

achievements and insights of contemporary science. In this effort, her primary dialogue partners include interfaith scholar Beatrice Bruteau, Passionist priest and self-styled geologist Thomas Berry, Hindu-Catholic mystic Raimon Panikkar, and luminaries from her elected Franciscan tradition such as Saint Francis, Bonaventure, and the contemporary spiritual writer and retreat leader Richard Rohr. Pope Francis's unprecedented encyclical on creation care, *Laudato Si'*, is a constant touchstone for Delio, but pride of place in her personal communion of saints is granted to the Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose transposition of Catholic Christianity into an evolutionary key animates virtually every page of the book.

Delio's essays orbit this Teilhardian view of things like planets in an intellectual galaxy characterized by both order and chaos. The overall effect is a prophetic warning regarding the irrelevance and near-obsolescence of any Christian system fixated on the categories of Aristotelian or Newtonian world-views. Like her monastic and mendicant forebears, Delio calls for church reform and creative thinking. The dominant mood of the book, though, is a blend of hope and awe, even audacity. Delio's conclusion equates the rise of a "new species with a new God consciousness" (p. 240) with the second coming of Christ.

Delio's engaging book is limited by its scant attention to the menacing side of science and technology, its failure to reckon seriously with the dramatic rise of nonreligion that calls her privileging of Christian myth into question, its overestimation of the general reader's science literacy, and its tendency to align scholarly and homiletic modes of communication too closely and too uncritically. Readers seeking linear arguments for theistic evolution or Christian pantheism will have to look elsewhere. Clergy, advanced students, and believing specialists in theology and the natural sciences will find a provocative and prayerful statement of a unique Christian cosmology that informs and inspires.

Reviewed by Peter A. Huff, Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Center for Benedictine Values, Benedictine University, Lisle, IL 60532.

Book Reviewers Welcome

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PSYCHOLOGY

THRIVING WITH STONE AGE MINDS: Evolutionary Psychology, Christian Faith, and the Quest for Human Flourishing by Justin L. Barrett with Pamela Ebstyn King. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021. 160 pages, index. Paperback; \$20.00. ISBN: 9780830852932.

I was looking forward to reviewing this book for several reasons. Firstly, I have been following the work of Justin Barrett for some time. As a clinical psychologist working in academia in the UK, I taught for several years an undergraduate module in psychology of religion in which I dedicated several hours to his work in cognitive science and developmental psychology of religion. Barrett, formerly director of the Thrive Center for Human Development at Fuller Theological Seminary and, prior to that, director of the Centre for Anthropology and Mind at the University of Oxford, has forged an unlikely career for a person of faith in a subdiscipline of psychology popularly considered the sole preserve of skeptics and nonbelievers.

Secondly, if I carry a bugbear about the empirical psychology of religion, it is that at times it tends to avoid application, a sense of the implications of its findings for human living. In this respect, Barrett's collaboration with Pamela Ebstyn King is a welcome addition to this project. Currently based at Fuller Theological Seminary as executive director of the Thrive Center and Professor of Applied and Developmental Science, King adds applied nuance and some succinct epigrams that bring home the implications of evolutionary psychology in everyday life.

Thirdly, it seems very important to me that people of faith generally, and Christians particularly, continue to explore and write about the field of evolutionary psychology, not least because it is often presented as a competing narrative of even nonliteral readings of the Genesis account, in direct opposition to a benevolent creator and a universe that could be considered in any way purposeful. I have lost count of the number of young adults I have encountered who refuse to consider the possibility of there being a creator, or who have lost faith in God, as a result of reading secular or atheistic accounts of human evolution.

Barrett and King have produced a short and well-informed book designed for any interested intelligent reader. No prior knowledge of evolutionary

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psychology (EP) is required to follow their train of thought. In the early chapters of the volume, they state clearly the basic principles of EP and how the EP account of what it means to be human is remarkably consistent with the biblical understanding of the hallmarks of human life designed in the image of God. They focus on three overlapping domains of competency that are notably human—sociality, expertise acquisition, and self-control—or, as King pithily summarizes: the human capacities to relate, learn, and regulate (p. 46). The early chapters of the book convincingly argue that there is nothing incompatible with these elements of human nature, properly understood, and the Christian anthropology presented in the Bible. Barrett and King successfully side-step contention or sides of the evolution-creation debate. Their point about the compatibility of evolutionary and theological perspectives is well made, and will be of interest for those who are open to it from any faith or nonfaith perspective.

From there, the authors go on to outline their understanding of flourishing from this evolutionary psychology perspective. They note that human nature, with its social, intellectual, and regulatory capacities, has a dual aspect. On the one hand, these capabilities were forged in response to particular niches in evolutionary history; on the other hand, they offer human beings the possibility of redesigning the very niches which formed us. And therein lies the central dilemma of evolutionary psychology referred to in the title of the book. As a species we find ourselves facing the demands of twenty-first-century industrial life with minds designed to deal with the challenges of living in the stone age. Much of the failure in human thriving can therefore be attributed, the authors argue, to the gap that can open up between the social, intellectual, and regulatory capacities of human nature, and the requirements of the contemporary cultural landscape.

Each of the three capacities of human nature is treated to an entire chapter, examining how they can be inadequate to the demands placed upon them in our current context. Examples include the stretching of our social brain ability to breaking point by large populations, the failure of traditional pedagogies to utilize well-established cognitive biases and heuristics, and the overwhelming of our regulatory ability in the face of relentless advertising. We fail to thrive when the gap between human nature and human niche becomes too great, but human flourishing is promoted when we find ways of closing the gap between how we are designed and how we

currently live. Barrett and King offer a raft of practical examples of how Christian faith and practice can contribute to this, such as network closure for socializing young people, age-appropriate education strategies for learning, and religious practices for building self-regulation. With these and many other evidence-based examples, the authors add evolutionary justification and theological depth to a common formulation in various forms of applied psychology, whether in clinical practice or the workplace, namely, that we flourish most when we fit our environment best.

The final two chapters take this proposition to its logical conclusion. Firstly, by querying what all this means for our status as bearers of the divine image, functionally commissioned to love God and one another, and to care for creation as God's representatives on Earth. And secondly, by giving space to a consideration of human purpose and telos. While Barrett and King avoid the suggestion that their book is aimed at those attempting to discern their vocation, the final chapter draws together the threads of their survey of human nature and its implications for flourishing with purpose and calling in life.

The book presents a convincing picture of consilience between evolutionary psychology and Christian theology applied in the real world. However, to my mind, it does leave a crucial question hanging. It is one thing to argue that the *outcome* of the evolutionary process is compatible with a Christian view of humanity, but what remains unaddressed, in this volume at least, is whether the evolutionary *process* is compatible with a Christian view of God. After all, this is what bothered Darwin. He was not wary of publication for fear of contradicting a literal reading of Genesis, but because his view of the origins of human life based on industrial-scale bloodshed was difficult to square with the existence of a benevolent creator. Once the conceptual problem of evolutionary creation is settled, the emotional problem of evolutionary creation emerges; the question of evolution morphs into the question of pain and evil. Personally, it would have helped this reviewer to more easily assimilate the message of the book if it had addressed this issue even briefly. But be that as it may, Barrett and King offer a coherent and elegant account of the confluence of evolutionary psychology and Christian faith in the quest for human flourishing, which is well worth reading.

Reviewed by Roger Bretherton, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Lincoln, UK, and Chair of the British Association of Christians in Psychology.