

third part looks at how the Bible has been particularly abused with regard to a racist theology. This includes chapters on the Christian Identity movement as well as some corrective pieces addressing Scripture directly, including one that examines the Samaritans as not a separate race but rather a separate religious group. The last section contains an array of case studies of interracial contact in a variety of church settings.

The editors fulfill their goal, for the end result is a book that is perfect for those being educated in a Christian environment—it is true to both modern scholarship and a religious vision that sees the church as potentially limitless in scope. Not only are our problems with race explicated in detail, but the correctives offered for our catastrophically racialized society call to mind the equalizing worldview that was the foundation of most of these evangelical churches—the radical vision of equality that sought to offer a godly alternative to a society riven by race, class, and gender. Readers of this journal should find the book particularly valuable as an alternative to the discourse on race that is the norm in many Christian and scientific circles. Every now and then, something like Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve* (1994) lures many with its assertions that the group they belong to constitutes an elite, as ordained by, biology (and, by extension, God). The temptation to seek validation for the superiority of a particular racial or ethnic group is not just scientifically misguided but is also incompatible with the Christian vision, given that the church, fundamentally, “is defined by faith in Christ rather than by genealogy, ethnicity, or race” (p. 328).

Reviewed by Guy Lancaster, Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Little Rock, AR 72201.

DAILY LIFE OF CHRISTIANS IN ANCIENT ROME by James W. Ermatinger. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007. Hardcover; \$49.95. ISBN: 0313335648.

Why this book? To explore the differences and similarities in daily life between Christians and pagans, to examine how Christianity developed and identified itself in an unfriendly world, and to place Christianity within the structure of Roman society. In the author's words: “The central aspect of this book examines Christians' daily life during the Roman world, especially in the city of Rome and before the legalization of Christianity” (p. ix). The author's information comes from literary and archaeological sources.

This ten chapter book includes a glossary, bibliography, chronology, photographs, drawings, images, and an index. The book's three main sections describe, in the Roman world, the uniqueness of Christianity, the uniqueness of Christians, and what it meant to be a Christian. Ermatinger presents a brief biography of two saviors of the world: Augustus was seen as political savior of the Roman world; Jesus would be seen as the religious savior of the whole world (p. 6). “These two individuals, Augustus and Jesus, living nearly contemporaneously with each other in the same political system, influenced the future of Christianity and the Roman world” (p. 7).

Christianity took root and developed because of the *Pax Romana*, established by Augustus (p. 19). Constantine established Christianity as the official state religion which led to its rapid spread because “Individuals quickly learned that by converting to this new religion there were more opportunities for advancement and wealth” (p. 21). Even so Christians were sometimes persecuted because they were part of a group, and “The Romans had a sort of national paranoia; they distrusted any gathering of people,” even a volunteer fire department (p. 39).

There were many contemporary Roman religions, but they offered little hope for life after death. This was one reason why Christianity and the mystery religions were so popular, with Christianity winning out eventually (pp. 43–4). This topic is explored in the chapter entitled “Afterlife.”

The last chapter, “Impact of Christianity,” explains how Christianity shaped and influenced its buildings, organizations, papacy, pilgrimages, and tourist economy. The author concludes that some practices and attitudes of Christianity evolved (divorce, dietary laws, vernacular services), but others continue to be a vital contemporary part of Christian experience (fasting, prayer, and communion).

James W. Ermatinger, professor and chair of the Department of History at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO, is the author of *Economic Reforms of Diocletian* and *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

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



Letters

Dialogues Appreciated

I love the dialogue approach, as exemplified by the Seely-Ross and Haarsma-Behe dialogues in the March 2007 issue of *PSCF*. For my money, this issue was the best yet of *PSCF*. Being able to read the article, the responses, and the responses to the responses all at once made it so much easier for me to understand the issues and make up my own mind. I hope *PSCF* is able to feature similar dialogs in the future, e.g., Dick Fischer & Glenn Morton, Carol Hill and ???, Howard Van Till and ???, and anyone else whose previous articles have stirred up letter responses in the past.

