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Review: Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith

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Aside from the obvious departures from orthodox theology, there are many issues that Fox raises which are worthy of consideration and interaction by the evangelical community, such as revitalizing worn out modes of worship, responding to societal needs and environmental issues, cultivating the arts, recapturing a youthful joy of the Christian experience, and making Christianity relevant. His concerns in these areas are commendable, yet the need to undergo a radical paradigm shift to meet these needs is highly questionable. This is an important book that could very well mark the direction of liberal theology in the twenty-first century.

RICHARD A. YOUNG
CHATTANOOGA, TN

Worlds Apart; A Handbook on World Views, second edition, by Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. Pp. 307. \$14.95. Paper.

The authors present seven world views from the religious perspective of how they deal with their God concept. Theism, atheism, pantheism, panentheism, deism, finite godism, and polytheism constitute the seven world views presented and critiqued. Representatives are chosen for each world view and then their views are presented by explicating their conception of God, the world, miracles, man, evil, ethics, and history with its telos. Each section ends with a summary of its tenets and a positive statement of its contributions as well as a negative statement of its criticisms.

The world view presentations are preceded by an introduction that defines a world view as a "way of viewing or interpreting all of reality." Each reader is viewed as a shopper in a world view catalog. The catch phrase of the introduction is "world views do make a world of difference," and thus buying one warrants careful shopping. The conclusion of the book provides the shopper with criteria to evaluate each world view presented in the catalog. Consistency, comprehensiveness, livability, and affirmability comprise the criteria to evaluate the world views on the market. The shopper is left to apply these without aid from the authors with the obvious implication that any rational person will purchase theism.

Many perplexing questions arise while reading the book. Why does the title promise a categorization of world views and then deliver a catalog of God views? In presenting Christian theism how is it possible to neglect the reformers in favor of C. S. Lewis? In fact the value set that stands behind who is included and who is excluded as representatives of the world view is never obvious to the reader. Perhaps the single most disturbing flaw in presentation is the homogeneous structure forced on each position. There is no obvious attempt to present the view with a literary hermeneutic internal to the view and its ethos. It all seems so cut and dry, even superficial.

It does not appear that the book makes any significant advance over James Sire's updated and expanded edition of *The Universe Next Door*. It is difficult to envision the book being used as a textbook and thus it seems most

sued as a tool for evangelism from an evidential foundation. The problem with using the book for evangelism is that there is no gospel in the book.

JAMES M. GRIER
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith, by Ronald H. Nash. Zondervan, 1988. Pp. 294. \$17.95. Cloth.

This new work by Dr. Ronald H. Nash (professor of philosophy and religion at Western Kentucky University) setting forth critical issues, questions and analyses of the Christian faith in the face of modern opposition is more than excellent. This text may be classified both as philosophy and religion (because of some of the issues addressed) and apologetics, and therefore can accomplish purposes that many previous works could not. In the process of endeavoring to help the thinking Christian think through and answer antagonistic views of our time, Nash is also able to aid in clarifying what is and is not truly of the faith. He sets a perspectival context in which the Christian can understand and live the faith. His interaction with recent thought produces fresh and sometimes surprising outcomes.

The whole of the study is explicitly set within the Christian world-view. The nature and role of competing world views and their interaction is made clear as foundational at the outset. The question and nature of our rationality, how we know we know (epistemology), is another worthy inclusion. Upon this effectively presented infrastructure Nash cogently and quite completely sets forth (reckoning the limitation to his space) the arguments for God's existence (including the often overlooked argument from religious experience), the problem of evil, the question and possibility of miracles (including an effective critique of Hume), with a very helpful concluding section ("Unfinished Business").

Among many strong points and features that I found in this book I will describe but a few. The first two sections (*cf.* above) on "world-view" and "epistemology" are not only crucial but they bind the entire work together into a cohesive whole. Nash's discussion of the arguments brings to bear the recent work of renowned (?) Reformed philosophers such as Plantinga, Mavrodes, Wolterstorff and Alston, as well as English philosopher Richard Swinburne, in forming much more effective, non-fallacious argumentation while seeing the limits (and person relativity) of each. In parallel (and up-to-date) fashion, Nash establishes the rationality of Christian theism from the presence and extent of evil and the Naturistic world-view (*cf.* miracles) which Nash shows to be clearly self-defeating. Another plus of the book is Nash's effective review questions at the end of each chapter. These, when utilized, solidify the thought of the chapter in the reader's mind.

I found, actually, nothing negative in this book. Only one point caused some initial concern—the chapter on "Gratuitous Evil" which sets forth the case for the reality (or at least the possibility) of purposeless evil in the world. This apparent affirmation of gratuitous evil sounded too close to a process

theodicy (*cf.* Griffin, et al.), but upon closer examination this concern provides to be a misunderstanding within the wider context of Nash's argumentation. His response and analysis here are penetrating and very useful.

