

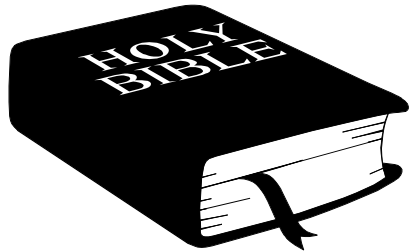
The
Presbyterian
Witness

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In This Issue:

**A Critique of the Report of the
Creation Study Committee**



**R.J.
Rushdoony,
RIP
1916-2001**

**The Inter-Faith Conference:
An Interview with Robert Zins**

The Presbyterian Witness

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Striving for the purity and peace of the Presbyterian Church in America is the responsibility of all her members and officers. Therefore, the purpose of this magazine is to enhance the purity of doctrine, purity of life, unity in the Spirit, and diligence in mission of the Presbyterian Church in America.

God raised up our denomination to be a standard bearer of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” “the whole counsel of God,” as faithfully expressed in our historic standards. Our goal is that through our faithfulness to the Great Commission, “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9).

We love the PCA and long to see it continue to be more and more reformed by the Word of God in its thinking and living. It is to that end that we pray God will use our magazine.

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A Note to Our Readers:

Please remember that, while *The Presbyterian Witness* is free of charge, the donations of readers and supporters is our only source of the funds necessary to continue this publication. Your prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.

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Letter to the Editor

ATLANTA CONFERENCE

February, 2001

Dear Byron:

April 27-29, 2001, Chalcedon Presbyterian Church in Cumming, Georgia, is hosting a conference at which Steve Wilkins will speak. The theme of the conference is ***“Out of the Past, Into the Future: How Understanding Our Past as a Nation Enables Us to Plan for the Future.”***

Conference topics will include:

“Do you really understand America’s War of Independence?”

“Have you been told the truth about the War Between the States?”

“How does a correct understanding of these two wars, and what caused them, affect the way you think and live in the 21st Century?”

The cost is \$35 per person or \$25 for students in middle school through college. Children are free. A nursery will be available for infants and toddlers, for a small fee.

On Saturday evening, conference attendees are invited to a concert to hear the classical guitarist, Barry Hause. Steve Wilkins will also be preaching at the congregational worship services on Sunday.

To register or obtain further information, those interested may call 1-770-205-9390 or toll free, 1-866-463-7529.

Thank you for bringing this conference to the attention of your readers.

In Christ,

Joe Morecraft

A Critique of the Report of the Creation Study Committee

By Conrad Doskey

Conrad is a Deacon at Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hampton, Virginia

The Creation Study Committee was established by the 25th General Assembly of the PCA to examine how “day” is to be interpreted as it applies to the days of creation in Genesis 1-3. Until recently, it was commonly understood by many elders in the PCA that the Westminster Confession of Faith interpreted the creation story as the plain meaning of Scripture: that God created all things in six 24-hour days (the Calendar-Day view). Lately, more and more prospective teaching elders had been declaring either the Day-Age view or some other view to be their understanding of what Scripture teaches. So it was hoped that the committee would be able to resolve the debate. Instead, with the assistance of the 28th General Assembly, the committee has muddied the waters further.

During its deliberations, the committee not only investigated the Day-Age view versus the Calendar-Day view, but also examined two other views in depth: the Framework interpretation (the creation week is a metaphor with the various acts of creation grouped topically), and the Analogical Days interpretation (the days of creation are God’s workdays which are only analogous to our workdays). As a result, the committee’s report focused on an evaluation of these four views. Since the committee was unable to decide on the nature and duration of the creation days, they apparently intended to present these four views as the basis for further prayer and discussion. However, they also described six other views in varying detail: the Intermittent Day interpretation, the Gap interpretation, the Days of Revelation interpretation, the Days of Divine Fiat interpretation, the Focus on Palestine interpretation, and the Expanding Time interpretation.

This past summer, the 28th General Assembly of the PCA received the report of the Creation Study Committee. In response to the report, the General Assembly adopted a motion that said, in part, “That since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected

theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that *such diversity as covered in this report* [emphasis added] is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted.” [Minutes of the 28th General Assembly p.184-185, hereafter M28GA] As a result, the PCA has actually declared ten different views of creation acceptable to our denomination. This was certainly a convenient conclusion and one that did much for the outward unity of our denomination, but it was definitely not the correct conclusion.

To begin with, I don’t think anyone seriously meant to declare all ten interpretations acceptable. It certainly wasn’t the committee’s intent. Six of these views were only included in the report as an aside. Charitably, this can be attributed to simple oversight, but I believe it’s more likely that this was a symptom of general unwillingness on the part of those present to deal with the issue. Secondly, the committee did not say that they thought the four primary views were all acceptable. They only said that they couldn’t agree on which one was the correct view. They were presenting all of them as information for further discussion. To say that, since we can’t determine the correct view, we’re going to allow them all doesn’t resolve the debate – it only evades it. Since the elders of the PCA are supposed to shepherd the denomination, evading the debate only means evading one’s responsibilities. But it’s possible that none of this would ever have happened if the committee had simply distinguished truth from error.

Believing in the infallibility, sufficiency, and perspicuity of Scripture, I am convinced that the true interpretation of the creation event is the most obvious one, the Calendar-Day interpretation. I also believe it’s relatively easy to determine that this is the correct view. Given the report of the study committee, it’s a simple matter of examining the details presented. The Creation Study committee documented the history of this debate, as well as the professed strengths and weaknesses of the four primary views. Therefore, unapologetically assuming the accuracy of the Calendar-Day view and ignoring the half-dozen “inadvertently accepted” views, I’d like to review the evidence that the study committee apparently couldn’t see for themselves.

In recounting the history of the debate, the report states that from the beginning of the New Testament church to the time of the Westminster Assembly, “Out of all of this literature it is possible to distinguish two general schools of thought on the nature of the six days. One class of interpreters tends to interpret the days figuratively or allegorically (e.g., Origen and Augustine), while another class interprets the days as normal calendar days (e.g., Basil, Ambrose, Bede and Calvin).”[M28GA p.124] It also states that Augustine proposed an instantaneous creation view. Then, while discussing the Reformation developments in the debate, the report states, “the Protestant Reformers mainly wanted to distance themselves from fanciful allegorizations of the days of creation – which is how they regarded Augustine’s solution to the problem of the nature of the days.”[M28GA p.126] Later in the report, we find this statement, “As we look at views of the creation days after Westminster, we find little if any difference over the matter within the Reformed community until the nineteenth century.”[M28GA p.129] Then, a little farther on, we are told, “At the turn of the nineteenth century, prior to Darwin and *in the wake of the new geology*, [emphasis added] Reformed Christians began to take a different look at the Genesis days.”[M28GA p.130] The combined effect of all these statements is this: that there was always a literal vs. non-literal debate in the church, that the Reformation church rejected the non-literal explanation, and that the Protestant church didn’t begin to entertain non-literal views again until the acceptance of modern scientific theories made it embarrassing to hold to the literal view.

This is precisely what proponents of the non-literal views want to deny! They know the seriousness of this charge. If they admit that the basis for these new theories is rooted in a response to modern scientific theories, then their theories are completely discredited. Orthodox Christianity affirms that the ultimate interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself and there is no Scriptural reason to doubt the plain reading of the creation account. Admitting that Scripture must conform to science in contrast to our accepted understanding of Scripture places these theories (and the men who hold them) beyond the boundaries of acceptable teaching.

