago and perhaps as much as hundreds of thousands. "Adam" and "Eve" actually existed, but they probably lived many thousands of years apart!

At rendezvous one, about six million years ago, we meet concestor one, our 250,000-greats-grandparent. From the loins of this person(?) have come not only all the hominid lines (us, *Neanderthal*, *Homo Erectus*, etc.) but also chimpanzees and bonobos. What did our ancestor look like? You will have to read Dawkins (p. 102) for his answer.

Each of the rendezvous points is fascinating in its own right. From concestor two, seven million years ago, came humans, chimps, bonobos, and gorillas. From concestor 10, mice and rabbits. From concestor 18, lungfish. From concestor 31, eight hundred million years ago, the sponge. Plants at rendezvous 36; eubacteria, at 39. The unity of all life is described by a masterful storyteller. At rendezvous 17, Dawkins talks about "the tyranny of the discontinuous mind" (p. 300). Ernst Mayr blames this delusion (Plato's Philosophical Essentialism) as the primary reason why evolutionary understanding came so late in our history, and why the Institute of Creation Research's arguments continue to flourish in the face of so much contrary evidence.

At the close, Dawkins returns to his philosophical base. He writes:

> My objection to supernatural beliefs is precisely that they miserably fail to do justice to the sublime grandeur of the real world. They are … an impoverishment … I suspect that many who call themselves religious would find themselves agreeing with me.

Most ASAers probably agree. Most would also comment that it is Dawkins who labors in impoverishment.

Finally, a closing note. Using reasonable assumptions, any human born today has about an 80% chance of eventually becoming a common ancestor of all humanity! Dawkin's discussion of this is priceless. Read it.

Reviewed by John W. Burgeson, Rico Community Church, Rico, CO 81332.

EVOLUTION VS. CREATIONISM: An Introduction by Eugenie C. Scott. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004. 272 pages, index. Paperback; $19.95. ISBN: 0520246500.

Scott is a Ph.D. physical anthropologist and Executive Director of the National Center for Science Education (NCSE). She has written extensively on the evolution/creationism controversy, is a Past President of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, and has been involved as head of NCSE since 1987 in debates, education efforts, and court cases involving different forms of creationism. This well-conceived and written text provides a comprehensive survey of contemporary evolution and the varied positions within creationism writ large.

As head of the NCSE that was founded to defend and promote evolution across the US, Scott lays her cards clearly on the table. At the same time, she seeks to fairly describe the views of scientists and others who would disagree with her own position and includes meticulous documentation for claims she makes about the views of others. She has fact-checked numerous assertions with individuals knowledgeable about the matter in question in addition to citing published literature.

Scott separates the various forms of belief that scientists and others hold regarding creation/evolution and introduces the reader to the following helpful continuum: Flat Eartherism, Geocentrism, Young Earth Creationism, Gap Creationism, Day-Age Creationism, Progressive Creationism, Evolutionary Creationism, Theistic Evolutionism, Agnostic Evolutionism, and Materialist Evolutionism. She correctly points out that one can find persons with scientific credentials within each of these "camps," though the number of such scientists grows considerably scarcer once you move past Evolutionary Creationism into Progressive Creationism. An authority on the history of the creation/evolution controversy in the US, she informs readers of the interconnections between and among spokespersons and organizations.

Scott describes and then provides refutation for assertions made by individuals opposed to some or all elements of contemporary evolutionary theory and research. Like all good scientists, she acknowledges that evolutionary theory and research will continue to change and our understandings improve over time. Many readers of *PSCF* will undoubtedly part company with Scott on certain points; however, she does a fine job showing the religiously motivated and metaphysical rationales and assumptions that lie behind some views promulgated in opposition to standard evolutionary theory. She realizes that religious beliefs are important to those who hold them and that such beliefs need not automatically conflict with contemporary understandings of the scientific community, including evolutionary biology, geology, etc.

Regardless of one's personal perspective, this book is a valuable contribution to the literature in evolution and creationism. Virtually any reader will find something of interest within its pages. It will surely raise the dander of some and bring delight to others—a quality possessed by many a good book.

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CREATION OUT OF NOTHING: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration by Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Books, 2004. Paperback; $19.99. ISBN: 0801027330.

This is an important book. The doctrinal belief that God created the universe out of nothing, *creatio ex nihilo*, has been held in disrepute for a long time in many theological and academic settings. Three main objections are often raised: (1) that the biblical texts do not clearly teach that God created out of nothing; (2) that this teaching was the creation of theologians in the late second century AD; and (3) that scientific study makes it difficult to believe in creation out of nothing. The great achievement of this book is that the authors give a detailed analysis of these objections and answer them.

