
Editorials

WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT DO?

King David penned in the psalms, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You are mindful of him...?" (Psalm 8:3-4).

Young David, at night when he watched his father's flock, had many occasions to "consider the heavens" and must have often asked himself, "What is man?" In comparison to an endless space, radiant moon, and host of sparkling stars, man seemed to the psalmist insignificant. Looking heavenward, David's pride was subdued by an overwhelming humility.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of puny and fragile man and the cause of innumerable conflict is pride. There is no attitude more out of place to the character and circumstances of man, made out of dust, whose follies are so numerous and glaring, than pride. Nevertheless, he struts in all his haughtiness and glories in his shame. This deplorable propensity in human beings is, at least for a moment, countered by a survey of the immensity of God's creation where man is as a grain of sand. "What is man?" What is sinful man, a creature so forgetful of his Creator, "that You are mindful of him?"

Man is honored, according to the abundant grace of God, and given a place near angels. "For You have made

him a little lower than the angels" (Psalm 8:5). Lower than angels because his body is made from dust (like the animals), but akin to the angels because he is spiritual and immortal. He is endowed with noble faculties and abilities, for God "crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:5). He was created and distinguished by God to rule and was given dominion over the inferior creatures. "You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:6).

What David started with as a proposition in the first verse, he closes with as a well-proven conclusion, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:9). What tongue can utter half the greatness of our God? All of creation is filled with His glory. His power and wisdom is visible everywhere. Descend into the depth of the ocean where no light penetrates, where the sand is motionless; even there are the wonders of God. From the myriad of stars in the vast expanse of space, to the creeping insects, to the crowning act of man, the miracles of God's power surround us.

What is man? Man is a creature. Man was created by God. Therefore, the meaning of man's life transcends man. It is impossible for man to interpret and understand himself and the universe apart from the Creator. The creator of a thing creates the thing with a plan and purpose in mind. It would be similar to a man, a thousand years ago, stepping into a time machine and

(continues on page 20)

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38. Keri Wyatt Kent, "Rediscovering Spiritual Formation," *Willow*, Fall 2007, Volume 14, Issue 4, pg. 10, emphasis added. Document accessed at: www.print-epro.net/freeport/willowcre/willowvol14iss4/index.php.

39. Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Sisters, Ore: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1990, pg. 1, emphasis added. This endorsement is also found on the back cover.

40. G. Richard Fisher, "When Grace is No Longer Amazing - The Tragic Life and Legacy of Brennan Manning," *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2012, pp. 1, 11, 18.

41. Henri Nouwen, *Here and Now*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1994, pg. 25, emphasis added. It should be noted that if God already dwells in each person regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs, as Nouwen states, then Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again (in John 3:3) are meaningless.

42. Foster cited in Bob DeWaay, "Richard Foster — Celebration of Deception," *Critical Issues Commentary* website, emphasis added. Document accessed at: <http://cicministry.org/commentary/issue112.htm>.

43. John Caddock, "What is Contempla-

ive Spirituality and Why is It Dangerous? — A Review of Brennan Manning's *The Signature of Jesus*," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1997 — Volume 10:19, emphasis added. Document accessed at: www.faithalone.org/journal/1997ii/Caddock.html. In addition to drawing his conclusion from Manning's *The Signature of Jesus*, Caddock further supports his remarks by citing Manning's *Gentle Revolutionaries* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1975).

44. "Awana Clubs — Are they heading toward contemplative?" Lighthouse Trails Research Project website, February 26, 2006. Document accessed at: www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/awana.htm.

45. "Revisiting Awana's Move Toward Contemplative - And Another Look at 'Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation'," Lighthouse Trails Research Project website, April 14, 2012. Document accessed at: www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=1864.

46. "Awana News," The Berean Call website, emphasis and book title italics added. Document accessed at: www.thebereancall.org/content/awana-news.

47. "Question: I've heard that Awana is

drifting toward mysticism in the way they are ministering to children. What do you know about that?," *The Berean Call* newsletter, February 2008. Document accessed at: www.thebereancall.org/content/question-ive-heard-awana-drifting-toward-mysticism-way-they-are-ministering-children-what-do.

48. *Ibid.*, brackets in original.

49. "Revisiting Awana's Move Toward Contemplative - And Another Look at 'Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation,'" *op. cit.*

50. According to The International Center for Reiki Training, "Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. It is administered by 'laying on hands' and is based on the idea that an unseen 'life force energy' flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one's 'life force energy' is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy." Document accessed at: www.reiki.org/faq/whatisreiki.html.

51. Beth Moore, *Be Still* DVD, *op. cit.*, at 26:45 timemark.



EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

finding himself at Cape Canaveral, Fla., staring at the space shuttle. As he inspects this strange object he would naturally ask "What is it?" and "What does it do?" The meaning and purpose of the space shuttle cannot be accurately ascertained by the man in and of himself. A NASA scientist would have to explain to the man what it is and what it does. Apart from that explanation the true meaning and purpose of the large object cannot be known by the man.

