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2. Craffert would subsume Jesus' parables and aphorisms as shamanic utterances based on Jesus' ASC, but it is doubtful whether this can account for their considerable verbal artistry and their sly subversive wisdom.

3. Craffert surely does a service in exposing the lingering ethnocentrism in HJ research, even in the work of those who earnestly try to avoid it. Yet Craffert's liberal application of the label "ethnocentric" (an unmistakably polemical term) seems overly broad. Is it necessarily ethnocentric to ask what objectively happened or whether Jesus actually said this or that saying? To be sure, these are modern interests, not those of the first century. But is it ethnocentric (in a pernicious sense) to ask and seek answers to questions that interest us – and modern readers, who care greatly about the "facts" of history – even if such questions might have been irrelevant to the ancients? Deriding this desire as "positivism" (another polemic term) is unhelpful.

4. Craffert's project operates outside the "authenticity paradigm" and proceeds without source criticism (his references to Q are often qualified by "if it existed"), tradition history, or redaction criticism. Can HJ scholars be persuaded that such tools of the trade are irrelevant? Should an approach to the HJ be properly called historical if it agrees with Craffert to consider all gospel materials (including John and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas) as equally useful historically?

5. Craffert's acknowledges that his method cannot distinguish (and Craffert seems uninterested in making the distinction) between culturally plausible reports of events about Jesus that objectively happened in time and space and culturally plausible stories invented by Christian tradents. The inability to tell historical fact from historical fiction surely reduces the power of any historical method.

I register these objections within the larger context of my admiration and gratitude for Craffert's achievement. This book is required reading for all interested in the HJ. It has the potential to reshape the field.



Dembski, W A 2006 – *Darwin's nemesis: Phillip Johnson and the intelligent design movement*

Publisher: IVP Academic. 357 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Dr Cornel W du Toit (University of South Africa)

The book is an extensive piece of propaganda for ID (Intelligent Design Theory). The book is dedicated to the "founder" Phillip Johnson and most of the contributors can be considered disciples of the movement. Johnson himself wrote the last chapter (p 19) and among the best-known ID authors whose contributions are included are John Reynolds (Introduction), Stephen C Meyer (ch 1, 12), Michael J Behe, known for his work *Darwin's black box* (see p 46) (ch 2), William A Dembski (ch 5) and Walter L Bradley (ch 18). Part III, entitled *Two Friendly Critics*, contains contributions by David Belinski and Michael Ruse. These two contributions do not really match the tone of the rest of the book.

Johnson, who takes on Darwinism, was a professor of law at Berkeley, not a scientist. The ID initiative can be traced back to the publication of Johnson's book, *Darwin on trial*, in 1991. In 1992 a symposium was held at Southern Methodist University at which Phil Johnson and Michael Ruse (a sympathetic opponent of ID) were the main speakers. "Within a year following that symposium, Phil had gathered a band of ... converts and volunteers, mainly scientists and philosophers. The next step was to organize that band. This Phil did in 1993" (p

14). Johnson is literally seen as a prophet (p 18) and the movement has taken on religious overtones: “This particular battle for the soul of the twenty-first century is his [Johnson’s – CWdT] battle. Due to his efforts, Darwinism and its concomitant ills are on the way out. To be sure, other evils will vie to take their place” (p 30). This is the conviction of those who believe they are right and the rest of the scientific world is wrong.

Part I (ch 1-4), entitled *Portraits of the man and his work*, is an exaltation of Johnson’s qualities and the influence he has had on the various contributors. Part II (ch 5-7) – *The wedge and its despisers* – endorses the tone of the book. The “wedge” is obviously Johnson, who would oust Darwinism from its established position and the “despisers” include everyone who does not agree with Johnson and co. Part III is referred to above. Part IV or *Johnson’s revolution in biology* (ch 10-13) deals with the issues of “common ancestry” (ch 11), the issue of “taxonomic categories” (ch 12) and ID’s favourite case study, “coordinate flagellar in pathogenic bacteria” (ch 13).

Part V (ch 14-17), entitled *Ever-increasing spheres of influence*, continues in the same vein with references to the movement’s gains in popularity. The book is polemic in nature and while the movement’s proponents are glorified, its detractors are annihilated throughout.

Mention is made of Judge Jones’ verdict against ID – “Judge Jones not only struck down the Dover school board policy advocating intelligent design but also identified intelligent design as nonscientific and fundamentally religious” (p 19) – but instead of exploring it, the author elaborates on what would have happened had the judge’s verdict been positive and concludes: “It is therefore naive to think that this case threatens to derail intelligent design” (p 20). The verdict, however, is significant because one of the movement’s main goals is to introduce ID as an alternative to Darwinism as a school subject.