Concerning the first objection, Copan and Craig show that the biblical writers consistently maintain an ontological distinction between God and the created universe. Genesis 1:1 refers to the totality of God's creation and must be read in an absolute sense ("in the beginning") rather than as a temporal construct ("in a beginning"), which leaves no room for pre-existing matter. God created all matter that exists, everything that is external to himself. A strong cumulative case is made for creation out of nothing. While there is no direct statement that covers the entire concept, the contingency of the created order is affirmed in passages that indicate God's creative act and God's sustaining care. "Creation out of nothing is thus taken for granted and strongly implied in the OT."

A detailed study of key New Testament passages follows, and these declare that God (through Christ) created everything, presenting a strong, if implicit, belief in creation out of nothing. Their examination is thorough, including the problem passage 2 Peter 3:5. Then they study the extra-biblical witness of the ancient Jewish writers and early Christian writers. The pre-Christian Jewish sources affirm, often explicitly, that God alone created the world by his Word, calling the created realm into existence from nothing. The evidence presented overwhelmingly answers the objection that creation out of nothing was an idea first proposed in the late second century AD. The authors then move into a detailed examination of the early Christian writers. They conclude that even if the Patristics "did not use the precise words 'creation out of nothing,' it is undeniable that the concept is in their worldview and writings."

Then Copan and Craig give a couple chapters of philosophical analysis to clear away conceptual difficulties, and offer responses to problems raised by questions about God's relationship to so-called abstract objects. My only criticism concerns one small part of their argument against

Philip Quinn, which comes in their discussion of occasionalism. Quinn maintains that God can create one and the same individual more than once, and appeals to the doctrine of eschatological resurrection for support (p. 155). Copan and Craig's response, on this one point, seems problematic. Yet move on to chapter six, where there is an argument for the impossibility of the existence of an actual infinite. This is significant, because if there can be no actual infinite, then the universe had a beginning. But is there any empirical evidence that would confirm this argument?

Two separate lines of evidence are examined. The expansion of the universe, the standard Big Bang model, describes a universe that is not eternal in the past. They note the efforts to promote alternative models and discuss the reasons why those have not succeeded. Secondly, they note that when the so-called second law of thermodynamics is applied to the entire cosmos, the conclusion that the universe will run out of available energy is unavoidable, which points to a finite universe. But some theorists have proposed other models in an effort to avoid that conclusion. Each of these, however, have attendant difficulties. "Because these lines of evidence are independent and mutually reinforcing, the confirmation they supply for a beginning of the universe is all the stronger." Thus, "those who believe in the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* will not find themselves contradicted by the empirical evidence of contemporary cosmology." And so another objection is answered. While ongoing research will make us revisit the question, there is sound reason for noting that this doctrine is in accord with the physical evidence.

In conclusion, this book is a major achievement. It goes far toward rehabilitating the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, and deserves a wide readership.

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PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY

THE MYTH OF RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories (Revised Edition) by Roy A. Clouser. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005. 416 pages. Paperback; $25.00. ISBN: 0268023662.

Most people working in the humanities are aware, perhaps painfully, that the world of academia has taken a postmodern shift in recent decades, and for many good reasons. If postmodernism goes too far, scientists often remain oblivious, continuing in the view that science is objective and neutral, and therefore unaffected by worldview or religious belief. For this reason, the new edition of *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* should be considered a welcome volume for Christians who are in the sciences and especially those who recognize the important role religion can play in science. *Myth* forcefully argues for its major thesis that scientific theorizing in all areas of academia inevitably depends on foundational religious beliefs, and the revised edition updates the arguments to reply to feedback since the original version was published.

Clouser begins the book by engaging in the foundational discussion of defining terms, such as "religion" and "theory." The main thesis begins in Chapter 2 with a carefully argued section, concluding that a religious belief is "a belief in something as divine per se no matter how that is further described, where 'divine per se' means having unconditionally non-dependent reality" (p. 23). A religious belief is then any belief about this non-dependent entity, or its relation to entities dependent on it (p. 24). Clouser argues that this definition seems to cover all cases of religion of which he is aware, and covers other positions not traditionally thought of as religious, such as materialism. Indeed, he argues, no system of thought can be viewed as free from something that is divine per se (pp. 29ff).

