
ASA member David F. Siemens wrote a letter (PSCF 49, no. 1 [1997]: 70) in which he notes the views of authors, such as Peacocke and Polkinghorne, who reject the ideas of divine omniscience and eternity. He quite interestingly qualifies their unorthodox attitude as making a god in their own image. This book is a refutation of these modern views, and its title reflects Siemens' thought of these unorthodox thinkers.

Geisler, an ASA member, is a philosopher who has written about fifty books, many of them on apologetics. He is currently dean of Southern Evangelical Seminary at Charlotte, NC. Geisler has previously written on the subject of worldviews in his Worlds Apart (Baker, 1989) and especially in his Christian Apologetics (Baker, 1976), where he unfolds his famous tests of unaffirmability and undeniability which are beyond the reach of postmodern criticisms.

In this book, Geisler exposes and refutes neotheism, the new, open view of God, which pictures a god with human limitations. This new view is a mixture of theism and panentheism (process theology). Its major proponents are Clark Pinnock, William Hasker, David Basinger, and Randall Basinger. Many evangelical thinkers and scientists have expressed sympathy for it, or endorsed different theist ideas. Neotheist ideas are also spread by some popular Christian best sellers, such as Gregory Boyd's Letters From a Skeptic (Victor, 1994).

Geisler briefly describes major worldviews. He then presents the distinctive and foundations of classical theism. The chapter on theism deals with abstract notions, but it clearly exposes the nature of God: his unchangeable knowledge, his will, and his relationship with the world. After this, Geisler contrasts theism with panentheism, describing and refuting the latter view. He then exposes neotheism, a fresh mixture of theism and panentheism. Geisler refutes the biblical arguments offered by neotheists. He shows how neotheism is incoherent, and how its theistic elements logically reduce to theism, and vice-versa with its panentheistic elements.

Geisler ends the book with the practical consequences of neotheism: the fallibility of prophecy and the Bible, and rejection of the biblical doctrines such as salvation, evil, and prayer. He points out that many prophecies contained in the Old Testament have been fulfilled and therefore falsify neotheism, which holds that God is eternal and cannot know the future.

Creating God in the Image of Man? is concise and contains several bibliographies. I think Geisler successfully refutes neotheism with clarity and logic. But will this book succeed in halting the growth of neotheism? I think it might have had more impact if it had been published by a university press instead of an evangelical one. Although it is beyond the scope of the book, I would have been interested in a comparison between neotheism and ancient heresies. I find it noteworthy that there are some common features between the neotheist God and the two gods of Marcionism.

This book clarified my ideas about the nature, knowledge, and will of God, as well as his relationship with me. It removed some doubts, increased my awareness of his majesty, and deepened my worship. I think that it may be quite profitable reading for Christians who love God with their minds, and a valuable acquisition for those who are interested in orthodox Christianity.


Polkinghorne, former president of Queens' College, Cambridge University, England, is a Fellow of the Royal Society. Fifteen years ago, he resigned from his chair in Mathematical Physics at Cambridge to study for the Anglican priesthood. Since then, he has published many books relating science to religion, beginning with The Way the World Is.

This Lenten book consists of 47 short articles to meditate upon from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Beginning with an article on sin, the central problem of humanity, Polkinghorne explains that the root of sin is alienation from God. The author believes that the best way to begin Lent is to acknowledge our need of God.

For the second week, Polkinghorne writes on creation. He believes in the Big Bang theory, but he also believes that God created the universe and is continuing his creation process today. He thinks the evolutionary process was programmed by God for the development of the world, but he also believes that the human race is special. Polkinghorne thinks that the world is mathematically beautiful because it is created by a rational God. This thought should enlarge our vision of God's majesty and power to include the understanding of chance operating in the universe.

The theme for the third week is reality. Polkinghorne understands that the layers of reality consist of truth, goodness, and beauty. To Polkinghorne, theism makes more sense than atheism. However, theism must not be based on sterile natural theology, but on a personal encounter with God.

In week four, the meditation is on searching. The search to understand reality should not be limited to science alone. The ultimate question is: What is God like? He has made himself known through Jesus Christ. We encounter Christ through the church, the sacrament of the Eucharist, and through the poor and needy who daily
cross our paths. Most importantly we meet the Lord in Scripture. Biblical writers and scientists share a common pursuit: seeking to give an honest account of what happened through the narrative conventions of their time.

