

Silk for calde blog: Wolfe thesis

The Urth list — 105 messages, 16 voices, 21 Sep 2009

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5491>

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Gwern Branwen — 21 Sep 2009, 23:26

Saw a relatively new Wolfe blog in my Google Alerts:

<http://silk4calde.blogspot.com/>

<http://silk4calde.blogspot.com/2009/09/its-official-i-have-thesis-topic.html>

"After a fruitful meeting with my honours supervisor this afternoon, I have finally settled on a specific topic for my honours thesis! My intention was always to write something on religion in Gene Wolfe's solar cycle (or sun cycle, or Urth cycle... I'm not sure anyone can agree on what it is called), but I had trouble deciding exactly what to focus on."

We just call it the Briah cycle around here, don't we?

" I narrowed the possible areas of study down to three topics:

- 1.The religion of The Book of the Long Sun as a parody of Catholicism.
- 2.Patera Silk and the role of the priest in science fiction.
- 3.Patera Silk as messiah figure — particularly as compared to Severian, the protagonist of BotNS, who is cruel and malicious, unlike the truly 'good' character of Silk, but is also explicitly a messiah figure. After much deliberation I have settled on the second topic, which lends itself well to a comparative study with other texts, and also offers a promising three-chapter breakdown. In brief, I plan to contend that there are two dominant uses of the priest protagonists in SF:
 - 1.To affirm the priest's faith / religion and its positive effect (e.g. the missionary goes to an alien planet, converts its inhabitants, and brings peace and utopia to all).
 - 2.To debunk the priest's faith and expose it as false (e.g. by having the priest discover something that has him renounce his faith). These will provide the topics for the first two chapters of my thesis. In the third, I will address Wolfe's use of the priest protagonist in BotLS, which I will put forth as an interesting and unique case."

Seems like a worthwhile thesis, although I wonder whether those 2 priest archetypes are quite so universal - such a categorization would have difficulty with Frank Herbert, I think.

gwern

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 22 Sep 2009, 00:04 · in reply to Gwern Branwen

On Mon, Sep 21, 2009 at 4:26 PM, Gwern Branwen <gwern0 at gmail.com> wrote:

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The makings of at least one excellent doctoral thesis lies in the image of the (Catholic) priest in SF. However, this person's thesis ain't it.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Gwern Branwen — 22 Sep 2009, 03:12 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

On Mon, Sep 21, 2009 at 8:04 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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Ah yes, how could I forget Father Dure? Although arguably the rest of Simmons' Catholic Church falls neatly into the lie category.

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This sort of thing is one reason I avoid literature research: of the dozens of thousands of SF works, is a few dozen works (say) which avoid the 2 standard storylines enough to render Wolfe's similar avoidance not newsworthy, or to invalidate the division into 2 standard storylines? What *is* the standard for good literature research?

gwern

Jerry Friedman — 22 Sep 2009, 05:34 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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Jerry Friedman

Zachary Kendal — 22 Sep 2009, 08:32 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On 22/09/2009, at 3:34 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

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Ouch! But I should probably introduce myself before taking up my own defence: Hi, I'm Zac, and, yes, I'm doing a thesis on Gene Wolfe. I know I really should have introduced myself earlier - before my blog became a topic of discussion (you couldn't have known I was lurking around the Urth mailing list) - but I was a little intimidated by how much everyone here seems to know about Wolfe's work.

Anyway, I'll re-post here what I wrote on my blog in defence of my thesis topic (slightly edited to

fit this context):

"Thank you for your feedback. I fully acknowledge that I have a lot of research still to do - indeed, I have hardly begun. I also know that these broad categories I have set out above may not hold up under scrutiny - and like 99% of people writing theses, I will probably end up writing something quite different to that which I had originally planned.

"I should have been clearer in my original post, but these crude 'stereotypes' are what I *currently* have the impression are dominant. I gather, from the limited research I have already done, that most SF with priests as protagonists (not peripheral or minor characters) either use the priest to challenge (or shake or debunk) the priest's faith, or to have it reaffirmed. These two categories are, of course, generalisations.

"I *plan* to argue that Wolfe finds a middle ground between these two *dominant* approaches to the priest. That he manages to do both debunk *and* affirm aspects of Catholicism (ritual vs. spiritual?). I do not plan to argue that no other author has ever done the same and challenged these two approaches.

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Dan! Danehy-Oakes - I'm not entirely sure you have any right to be so negative about my thesis since (a) I haven't written it, and (b) you haven't read it. For all you know, my thesis could shake the foundations of SF studies and completely change the world... well, alright, I highly doubt that too - but it could happen?

I realise that it is not very fair that I was reading these posts without your knowing, and I apologise. I would warmly welcome any constructive criticism that anyone might have. I am passionate about Wolfe's writing, and have been wanting to write on his work since I started my degree. Not much scholarship seems to have been written on Silk and BotLS, so I thought I would investigate how Wolfe uses his priest in an original and exciting way - since I believe that Wolfe is an important (and newsworthy, as gwern said) SF author... I'm sure that we can all agree on that much at least :)

Cheers,
Zac

Jerry Friedman — 22 Sep 2009, 14:44 · in reply to Zachary Kendal

--- On Tue, 9/22/09, Zachary Kendal <zackendal at optusnet.com.au> wrote:
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Ouch!