Clouser begins part II with a chapter on "What is a theory?" Central theses here are that all theorizing involves abstraction (p. 64), and that scientific theories focus on entities rather than general perspectival claims (p. 77). The abstraction, in which we rationally abstract a particular aspect or property of a thing in order to theorize about that aspect, in particular can lend itself to reductionism. In chapter 5, Clouser considers different possible relations between theories and religion, including "religious irrationalism" (p. 89), "religious rationalism" (p. 92), "religious scholasticism" (p. 98), and "the radically biblical position" (p. 84). By the latter, he means that which the biblical writers held, and indeed the one we should hold, a view which he finds in contrast to influences from the rationalist tradition. In chapter 6, he uses these categories to reveal what he calls the "mistake of fundamentalism" in how religious beliefs affect theorizing, the view that "sacred scripture … contains inspired and thus infallibly true statements about virtually every conceivable subject matter" (p. 111). This sets the stage for a discussion of the Genesis creation story in this same chapter.

To illustrate his claims in the preceding chapters, in the first three chapters of part III, Clouser offers casebook studies in mathematics, physics, and psychology. It would probably not be surprising to most scientists that religious beliefs play a role in our theories about psychology, but here we find that physics is not immune, nor is even mathematics! In the final chapter in this section, Clouser outlines why his argumentation to this point calls for a "new beginning" in our understanding of science and religion. After making his case against reductionism, in the important part IV, Clouser lays out his positive framework for a non-reductionist approach to theorizing.

While this review is of necessity all too brief and does not really reveal the essence of the arguments, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* has much to commend itself. If it has a weakness, it is perhaps that close attention need be paid, and hence quite some labor spent, to appreciate the arguments in many parts. But such is philosophy. Certainly philosophers will enjoy reading the revised edition, perhaps comparing their own views with Clouser's, or seeing whether he has anticipated their objections. But I particularly recommend a serious consideration of the book to scientists. Assuming Clouser is correct, we need to take his view into account not only when considering our own approach to science, but also how we discuss our science with those outside the Christian faith. Apparently religion is unavoidable when doing science, and we would be much the better for recognizing how, rather than ignoring such an important fact!

Reviewed by Donald N. Petcher, Department of Physics, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA 30750.

RELIGION & BIBLICAL STUDIES

LIVING THROUGH PAIN: Psalms and the Search for Wholeness by Kristin M. Swenson. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005. 273 pages. Hardcover; $19.95. ISBN: 1932792155.

Swenson hopes her book will induce in readers a feeling of "stepping into a steaming hot tub full of interesting people, easing aches and promising thought-provoking and engaging conversation" (p. 2). She writes that her book is not a treatise on how the Bible or medicine may cure pain. It is also not an apologetic or theodicy on the *why* of pain. It is about unwelcome pain and the efforts to mitigate or manage it (p. 3). It deals with both physical and psychological pain, because, for many people, the emotional pain accompanying physical pain can exceed it.

Swenson is assistant professor of religious studies at the School of World Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her book includes nine chapters, Psalms translations, endnotes, and works cited; it is not primarily for biblical scholars or religious people. Her topic is timely because there is an increase in reported pain in the USA (p. 4). This book is more about healing than curing pain. Integrating the physical, psychological, spiritual, and social aspects of a person is important in pain relief.

Here are some salient facts about the yearly cost of pain in the USA. One hundred billion dollars is spent on pain relief; 13% of the workforce experience reduced productivity; 86 million people cannot work; pain results in 70 million visits to doctors; employer costs of nearly $6,000 per fibromyalgia employee; and 24% of the population suffers chronic pain.

The Buddha said, "All life is suffering" and R. W. Emerson observed that "He has seen but half the universe who has never been Shewn the house of Pain." Two primary considerations with pain and suffering are the theoretical, i.e., why do they exist, and the pragmatic, what to do about them. This book deals with the latter. The author seeks, as an Old Testament scholar, to apply to pain wisdom derived from analyzing six Psalms (6, 22, 38, 69, 88, and 102): "Listening to these ancient poems may round off the cruel edge of loneliness that pain can bring" (p. 6). About two-thirds of the book is devoted to an analysis of these six Psalms. In this analysis, she rejects the idea that the Psalms have "cures hidden or encoded within the text" (p. 69). Therefore, her approach differs from the application of drugs, surgery, or physical therapy; she seeks a different avenue to deal with pain's experience and management.