There is no academic field of study and application more immersed with evolutionary thinking than psychology. Ever since Charles Darwin, and especially Sigmund Freud, psychologists have evaluated man's behavioral problems on an animalistic basis. Experiments with animals and even insects are routinely used for guidance in dealing with human beings. Although many modern-day psychologists have disavowed Freud, they nevertheless have built on his foundation. They theorize within an evolutionary framework. They believe man is merely a highly evolved animal with animal problems and animal solutions.

Psychology's attempt to understand man's nature, his behavior, attitudes and thoughts, apart from the Creator is impossible. Man exists by virtue of the fact that God exists. God is man's environment. Man cannot be lifted

out of his God-environment and be understood. To understand man, as psychology attempts to do, one must understand God's purpose for creating man in the first place. God, the Creator, is the Interpreter of what He has created. To say there is no God who created man with meaning and purpose is to deny man has meaning and purpose.

The theory of evolution maintains that man evolved out of chaos and by chance. Man, therefore, has no meaning and purpose because chance has no meaning and purpose. Chance has no plan because there is no Planner. If there is no NASA scientist to explain and interpret the meaning and purpose of the large object then it is impossible to know. The object has no discernible meaning and purpose. The man can hypothesize and guess, within the context of a man living a thousand years ago. However, all that the man will know for sure is that the object is; it exists. Why? Because it is there. But what it is and what it does, he will never know.

Man will never understand himself apart from God who created him. To deny God and then attempt to gain knowledge of man, as psychology professes to do, is an attempt to do the impossible. It is impossible because God made man with meaning and purpose. Psychology ignores man's real meaning and purpose and presupposes a false meaning and purpose. The result is man's behavior, disturbing moods, and uncomfortable feelings are confusing and difficult to explain; hence the reason there are hundreds of conflicting theories of psychology.

For example, a can opener was created with meaning and purpose: to open cans. What if I decide to impose a false meaning and purpose on a can opener? I tell you I am going to use it to clean my carpet. Can you imagine how difficult and convoluted my explanations are going to be trying to explain how a can opener can clean carpet?

It is the same with psychology. The Bible teaches us that man was created in the image of God. Man is a spiritual and material being. Man is a sinner and his problems with anger, immorality, and so on are heart issues. Psychology teaches man is an animal. Man is material only and his problems are health issues. As man continues to evolve he will become physically and ethically better and better.

No matter what explanation I put forth as to how a can opener can clean carpet, the explanation will never fit the experience of cleaning a carpet. I will have to give another explanation. However, it won't fit either. And so I will have to resort to another and another and another explanation.

Getting back to the man looking at the space shuttle, the NASA scientist interprets its meaning and purpose. He explains the landing gears, wings, booster rockets, and so forth. It all makes perfect sense. If the man rejects the scientist's explanation and imposes his own erroneous explanation then he will never know the meaning and purpose of the space shuttle. For example, the man observes it has wheels; therefore, it rolls. It is large and very heavy; therefore, it must be pulled by horses. It is long and has a protruding nose on the front; therefore, it must be a modern-day battering ram used to break down fortified walls. The platforms (wings) are where soldiers ride. And the man's theories about the meaning and purpose of the space shuttle, just like in psychology, go on and on.

The knowledge to understand man is found in God's Word. Paul wrote the believer is "renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Colossians 3:10). It is knowledge within the context of the One who created man with meaning and purpose. To lift man out of that context would make true knowledge about man unknowable. The man does not have the proper context to interpret the space shuttle. He does not know about modern aerodynamics, hydraulics, rockets, space exploration, and so on. He tries to understand the space shuttle in the context of a man living a thousand years ago. Therefore, he cannot know the space shuttle. God's Word is the ground for true knowledge. "For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).

The belief that man can formulate a psychology apart from God is a myth. A psychology that does not begin with the fact that man was created by God and rebelled against his Creator is not an objective account of man. Humanistic psychology has produced unprecedented confusion and has permeated the evangelical Church.

Psychology, properly understood, is a branch of theology. Theology is the study of God. Psychology is the study of the soul or mind of man. Anthropology's focus is on man's physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture. Psychology is concerned with man's nature and inner life. Satan's substitute, humanistic psychology which is radically at odds with the Bible, is commonly used by Christians for guidance in pastoral or "Christian" counseling. This routine practice has resulted in the steady erosion of the biblical doctrines of creation, man, and salvation.

The biblical worldview sees man as a little lower than the angels, while the prevalent worldview sees him a little higher than the apes. In the gradual ascending series of creative acts we see man at the top. Man created in God's image, a little lower than the angels and capable of entering not only into relations with his fellow man but also with his Creator. There stands, above the plant kingdom and animal kingdom, man, a being fitted for the kingdom of God. Animals, however highly developed, are merely creatures within the natural world. Man has a life above nature. He is able to reflect upon himself; on the meaning and causes of things. He can reason and overrule impulse and passion and so he is responsible and capable of morality. He shows his superiority through the thoughts he cherishes of God and eternity. Before God had created man He pronounced His works "good," but not until He made man did He declare His works "very good." Man is the key to understanding the whole creation for nature does not exist for its own sake, but for the sake of man. Man is the bonding agent who connects the material and spiritual worlds. Humanistic psychology's materialistic explanations ignore the spirit and reduce thoughts, feelings, and will to functions of matter. Man is a little higher than the ape. There are no angels.