Now let’s examine the supposed strengths of the various non-literal views as reported by the committee.

The Day-Age Interpretation

The principle distinction of this view is that we must assume the creation event took a long time to occur. Proponents of this view cannot explain why this must be the case. But by examining its supposed strong points, it becomes easy to see where the idea of long ages comes from. As I said earlier, it is a blatant attempt to make Scripture conform to modern scientific theories. As the oldest of the non-literal views, it is also most easily refuted (looking forward to the newer views, recall that men don’t make new errors – they just camouflage the old ones more carefully). So, according to proponents of the Day-Age theory, there are seven strengths to be considered.

First, with regard to time, this view allows for long ages because God may have used growth processes to develop His creation. It also allows for overlapping ages, to account for the fact that insects and birds are required for many plant reproductive processes. **Response:** This can only be considered a strong point if someone can show that God actually used growth processes (plant reproduction) as part of creation. To simply assume that this was the case is tantamount to denying that God works outside of ordinary processes.

Second, this view avoids a number of conflicts between Scripture and science, specifically; the appearance of age, the order of nature, and the fossil record. **Response:** This view does nothing to avoid the aforementioned ‘problems’. The only way to get around the appearance of age ‘problem’ is to accept a naturalistic, evolutionary timeline. As an orthodox Christian who believes in the special creation of Adam and Eve, you must either accept that God created them as mature adults or believe that they were created as infants and raised by wolves. As far as the order of nature is concerned, there is still a problem. Modern scientific theory holds that birds are a younger order than land-based reptiles, but Scripture says they were created first. Although proponents say that these ages can overlap, they must be willing to say that Day Six began before Day Five in order to resolve that conflict. Of course, the major problem with this

‘strength’ is that it is simply an admission on the part of Day-Age proponents that what they really want to do is make Scripture conform to science.

Third: “The Day-Age construct preserves the general sequence of events as portrayed in the text.”[M28GA p.161] **Response:** So what? Although this is an advantage over the other non-literal views, this is nothing that the Calendar-Day view doesn’t also adequately address.

Fourth: “The position can be, and has been, arrived at through exegesis of the text”, and “does not require the influence of Darwinian evolutionists, or any of the natural sciences.”[M28GA p.161] **Response:** To begin with, I would hope that any proposed interpretation is arrived at through exegesis. If not, it wouldn’t merit a response. But it’s the second half of this point that is really interesting. Proponents of this view want us to think that they owe nothing to the evidence of the natural sciences. But consider this—how many people would hold to this view if there were no scientific evidence calling for vast ages of time? I don’t want to sound harsh, but if the popular scientific community reversed itself tomorrow and claimed that the earth was only ten thousand years old, this view would wither and die in a matter of minutes.

Fifth, if we assume that the explanation of the sun’s creation on Day Four is that it only became visible at that time, then “no non-literal explanation of the text dealing with this creation is called for. Neither do we have to impose solar days on Days 1-3 of creation before the sun was in existence.”[M28GA p.161] **Response:** Oops, they admitted that literal explanations are good. So why is a non-literal explanation for the timing of the whole creation week called for? Beyond this, it appears they are trying to have their cake and eat it too. They have to say that the sun was around from the beginning (in order to fuel the natural plant processes), so they explain the sun’s “creation” on Day Four by saying it only became visible at that time. But, they also claim that the sun wasn’t in existence prior to Day Four in order to justify not “imposing” a solar day view on Days 1-3. It doesn’t work both ways, and either way destroys this view. If the sun was shining on Day One to fuel plant growth, then we can measure solar days and there’s no reason to question the length of the

creation days. But if the sun wasn’t shining until Day Four, then the plants can’t survive (given their self-imposed natural processes).

Sixth, “This viewpoint readily accommodates the preponderance of inference from present day scientific interpretation from general revelation, in particular with data from astrophysics, geology and the fossil record.”[M28GA p.162] **Response:** This pretty much speaks for itself. To say that this is an asset is a clear admission that they want Scripture to conform to science.

Seventh, this view easily accommodates all the things that take place on Day Six of creation. **Response:** This can only be considered a strength if a long period of time is necessary. The creation of land animals, Adam, and Eve doesn’t need to take very long. The supposed long time comes from Adam naming the animals. There are several plausible explanations that don’t require much time at all. The easiest explanation is that we don’t know how much differentiation was present in the first animals. There probably wasn’t the full range of species that has since developed by natural processes.

The Framework Interpretation

The main idea here is that the Genesis account is poetry and shouldn’t be taken literally. Proponents of this view say that the creation events are arranged, not chronologically, but topically by “days” of unknown (but extended) length. Since this is the case, there is no definite sequence to the creation account. The only thing left is the affirmation that God created everything. But even that isn’t anything special according to this view. There are four supposed strengths to be addressed here.

First: “The Framework view interprets Genesis 1 in the light of its immediate context in Genesis 2.”[M28GA p.165] Genesis 2:5-6 presupposes that God preserved the plants during the six days by secondary causes, because it says God wouldn’t create plants without rain or a human cultivator. There was a time during the creation event when there were no plants because God had not yet provided rain or a cultivator and the land was too dry to support vegetation. This must have been on Day Three and it had to have taken much more than 24

hours for the land to dry out. **Response:** There are several reasons why this is completely wrong.

(1) According to this view, the entire first chapter of Genesis needs to be interpreted in light of Genesis 2:5-6. One might well ask why a very detailed account should be considered unclear and in need of interpretation by two subsequent verses. Common sense tells us it's the other way around. The detailed account provides interpretation of the unclear passage.

(2) Concerning the details of why Day Three couldn't have been 24 hours, Framework proponents require God to use secondary means of preserving His creation and insist that He couldn't create plants because the land was too dry (no rain and no human irrigation). But in order to say this, they must ignore the very passage of Scripture upon which they base their argument. Genesis 2:6 states, "But streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground"[NIV]. Regardless of the manner of interpretation of the passages, and regardless of the question of whether God limited Himself to using natural means of preserving His creation, the fact remains that the conditions described in Genesis 2:5-6 don't prohibit God from creating plants at any time on Day Three of creation.

(3) According to their own view, events are arranged topically, not chronologically. If that is so, there is no reason to insist on a sequential interpretation of the events on Day Three. They must deny their own theory to establish the need for long ages in creation. The bottom line is this; there is absolutely no reason to assume the days were anything other than ordinary 24-hour days. The arbitrary insistence on long ages in this view betrays its fundamental purpose – to make Scripture conform to modern scientific theories.

Second: "The view is fully compatible with the New Testament, which emphasizes God's Word of power and the created order, not the timing or length of creation." [M28GA p.166] **Response:** This may or may not be true, but it certainly is not compatible with the Old Testament (Exodus 20:11), which says, "In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them". It's not good enough to say it's compatible with some of God's Word. If

it's not compatible with all of God's Word, then it's not compatible with God's Word, period, and it's not worth talking about.

Third: "The Framework view is theologically rich, highlighting Moses' presentation of Biblical-theological themes such as covenant, image of God, and Sabbath." [M28GA p.166] **Response:** This has nothing to do with the strength of an interpretive view. Theologically rich does not mean theologically right. Richness is a criterion for choosing desserts, not Scriptural interpretations.