Swenson shows how experience alters pain perception through this illustration. An ancient story tells of a mother whose child has died. She brings the child to a holy man and asks for medicine to restore life. The holy man sends her to find a curative mustard seed. As the woman goes from house to house, instead of finding a panacea, she finds everyone experiencing pain. In the process, her pain is healed and she helps others.

This book may be helpful to those who suffer acute or chronic pain, those who wonder how ancients thought about pain, and those who seek to grow spiritually through pain.

Its lack of dogmatism and of pat answers is a strength which will buttress the reader against easy answers to difficult questions. The greatest philosophical question is why is there any suffering in the world. The question is not dealt with in this book, for alas, there is no answer that satisfies most sufferers. However, Swenson does an admirable job of dealing with the practical implications of how certain Psalms reflect on pain.

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

ENGAGING WITH CONTEMPORARY CULTURE: Christianity, Theology and the Concrete Church by Martyn Percy. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005. 258 pages, index. Hardcover; $79.95. ISBN: 0754632598.

This collection of essays by Percy, the Principal of Ripon College in the UK, takes up questions about the role of the church and theology within contemporary Western culture with a particular focus on the US and Europe. Percy argues that practical theology, i.e., a critical and constructive engagement by a living religious community with human experience that reflects on its meanings and value, is fundamental to a sustained and informed interaction and ministry in and to the modern world. Through the methods of cultural studies, he seeks to explore the different meanings and interactions of churches and Christians with the varied aspects of contemporary culture. This is one of several books he has authored in this area; it demonstrates his deepening insights over time and his passion for his subject.

The first section looks at general beliefs about theology, the Church, and contemporary culture. His opening chapter is a study of the reflections of four Roman Catholic writers concerning contemporary culture in North America: Francis Buckley, Anthony Gittins, John Fuellenbach, and Nicholas Healy. A second chapter moves the inquiry to a church in Atlanta, Georgia, and considers issues about consumerism, choice, and Christianity. The third chapter takes up the Radical Orthodoxy of John Milbank, the reflexive theology of Lieven Boeve, and the socio-theology of David Martin.

The middle section of the book considers ordinary theology through case studies that focus on describing faith, theological knowledge within the pews, the concept of a mother church, transformation, liberation, vocation, and Christian formation. The final section of the book looks at issues related to theological culture and the concrete church, i.e., the church as actually lived in practice, not as theologians or others construct it in creedal formulas, doctrinal expositions, and ecclesiastical pronouncements. It includes a case study of the so-called "Toronto blessing," a sociohistorical look at reform within the Church of England, and an illuminating essay on Anglicanism as irony and comedy in the full sense of theater. A concluding chapter provides some reflections on authentic engagement.

The book is worthwhile for those who wish to consider varied aspects of the contemporary Church as it engages with the wider culture and as it reflects or is shaped by that culture as well as when it resists that culture and its messages and values.

Reviewed by Dennis Cheek, Vice President of Education, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City, MO 64110.

PRAYERS TO AN EVOLUTIONARY GOD by William Cleary. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2004. 208 pages. Hardcover; $21.99. ISBN: 1594730067.

This book is, unfortunately, what might be expected from the title. I had hoped for some sort of acknowledgment of evolution as a (or the) mechanism God used to bring about the diversity of life on earth, combined with reverence for the Christ. But that is not this book. Cleary writes:

> The promise of a messiah as savior of the world was a brilliant invention of the ancient Jewish writers. To dedicate oneself to the welfare of others is a healthy human ideal for everyone—and devotees of all the Abrahamic religions are called on to be deeply messianic in their personal lives. Today we know it is not sin that any messiah must save us from, but above all from the catastrophic loss of the entire human habitat (p. 90).

The author was a Jesuit priest, but is no longer. This is not surprising as, I believe, the formal name of the Jesuits is Society of Jesus. The book is, as the title suggests, a collection of prayers written by Cleary. There are about one hundred prayers, averaging perhaps twenty lines. Each prayer is accompanied by a brief explanation. The prayers are grouped into Prayers of Listening, Questioning, Ambiguity, and Intimacy. The index gives the titles of the prayers.

Here is a sample prayer, from the section on "Prayers of Ambiguity," selected for its brevity:

Your Joy, Your Wrath—Mystified by Good and Evil

Holy Energy and Love,
we join in your joy
over the pleasure that thrives in the hearts and bodies
of so many living creatures.

Holy Caringness and Wisdom,
we join in your wrath
over the abuse of the vulnerable in this world
and of the vulnerable earth itself.