The authoritative Stephen J Gould’s article in *Scientific American*, which radically criticizes Johnson’s book, is also dismissed (Thomas Woodward, pp 66-67). The findings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Society of Neuroscience rejecting ID (p 83), are also mentioned. These too are not taken seriously. Dembski’s shocking pronouncement (p 81) confirms the general attitude to the broad scientific community: “It is a measure of the success of our movement that no biology journal would give our books such respectful treatment any longer.” Dembski devotes the greater part of his contribution to techniques for disposing of opponents (pp 88-104).

Woodward concedes to Dawkins that “... stars or planets, being relatively simpler objects, do not logically suggest an intelligent-type explanation for their existence”, but immediately adds: “... on the other hand, biological entities do suggest such explanation due to their watchlike complexity” (p 69). This makes their position even more vulnerable because this train of thought leaves everything to chance or the laws of nature, and only in some cases does biological complexity suggest an intelligent designer.

Although not directly admitted, strong sentiments about the young earth model emerge in the book: “In Johnson’s prototype of ID strategy, the timing of creation is not so much unknown as it is deliberately not discussed” (p 75). These sentiments are also obvious from the suspicion cast on carbon dating, the fossil record (p 68) and Richards’s own statement: “I quickly learned that there were better arguments for young-earth creationism than those off-putting stories about Paluxy footprints and moon dust.”

Chapter 16 examines the differences between creationist groupings (see diagram p 269). The points of difference with the young earth creationists are described as follows: “ID is based on science, whereas young-earth creationism is based on sacred texts” and “[t]he religious implications of ID are unconnected to ID self” (p 266). Although there is some affinity between the groups, the ID group accepts that the chances of creationists being taken seriously are remote and believe that their own approach stands a better chance. They attempt to justify a literal reading of the Bible on the basis of a highly doubtful hermeneutics.

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The flat earth problem, for instance, can be solved by regarding references to it as poetry (pp 270-271)! That it formed part of the broad world view at the time is completely ignored.

ID's strongest argument is the claim to irreducible complexity. Behe describes it as follows: "An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly ... by slight, successive modifications of a precursory system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on" (quoted in Ajala 2006:78).

The following references to irreducible complexity are found in the work: the structure of the vertebrate eye (p 43; refuted by Ajala 2006:79-80), the structure of the protein haemoglobin (p 43; refuted by Ajala 2006:82-83), and flagellum (p 104, refuted by Ajala 2006:80-1). Also see pages 57-59.

In this connection Ajala (2006:78) writes: "But evolutionists have pointed out, again and again, with supporting evidence, that organs and other components of living beings are not irreducibly complex – they do not come about suddenly, or in one fell swoop." The examples given of irreducible complexity are not irreducible at all.

To summarize: ID is an ideology which assumes religious-sectarian traits. It is veiled creationism. It relies on a few examples, most of which have been refuted by authoritative scientists. They try to turn ID into proof of the existence of god – an attempt which like other "god of the gaps models" will eventually result in embarrassment. There is no doubt that ID has its followers, but the same can be said of many of the other pseudo-scientific movements. Ajala (2006: 90) points out "that the theory of evolution is not incompatible with belief in the existence of God and God's presence in the workings of the universe."



Dunn, J D G, 2005 – *The new perspective on Paul: Collected essays*

Publisher: Mohr Siebeck. Hardcover 536 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr Gys Loubser (University of Pretoria)

Since the early eighties Dunn has established himself as the most prolific proponent of the so-called *New Perspective on Paul*. Before him there were scholars such as G F Moore, J Parkes and, of course, the one from whom he profited most, E P Sanders (pp 5-6).

It was Sanders who introduced the concept of *covenantal nomism* to explain Israel's understanding of its relationship with God. Israel could not initiate or create the relationship with God. This, only God could do in his divine grace. They did, however, have the responsibility to live up to their obligations as decreed in Torah. Thus, living according to Torah was not about *getting in*, but about *staying in* the relationship with God. Sanders' aim was to indicate that it was not true that Second Temple Judaism, from which Paul stemmed, was stripped of grace and was wholly a meritorious religion. In fact, it even allowed for imperfection, atonement and forgiveness for repenting sinners.

For Dunn this is a timely correction to too staunch a Lutheran view of Jewish justification. Having said this he, however, still felt that Sanders' Paul does not make sense. "If the Judaism of Paul's day also gave such a place to divine election, atonement and forgiveness, then what was Paul objecting to?"(p 7). His position is basically "that Paul's own teaching on justification focuses largely, if not principally, on the need to overcome the barrier