Fourth: "With respect to the relation of scientific theory and theology, it is open to the study of general revelation regarding the age of the earth and the cosmos, within biblical constraints." [M28GA p.166] **Response:** Once again, we see the concern for making Scripture conform to science. Although Framework proponents say they want to study science within Biblical constraints, they begin by throwing away one of the most relevant constraints—namely, that one accepts the plain meaning of Scripture unless Scripture itself gives reason to interpret it differently. If you deny Biblical constraints while seeking to harmonize Scripture and science, then science becomes your standard. This isn't an asset; it's a confession.

The Analogical Days Interpretation

This view is an outgrowth of the Day-Age view, and shares many traits with its parent theory. Accordingly, many points of refutation dealing with the Day-Age view also apply here, but I will only deal with the points offered by the committee. According to this view, the days of creation are God's workdays and are only analogous to man's workdays. These "days" are of undefined length (why?), are successive but possibly overlapping, and may be grouped logically rather than chronologically. In addition, Genesis 1:1-2 (creation from nothing) is separated from the beginning of Day One by an unknown length of time. There are six supposed strengths to be found in this interpretation.

First: "It derives from a discourse-oriented study of the text of Scripture in the original languages." [M28GA p.172] **Response:** It would be a strong point if this method of Biblical interpretation were

established as valid. Until then, this cannot be considered an asset, only a novelty.

Second: The discourse and literary methods confirm traditional interpretations of the rest of Genesis 2–3, and “attempt to systematize what good grammarians and exegetes through the ages have ‘felt’.”[M28GA p.173] **Response:** Although it’s nice that this method seems to work when applied to other portions of Scripture, the question is not one of utility, but one of principle. Until the principle of discourse-oriented study is acknowledged as a valid method of interpretation, its results can’t be relied upon to resolve a debate.

Third: The interpretive scheme “does not actually involve any grammatical or semantic innovations.”[M28GA p.173] **Response:** Again, this isn’t a strong point. This should be an accepted fact. If the discourse-oriented study required any grammatical or semantic innovations, it would be highly suspect, much like former president Clinton’s attempt to redefine the word “is”.

Fourth: “The developed arguments for the view claim to account for all the details of the text.”[M28GA p.173] **Response:** All the other views also make this claim. The real question is, does this view truly account for all the details? The answer is “no, it only accounts for the details that it thinks are important.” The Analogical Days interpretation basically says that God created everything but we don’t know anything about the sequence or duration of the creation event. That leaves quite a bit of detail unexplained.

Fifth: “This view is explicitly built on the desire to be ruled by Scriptural reflections on the [Genesis] account.”[M28GA p.173] **Response:** Again, all the other views also make this claim. But a desire to be ruled by Scriptural reflections on a subject does not equal a practice of being ruled by Scriptural reflections on the subject. So, once again, the real question is, is this view ruled by Scriptural reflections on the subject? And again, the answer is “no”. (Anyone who doesn’t hold to the Analogical Days view would give this answer).

Sixth: By emphasizing the analogy between God’s creative work and man’s God-ordained work, this view requires special creative events and therefore, “it is incompatible with theistic evolutionary schemes.”[M28GA p.173] **Response:** This is a good point, although only as a form of insurance versus progressive warping of this view to allow theistic evolution. But although it is a good point, there is nothing here that isn’t also the case with the Calendar-Day view.

After all this, it would be easy to say that the Calendar-Day view is right because all the others are wrong. But proponents of the other views claim that there are problems with a literal view. Since I want to be fair, I need to address the objections raised to the Calendar-Day view.

First: “The traditional view is easily caricatured as anti-intellectual and classed along with those of geo-centrists and flat-earthers.”[M28GA p.147] **Response:** This isn’t even a real objection (it merely points out that non-believers will ridicule this position), but it’s the main reason for all the other views. Some people are more concerned with what the unbelieving world thinks of them than with what is true. This objection would be valid if the view was actually anti-intellectual. But as long as you are careful not to make Scripture affirm something it doesn’t affirm (the problem of the geo-centrists), it doesn’t matter what others think of you. Remember, the unbelieving world thinks the gospel is ridiculous, too.

Second: The first three days couldn’t have been solar days because the sun hadn’t been created yet. **Response:** The problem here is a failure to distinguish between solar days and 24-hour days. Of course the first three days weren’t solar days. No one said they were. But God’s ability to measure time didn’t begin with the sun and no one is foolish enough to think that we can’t measure time in the absence of the sun. Actually, opponents of the Calendar-Day view condemn their own views when they make this objection because built into the objection is the admission that it’s possible for Days Four through Six to be solar (24-hour) days. Once you admit that some of the days were normal calendar days, you can’t arbitrarily declare that others weren’t.

Third: This view “seems not to take science seriously and impugns the veracity of God because, on the one hand, it dismisses central conclusions of the current scientific consensus on cosmogony and, on the other hand, it supposedly requires one to view the general-revelation evidence as to the age of the earth as misleading.”[M28GA p.149] **Response:** Once again, this is the whole point of the debate. Some people would rather abandon the plain teaching of Scripture in favor of unproven scientific theories. Those who hold the Calendar-Day view don't. Since Scripture gives no reason to doubt the plain understanding of the creation account, we rightly reject any conclusions that contradict Scripture.

Fourth: “The view tends to read the text only against the background of a modern world and life view, with its interest in timing and mechanisms.”[M28GA p.150] Ancient Israel, the original audience of Genesis, had a different worldview. **Response:** Yes, ancient Israel viewed the world differently than modern man. This is an argument in favor of the Calendar-Day view. Ancient Israel would have understood the timing of the creation account as normal calendar days. The assertion that this view depends on a modern mindset fixated on “timing and mechanisms” is laughable. How do they account for the fact that this is one of the oldest views in the church?

Fifth: The sun was created to govern the day but it wasn't created until the fourth day. So the first three days weren't “governed” with regard to days and seasons. **Response:** This is similar to the second objection. The lack of an instrument to govern the length of the day doesn't invalidate the revealed timing of the day. The sun didn't govern the timing of the first three days; it was governed by the light that God established prior to the sun. The error in this objection can be illustrated this way: Was there no sin until the Mosaic Law was revealed on Mt. Sinai, since the Law was intended to govern what was and wasn't a sin? The very idea is ridiculous. God governed what was and wasn't sin according to His nature before He established the Mosaic Law, and He governed the days and seasons before He created the sun.

Sixth: There is a general objection that the Calendar-Day view creates a conflict between the account of Genesis 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-25.

This objection is based on an interpretation of Genesis 2:5-6 that says God created plants after He created man, and used ordinary providence to sustain His creation. **Response:** This objection is only valid if Genesis 2:5-6 must be interpreted as an account of events on Day Three. This doesn't need to be the case. There is no conflict between these two accounts because they are accounts of two different events. The Genesis 2:4-25 passage is the detailed account of God's creation of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. As such, Genesis 2:5-6 speaks to the planting of the garden that Adam and Eve would live in, not the creation of plants in general. This interpretation completely resolves any supposed conflict between the two accounts.