Holy Spirit of wisdom, energy, and love,
draw us into communion with you
as we live through the mysteries of evil and good
that surround us every day.

Amen (p. 111).

Most Christians could join in this prayer. Cleary makes some telling points. Some Christians ignore the environment, do not relish the glory of God's creation, have childish views of God, and reject the findings of science. Cleary does not do any of these, but he is influenced by questionable sources. His main influences are Diarmuid O'Murchu (author of *Evolutionary Faith: Rediscovering God in Our Great Story*, and a priest, who wrote the Afterword) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Jesuit scientist whose works were officially declared to contain "dangers" in 1962—one danger being his disbelief in original sin). Cleary rejects original sin in humans. To him, all babies are perfect at birth.

Here is a quotation from O'Murchu's Afterword:

> Destruction is thus neither an aberration nor an evil; it is an inherent dimension of the cosmic evolutionary process. Pain and destruction are not about creation existing "at a price," nor can they be adequately explained by invoking a central tenet of Darwinian evolution like the survival of the fittest. This is a paradox that defies a one-dimensional rational explanation. Truthfully, it makes sense only in a theological and spiritual context.
>
> A religion like Christianity, centered on the salvific death of the Christ as the ultimate solution to the predicament of suffering, misses the deeper meaning of this paradox (p. 173 of Cleary).

In this review, I criticize the intention of the author, and his main influences, rather than how well that intention is achieved. Perhaps the historic Christian faith could stand some mutation, so that ideas about quantum theory and evolution might be accommodated, but Cleary wants it to change Christianity into a new species.

Reviewed by Martin LaBar, Professor of Science emeritus, Southern Wesleyan University, Central, SC 29630.

OUR IMPROBABLE UNIVERSE: A Physicist Considers How We Got Here by Michael Mallary. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2004. 227 pages. Paperback; $15.00. ISBN: 156858301X.

Mallary is in love with the universe, and whether you are a theist or an atheist, he thinks you should be, too. Whether God exists or not, writes Mallary, humans should cherish the improbability of life on this remarkably fecund planet. "It is astounding that we live in a universe in which particles can spontaneously organize into people and other incredible beings" (p. 2).

Mallary does not deny or affirm the existence of God. He thinks life and creation are inherently valuable; they do not need a creator to be justified (p. 178). "Whether we look to a creator or to a creative universe we see the same imperative: protect this creation and enjoy the show" (p. 205). "Over the last ten million years we have seen a fun-loving ancestral ape that lived in an African jungle evolve into fun-loving members of a world wide collective mind, economy, and ecosystem" (p. 154).

Is there a built-in bias in creation that reveals a designer's taste? Perhaps, thinks Mallary. The artist's signature on the canvas, the designer bias, may come from the existence of uranium which is unnecessary for the existence of a universe that evolves intelligence. Perhaps uranium exists "to allow incorrigible barbarians to eliminate themselves" (p. 15). However, Mallary does not think uranium or the complexity of creation proves the existence of the Master Watchmaker (p. 14).

Mallary espouses the view that our universe exploded from a tiny point at a moment called the Big Bang. He dis-

cusses the fourteen stepping-stones or properties in the universe essential to produce life. How did they come about? He writes:

> Truly, the uncanny coincidence of all these factors seems to give the appearance of deliberate design … But a deistic hypothesis is not the only explanation … many scientists … propose that this beneficent structure has been determined by a random unknowing process (p. 12).

Inflationary models hypothesize that "it is possible to imagine that at least one universe in a trillion trillion had just the right properties for life to evolve" (p. 13). The anthropic principle says the universe appears to be designed because botched universes are not observable to the inhabitants of the successful one. Based on this reasoning, a billion monkeys over a billion years might type out "to be or not to be." Theories of Everything say that a larger metauniverse has at least ten dimensions but only three spatial dimensions and one time dimension are manifested in any human's reality (p. 40).

Mallary offers a good many opinions (with accompanying rationale). For instance: (1) Many centers of intelligent life probably exist in our universe (p. 76); (2) the universe likely holds life which is advanced beyond earth's (p. 170); (3) fear of an angry god is not a sufficient reason for faking faith (p. 179); (4) the value of human life is not increased by increasing the population of the earth (p. 200); (5) humans will soon create biological life (p. 155); (6) people have instincts (pp. 110, 112. What Mallary calls instincts most psychologists call drives. Humans have no instincts).