This text is highly recommended for both college and seminary apologetics courses or even philosophy of religion. However, the book is well written and not at all beyond the grasp of any educated Christian (which is also Nash's hope for the book).

JOHN D. MORRISON
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

The World that Perished, by John C. Whitcomb. Revised edition 1988. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. Pp. 178. \$9.00. Paper.

After 15 years and almost as many reprintings, Dr. Whitcomb has thoroughly updated this popular study of the Genesis flood. Initially, the book was a detailed reply to criticisms that had been leveled against Whitcomb and Morris' 1961 *The Genesis Flood* by secular geologists and theistic evolutionists. This revised edition still fulfills that purpose, but also presents a wealth of resource material, current events in creation-science, and an undiluted dose of biblical truth.

The book is divided into four parts: the supernatural nature of the flood, its universal destruction, modern evidence, and a defense of the biblical account. Scientific details include the frozen mammoths (p. 81), coal formation (p. 84), and geological lessons learned from Mount St. Helens (p. 104). More discussion is needed of continental drift and also the post-flood ice age, but this can await the next revision. The technical areas are followed by an insightful analysis of the failure of so many people to grasp the truth of the worldwide judgment by water. John Whitcomb sees two reasons, the first being an attitude of rejection of any miraculous intervention in history. The second is a total lack of knowledge of the multiple modern evidences for a recent universal flood (p. 90). On both counts, the secular scientific world is guilty of ruling out the biblical alternatives. There is a common, harmful misconception that the early chapters of Genesis are true only in a "vaguely religious" sense (p. 141). This neglect of the foundational book of Genesis has resulted in predictable results: controversy and confusion. As always, correct conclusions concerning the Bible and science depend on a correct starting point (p. 96). This book has the answers for those who are interested in or perplexed by the subject of origins and flood geology.

DON B. DEYOUNG
GRACE COLLEGE

Biology Through the Eyes of Faith, by Richard T. Wright. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989. Pp. 298. \$9.95. Paper.

Dr. Richard Wright is professor of biology at Gordon College, Wenham, MA. This book is the fourth in a series sponsored by the Christian College Coalition, an informal network of private colleges including Grace College.

The other three studies in the Christian faith series discuss Psychology, History, and Literature. The books are designed as supplemental textbooks in introductory-level courses, particularly for Christian colleges.

Dr. Wright examines several contemporary issues in biology. This rapidly progressing field of science is clearly outpacing a reasoned, ethical analysis of its discoveries and directions. The author sees biology as undergoing four recent "revolutions" in the sense defined by Thomas Kuhn. These major changes in scientific thinking include origins (Darwinism), biomedicine (technical advances), genetics (mastering DNA, the blueprint of life), and the environment (stewardship versus abuse).

The section on origins is one hundred pages long, one-third of the book. Richard Wright correctly sees the origins issue as fundamental to one's views in all other areas. Unfortunately, the treatment shows a strong bias toward theistic evolution and against a recent supernatural creation. On most other issues in the book, the author invites the reader to make his own decisions. On origins, however, such flexibility appears to be lacking. Dr. Wright quotes extensively from the French theologian, Henri Blocher. Blocher believes the biblical days of creation are to be taken as topical or symbolic rather than literal. This view, sometimes called the literary or framework view, has been thoroughly refuted by conservative scholars. Four different times, Wright recommends a book by Howard Van Till of Calvin College, titled *The Fourth Day*. Van Till's book has raised a storm of controversy for its promotion of an evolutionary view of astronomy. Meanwhile, literature by creationists is not recommended at all. No mention of the Creation Research Society Quarterly appears, a technical periodical that has been treating the book's issues, including environmental stewardship, for twenty-five years. Five book statements of serious concern to the creationist will be mentioned here: *First*, comparative embryology is listed as favoring evolution, without comment (p. 122). This "evidence for common ancestry" has been fully discredited for many years. *Second*, the fossil record is said to give "overwhelming evidence" of great age and also many changes in living things (p. 128). The evidence for evolution is also said to be "strong and convincing (p. 137)." *Third*, Scripture is declared to answer who created the cosmos, and why, but not how or when (p. 132). *Fourth*, literalists are accused of "loading origins down with supernaturalism . . . (they have) erected a very large stumbling block to belief in the God of the Bible (p. 81)." *Fifth*, the fossils "point to the strong possibility that *Homo sapiens* evolved from previous hominids (p. 146)." Many Christians, if not most, would strongly oppose each of these five statements. If used as a Christian college text, as planned, a generation of students will surely be misled by the one-sided approach, and many parents will be rightfully upset at the undermining of a literal view of Genesis. The book's pro-evolution stance will simply preclude its use at many conservative Christian colleges.

Following the disappointing chapters on origins, the balance of the book becomes more helpful. In both biomedicine and in genetics, Dr. Wright introduces terminology and current issues for the untrained reader. He takes a conservative, cautionary position in such biological frontiers as amniocentesis and gene splicing: "Having learned to read God's instructions in DNA research, we are also revising them . . . it is clearly vital to make sure that this