In summary, I would like to point out that all of this evidence was available to the Creation Study Committee during its deliberations. The committee reported all of this information to the General Assembly. The entire report was read on the floor of General Assembly. Nothing was hidden or denied. Given a thoughtful review of the facts at hand, it should have been obvious to all who were willing to study the issue that there is only one true interpretation of Genesis 1-3, the Calendar-Day view. I hope and pray that more people – more elders – would consider these facts fairly and without regard to the prejudices of an unbelieving world, and would commit themselves, their churches, their presbyteries, our denomination, and Christ's church to unashamedly affirming our reliance on the truth of Scripture in all respects.

R. J. Rushdoony, R.I.P.
by Gary North

The death of Rousas John Rushdoony on February 8 at the age of 84 will not be perceived as newsworthy by the American media, any more than Ludwig von Mises's death in 1973 and Murray Rothbard's death in 1995 were regarded as newsworthy. But being a newsworthy event is rarely the same as being a significant event.

Rushdoony's writings are the source of many of the core ideas of the New Christian Right, a voting bloc whose unforeseen arrival in American politics in 1980 caught the media by surprise. This bloc

voted overwhelmingly for Ronald Reagan. Two weeks after Reagan was inaugurated, *Newsweek* (Feb. 2, 1981) accurately but very briefly identified Rushdoony's Chalcedon Foundation as the think tank of the Religious Right. But the mainstream media did not take the hint. They never did figure out where these ideas were coming from. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson were on television, and the media's intellectuals, such as they are, believe that television is the source of world transformation. Rushdoony in 1981 was almost unknown outside of the leadership of New Right/New Christian Right circles. So he remained at his death.

He was born in 1916 in New York City. His parents were newly arrived refugees. They had fled from the northern Armenian city of Van during the century's first genocide, the Turks' slaughter of an estimated million and a half Armenians, an event still ignored by most modern history textbooks and officially ignored by the British government in its United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Day, held last month. Rushdoony's older brother, a toddler, had died during the family's escape across the border into Russia.

His father had been educated at the University of Edinburgh. As a farewell gift from Scottish friends, he had been given English pounds sterling, which he had kept in cash. With this universally recognized currency, along with money he had saved from his job as a teacher after his return to Armenia, he was able to buy train tickets across Russia for himself, his pregnant wife, and her sister's family. They reached Archangel and then booked passage to the United States.

Rushdoony senior became a Presbyterian minister in America. His forebears had been priests for at least six generations, son by son. He ministered to Armenians for the remainder of his life. (With a photographic memory, he contributed two detailed eyewitness accounts for Viscount Bryce's official government volume, edited by a young Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*. His name is spelled Rushdouni in the book.)

R. J. Rushdoony learned to speak English in public school. He wound up majoring in English at the University of California, Berkeley, in

the late 1930's. He attended graduate school there, receiving a master's degree in education, and then attended the liberal Pacific School of Religion, graduating in 1944. He entered the Presbyterian ministry in the mid-1940's, where he had a mission to the Chinese in San Francisco and later to the Western Shoshone tribe in Idaho.

Writing Career

It was on the reservation that he began to write. He wrote for the *Sunday School Times*. He also wrote an essay for the Foundation for Economic Education on the erosion of the Indians' voluntary charity traditions under the collectivism of the U.S. government's reservation system. This essay was included in one of FEE's *Ideas on Liberty* volumes, back before FEE changed the name of *The Freeman* to *Ideas on Liberty*.

In 1959, his first book appeared, *By What Standard?* It was an introduction to the philosophy of Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary. A shortened paperback version was published in 1960, *Van Til*. Then he began writing applied theology. *Intellectual Schizophrenia* (1961) was a short but trenchant critique of tax-funded, "neutral" public education. FEE's senior staff member, Rev. Ed Opitz, wrote the Introduction. Two years later, his masterpiece on public education appeared, *The Messianic Character of American Education*, a highly condensed, thoroughly documented, and theologically astute critique of the educational philosophies of over two dozen of the major founders and philosophers of American progressive education, from Horace Mann to John Dewey. Nothing like it had ever been published before, and nothing equal to it has been published since.

This book became the academic touchstone for leaders of the independent (non-parochial) Christian school movement, which was just beginning to accelerate in 1963. It provided them with both the theological foundation and the historical ammunition for making their case against compulsory, tax-funded education.

Then, in rapid succession, came *This Independent Republic: Studies in the Nature and Meaning of American History* (1964), essays on the

conservative Christian roots of colonial America, and *The Nature of the American System* (1965), on the Unitarian takeover of the culture in the nineteenth century, culminating with the United Nations. Also in 1965, his remarkable and still little known essay/book appeared, *Freud*, which I contend is the most devastating short piece ever written on that charlatan's system.

He moved to the Los Angeles area in 1965 and founded the Chalcedon Foundation in that year. He began writing the monthly *Chalcedon Report* newsletter in October, 1965, which was mimeographed in the early years. (These newsletters are collected in one large volume, *The Roots of Reconstruction*.) In quick succession came a string of books: *The Mythology of Science* (1967), *Foundations of Social Order: A Study in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (1968), *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (1969), *Myth of Over-Population* (1969), *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (1970), *Thy Kingdom Come: Studies in Daniel and Revelation* (1970), *Law and Liberty* (1971) and *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (1971).

These books were the products of his disciplined reading habits: a book a day—underlined, with a personal index in the back cover—six days a week for 25 years. He then followed suit with another 25 years of the same schedule. It added up. So did the books he wrote. In the December issue of the older *Chalcedon Report*, Rushdoony would publish his reading and speaking totals for the year. The volume of work was beyond most scholars' capacities.

Rushdoony's great gift was his ability to pack many ideas and a mass of footnotes into a short, tightly written essay. He was primarily an essayist. His books were often subtitled, "Studies." They were collections of related essays.

The Institutes of Biblical Law

The seemingly great exception to this related-essays approach was in fact not an exception: *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973). This was his magnum opus, a book of over 800 pages. It was the footnoted version of five years of sermons, 1968-72. This collection of sermons

is like no other in modern publishing history. He will be remembered most of all because of this book. Harold O. J. Brown named it the most important Christian book of 1973 in his 1974 *Christianity Today* column—an opinion that I suspect was not shared by the editors.

The *Institutes* revived a long-dead discipline among Protestants, casuistry: the application of biblical legal principles to real-world situations. The book appeared on the 300th anniversary of the publication of Richard Baxter's even longer book, *A Christian Directory*. Only the late-seventeenth-century Anglican moral philosopher, Jeremy Taylor, produced anything of consequence in the field after Baxter. After 1700, the Protestant tradition of casuistry disappeared, succumbing first to Unitarian social philosophy under the banner of Isaac Newton, and later to social evolutionism after Darwin.

In *The Institutes*—self-consciously named after John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)—Rushdoony took the Ten Commandments as the ordering principle for the whole of Biblical law, Old Testament and New. He analyzed each of the case laws in terms of the Decalogue. He considered which principles carried over into the New Testament era and how they should be applied to modern life. He concluded that civil government must be shrunk drastically to meet Biblical standards, so that the free market and voluntary social action will flourish. He was an Austrian School proponent in most of his economic views, as his footnotes to Mises revealed throughout his career.

The Institutes launched the Christian Reconstruction movement. It represented a major transition in his writing career from detailed negative critical analyses to a detailed positive alternative. It filled a crucial gap in his previous strategy: "You can't beat something with nothing."

Transmission Belts

Lenin believed that revolutionary social transformation comes through disciplined organizational transmission belts of power and

subversion. He thought that permanent social change must be secretly planned at the top and implemented hierarchically by means of a cause-and-effect system of institutional commands and responses. His ideal was a statist command structure with absolute obedience and predictable, measurable results.