Mallary presents many interesting observations. Among them: he thinks everything we see exploded from a ball the size of a grapefruit at nearly the speed of light around 14 billion years ago (p. 17). Galaxies in deep space are rushing away from the earth at nearly the speed of light (pp. 2, 17). The sea otter uses a pair of rocks as tools to crack open its shelled meals (p. 70). The nuclear energy in an ounce of uranium is roughly what could be obtained from burning thirty tons of coal (p. 73). The oldest evidence of life is found in rocks 3.8 billion years old (p. 77). To survive, the hummingbird must eat twice its body weight daily (p. 108). Bead necklaces became common 80,000 years ago (p. 137). The sun has a ten-billion-year life expectancy (p. 183).

I liked this book. Although readers short on knowledge of physics and contemporary views of origins may encounter occasional difficulty, overall they will be captivated by the broad sweep of hypotheses and explanations about how everything came to be. The book bristles with interesting questions and observations, and Mallary is not dogmatic about his views of them. Both theist and atheist will benefit from reading this book, and it will enhance their appreciation about the intricacies, balances, and options of creation viewpoints.

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

Social Science

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE WORLD'S MAJOR RELIGIONS by Peter J. Haas, et al. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005. Five volumes; 1497 pages. Hardcover; $412.50. ISBN: 0313021031.

In this set of books, one volume is written about the human rights of five major religions: Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist. The volumes intend to give the historic development and current status of human rights affairs in each religion. Each volume has a different author with William H. Brackney, the series editor and professor at Baylor University, contributing the one on Christianity. Included in each volume are primary sources, biographical sketches, indexes, notes, and annotated bibliographies.

The Jewish tradition concentrates on biblical and rabbinic writings and their implications for Jews, especially in Israel. The Catholic tradition covers human rights in the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox viewpoints with clarification of important terms and people. The Islamic tradition examines the requirements of both rights and duties in the world of Islam. The Hindu tradition contrasts human rights in Eastern and Western traditions while exploring principles and thoughts of Hinduism. The Buddhist tradition concerns itself with principles leading to decent, non-oppressive, cooperative societies where people can actualize their potentials.

These volumes are useful for the casual reader since each volume is carefully outlined and indexed to allow for quick location of specific topics. Especially interesting and potentially useful are the biographical sketches of Christian leaders in human rights. These include Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Emil Brunner, Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Desmund Tutu. I was somewhat surprised that Billy Graham, who has carried the message of tolerance and equality all over the world, was omitted. However, I was pleased to see Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, better know as Mother Theresa, included. The price for this set is expensive; purchasers would most likely be libraries, teachers, or professionals.

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

FROM CELLS TO SOULS—AND BEYOND: Changing Portraits of Human Nature by Malcolm Jeeves, ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004. 266 pages, Paperback; $29.00. ISBN: 0802809855.

"Who am I? What am I?" These enduring questions have been given new relevance and urgency by recent developments in genomics, cloning and the neurosciences that challenge the meaning of personal identity and our understanding of the biological basis of human nature. Furthermore, the advances bear a load of reductionism that is hard to avoid and also renew disagreements about body/soul and mind/body relationships.

This book addresses these issues through its goal of identifying those features that must be included in "any faithful portrait of human nature that is true both to sci-

ence and to Scripture." It represents the work of an international, interdisciplinary team of thirteen scholars sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation. The sequence of chapters starts with genetics, neurobiology, and neuropsychology, then psychiatry and psychology, ending with philosophy, biblical studies, and theology (reversing their earlier dominance). Ample footnotes and nineteen figures are included.

There seem to be two main themes, the first of which responds to the first question above. *Who* am I? "I am a person." Person or personhood is in the title of seven of the main chapters and is discussed by most of the other authors. This is a complex and important concept the importance of which takes careful reading to grasp. Many current ethical problems turn on the issue of when we become, or cease to become, a person. Personhood develops gradually, partly in response to our environment, including our relationship with others around us. Indeed, central to any concept of personhood is an understanding of both personal relatedness (to others and to God) and personal agency (the ability to act and decide).

A second theme answers the other question. *What* am I? "I am a bio-psycho-spiritual unity." Several authors express this as "embodied spirituality." Or argue that humans *are* bodies, they do not *have* bodies; so also, they *are* souls, they do not *have* souls. They agree that there is no scientific evidence or biblical warrant for spirituality as a separate thing. This oneness of body and soul is expressed graphically in self-identity and spiritual suffering, the problems of which are experienced by Alzheimer patients. Furthermore, a continuing relationship between the dementia patients and other persons in their lives can be of great help in facilitating, remembering, and bestowing personhood. Spiritual awareness is also discussed as related to such topics as "possession," mental illness, hallucinations, and Christic visions.

