as well as weak accountability and support. In summary, "Deep down, both church leaders and faculty members no longer believed the Christian faith to be comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central."

Turning to examples of institutions that have maintained their "soul," Benne begins with a typology that identifies four variations: Orthodox, Critical-Mass, Intentionally Pluralist, and Accidentally Pluralist. These are differentiated according to the following aspects: major divide; public relevance of Christian vision; public rhetoric; membership requirements; religion/theology department; religion/theology required courses; chapel; ethos; support by church; and governance. The six examples chosen are: a Reformed college (Calvin), an evangelical college (Wheaton), two Lutheran schools (St. Olaf and Valparaiso), a Catholic university (Notre Dame), and a Baptist university (Baylor). The detailed examination of these examples leads to the conclusion stated at the beginning of the book—and of this review—that the essence of commitment derives from vision, ethos, and the embodiment of these in persons, especially leaders and faculty members.

This book is easy to read and compelling. It is well researched and documented. All those interested in the development of academic traditions will find it of value.

Reviewed by David T. Barnard, University of Regina, Regina, SK, S4S 3X4 Canada.


Terkel is a Pulitzer Prize winner (for The Good War) who has recorded the thoughts and lives of ordinary people on a variety of topics. Perhaps his most impressive research is contained in his book, Working. In this volume, Terkel turns his attention to a topic relevant to everyone: death. Terkel has received wide notice for this book with reviews and interviews, including one on 60 Minutes.

This book is divided into four parts (I am not sure why) and contains over fifty interviews. In these interviews, people comment on their lives and perceptions of death. Included among them are people from a variety of backgrounds: police officers, firefighters, health professionals, an AIDS worker, a Hiroshima survivor, a death-row paralee, a folk singer, an architect, and a retired teacher.

A church worker relates that she has read obituaries since she was nine years old and still does. A graduate student tells what she thinks of organized religion: "I dislike it immensely. I think it's done more harm than good." A civil rights worker observes: "I think one reason people are so desperate about dying is that they haven't lived yet. ... I think life is miserable for most people." But there are people who give affirmations of faith including a Dutch Reform pastor who says when death comes, "Jesus Christ is going to be with me, He's going to hold my hand, and he's going to walk with me through the valley of the shadow of death."

This is not a book to give to someone who is depressed or is seeking dogmatic answers to the big questions of life. The ruminations by people with religious backgrounds, as well as by religiously indifferent folk who seek meaning in life, offer no definitive answers. However, this book illustrates above all else that most people give considerable thought to the biblical truth that "it is appointed unto man once to die."

Terkel wrote this book after his wife died. They had been married sixty years. Sickly and asthmatic as a child, Terkel has survived a quintuple bypass, and at 89 years of age, indicates he might write another book. High praise for this book from the likes of John Kenneth Galbraith and Oliver Sacks might encourage him to do so.

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


Sampson, who holds a doctorate in social sciences from the University of Southampton in England, co-edited Faith and Modernity in 1994. Six Modern Myths discusses topics that modern critics claim are problems for Christianity. Sampson points out that these supposed problems are built on myths. He intends to defuse them by demythologizing them.

The first myth is about the Galileo event. It was claimed that Galileo, using the telescope and reason to defend the truth, was persecuted by the church which insisted that the earth was at the center of the universe. However, Aristotle and Ptolemy, not Christianity, were the originators of the earth-centered theory. At Galileo's time, the observational data did not tip the balance toward the heliocentric theory. Regarding the world view implication, the earth-centered theory did not elevate humanity's status as critics implied. Aristotle emphasized the corruption of the earth under the pristine heaven. The Copernican heliocentric system rejected the idea that earth was a cosmic sink; thus it actually elevated humanity.

The second myth concerns Darwin's evolution theory. The myth was that heliocentric theory put humanity in its place in the cosmos, and Darwin's theory put humanity in its place on earth. Again, the fact of evolution can be interpreted that humanity evolved to be the very peak of nature. Darwin claimed that evolution enables humanity to progress toward perfection. Regarding the scientific evidence, the theory of evolution as proposed by Darwin did not have sufficient data to convince most eminent scientists during his lifetime. The mixed reception in the religious circle was similar to that of the scientific community. It took about seventy-five years before the evolution theory was accepted by the scientific world.

The third myth is about the Christian exploitation of nature. This myth blames the ecological crisis on the Christian teaching of humans' mastery over nature and on the subsequent emergence of exploitative technologies in the Western countries. However, the concept of using
nature for the benefit of humanity was originated by Aristotle. The anthropocentric idea of domination was common in ancient Greek and Roman philosophies. The exploitation of the environment is not only a modern phenomenon and not a feature unique to Western culture.