This is not the way the world works. The world is far too complex for any mastermind's transmission belt to deliver predictable results on command. The public failure of the Soviet Union in 1991 interred Lenin's theory of social causation in his Red Square casket, although, like Dracula, the monster occasionally climbs out of its casket and wanders through American college campuses, seeking whom it may devour.

Historically, almost every founder of the major religions began to preach his message on the periphery of society. But the best refutation of Lenin's transmission belt theory in modern history is Karl Marx. Marx was an obscure, unemployed, German-speaking academic in exile during his adult lifetime, but his ideas spread quietly through the revolutionary underground. Lenin put flesh on the ideological skeleton and successfully captured the Russian State in an improbable *coup*.

Marxism seemed to be the wave of the future over the next seven decades. Marxism was hot stuff. But then, in 1991 and early 1992, the fat, unreadable tomes on "what Marx really meant" were consigned unceremoniously to the dustbin of history, or its academic equivalent, the "books for a buck" tables in college-town bookstores.

The careers of men who pioneer fringe ideas are testimonies to hope that flies in the face of politically correct reality. Consider Rushdoony, Mises, and Rothbard. In terms of the number of books per title sold, the size of the mailing lists compiled, the votes in Congress recorded, and similar documentable artifacts suitable for inclusion in a Ph.D. dissertation on social history, all three were on the sidelines of history. But, in the long run, when bad ideas are implemented by civil governments in terms of the statist casuistry of the Powers That Be, societies begin to shift off-center in reaction, and move in new directions toward the periphery. Men who spent their

careers marshaling logic and footnotes on the sidelines of respectable culture are seen in retrospect as the pioneers.

We can only guess in advance about who these retroactively successful pioneers will turn out to be, but we do know this: their intellectual opponents are strategically short-sighted in ignoring them during their lifetimes, and their followers are not content to roll over and play dead at the suggestion of a self-tenured establishment. The center does not hold. Those who stake their reputations and their careers on the preservation of the center eventually get left behind.

February 10, 2001

Gary North is the author of an eleven-volume series, *An Economic Commentary on the Bible*. The latest volume is *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*. The series can be downloaded free of charge at www.freebooks.com.

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THE INTER-FAITH CONFERENCE

An Interview with Robert Zins

By Byron Snapp

Q. Rob, you recently attended, as an observer, the Parliament of World Religions that met in South Africa. What was the purpose of that Conference?

A. I will give a couple of introductory remarks. It was not a conference at which Christians from a number of different Protestant denominations came together to stand publicly on the basis of the Christian faith. Secondly, this was not the initial conference of its kind. The first conference of the Parliament of the World's Religions, as it is called, was held in Chicago in 1893. In 1993, a century later, another conference was held. Again in 1999, another meeting occurred, this time in South Africa.

The main purpose was to help bring about a peaceful future for the human race. They want to end war. Thus they wanted to bring

people from all of the world's major religions together on an equal footing to basically come to an agreement that would, in their view, facilitate world peace.

Q. Why should Christians here be aware of this and similar conferences?

A. Conferences like the one I attended should be of concern to Christians because these people have set a noble goal— world peace— but have left out the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. One of their objectives is to write a new global ethic, a set of laws that would be formulated by conference attendees. As Christians we have to remember we already have an ethical system, the Bible. We do not need a new ethical system given to us by a group of PhDs. Christians need to be aware of what is happening because ultimately, I believe, these people will pose a challenge to our faith as Christians.

Q. The very name of the conference, *The Parliament of World Religions*, equates Christianity as being equal with other religions. Do they mean that? If so, how was it evidenced at the Conference?

A. Those who hold to a humanistic worldview view all religions as being an invention by man over the course of world history. Thus, the humanists propose a new religious humanism that elevates human reason above all things. This attitude was evidenced at the Conference.

People from all religions were welcomed just as long as no one would assert that their religion is the true one. They made much use of the word "tradition", such as, "You are from the Christian tradition" or the "Islamic tradition". Everyone came from his or her tradition. This usage put everyone on an equal level.

What would not have been welcomed was someone quoting Jesus Christ's words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by Me." That statement and similar ones would not have been tolerated. The exclusiveness of the Gospel would not have been tolerated.

I also attended one lecture with a mixture of professing Christians and non-Christians. A lecturer boasted that as this movement was striving for unity. The only thing that stood in everyone's way was our "scriptures," the respective scriptures of the various religious groups. As a professing Christian, this man was willing to put aside the Bible in order to have unity. Unity was more important to them than living and walking in the truth. I saw this firsthand at the Parliament.

Q. It would seem that they declared themselves to be god and rejected the fact that the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, took on flesh in order to die for sinners and save His people from their sin.

A. It was very disturbing to see professing Christians walking together with professing non-Christians in a conference in which distinctions were so blurred. Many of the professing Christians did not go to defend the distinctives of the Gospel.

Q. Although the leaders would deny the superiority of the Christian religion, would they also deny the superiority of this intermingling of all the world's religions? How did they handle this superiority by default?

A. You bring up a very good point. One lecturer said that Christians should be ashamed for mission work they carried out in previous centuries. People in Asia and Africa have heard the Gospel and by God's grace have responded joyfully to it. This lecturer said that Christians should feel ashamed of believing so much in the Gospel that they would try to convince others to believe in it also. He said there is a sense of superiority to that. He believed that everyone should hold to a philosophy that claims that all religions are equal. He believed that is the true way. I challenged the man by stating that his view promoted a new type of superiority. I reminded him that Christians went throughout the world and did not proclaim themselves as being great. They proclaimed Christ as Lord.

However, these humanists are saying we should follow human reason. They proclaim themselves as being neutral. In fact, they are

promoting a new religion in which man's reason is supreme to Christ. This is a religious confrontation we are facing as Christians.

Q. Even in their rejection of Christianity they will use words that sound familiar to Christians in order to get Christians involved in their movement. Do you recall particular words that would get the attention of unsuspecting Christians?

A. People who want to perhaps convince Christians to support an unrighteous movement will often use words that have a Biblical meaning. They will re-define those words however.

For example, at the conference the Lordship of Christ was denied. They frequently used such words as "love", "brotherhood", "justice" and "peace". To speak about personal peace without Christ is foolishness. They spoke about "justice". What is justice? Justice is upholding the righteous standard of God's Word. Therein we learn the principles that we may apply for justice. What they really had in mind as justice was the application of some platitudes of human philosophy. They thought more of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" than they did of the Ten Commandments.

Q. Could you further explain the term "global ethic" as it was used at the Conference?

A. The conference organizers stated that in order to have world peace there must be peace among the world's religions. Thus they propose what they call "a universal global ethic". This is a set of rules, a higher law to which everyone should subscribe.

There is a flaw in their reasoning. They want to bring peace but they reject the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. They reject His uniqueness. In the Interfaith circle that was represented at this meeting, the name of Jesus was tossed around. It was not the Jesus of Scripture. It was a watered-down Jesus, not the victorious Lord and Savior set forth in the Bible.

The proposers of the global ethic have suggested that once they release this document they will publish it. They believe that all the

nations of the world will promote it. They also believe that all institutions such as governments, religious organizations, academics, institutions, etc. will also promote it. They want their global ethic to permeate all areas of life.