Perhaps some of the “debates” on the ASA List Serve could be turned into future dialogues by giving the principal debaters an opportunity to present their positions and comments on others' positions.

Incidentally, I also appreciated the insightful book reviews in the “Origins & Cosmology” section (my personal area of interest).

Keep up the good work. I give my compliments to the anonymous donor who made the 88-page issue possible.

Paul Bruggink
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Intelligent Design Is Not Natural Science

The Intelligent Design (ID) movement has insisted that intelligent design is scientific. William Dembski, a prominent spokesperson for ID, wrote that intelligent design is "a fruitful scientific concept,"¹ "a full-fledged scientific theory,"² and "a scientific research program."³

In his article, "Is Intelligent Design 'Scientific'?" (*PSCF* 59, no. 1 [March 2007]: 55–62), Loren Haarsma twice points out that most people equate science with natural causes. Even so, he concludes his article by stating that ID is "partly science."

The intelligent manipulation of known characteristics of the physical universe is the hallmark of engineering and technology. The intelligent design (Lower case 'i' and lower case 'd') and the intelligent assembly of the components of biological origins are synonymous with supernatural genetic engineering and supernatural biotechnology. Whether they are the result of a supernatural design placed within the singularity, the result of supernatural intermittent activity within the physical universe or the result of a creative act cannot be determined scientifically.⁴

The intelligent design and the intelligent assembly of biological entities reside totally outside *natural science*. They are antithetical to natural events having natural causes. However, once existent, the components of biological origins function naturalistically and do not require ongoing supernatural intervention. Scientists can do their experiments and obtain results consistent with methodological naturalism.

The ID movement would be better served by dropping or ignoring all associations with "science" and, instead, assimilate the language of engineering and technology where intelligent activity is normative. The relationship between evolution and intelligent design is not one of science vs. religion but, rather, one of natural science vs. technology.

How should one respond to the question: "Is intelligent design scientific?" A reasonable response would be: "The classification of intelligent design within science is irrelevant. Let me explain why intelligent design belongs within engineering and technology."

The formal concept of Intelligent Design (Upper case 'I' and upper case 'D') is a totally different matter. ID is a process, which differentiates intelligent causation from naturalistic causation. Therefore, it lies wholly outside the natural sciences, outside technology and outside engineering. ID is based in the field of logic.

Proponents of ID use a logical algorithm to determine the probable causative agency, which gave rise to individual biological components. This algorithm, the Explanatory Filter, has three junction points where consecutive decisions are made concerning contingency, complexity

and specificity. This Filter is used to differentiate intelligent causation from natural causation. An activity or structure that is contingent, complex and specified is most likely due to intelligent design and activity. The origin of a specific biological component, which is contingent, complex and specified, lies within biotechnology and/or genetic engineering rather than within natural science.

Lastly, a scientific research program unique to Intelligent Design is a myth. Promoting such a program is counter productive. Intelligent design is advanced through quality scientific research, through the scientific method and through sound reasoning. Neither Michael Behe, author of *Darwin's Black Box*, nor Jonathan Wells, author of *Icons of Evolution*, based their books on an Intelligent Design scientific research program. Rather, both relied on quality research within natural science. A scientific research program from an alien culture should be able to determine that the Pioneer Space Craft is the result of intelligent causation rather than naturalistic causation. No special research program need be set up. The same can be said for the investigation of causative agency concerning biological origins.

Notes

¹W. Dembski, *The Design Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 34.

²*Ibid.*, 37.

³*Ibid.*

⁴F. Nelson, "Letters: RFE and ID Universe Are Both Supernatural," (*PSCF* 57, no. 1 [March 2005]: 76–7).

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Kudos for the March 2007 Issue

I have just read through the March 2007 issue of *PSCF*. It was the best edition yet. The article-response-author reply pattern added greatly to the clarity and quality of the discussions. I hope that pattern will be continued as much as possible.

Thanks.

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Change in Manuscript Submission

Beginning **July 1, 2007**, submit all manuscripts (except book reviews) to:

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