Next is a meditation on prayer followed by one on suffering. The meditation for the final week is related to Jesus’ passion. The moment of darkness on the cross when God provided for salvation was followed by the triumphant resurrection of Jesus.

Overall this small book seeks to relate science and religion in a devotional way. Polkinghorne provides a summary of his writings in the form of daily meditations. This Lenten book can provide refreshing insights for both scientists and nonscientists alike. It is indeed a writing from a wise priest and gifted scientist.

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How should an archaeologist decide whether hominin remains are human remains? In the debate between those who hold that the human race is no older than 40,000 years or so and those who attribute earlier origins to humans, the question of how you identify humans is crucial. In this book, Morton argues that, to identify humanness, one should look for evidence of activities typically associated with humans, including speech, religion, art, burial, decoration, toolmaking, planning, and care of the injured.

This book reports data from published literature showing that ancient hominids did many of the things we associate with humanity as long as 1.8 million years ago. Biblically, man is the image-bearer of God. The image of God does not fossilize, but fossil evidence that ancient hominids did things we consider uniquely human would suggest strongly that those individuals were human.

Speech, associated with brain regions called Broca’s and Wernicke’s areas, is a uniquely human activity. Animals such as monkeys have Broca’s and Wernicke’s areas, but do not use them for speech. A human’s very large Broca’s area makes a recognizable impression in the skull. This feature in a fossil skull indicates an individual with speech capability. Morton cites literature showing the presence of Broca’s area in two-million-year-old Homo habilis skulls, as well as later H. erectus and Neanderthal skulls.

Ancient hominid technology provides further evidence of their humanity. For example, humans utilize space differently from animals, dividing living spaces into areas for functions, such as sleeping and food preparation. Neanderthals and other ancient hominids organized their living spaces as humans do, rather than the undifferentiated dens of animals. While no ancient hominid clothing has survived, plenty of indirect evidence exists, such as sewing needles and scrapers for cleaning hides. These evidence go back 26,000 years. Furthermore, there is evidence that H. erectus lived in Siberia and Germany 300,000–400,000 years ago and in Georgia 1.6 million years ago, and these locations require winter clothing.

While it might seem difficult to find evidence of a human’s soul in the fossil record, some evidence is available if “soul” is defined as self-awareness. Morton studies evidence of planning depth and compassion for the injured by ancient hominids. Neanderthals’ planning depth—the ability to plan ahead—extended to days or months, as evidenced by the distance they transported tools and weapon raw materials. Chimpanzees’ planning depth runs, at most, to minutes. There is evidence Neanderthal and H. erectus treated their incapacitated with compassion more than 40,000 years ago and 1.7 million years ago respectively. Morton cites the treatment of KNM-ER 1808, a dying H. erectus woman whose remains were discovered in 1973. KNM-ER 1808 was cared for and protected by companions during her last days, approximately 1.7 million years ago in Kenya. The woman’s remains were found with evidence of bone growth caused by hypervitaminosis A. This growth would have taken many days to form, during much of which she would have been incapacitated. Someone brought her food and water and protected her from predators. Morton notes that Jane Goodall’s studies of chimpanzees’ treatment of an injured tribe member show that such compassionate treatment is not common among apes.

When new evidence contradicts our understanding of Scripture, we can: (1) reject the evidence; (2) reject Scripture; (3) reinterpret Scripture to fit the evidence; or (4) search for an interpretation that honors both. Morton presents a strong argument for the fourth alternative, and a warning to evangelicals to avoid the damage to Christian credibility that results from the first. The careful logic and extensive references provide an excellent starting point for anyone wanting to investigate the humanity of fossil hominids.

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Are you interested in formulating a satisfying philosophical solution to the perennial problem of the relationship between science and theology? If so, you will enjoy this volume of collected papers from a three-day symposium at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (1988). A distinguished group of scientists, theologians, and philosophers met with Wolfhart Pannenberg and examined his effort to “lay theological claim to scientific understandings.” Some papers were extensively revised before publication, one was written during the dialogue, and one was written after subsequent reflection.

The two essays by Pannenberg will prove especially constructive. His argument is that an idea such as God must be “superimposed” on the world before the world can be logically analyzed. Consequently, He is the “foundational principle” of the universe. The theological and scientific-philosophical arguments for this foundational principle are well thought out.

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