The fourth myth concerns the stories of oppression of other races and their cultures by missionaries. The error of this myth came from the identification of Western civilization with Christianity. Missionaries accepted the idea of a common humanity and treated the native people with more dignity than their own national governments did. Many missionaries preached against the exploitation of natives by the colonial governments and the slave trade. Regarding the change of cultures, the naive and romantic idea of innocent native cultures was unsubstantiated, and the process was caused more by Enlightenment and evolutionary ideologies.

The fifth myth is about the suppression of the human body. It was claimed that Christianity considered the body as evil, so many natural desires were suppressed through church teaching. However, the idea of sinful flesh came from the Greek philosopher Plato. He also proposed that man is the “superior sex.” The alliance between Greek thought and Christian understanding existed throughout the Medieval period and was corrected by Protestant Reformers. The real effect of Christianity included the equality of genders and the stability of families.

The sixth myth concerns the persecution of witches. The myth claimed that religious superstition and intolerance caused the persecution of these women. However, the number of witchcraft prosecutions was exaggerated, and the church was not the prime mover in the persecution of witches. Instead, both Catholic and Protestant churches were found to have a modifying effect on these prosecutions. The incidents at Salem, MA, during the Puritan period was not typical.

This book provides much information to counter the six modern myths which accuse the Christian faith of many wrongs. The research and documentation are excellent. It may deflate the accusation of the sin of commission, but it may not extricate the church from the sins of omission. Since Western civilization was intertwined with Christian faith, the church could have and should have exerted more moral influence.

Reviewed by T. Timothy Chen, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX 76122.


Davydov completed his Ph.D. in 1967 at the Moscow Institute of Energy. In 1977 he graduated from the University of Marxism-Leninism in “scientific” atheism. In 1990, Davydov emigrated to the United States where he is now a Christian, a full member of the New York Academy of Sciences, and President of the International Science Center in Brooklyn.

The book under review has two parts: “God and the World” and “Six Biblical Days.” Part I discusses the relationship between a transcendental God and the physical world while Part II is a scientific interpretation of the six days of Genesis.

The book is fascinating to read because of the author’s knowledge of the communist atheist propaganda concerning science and religion. The communists were irrevocably opposed to the Big Bang as the origin of the universe since it contradicted their materialistic beliefs. However, in 1977, the communists capitulated (twelve years after the acceptance of the Big Bang in the West with the discovery of the cosmic background radiation in 1965). It is no accident that Davydov graduated in “scientific” atheism in 1977 when the communists were preparing their scientists to acknowledge the Big Bang.

Davydov’s emphasis in Part I of the book is that God is outside the materialistic universe. We all recall the impression the first cosmonaut Gagarin made when he announced he could find no God during his trip into space. This was the kind of evidence the Soviet Union was using to prove that there is no God. Davydov thus uses scientific arguments to demonstrate that God must be outside the physical universe so that he would not be discovered by cosmonauts.

However, the science Davydov uses is not easily translated into Western science. For example, on pages 92 and 94, Davydov refers to a “fundamental law of nature” which states that relative matter cannot exist in space and time without its absolute opposite, which exists outside of any space or any time. This must be a law of Communist science; it is not a recognizable law of Western science. It must be said here, however, that the leading Soviet scientists use Western science and, indeed, were pioneers in the understanding of the Big Bang in spite of communist orthodoxy.

“The fundamental law of nature” is not an isolated instance of the strangeness of Davydov’s science. On page 97, Davydov refers to “the three scientific laws of nature.” The first scientific law is that no material system can exist eternally. But this law of nature did not prevent the proposal of the Steady State Universe by Bondi, Gold and Hoyle, three highly respected physicists. Eventually, the Steady State Universe was abandoned because of experimental evidence. It was not abandoned because it violated the first of the three scientific laws of nature.

Davydov gives the second scientific law of nature as the cause of the formation or birth of a given material system always lies outside the system. This law is not like Newton’s law of gravity or Maxwell’s laws of electromagnetism where values for masses or charges are inserted and forces or fields are calculated. The law is more similar to the Second Law of Thermodynamics which states that certain things are impossible. But, in none of these physical laws, is “cause” considered. Davydov’s second scientific law appears to be more a philosophical principle than a scientific law based on experimental evidence.

Davydov’s third scientific law is that matter in the universe develops in a highly purposeful way. This law is not generally accepted, particularly by evolutionists. Until recently, the National Association of Biology Teachers has defined evolution as being a “purposeless” process. While this claim has been withdrawn, it was not withdrawn