Some may quickly recognize that this proposal is actually a counterfeit of the Great Commission. Therein Christ told His disciples to go into all the world and teach all nations all that He commanded. This PWR is saying that Christ's command is not good enough. They want to teach us what to teach the nations. As Christians we need to be aware of such goals. We must be careful that we do not get sucked in even through the local church in supporting such an abominable program.

Q. A statement such as Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation would certainly be frowned upon in this ethic wouldn't it?

A. That is correct. At the Parliament they were saying that all roads lead to God. There was an explicit denial of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. I attended one meeting and confronted the lecturer (educated in Chicago, by the way) who was lecturing on "Salvation and Christ". He did so without ever mentioning the cross. I asked him how it was possible that he could talk about salvation without mention of Christ's death on behalf of sinners? I quoted 1 Timothy 2:5 regarding Jesus being our Mediator. The lecturer, who claimed to be a professing Christian, said that he did not believe in the writings of Paul. This is a very subtle attack. Their attack is not overtly against the Gospel. They attack the Apostle Paul. The man told me that he did not believe Paul had a correct interpretation of Scripture. That opens up the door for all sorts of things. I told the man that the Jesus he presented was very appealing to the natural man. Also, if we embrace Paul's perspective we would be prevented from making an idol of ourselves and of our human reason.

Q. Here we have an attack on the sufficiency of Scripture. It is replaced with the false sufficiency of man's word.

A. In the future we might expect to see something from the United Nations being delivered to all UN member countries saying this is the

new global ethic, the set of standards that should be promoted internationally. As Christians we ought to encourage our government to have no part in such a pronouncement.

Q. Already people in churches are being subtly prepared for an openness to the kind of thinking.

A. That is right. When pastors fail to proclaim the whole counsel of God and to instruct their people in Biblical knowledge, then they will not have the discernment to stand up against this type of attack on Christianity. We read in Jude 3 that we are to contend earnestly for the truth of Scripture.

Q. A problem that I find already in existence in the U.S. is a growing Biblical illiteracy. I have counseled a number of unchurched people recently who do not have a copy of the Bible in their homes.

A. Within the church I fear that a number of people cannot name the Ten Commandments. Thus it will become increasingly difficult for these to oppose another ethic. We must be discipling Christians in a Biblical ethic. We must teach them a Biblically based ethic that they can then explain to others.

In order to entice Christians to support this interfaith movement leaders say that the new global ethic is based on four commandments. Do not kill; do not steal; do not commit sexual immorality; and do not lie. Before we get too excited about this and think that it's Biblical, we have to realize that their usage of those words is different than the usage you or I might understand. They are totally devoid of Biblical meaning.

Let me give you an example. At the PWR they said that we are not to kill. However, they had no objection to unborn babies being aborted—being murdered in their mothers' wombs.

They said, "Do not steal," and yet they had no objection if a government would use its power to confiscate the wealth of some people arbitrarily and give it as favors to others.

At the Conference they said, "Do not lie". I must tell you that the truth was not in these people. Among those who attended were some who claimed to be god. They stood up and basically said that man is god. No one objected to that in my particular audience.

Regarding the prohibition to committing sexual immorality, we must ask what is immorality? They do not have anything against homosexuality. You can see that their usage of those commandments was totally devoid of any Biblical meaning.

We do not need to be searching for a new global ethic. We have a universal ethic that is valid for all time, all history. It is in the Bible. It is summarized in the Ten Commandments.

Q. How can people here in the U.S. become subtly prepared to be open to this type of teaching? It would seem that the first attack would have to be made on the Word of God.

A. One of the slogans of the French Revolution was, "Liberty, Fraternity, All Men are Brothers." Is that a true statement? Not from a Biblical perspective. We are all God's creation. A Christian becomes an adopted child of the Lord through faith in Jesus. When Jesus confronted the Pharisees they proudly proclaimed that they were Abraham's children. Jesus rebuked them in John 8. In reality they were seeking to work out their own salvation. Jesus told them that they were like their father, Satan. Thus not all are brothers in a spiritual sense. Those who trust in the Lord are brothers and sisters. Those of the antithesis neither trust in the Lord nor accept the definitions God has put upon life.

Who defines marriage for example? Some churches are scratching their heads wondering whether or not homosexuals should be married. Genesis 2 is clear regarding this. One man was created for one woman. Their union is to be a permanent one. Thus within the church some want to define terms on the basis of human reasoning or human philosophy.

Q. I read somewhere that he who defines wins. There are things within our own culture that cause me real concern. I think about the

word "Christmas" being replaced with "Happy Holidays". Of course, the word holiday does mean holy day, thus those who are determined to use holiday are referring to a holy day. What holy day are we talking about? What we are doing culturally is removing the word "Christ" from the time set aside by man to celebrate Christ's birth.

A. Exactly. One can learn a lot about a country by looking at the holidays they celebrate. I recently saw calendars from Mozambique and from Angola. These are two countries in southern Africa. In the 1970's these countries each experienced a Communist revolution. Dedicated Marxists came to power. They tried to be consistent in their belief and practice. Their current calendars do not reflect holidays for Christmas or Easter. They do have plenty of other holidays such as Worker's Day, Woman's Day, Children's Day and other similar holidays. Likewise our calendar will reflect our faith.

Q. We are seeing a lessening emphasis on keeping the Lord's Day. Too often it is treated as any other day of the week. Some holidays that men have established get far more emphasis.

A. Today people are crying out for their conveniences. We are increasingly seeing malls and businesses open on the Lord's Day. We too often forget that Judah was taken into captivity because they did not honor the Sabbath. I believe that the commandments are applicable worldwide, not just for Christians.

If things continue as they are I believe the day is coming when Christians will be told that if you want to keep your job you will have to work on Sunday. There is a kind of permissive attitude now toward shopping on Sundays. We do not think of the future ramifications of this of employees being told they have to work on Sundays. Such a command would challenge the time God has told us to set aside for corporate worship. This is a consequence of treating the Lord's Day casually now.

Q. I fear we hear too few sermons today on the importance of honoring the Lord's Day, even though the Bible and our Confession of Faith speak clearly to this issue. Another subtle phrase used by many today is "people of faith". In reality everyone is a person of

faith. Everyone believes in some god. By using this terminology, we relegate Christianity to be equivalent to any other faith, rather than Christianity being the true faith.

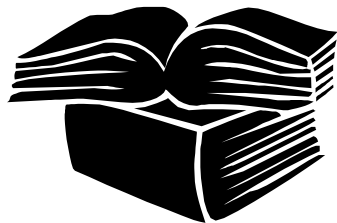
A. Some teach that all sincere people will go to heaven. This is not in accord with the teaching of Scripture. In I John 5:12-13, we read "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the Son of God that you may know you have eternal life." We see the antithesis clearly here. Some may think it too rude or too impolite to say that those who do not believe in the Son of God do not have salvation. Yet that is exactly what the Apostle John states clearly. This should encourage us to share the Gospel with our neighbors.

To just use the phrase "people of faith" is too generic. When one stands before God's throne of judgment, he cannot say, "I am a person of faith." That is not a valid answer for what is needed for admittance into heaven. One's faith is defined by the object of that faith. Our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ who died on our behalf. We must trust in Him and His work alone for our salvation.