I'm sorry I caused you to say that. I would defend my use of "stereotypes", but after your clarification, it seems pointless.

But I should probably introduce myself before taking up my own defence: Hi, I'm Zac, and, yes, I'm doing a thesis on Gene Wolfe. I know I really should have introduced myself earlier - before my blog became a topic of discussion (you couldn't have known I was lurking around the Urth mailing list) - but I was a little intimidated by how much everyone here seems to know about Wolfe's work.

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"Thank you very much for your recommended texts - I'm currently in the process of planning my summer reading,

Speaking of stereotypes, I thought, "Summer reading? Isn't this due in 2010? Oh. Never mind."

"It may also have been unclear in my post that this is an undergraduate thesis - a 15,000 word thesis that I will do in 2010 for my honours degree (we do things differently in Australia, I think).

...

Undergrad theses are known here in America--I wrote one. (I trust yours will be better than mine was.)

I realise that it is not very fair that I was reading these posts without your knowing, and I apologise.

I hope that was irony. We all know people lurk on mailing lists, and you linked to this list at your site, so there's nothing to apologize for. I don't know whether I need to apologize for using a less harsh word at your blog than I did here--no harm was done by my two faces, since you saw both.

I would warmly welcome any constructive criticism that anyone might have.

You're in the right place.

I am passionate about Wolfe's writing, and have been wanting to write on his work since I started my degree.

Still in the right place.

Anyway, best of luck with this project!

Jerry Friedman

On Sep 22, 2009, at 3:32 AM, Zachary Kendal wrote:

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To apply a slightly different crude overgeneralization: if you're making a priest a major figure, then there's presumably a *reason* for that choice, and that reason has something to do with his being a priest, rather than, say, a fat guy, or a redhead.

At which point, you're probably committed to doing *something* with his faith. Shaking (perhaps to death) and reaffirming are the two obvious things to do.

I suppose this wouldn't be true in a book where *everyone* (or at least, many of the major characters) are clergy and therefore the difference is in particulars of theology rather than being-a-priest-or- not. For examples of this, Name of the Rose, Endymion, and Anathem all come to mind.

Something I'd *really* like to see someone play with is: why is such a large proportion of religion-oriented SF Catholic? If it reflects the background of the authors, then why are Catholics overrepresented in SF authorship (and, concomitantly, why are there relatively few Jewish SF stories) ? I mean, just off the top of my head:

A Canticle for Leibowitz, A Case of Conscience (which really is dire), Hyperion/Endymion, "The Star", much of Wolfe's work. Where's, for example, the Lutheran SF? (If I were being snarky I'd ask and answer where the Baptist SF was.) Or even specifically *Protestant* Christian SF?

Adam

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 22 Sep 2009, 16:47 · in reply to Zachary Kendal

Zac,

Welcome aboard.

I had no idea that this was an undergrad thesis - I've barely even heard of those. To me, the word "thesis" conveys images of Ph.D.

I'm also sorry I was so harsh, but truly, I can't think of a single significant SF text that does fit the description you give. The closest thing I can think of is the Curate in H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds," which is proto-SF in the meaning of the act. (SF proper really begins with Hugo Gernsback's identifying it as a genre, giving it a name, and providing it with a home, first in The Electrical Experimenter and then in Amazing Stories.)

There are plenty of SF writers who are blatantly hostile to religion, but they don't seem to use

priests as characters all that much.

I'd be interested in examples of what you're describing.

--Dan'l

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Cheers,
Zac

James Wynn — 22 Sep 2009, 17:05 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

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Tut-tut. I suppose Edith Hamilton invented mythology. And Young Adult Fiction began with Barnes & Noble labeling a section by that name in their stores.

J.

Jerry Friedman — 22 Sep 2009, 18:29 · in reply to Adam Thornton

I'll start by recommending Richard Cowper's trilogy /The White Bird of Kinship/, both for Zac's thesis and as something I liked. (I can be a little sentimental at times, though.) If you find a copy of volume 1, /The Road to Corlay/, that doesn't start with the story "Piper at the Gates of Dawn", you should track that story down and read it first.

Though if you really want suggestions, Zac, you could ask in rec.arts.sf.written if you haven't already.

--- On Tue, 9/22/09, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:
On Sep 22, 2009, at 3:32 AM, Zachary Kendal wrote:

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So why did Wolfe make Chris a priest in /Pirate Freedom/? Just for plot convenience? To say some some things about contemporary Catholicism? To give him vows to break? (This is a real question, not a rhetorical challenge to your argument.)

Something I'd *really* like to see someone play with is:
why is such a large proportion of religion-oriented SF Catholic?

Catholicism is more colorful than most Western religions. It's got rituals, saints, vestments, cathedrals, celibates (who can break their vows), a hierarchy, and more. And as the storyteller in "The Tale of the Rose and the Nightingale" points out, color is a requisite for a good story.