In one brief phrase "image of God," man is related to God. Evolution is denied and man's uniqueness is upheld. He is more than flesh and blood. His behaviors and attitudes issue from his heart and are therefore, spiritual and God-related. Contrary to humanistic evolutionary psychology, human beings are far more similar to God than to animals. Man is made in God's image; animals are not (Genesis 1). Man was given rule over the animals (Genesis 1:26); animals are not "suitable" and do not correspond to man (Genesis 2:18-20).

Communication by man and God through revelation and prayer is nonexistent between God and animals. Man, unlike the animals, has the power of moral knowledge. The moral "ought." He distinguishes good from evil. He recognizes his obligations toward God to obey what is right and just and flee from what is unjust and evil. He was made with moral freedom and capable of moral affection. God is love and without this capability man would not be a true image bearer of God. Man, in the image of God, is a rational being. He can understand the world God has made. Science is only

possible because man was created with the same kind of reason which is expressed in the world in which man lives. For example, if a man was going to translate a book written in a foreign language, he must know the language of the author who wrote the book. If he did not know the author's language he would not be able to translate the book into his native language. It is the same with the kind of reason man was created with and the kind of reason expressed in creation by the Creator.

Biblical psychology will seek to understand man, not in terms of human relations, but in terms of the image of God. The psychologies built on evolution reduce man from a creature made in the image of God to an animal evolved by chance, out of chaos and nothingness. Many believers argue against modern psychology on the basis that it attributes man's behaviors to a plethora of drives and instincts over which he has no control. Christians rightly contend man is not at the mercy of drives and instincts, but is responsible and accountable. It is certainly true that modern psychology does not allow for responsibility, but it is not because of out-of-control drives and overwhelming impulses. The psychologies leave no room for responsibility because it lifts man out of a creation context. Man, made in the image of God, is immersed in an evolutionary scenario where every aspect of his personality has come from chance, chaos, and nothingness. Man cannot be responsible to nothingness. He can only be responsible if he is a creature of God. Man as a creation by God is the only option to man as a creation from nothingness.

—DMT

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

Graham posted on his ministry's website a statement announcing the meeting which took place at the evangelist's home in Montreat, N.C., and which stated in part, "It was an honor to meet and host Gov. Romney in my home today, ... What impresses me even more than Gov. Romney's successful career are his values and strong moral convictions. ... It was a privilege to pray with Gov. Romney — for his family and our country."

Ken Barun, chief of staff for the Graham organization told CNN in a statement that, "Our primary focus at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has always been promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We removed the information from the website because we do not wish to participate in a theological debate about something that has become politicized during this campaign."

In Charismatic circles, self-proclaimed modern-day prophet Rick Joyner told viewers of the Rev. Jim Bakker's Sept. 24 broadcast that a prophecy "supposedly

attributed to Joseph Smith" stated that at a time when "the U.S. Constitution would hang by a thread" that "the Lord was going to raise up a Mormon president to save our Constitution." Joyner went on to say, "And who knows, maybe this was one of those true prophecies."

Right Wing Watch, a website describing itself as a "project of People For the American Way dedicated to monitoring and exposing the activities of the right-wing movement," targeted Joyner's comments and provided a link to its YouTube posting of his remarks as well as a link to Bakker's own website featuring the entire broadcast. The RWW website also noted that Joyner agreed "with Bakker that the differences between Mormonism and Christianity are merely minor ones."

In November, Republican nominee Romney lost his bid for the presidency to President Barack Obama. Despite his loss, the LDS church still was victorious by gaining ground in its ongoing effort to further shed its cult image.

—MKG

POWER STRUGGLE AT TBN REVEALED

The family rifts amidst the leadership of the Trinity Broadcasting Network have snowballed to the point that the local newspaper is describing it as "nuclear family warfare." Brittany Koper, granddaughter of the network's founders Paul and Jan Crouch, along with her husband, Michael, have charged family members with gross financial mismanagement and power struggles for control of the multibillion-dollar broadcasting empire. The Kopers have furnished the courts with numerous internal documents and reports to substantiate their allegations.

More recently, a 70-page declaration was filed in Orange County [California] Superior Court containing a photograph of Jan Crouch holding a letter from Paul Crouch Sr. in which it is alleged that he appointed his son Matthew to take control of the broadcasting ministry after his death. Matthew Crouch is uncle to Koper and younger brother of Koper's father, Paul Crouch Jr. Matthew is a prime target fixed in the crosshairs of the Kopers' charges.

According to a declaration by Michael Koper, the photo was taken in September 2011 when Paul Crouch Sr. "was in the hospital suffering from congestive heart failure," the *Orange County Register* reported. "Apparently, Matthew Crouch and Jan Crouch were celebrating what they believed was Paul Crouch Sr.'s impending death and Matthew Crouch's promotion to president of TBN that would subsequently occur," the newspaper further reported Koper as saying.