I am reminded of our work in Sudan. The Muslims told their soldiers that they had a key around their work. That was their key to heaven. Yet their trust in that key will not get them anywhere.

Q. Thank you very much for this interview.

BOOK REVIEWS



Knots Untied: Being Plain Statements on Disputed Points in Religion from the Standpoint of an Evangelical Church by J. C. Ryle. Charles Nolan Publishers, Moscow, ID; 41pgs; hbk; © 2000; \$29.99. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

The writings of the renowned Ryle are worthwhile reading. *Knots Untied* is no exception. The author penned this volume out of courageous concern for evangelical truth in his day. A study of history reveals that attacks on Biblical truth too often come from within the organized church. Ryle seeks to maintain sound doctrine in the midst of the inroads of unbiblical teaching.

The reprinting of this volume is of greater importance than historical interest in religious battles of Ryle's day. A perusal of the chapter headings reveals the relevance of the book for our day. Ryle rightly begins with a defining of evangelical religion that is uncompromising in its stand on the Bible's sufficiency as a gauge for the doctrinal truth.

In the subsequent eighteen chapters he covers such topics as Christ being the only way of salvation, the Lord's Day, the worship of God, regeneration and ministerial fallibility.

Ryle's writings give sure evidence that he has drunk long and deep at the well of Puritan writings. Thus his prose shows a commitment to and a love for Biblical truth and a desire to communicate that truth simply and compassionately, yet without compromise.

Contemporary readers can profit greatly from this volume. First, we are reminded that we are neither the first nor the only Christians to fight current attacks on Christianity—even attacks that come from

within churches. Secondly, we are reminded to stand for Scriptural truth even though individuals on either side of an issue can find historical writings to provide ammunition for their position. Ryle relies on the sword of God's Word. We need this reminder today. I will also add here, and I am sure the author would agree with me, that the reader must measure Ryle's words by the yardstick of Scripture. Ryle writes from the presupposition of Anglican ecclesiology. No reader should allow this to hinder his reading of this or any of Ryle's works.

Thirdly, Ryle's stance for truth teaches us to stand no matter what our calling in life. He was a bishop in the Anglican Church. It was not easy to stand against popular opinions of the day. Equally important, he reminds us not to be so narrow minded that we pride ourselves in the fallacy that our denomination is the only Christian denomination.

Finally, I am reminded that I, too, not just others, can be caught up in false teaching. I must make sure that what I believe is what the Bible teaches.

Take time to read this volume. In our age of tempting compromise and the tragic consequences thereof, this volume is timely. It can be read by officers and laymen for edification and easily recommended to others.

Muslims and Christians at the Table by Bruce A. McDowell and Anees Zaka. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, New Jersey; © 1999; 326 pp; pbk.. Reviewed by Tracy Davis.

This year is the thirty-sixth anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X. Between 1989 and 1998 the Islamic population in Europe grew by over 100 percent, to 14 million. During the same period, the Muslim population in the United States grew by 25 percent. Islam is the second-largest religious group in the world, with more than a billion members world-wide. An estimated four to six million Muslims live in the U.S. today, and that number is growing. Islam could be the second-largest religion in America by 2015, surpassing Judaism, according to some estimates. By other

estimates, Islam has achieved that rank already. The timely publication of *Muslims and Christians at the Table* is a valuable resource that needs to be in the library of every pastor and church in the United States. The scope of the book is limited specifically to ministry to Muslims in North America.

One cannot overlook the rise of Islam in America, especially among the African-American community. The authors list several reasons for this trend, but two are particularly noteworthy. The first reason for this great appeal is the militantism espoused by leaders of the Nation of Islam. There is a bitter resentment toward whites as a result of centuries of oppression, which is still felt today. Christianity, by some, has been defined as “the white man’s religion.” God has been identified as “black.” Elijah Muhammad (the second leader of the Nation of Islam) taught that Fard Muhammad (the founder), as god, “came to destroy the white race and restore the black race to its superior place in the world” (p. 9). In light of this type of rhetoric is there any reason why Islam should not have tremendous growth among the African-American community?

Another reason for the tremendous growth is due to the focus of the evangelical church on individualistic, internal spirituality, rather than a complete Biblical worldview which understands the gospel as not only transforming the individual but society as well. The church has moved to the suburbs, built immaculate structures, and developed evangelistic strategies which target certain demographics (namely white middle class) and thereby leaving the inner-city in the hands of Islam which offers a high sense of community and brotherhood.

Christians and Muslims offers a good introduction for the church to begin to address these issues. The authors do a good job in reviewing succinctly the history and foundations of Islam. They then move on to the bulk of their book, theological understanding. They do a rather good job summarizing the major tenants of Islam and responding to them. However, there is at one point where, in my estimation, they could have developed their thought.

Muslims assert that there is only one God. About three centuries

after Muhammad’s death Muslim theologians asserted that the Qur’an was “uncreated and coeternal with Allah. Essentially, one could say that the Qur’an means to the Muslims what Jesus means to Christians” (p. 74). The authors simply make this statement and move on, never commenting on it. They do not show that “uncreated and coeternal” are by definition what it means to be God and therefore, if the Qur’an is uncreated and coeternal then the Qur’an is God. So Muslims are faced with an internal inconsistency.

In the final section of the book, the authors give several (in fact, in one chapter 21) ways to reach Muslims. These are helpful but only as springboards with very little “how-to.” They do, however, supply an exhaustive resource list in the back of the book.

This book awakens the church to the tremendous grace God has given the Church in America. At all major universities there are Islamic student groups and in most major metropolitan centers there are mosques. Students from Islamic nations flock to America because of its educational opportunities and then return to their home countries to be leaders in society. God has brought them to us for the sake of the gospel. There are many opportunities and this book will awaken us to them and give us a firm enough understanding to overcome any fear which we may have.

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. Barnes & Noble, Inc., New York, 1996. Reviewed by Toby Comeaux.

In his book, *Robinson Crusoe* (based on a true life incident), Daniel Defoe writes the story of a man who spent his life seeking one adventure after another. The story is told in the first person, as if one were reading a diary.

Crusoe, as a young man, defies his father’s wishes and wisdom and sets out to sea for adventure. His dreams quickly give way to reality as he meets with one misfortune after another. He begins to regret dismissing his father’s admonitions, even realizing that perhaps God is punishing him for his foolishness. Yet he stops short of true repentance. However, when he is marooned, he eventually comes to God. But this part of the story is just a small part of the many

adventures he embarks upon, after being rescued. He marries and has children, his wife dies, and he leaves his children with a caretaker to act upon his desire to roam.

The rest of the book chronicles his travels, which took him around the entire known world. From the islands of the West Indies, to Southeast Asia, China, overland to Russia and back to England. The book is full of hair-raising adventures ranging from perils at sea to pitched battles with heathen hoards.

Throughout the book, the reader is invited into the innermost thoughts of a man who struggles with sin, and the world around him. Being a Christian, he at many times is at odds with what he witnesses in his journeys.

His coming to God on the island is the most profound part of the book. He details the struggles of his heart and mind as God forces him to call upon His name. He is Reformed in his theology, stressing God's sovereignty.

This is no quick read. Crusoe goes into minute details about his survival on the island, all the work he had to do, and all the things he made, farmed, raised, and harvested. This attention to detail is applied to all he does throughout the story.