Catholicism goes with medieval and pseudo-medieval settings, which are popular. The RC Church a worldwide organization, which makes it suitable as a conspiracy (for good or evil).

Also, until recent decades, Catholicism was more pervasive in American Catholics' lives than Protestantism in American Protestants'. If I may be forgiven a stereotype, being whacked by nuns can give one deeper feelings about one's religion than being hushed during sermons.

Recently, conservative Protestant denominations have been trying to close the pervasiveness gap. As a result, once in a while there's a magazine story set during Vacation Bible School or some such (and maybe fewer stories where fundamentalism is the root of all evil).

If it reflects the background of the authors, then why are Catholics overrepresented in SF authorship (and, concomitantly, why are there relatively few Jewish SF stories) ?

Catholics outnumber Jews in the United States by a factor of more than 10.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_demographics#Religious_affiliation

Getting numbers for other countries is more work that I'm willing to do, but the proportion for the UK might be fairly similar.

I mean, just off the top of my head:

A Canticle for Leibowitz, _A Case of Conscience_ (which really is dire),

I liked it, at least the ending. So it's scientifically ridiculous--whaddya want?

Hyperion/Endymion_, "The Star", much of Wolfe's work. Where's, for example, the Lutheran SF?

As one of Robertson Davies's characters points out, Protestantism has inspired great music, but not a single great painting. (Have I mentioned that I like Robertson Davies?)

(If I were being snarky I'd ask and answer where the Baptist SF was.)? Or even specifically *Protestant* Christian SF?

There's Heinlein: "If This Goes On--" and "Job", neither of which is favorable to evangelical Protestantism, if I may understate.

Jerry Friedman

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 22 Sep 2009, 18:49 · in reply to Adam Thornton

On Tue, Sep 22, 2009 at 8:39 AM, Adam Thornton <adam at io.com> wrote:
Something I'd *really* like to see someone play with is: why is such a large proportion of religion-oriented SF Catholic?

One reason is that Catholicism is the Big Dog of Christianity. There is no Protestant sect that comes near Catholicism in terms of total membership; thus, if you want to present a generic Christian, a Catholic is the logical choice.

In addition, there is a huge and interesting dynamic between Catholicism, specifically, and science. Catholicism is the most "rationalistic" of the Christian religions, with its theology heavily based on the Aristoteleanism of St Thomas Aquinas. Yet Catholicism is -- or was, until fundamentalism reared its head and began resenting biology and geology -- the sect which has the most significant history of conflict with science and rationalism (can you say Galileo? I knew you could).

Plus, as Jerry observed below, there is all the nifty colorful baggage that comes with Catholicism - though if that's what you're looking for, Eastern Orthodoxy is even better.

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Relatively few Jewish SF stories? Heavens, man, what about Asimov's "Robot" stories? Those are all basically Talmudic disputation.

There are two excellent anthologies of Jewish SF edited by Jack Dann in the '70s, "Wandering Stars" and "More Wandering Stars."

Where's, for example, the Lutheran SF? (If I were being snarky I'd ask and answer where the Baptist SF was.) Or even specifically *Protestant* Christian SF?

I can't think of any Lutheran SF offhand, but there's an excellent Quaker SF novel called "Pennterra" by Judith Moffatt.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 22 Sep 2009, 18:51 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Additional thought:

Genre SF is an American phenomenon (in origin). SF is about exoticism. To the largely Protestant and Jewish kids who formed the "golden age" writers bloc, Catholicism was fairly exotic, Judaism less so, and Protestantism, as the American mainstream culture, not at all.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Matthew Keeley — 22 Sep 2009, 20:32 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

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Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

If we're going this direction, it might be significant that many Catholic sf writers are converts. Walter Miller Jr. converted to, and later from, Catholicism. Wolfe was a convert. Though I guess Tim Powers comes from a Catholic family.

To move on to more general comments:

If you want something "light" to look at, you might want to glance at Space Vulture, co-authored by Gary K. Wolf and the Archbishop of Newark. SF by a priest!

Also, some "mainstream" Catholic writers have stories that have a sf elements. I believe Graham Greene has a story called "The Last Word" about the last pope. I suppose that veers towards sf? Evelyn Waugh has Love Amongst the Ruins: A Romance of the Near Future, which was originally published independently as a novel but now appears in Complete Short Stories.

Charles Williams might also be interesting to look at. I don't think he was Catholic, but he certainly knew one or two influential Catholic writers...

http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/the_tls/article4164208.ece

Zac - I nearly did an undergraduate honors thesis on a similar topic, but decided I would take extra classes instead. Good luck with yours.

-Matt

brunians at brunians.org — 22 Sep 2009, 22:28 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Orson Scott Card has written some very interesting Mormon based stuff.

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Plus, as Jerry observed below, there is all the nifty colorful baggage that comes with Catholicism - though if that's what you're looking for, Eastern Orthodoxy is even better.