The chapters on philosophy, biblical studies, and theology (though placed last) make significant contributions to the themes of personhood and unity and, furthermore, to the relevance of eschatology, the resurrection, the necessity of thinking from grace to nature and the interplay of divine sustenance, rescue, and ennoblement.

The most important part of the book is the last chapter in which Jeeves synthesizes the ideas from the other authors and carefully develops a composite portrait of human nature. On the basis of our present knowledge, how can we describe the relationship between brain and mind, or between soul and body? Jeeves suggests the phrase "an *irreducible intrinsic interdependence.*" For the tension between the physical and the mental, neither of which can be reduced to the other, he reviews the discussions about nonreductive physicalism and then opts for *"duality without dualism."* These are carefully crafted phrases but not the final answer since they remain open to, and may actually stimulate, further research and careful study.

In my opinion, this book does indeed meet its goal. The team of authors was well selected and each described the current status of his area and considered the themes mentioned above. The last chapter with its integration of ideas is a special bonus. The absence of any index was frustrating, making the comparison of valuing views on a given topic quite difficult.

The book should be of interest to those in the specialties represented by the authors, particularly as a good introduction to the areas outside of their own expertise. It can be recommended to those in ethics, the humanities (including literature), and anthropology (cultural, biological, and theological). For example, I referred a journalist interested in science and religion to Eaves' chapter on twin studies. Those in ministry will find many helpful ideas. Other ASA members will find the cross-talk among those with varying points of view to be interesting.

Malcolm Jeeves, the editor, is emeritus professor of psychology at the University of St. Andrews and is the author of many scientific papers in neuropsychology as well as other books relating science and Christian beliefs. Two recent books are *Human Nature at the Millennium* (1996) and *Science, Life and Christian Belief* (with R. J. Berry, 1998). The other authors are Diogenes Allen, Warren S. Brown, Gaius Davies, Lindon Eaves, Joel Green, D. Gareth Jones, David Parkes, C. Michael Steel, Alan J. Torrance, Glenn Weaver, Michael Welker, and Philip H. Wiebe.

Reviewed by V. Elving Anderson, Emeritus Professor of Genetics, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455.

THE HAPPINESS HYPOTHESIS: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom by Jonathan Haidt. New York: Basic Books, 2006. 284 pages. Paperback; $26.00. ISBN: 0465028012.

This book on happiness joins several others written recently: *The Pursuit of Happiness* by ASA member David Myers; *Happiness Is A Serious Problem* by Dennis Prager (both books were reviewed in *PSCF*). Haidt, associate professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, has done research on morality and the moral emotions.

Martin Seligman, previous president of the American Psychology Association and founder of positive psychology, praises this book highly: "For the reader who seeks to understand happiness, my advice is: Begin with Haidt." *The Happiness Hypothesis* is about ten great ideas with a chapter devoted to each idea (the eleventh chapter is the conclusion). These ideas have come down from several world civilizations including India, China, and Mediterranean cultures. In this book, they are analyzed, along with their contemporary expressions, as to their accuracy and relevance. Endnotes and a substantial bibliography direct the reader to evidence and additional sources. Each chapter begins with quotes from such ancients as Epicurus, Buddha, Muhammad, and Heraclitus.

Unlike many self-help or how-to books, this one is based solidly on science. Empirical studies are sprinkled throughout. Haidt is active in the field of positive psychology which explores the avenues to happiness and meaning. In applying positive psychology, Haidt describes how the mind functions, how people interact, what causes happiness, how people grow and develop, and how people find meaning. Chapter 5 gives a formula for finding happiness (p. 91).

Along the way to supporting his hypothesis, Haidt includes many interesting findings. People are more likely to choose a mate, job, or hometown with a name similar to their own. The majority of people who receive a Christmas card from a person they do not know reciprocate. Bats

who regurgitate blood to share with genetically unrelated bats expect reciprocity. The brain uses 20% of consumed calories but accounts for only 2% of body weight. Humans are born "prematurely" in order for their brains to fit through the birth canal. Gossip about transgressions is ten times as prevalent as gossip about good deeds. Waitresses who mimic their customers receive larger tips. People who hold positive illusions about themselves are happier and better liked by others. A large majority of Americans rate themselves above average in virtues, skills, intelligence, driving ability, and ethics. Seventy percent of high school students rate themselves above average in leadership abilities, while only 2% rate themselves below average. Ninety-four percent of college professors think they do above average work. When husbands and wives estimate the percentage of housework each does, the total comes to 120%. The elderly who do volunteer work live healthier and longer lives.