Robinson Crusoe is a man with whom Christians can identify. This is a book which stresses man's sinfulness and God's holiness. The weak-kneed, touchy-feely "Christian novels" written today cannot compare.

It is interesting to note that Daniel Defoe, like his father, was a dissenter from the Church of England. His Christianity is apparent in this novel. He most likely was a recipient of the blessings of the Reformation.

A Place for Truth by David B. Calhoun. Reformed Academic

Press, P.O. Box 8796 Greenville S.C. 29604; 75 pp with index; \$9.95. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

This volume comprises the 1995 Bicentennial James Henley Thornwell Lectures by the author. Herein he covers, in an overview, the early history of Columbia Theological Seminary during its tenure in Columbia, South Carolina, the thirty-eight year history of the Southern Presbyterian Review and the first one hundred years of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia. He sees each as a place for truth in a number of early professors who had impact on the formative years of the Seminary and, along with the pastors, whose articles appeared in the Southern Presbyterian Review. Interestingly, the major doctrinal conflict within the Seminary was over theistic evolution, costing the Seminary financial support and students.

This well-written booklet is informative and interesting. One is reminded that locales of truth are raised up by God's grace but cannot be taken for granted. Faithful doctrine will be attacked. To treat false doctrine or its attacks lightly can well lead to a place for truth becoming a habitat for error. Such acceptance can lead not only to the diminishing of truth within but the demise of the institution itself.

This small volume gives the reader of our day much upon which to reflect.

Daring Suffering: A History of the Andrews Railroad Raid by William Pittenger. Cumberland House Publishing, Inc. 4331 Harding Industrial Drive, Nashville, TN 37211; 416 pp. plus supplement; pbk; \$18.95. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

This reprint of the 1887 edition is a first person account of the famous Andrews Railroad Raid by one of its participants. In February 1862, a Union spy, James J. Andrews, approached the Union brigadier general, Buell, with a plan of secretly entering Confederate territory, stealing a train, proceeding to Chattanooga, and burning bridges behind them. Had this plan succeeded, a major supply line from Atlanta to the northern part of the Confederacy would have been cut off until bridges were rebuilt. This would have been devastating to the Confederacy's western territory. The plan

was approved. Andrews and twenty Union soldiers set off on their mission.

In time they arrived in Marietta, GA, boarded a train headed north, pulled by an engine known as “The General”. Their planned theft worked well initially until their northern journey was slowed by long waits on side tracks while southern bound trains arrived and proceeded toward Atlanta. Seeing their train stolen during a brief stop for breakfast, the quick-thinking engineer and the conductor headed up the tracks first on foot, then by a handcar. Finally they found an engine facing south that they put in reverse and ably continued their chase.

Recent rains prevented the bridges being burned and no hindrances were able to stop the persevering southerners from continuing the chase. Finally the thieves realized their mission was a failure. They abandoned the locomotive and sought to evade capture. All were captured relatively soon.

The remaining chapters of the book give the reader a very interesting account of their treatment and experiences as prisoners in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Atlanta and Richmond prior to their release in a prisoner exchange in March, 1863. During this time eight, including Andrews, were hung. Eight managed to escape. Their tortuous, but successful, journey to the safety of Union lines is told in their own words.

One of the most interesting parts of this book is the great interest the prisoners took in Christianity. For the last several months of their captivity, they spent time as a group, almost daily, in reading the Bible and in prayer. The author became a minister after the War.

There is much in this volume to hold the reader’s interest. Clearly men on both sides of the conflict were devoted to their respective nations. An eyewitness account of incidents, people, and places, provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the era and its events.

The supplement includes information on what happened to members

of the group after the War. The author also includes an account of his return to the South after the War. A number of illustrations, including drawings of the conspirators, are throughout the book. This adds to a volume that already has much to attract readers with an interest in history and/or the people who participate in dangerous endeavors.

Where Love Is, There God Is Also by Leo Tolstoy. Compiled by Lawrence Jordan; published by Fleming H. Revell, a division of Baker Book House Company, P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287; © 2001; 93 pp.; hbk. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

When one thinks of Tolstoy one most often thinks of his classic works such as “War And Peace” and “Anna Karenina”. Tolstoy was also a prolific short story writer. This volume brings three of these stories together. The English translation reads well and flows smoothly.

The stories manifest some of Tolstoy’s theology as he seeks to show the importance of the love of God and love for God in daily life. He does not focus on God’s love for sinners, as set forth in Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross for His people. Instead, the author centers on love being manifested in daily life.

In the first selection, “Where Love Is, There God Is Also”, a cobbler anxiously awaits a visit from Christ. While waiting for Him he ministers to the needy and learns an important lesson. “The Three Hermits” teach the importance of holiness in comparison to just words. The final selection “What Men Live By” tells of an angel who learns three basic things during his sojourn on earth.

Readers most likely will disagree with some of Tolstoy’s theology. However, they can learn of his theology and also much about Russian life in his day by reading these stories. These are memorable stories because of the spiritual instruction Tolstoy seeks to teach in each one.

The stories can be read by individuals or read by family members and then discussed by the family as a whole.

History of the Protestant Church in Hungary translated by J. Craig, with an introduction by J. H. Merle D' Aubigne. Jointly published by MO Press, P.O. Box 422, Mt. Olive, MS 30110 and Sprinkle Publications, P.O. Box 1094 Harrisonburg, VA 22803; © 2001; 560 pp.; hbk.; \$36.00. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

I knew little of God's work among the people of Hungary until I read this excellent work. The volume, first published in 1854, traces the rise and progress of Christianity in Hungary to 1850. It is full of triumph and setbacks, of covenantal thinking and attacks on such thinking and of the people and places that were closely involved in these long forgotten events.

A major inroad for the Gospel's entrance into the land occurred when the Magyars in the tenth century captured priests and brought these captives into Hungary. These captives brought with them the Word of God, which cannot be bound.

God's unleashing of the Gospel was not appreciated by those whose hearts and minds remained darkened by sin and self-love. In the midst of a variety of measures and attacks that put stress on family life, and relationships, the Christian faith was increasingly solidified in the hearts of believers. It was shown to be worth living and dying for.

This reprint is important for a number of reasons. It is important that Christians know something of what some of their spiritual ancestors, brothers and sisters in the Lord, encountered and endured on behalf of the Lord Jesus. The reader will also see the importance to Protestants and Catholics of educating the next generation in terms of the faith of the group that controlled the town or city at any given time. Perhaps in our day we will take Christianity less for granted. Christians should have a greater appreciation for the location of Hungary and the battleground it became for Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants. Also, God is clearly seen as the One building His Church in the midst of tremendous opposition.

The publishers have printed a very attractive edition that deserves a wide reading.

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JOHN HODGES is a professor and the Director of the Institute for the Arts & Cultural Apologetics at Crichton College in Memphis, Tennessee. He conducts the ARS NOVA Chamber Orchestra and has conducted the Kharkov Philharmonic in the Ukraine. He has been a regular lecturer at L'Abri conferences since 1994. He will be speaking on a Christian worldview of music.

PETER LEITHART teaches at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho. He is the author of numerous books including *Wise Words*, *Brightest Heaven of Invention: A Christian Guide to Six Shakespeare Plays* and *Heroes of the City of Man: A Christian Guide to Select Ancient Literature*. He will be speaking on reading literature from a Christian perspective, focusing on Greek classics, Shakespeare and Jane Austen.

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