If it reflects the background of the authors, then why are Catholics overrepresented in SF authorship (and, concomitantly, why are there relatively few Jewish SF stories) ? I mean, just off the top of my head:

Relatively few Jewish SF stories? Heavens, man, what about Asimov's "Robot" stories? Those are all basically Talmudic disputation.

There are two excellent anthologies of Jewish SF edited by Jack Dann in the '70s, "Wandering Stars" and "More Wandering Stars."

Where's, for example, the Lutheran SF? (If I were being snarky I'd ask and answer where the Baptist SF was.) Or even specifically *Protestant* Christian SF?

I can't think of any Lutheran SF offhand, but there's an excellent Quaker SF novel called "Pennterra" by Judith Moffatt.

--

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

brunians at brunians.org — 22 Sep 2009, 22:33 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Not in NYC, which dominated the publishing biz, let alone the genre publishing biz, in the early to mid twentieth. In the NYC where I grew up, Jews and Catholics were normal: white people were either one or the other, white Protestants were strange. Protestants is what you expected black folks to be.

.

Additional thought:

Genre SF is an American phenomenon (in origin). SF is about exoticism. To the largely Protestant and Jewish kids who formed the "golden age" writers bloc, Catholicism was fairly exotic, Judaism less so, and Protestantism, as the American mainstream culture, not at all.

--

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Zachary Kendal — 22 Sep 2009, 23:15 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On 23/09/2009, at 2:47 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:
Zac,

Welcome aboard.

I had no idea that this was an undergrad thesis - I've barely even heard of those. To me, the word "thesis" conveys images of Ph.D.

I'm also sorry I was so harsh, but truly, I can't think of a single significant SF text that does fit the description you give. The closest thing I can think of is the Curate in H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds," which is proto-SF in the meaning of the act. (SF proper really begins with Hugo Gernsback's identifying it as a genre, giving it a name, and providing it with a home, first in The Electrical Experimenter and then in Amazing Stories.)

There are plenty of SF writers who are blatantly hostile to religion, but they don't seem to use priests as characters all that much.

I'd be interested in examples of what you're describing.

--Dan'l

Hi Dan'l, and thanks for the welcome.

I fear I was unclear in my original blog posting, but those examples I gave of the 'positive' and 'negative' use of the priest as protagonist were extremes (and intended to be taken that way). I'll post a clarified thesis topic to my blog today later today, which should sort out some of this confusion.

I'd consider Clarke's "The Star" to be a fairly clear example of the 'negative' use of the priest in SF (i.e. in order to shake the priest's faith). I know the Jesuit narrator doesn't explicitly renounce his faith altogether - he may well retain his belief in the existence of God (the extraordinary 'coincidence' of the supernova being the star of Bethlehem would suggest this) - but his idea of an all loving and merciful God is greatly challenged (and, indeed, I believe his faith is profoundly shaken to say the least). It's not an uncommon SF motif for God to be revealed as incredibly evil (often an incredibly evil parasite - hell, Stargate SG1 milked this theme for 10 seasons and 3 films!).

Miller's "A Canticle for Leibowitz", as a whole, focuses on the Church, not the priest (singular) and his personal journey of faith, which is what I will be focusing on. While it is a fantastic book, I don't believe it will be referred to much in my thesis.

As Adam Thornton wrote:

To apply a slightly different crude overgeneralization: if you're making a priest a major figure, then there's presumably a *reason* for that choice, and that reason has something to do with his being a priest, rather than, say, a fat guy, or a redhead.

At which point, you're probably committed to doing *something* with his faith. Shaking (perhaps to death) and reaffirming are the two obvious things to do.

Adam seems to have described my decision well :) rejection/shaking or reaffirmation of faith are the two obvious reasons to have a priest as a protagonist. The very purpose of my *doing* research is to see whether or not these are the two *dominant* uses of the priest. I should also be clear here, I am only looking at SF works with a priest as the main or central character, where his faith / spiritual journey is an important part of the story. And I do believe that some SF authors hostile to religion choose to have a priest protagonist (especially narrator) - this is usually done in order to attack or debunk religion from 'within' (i.e. Clarke?).

Zac

Jeffrey Brent McBeth — 22 Sep 2009, 23:51 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Tue, Sep 22, 2009 at 06:28:55PM -0400, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Orson Scott Card has written some very interesting Mormon based stuff.

I find his style too much Perelandra and Anthem and not enough Middle Earth and Brave New World. I love Wolfe and Chesterton and Tolkien and ... precisely because while the author's beliefs are there in all of them, there is more than just a didactic exercise in the latter.

Jeff

"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them."

-- Mark Twain

Nathan Spears — 18 Dec 2009, 07:27 · in reply to Jeffrey Brent McBeth

I don't think that Card became didactic until his later years. I found *Seventh Son* to be much more *The King Must Die* than *Atlas Shrugged*. I didn't know he was a Mormon when I read it, and even after I found out I can still enjoy it because it isn't a soapbox.

Nathan Spears — 18 Dec 2009, 08:21 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

This is pure speculation on my part, as I was raised Protestant, so please forgive me if I stereotype.