This book has a lot of commendable features: it is interesting, witty, informative, scientifically based, relevant, readable, helpful, and religion friendly. It frequently refers to the wisdom of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, sometimes approvingly quoting Jesus or Paul. Haidt is a political liberal, semi-vegetarian, and Jewish atheist, but in this book he pushes none of these positions. Haidt supports his happiness hypothesis with the wisdom of the ages as seen through the lens of science. This results in a book which is uplifting and optimistic, something that might be expected from a psychologist who espouses positive psychology.

Reviewed by Richard Ruble, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761.

AUTHENTIC FAKES: Religion and American Popular Culture by David Chidester. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 294 pages. Paperback; $19.95. ISBN: 0520232807.

Chidester, professor of comparative religion at the University of Cape Town, has written and lectured widely on how American popular culture counts as religion. He defines religion as "a point of entry into the meaning, power, and values at work in the production and consumption of authentic fakes in American culture" (viii). This book focuses on what is authentic. For example, while Americans consider their bodies as vehicles of religion, they also want to leave or change the body in some way, with drugs, piercing, tattooing, and other means. Chidester wants readers to pay particular attention to how individuals engage in binding, burning, moving, and handling the world around them.

There are eleven chapters in the book. The first is "Planet Hollywood," which sets the stage and provides many of the analogies for the study, while the final chapter "Planet America," recounts the influence of American culture on the rest of the world. In between are chapters about various kinds of American religion summarized below. The book concludes with an index and a comprehensive set of endnotes for each chapter.

- *Popular religion* is shaped to a large extent by Hollywood where consumerism dominates and utilizes religious ritual and life. Baseball is one example, and Coca-Cola is described as a "fetish" that has "inspirited a missionary fervor" (p. 41), a virtual "Cocacolonization" of the world.
- *Plastic religion* represents the cheap and ephemeral aspects: records, tapes, and CDs; the computer; and especially Tupperware, the consummate plastic community, with its own domestic sacred space represented by the Tupperware Party with its rituals and displays, symbols and myths.
- *Embodied religion* takes place through the body, with caress, shock, binding, burning, moving, and handling—all instruments of the spiritual that enable humans to deal with stress.
- *Sacrificial religion* includes the Jonestown mass murder-suicide and Ronald Reagan's sacrificial patriotism and expenditure. These ideologies portray sacrifice, combining the elements of a world view into a "meaningful and powerful whole" (p. 103).
- *Monetary religion* refers to the dollar in various societies around the world, especially in Africa. It is also tied to the war on terrorism because Bush reflected that "money is the lifeblood of terrorist operations" (p. 130).
- *Global religion* is a dominant theme in the book, illustrated by multi-cultural companies that use images and icons in foreign countries to market their products, such as "*McDonaldization*" and "*Disneyization*" These companies and others are instances of a global religion reflected in their symbolic and material negotiations over humans.
- *Transatlantic religion*, the interplay of Christianity and cults between America and Africa, has requirements for membership, ritual acts of sacrifice, millenarian movements, pilgrimages, and other cultural exchanges.
- *Shamanic religion* is represented in modern New Age spirituality, the Yaqui shaman don Juan Matus, the Zulu Credo Mutwa, alien visitors, and many others, often with African connections and depicted shamelessly on countless web sites.
- *Virtual religion* may often seem to be obvious fake but fraudulence may produce real effects upon people. As William James noted, religion is a way of thinking and always signifies a serious state of the mind (p. 212).

Chidester's final chapter includes a note on the "global ambivalence toward America, combining fascination with a popular culture and repulsion from its global politics" (p. 214). Americans have visions of a manifest destiny but also live in a pluralistic society that allows differing views of what America is really like.

The strength of *Authentic Fakes* is the overview of what is perceived as religion in America, with many illustrations and examples. In America, religion shows up everywhere. Its weakness lies in the author's unwillingness to contrast a fake religion with a real one. Is religion a continuum of beliefs with all of them, in one sense or another, fake in our popular culture?

Although the book lacks rigor in classifying religions and explaining where cults fit in, and gives outlandish weird practitioners too much space, it is an entertaining and disturbing book. If Chidester accurately reports what religion in American popular culture is like, it may not bode well for the future of authentic Christianity in America.

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