1. SF authors are interested in, um, science. Science being a logical and repeatable method for explaining the universe. Expanding on that idea, many SF authors (Wolfe, for instance) are interested not just in the results, but in the nature of logic, rationality, thought, memory, etc.
2. Protestantism has vague boundaries to many of its practitioners. Ask ten Baptists what they believe and you will probably get eleven answers. The clergy in Protestant churches are likely to be well-educated, informed about and invested in their system of belief, but their parishioners much less so (the first two at least). There is also much less an idea of a "clergy lifestyle" - pastors are very free to pursue their own agendas outside of their pastoral duties, and opinions vary widely as to what is permissible. Drinking, smoking, dancing, hunting, parties, etc. Opinions vary widely on these topics, even within one denomination.
3. As an earlier poster pointed out, Catholicism has a lot of trappings, but I wanted to point out that it also has a more uniform belief system, with predefined actions, rituals, etc, and (I think) a clergyman is much more likely to have a "clergy lifestyle" across the Catholic church. So, as a symbol a priest has a more universal power and greater accessibility than a pastor does, because many of his attributes and attitudes are known. At least their stereotypes are known.

Sorry for rambling and chasing rabbits (I'm really tired), but my main point was this: it must appeal to many authors to be able to play two systems against each other to see where they are consonant and dissonant. This is, I believe, a summary of the proposed thesis. Because Catholicism seems a more defined system than, say, Methodism or Judaism (where it's much more likely that believers will pick and choose their doctrines), and the priest a more universal symbol, I would think those aspects would appeal to an author looking to juxtapose religion with science.

Ok, one more try: Catholicism is much more like a religious science than many other religions. That's all I wanted to add to The Big Dog theory.

The temptation to provide a false dichotomy between religion and science often proves too strong for the zealous author. Too strong for a good story, at least. One theme of Wolfe's that would bear mention in your proposed thesis is religion as a humanizing element. Wolfe is aware of the powerful benevolent moral influence of religion as well as the terrible things that it can achieve. Most of the "negative" religion in SF that you mention comes from authors who believe (as best I can make out) that rationality should be sufficient to conquer our moral problems, who discount religion's benevolent influence as trivial at best, and who have in their minds a scale with the Inquisition, the Crusades, suicide bombers, Mayan sacrifice, etc on one side, and nothing on the other.

Anyway in Wolfe when the priest finds his faith shaken or confirmed, it is often this humanizing process - he must confront what about his faith he can continue to believe, what he finds truly important, what is worth believing, whether he will continue to believe it whether or not there is any proof of it, etc. These are the same questions that we all confront about our beliefs if we are to shape them into something worth believing, whether or not they are religious. </sermon> I also wonder how much of Silk's journey is an analog to Wolfe's own - I feel that I can see Wolfe's shadow on Silk, as he makes a deliberate choice to believe even when it seems foolhardy and dense. I often feel the same way in my faith so maybe I'm just projecting.

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 14:59 · in reply to Nathan Spears

Card's early short work, which mostly appeared in OMNI, was really, really good. He is, at worst, readable.

I don't think that Card became didactic until his later years. I found Seventh Son to be much more The King Must Die than Atlas Shrugged. I didn't know he was a Mormon when I read it, and even after I found out I can still enjoy it because it isn't a soapbox.

From: Jeffrey Brent McBeth <mcbeth at broggs.org>
To: The Urth Mailing List <urth at lists.urth.net>
Sent: Tue, September 22, 2009 5:51:48 PM
Subject: Re: (urth) Silk for calde blog: Wolfe thesis

On Tue, Sep 22, 2009 at 06:28:55PM -0400, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Orson Scott Card has written some very interesting Mormon based stuff.

I find his style too much Perelandra and Anthem and not enough Middle Earth and Brave New World. I love Wolfe and Chesterton and Tolkien and ... precisely because while the author's beliefs are there in all of them, there is more than just a didactic exercise in the latter.

Jeff

--

"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them."

-- Mark Twain

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 15:04 · in reply to Nathan Spears

Orthodox Christianity (including Catholicism) is Christianity. The forms of Protestantism are Christianity with various bits sliced off.

Christianity began by being a coherent expression of the common ancient Worldview with a particular theological slant upon it.

This is pure speculation on my part, as I was raised Protestant, so please forgive me if I stereotype.

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From: Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com>

John Smith — 18 Dec 2009, 15:13 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Well, EXCUUUUUUSE me! ? Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers would beg to differ.

Best wishes,

Jack the Protestant

--- On Fri, 12/18/09, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

From: brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> Subject: Re: (urth) Silk for calde blog: Wolfe thesis To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net> Date: Friday, December 18, 2009, 10:04 AM

Orthodox Christianity (including Catholicism) is Christianity. The forms of Protestantism are Christianity with various bits sliced off.

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? ? ???

Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 15:24 · in reply to John Smith

Heretics all.

.

Well, EXCUUUUUUSE me! ? Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers would beg to differ.

Best wishes,

Jack the Protestant

--- On Fri, 12/18/09, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

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Date: Friday, December 18, 2009, 10:04 AM

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James Wynn — 18 Dec 2009, 17:53 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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Well, EXCUUUUUUUUSE me! Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers would beg to differ.

Heretics all.

....And so Josh got the Christmas party started at the Urth List.

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 17:57 · in reply to James Wynn

Bah! Humbug!

.

Orthodox Christianity (including Catholicism) is Christianity. The forms of Protestantism are Christianity with various bits sliced off.

Well, EXCUUUUUUUUSE me! Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers would beg to differ.

Heretics all.

....And so Josh got the Christmas party started at the Urth List.

James Wynn — 18 Dec 2009, 18:01 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

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Well, EXCUUUUUUUUSE me! Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers would beg to differ.

Heretics all.

....And so Josh got the Christmas party started at the Urth List.

Bah! Humbug!

Now you sound like a Puritan.

:-D

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 18:07 · in reply to James Wynn

The original group is the orthodox group: there was no one before them, they get to say what is orthodox. Any deviation from what that original group says is therefore, by definition, heterodox.

QED.

.

Orthodox Christianity (including Catholicism) is Christianity. The forms

of Protestantism are Christianity with various bits sliced off.

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Heretics all.

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:-D

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 18 Dec 2009, 18:10 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The question is, then, whether the Orthodox or the Catholic are orthodox as regards the _filioque_ clause.

(Will the filioque clause be coming down your chimney this Christmas? Have you been a good brunian or a bad brunian?)

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:07 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
The original group is the orthodox group: there was no one before them, they get to say what is orthodox. Any deviation from what that original group says is therefore, by definition, heterodox.

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Heretics all.

....And so Josh got the Christmas party started at the Urth List.

Bah! Humbug!

Now you sound like a Puritan.

:-D

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 18:28 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

The question is, then, whether the Orthodox or the Catholic are orthodox as regards the _filioque_ clause.

That part's pretty minor. They can take sacrament from each other's priests, in an emergency. The Anglicans are also reasonably close: they should be considered something other than Protestant if you ask me.

It's not like slicing and the dicing and the mixing and the matching of the theology that Martin and John and their ilk indulged in.

(Will the filioque clause be coming down your chimney this Christmas?

I'll be enjoying a nice drive on Christmas.

Have you been a good brunian or a bad brunian?)

I'll do until something better comes along.

.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:07 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

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Heretics all.

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Bah! Humbug!

Now you sound like a Puritan.

:-D

James Wynn — 18 Dec 2009, 18:41 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

The original group is the orthodox group: there was no one before them, they get to say what is orthodox. Any deviation from what that original group says is therefore, by definition, heterodox.

And here we go...

Well, then we have to ask who is saying it? For quite a long time the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches considered each other heretics, excommunicated, and damned. (Same with the Church of England)

IIRC the terms "orthodox" (right-thinking) and "heterodox" (other-thinking) were coined by Irenaeus in the 2nd century. He openly criticized the Pope for excommunicating churches who persisted in celebrating Easter on the 14th of Nisan (Quartodeciman system) rather than on the Sunday *following* the 14th of Nisan. That he was free to do so without being at odds with the Church implies that the system at that time was not the Roman system at the time of the Reformation. So you are labeling a group "original group" without establishing that it is *in fact* the original group. And the argument of Calvin and (eventually) Luther is that they were not.

You cannot move forward without establishing that point one way or the other.

(Q.E.D. stricken)

J.

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 18:51 · in reply to James Wynn

I'm just going by the meaning of the terms.

I'm either a Jew or a Brunian, depending what mood I'm in when you ask me: I have no dog in this fight.

.

The original group is the orthodox group: there was no one before them, they get to say what is orthodox. Any deviation from what that original group says is therefore, by definition, heterodox.

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J.

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 18:53 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Remember, I always use the radical meaning of a given term.

.

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(Q.E.D. stricken)

J.

Matthew Weber — 18 Dec 2009, 19:08 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
Remember, I always use the radical meaning of a given term.

The radical meaning of "orthodoxy" is "right-worshipping."

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.
Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 18 Dec 2009, 19:10 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief." Right-believing.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:08 AM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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James Wynn — 18 Dec 2009, 19:11 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I'm just going by the meaning of the terms. I'm either a Jew or a Brunian, depending what mood I'm in when you ask me:

I have no dog in this fight.

Well, the meaning of terms is formed entirely by the context and the era it is used. The Reformation and Reaction was all about the meaning of those terms.

For example, I could argue that all Christian denominations merely branches of Judaism based on Jeremiah 31 (where the term New Testament comes from) with altered rules for receiving converts. Certainly that is how 1st century Jewish Christians saw themselves. Just because they were expelled from the synagogues and so had to set up their own synagogues (which were eventually called "kyriakon" from which we get "church") does not rationally deny them that status. There's not even an "original group" to deny them that status since Judaism from the 2nd century on is a new branch itself developed to carry on without a Temple in Jerusalem.

Obviously, however, this definition of terms would be unacceptable to 99.99% of Jewish rabbis.

J.

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 19:11 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Indeed.

And your point?

.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Remember, I always use the radical meaning of a given term.

The radical meaning of "orthodoxy" is "right-worshipping."

--

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 19:12 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Sorry, I was wrong to agree with you.

The radical meaning of orthodoxy is right belief.

.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Remember, I always use the radical meaning of a given term.

The radical meaning of "orthodoxy" is "right-worshipping."

--

Matt +

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brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 19:13 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Exactly, Dan'l.

Still not seeing Matt's point.

.

Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief." Right-believing.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:08 AM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

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Matthew Weber — 18 Dec 2009, 19:24 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:10 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danl do at gmail.com> wrote:

Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief." Right-believing.

That's certainly the sense in which it's most often used now. "Doxa" usually seems to imply "praise," as in "doxology". According to my lexicon, "doxa" can also be translated as "opinion," but isn't "belief" closer to "pistis"?

Assuming that by "radical meaning" Brunians meant "root meaning," that is.

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 18 Dec 2009, 19:30 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Doxology originally meant "statement of belief." And the radical meaning of "radical meaning" would be "root meaning."

Shall we go into grammarology?

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:24 AM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:10 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 19:32 · in reply to James Wynn

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I have no dog in this fight.

Well, the meaning of terms is formed entirely by the context and the era it is used.

I don't agree. This is not the way I use terms. Each term has a radical meaning, which is mine to discover and then to always use.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 19:33 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Well, yes.

The radical meaning of the term 'radical' is 'root'.

.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:10 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief." Right-believing.

That's certainly the sense in which it's most often used now. "Doxa" usually seems to imply "praise," as in "doxology". According to my lexicon, "doxa" can also be translated as "opinion," but isn't "belief" closer to "pistis"?

Assuming that by "radical meaning" Brunians meant "root meaning," that is.

--

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 19:34 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Once again, this is exactly correct.

.

Doxology originally meant "statement of belief." And the radical meaning of "radical meaning" would be "root meaning."

Shall we go into grammarology?

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:24 AM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:10 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief." Right-believing.

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Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

James B. Jordan — 18 Dec 2009, 19:45 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Um, no. In English, usually "right opinion." In Eastern Orthodoxy, "right praise." It can be either. "Right Praise" is original, since the arguments were over the date of Pascha and other liturgical matters.

JBJordan

At 01:10 PM 12/18/2009, you wrote:

Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief." Right-believing.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:08 AM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Remember, I always use the radical meaning of a given term.

The radical meaning of "orthodoxy" is "right-worshipping."

--

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

James Wynn — 18 Dec 2009, 19:50 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Hmmm...This seems to affirm that "brunians" is synonymous with "radical". So I suppose it is logically consistent.

Once again, this is exactly correct.

Doxology originally meant "statement of belief." And the radical meaning of "radical meaning" would be "root meaning."

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 20:02 · in reply to James B. Jordan

Opinion and belief are the same word in Greek. That word is 'doxos'.

It is sometimes translated as opinion and it is sometimes translated as belief.

This uniform employment of radical meanings for terms is a personal practice which I encourage others to adopt.

Some others have.

I freely admit that most others use terms in other, less perfect ways.

.

.

Um, no. In English, usually "right opinion." In Eastern Orthodoxy, "right praise." It can be either. "Right Praise" is original, since the arguments were over the date of Pascha and other liturgical matters.

JBJordan

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The radical meaning of "orthodoxy" is "right-worshipping."

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Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

John Watkins — 18 Dec 2009, 20:52 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

For the record, Orthodox Christians are told not to take the Sacrament from Catholic priests, and it is my impression, at the least, that the Orthodox do not offer the Eucharist to Catholics.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 1:28 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

The question is, then, whether the Orthodox or the Catholic are orthodox as regards the _filioque_ clause.

That part's pretty minor. They can take sacrament from each other's priests, in an emergency. The Anglicans are also reasonably close: they should be considered something other than Protestant if you ask me.

It's not like slicing and the dicing and the mixing and the matching of the theology that Martin and John and their ilk indulged in.

(Will the filioque clause be coming down your chimney this Christmas?

I'll be enjoying a nice drive on Christmas.

Have you been a good brunian or a bad brunian?)

I'll do until something better comes along.

.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:07 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

The original group is the orthodox group: there was no one before them, they get to say what is orthodox. Any deviation from what that original group says is therefore, by definition, heterodox.

QED.

.

Orthodox Christianity (including Catholicism) is Christianity. The forms of Protestantism are Christianity with various bits sliced off.

Well, EXCUUUUUUSE me! Martin Luther, John Calvin and their followers would beg to differ.

Heretics all.

....And so Josh got the Christmas party started at the Urth List.

Bah! Humbug!

Now you sound like a Puritan.

:-D

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 21:11 · in reply to John Watkins

Orthodox Christians may not take the sacrament from Catholic priests unless they really need it and there are no Orthodox priests around.

This I have from an orthodox priest.

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For the record, Orthodox Christians are told not to take the Sacrament from Catholic priests, and it is my impression, at the least, that the Orthodox do not offer the Eucharist to Catholics.

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Bah! Humbug!

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:-D

John Watkins — 18 Dec 2009, 21:13 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Or, as the Catholics would say, only in extremis?

I buy that.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 4:11 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:
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unless they really need it and there are no Orthodox priests around.

This I have from an orthodox priest.

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Bah! Humbug!

Now you sound like a Puritan.

:-D

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 21:19 · in reply to John Watkins

That's the term!

.

Or, as the Catholics would say, only in extremis?

I buy that.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 4:11 PM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

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followers
would beg to differ.

Heretics all.

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List.

Bah! Humbug!

Now you sound like a Puritan.
:-D

Jeff Wilson — 18 Dec 2009, 22:58 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Heretics all.

I think you have to depart from the Nicean Creed to achieve heresy, or at least to depart from
Christianity. This was agreed upon in the ageas before the great schim between Roman and
Eastern Catholics.

Regards,
Jeff

brunians at brunians.org — 18 Dec 2009, 23:12 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Not if you are, as I am, using the radical definition of the term 'heterodox'.

.

Heretics all.

I think you have to depart from the Nicean Creed to achieve heresy, or at least to depart from Christianity. This was agreed upon in the ages before the great schism between Roman and Eastern Catholics.

Regards,
Jeff

Adam Thornton — 19 Dec 2009, 00:29 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes wrote:

(Will the filioque clause be coming down your chimney this Christmas? Have you been a good brunian or a bad brunian?)

That's the filioque clause? I thought it was the Holy Spirit. Or maybe ectoplasm.

Adam

Adam Thornton — 19 Dec 2009, 00:33 · in reply to Nathan Spears

Nathan Spears wrote:

Ok, one more try: Catholicism is much more like a religious science than many other religions.

Paging Father Brown.

Seriously: it's not like Wolfe hasn't told us often enough that we should read Chesterton. I'm finally doing so, and, yeah, you can see an awful lot of very, very strong influence. Plus it's kinda fun.

Adam

Adam Thornton — 19 Dec 2009, 00:35 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I don't agree. This is not the way I use terms. Each term has a radical meaning, which is mine to discover and then to always use.

The question is who's to be master, that's all.

Adam

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 00:40 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Not if you are, as I am, using the radical definition of the term 'heterodox'.

It's not which way your doxy swings, it's about the message before that. Protestants don't slice any material bits off of the Creed.

Matthew Weber — 19 Dec 2009, 00:45 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 4:40 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
Not if you are, as I am, using the radical definition of the term
'heterodox'.

It's not which way your doxy swings, it's about the message before that.
Protestants don't slice any material bits off of the Creed.

Depends on the Protestant. I'm not sure that Anabaptists mean the same thing that I do when I say that I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

And there are non-magisterial Protestantisms that set personal experience and opinion far above any credal or dogmatic formulation; Bishop John Shelby Spong, Gretta Vosper, and Paul Tillich have all felt perfectly comfortable in contesting or contradicting the historic creeds without violating the canons of their respective church bodies.

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.
Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 00:52 · in reply to Adam Thornton

It is certainly scientific in the old sense.

It has been gone over for a long time by some brilliant people and the loose ends are pretty much all tied up.

.

Nathan Spears wrote:

Ok, one more try: Catholicism is much more like a religious science than many other religions.

Paging Father Brown.

Seriously: it's not like Wolfe hasn't told us often enough that we should read Chesterton. I'm finally doing so, and, yeah, you can see an awful lot of very, very strong influence. Plus it's kinda fun.

Adam

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 00:53 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Sorry, I'm not into S&M currently.

Not that I have anything against that kind of stuff.

.

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I don't agree. This is not the way I use terms. Each term has a radical meaning, which is mine to discover and then to always use.

The question is who's to be master, that's all.

Adam

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 00:54 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

OK, I can disagree with that.

Not if you are, as I am, using the radical definition of the term 'heterodox'.

It's not which way your doxy swings, it's about the message before that. Protestants don't slice any material bits off of the Creed.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 Dec 2009, 01:43 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

It's not which way your doxy swings, it's about the message before that. Protestants don't slice any material bits off of the Creed.

No, but they've redefined terms (you know, like "I believe ... in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church ...") to suit themselves. Too, they tossed out bits of Scripture that didn't suit them and then set up the unprecedented principle of "Sola Scriptura."

No: the Protestant "reformation" was a series of heresies.

Luther had a point. There were things that were wrong with the practice (NOT the theology) of the Roman church. Had he been patient enough to work within the Roman system, they might have been addressed much sooner -- some of them were not properly addressed until the second Vatican council, which might properly be seen as the Church's response to the legitimate complaints of the Deformers.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 03:31 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:
It is certainly scientific in the old sense.

It has been gone over for a long time by some brilliant people and the loose ends are pretty much all tied up.

How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiabiles?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Matthew Weber — 19 Dec 2009, 03:57 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 7:31 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:
brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiabiles?

Could you unpack what you mean by "transubstantiation"? Where I come from, the word is used to describe a theory of how the Real Presence in the Eucharist works; a theory couched in 13th-century neo-Aristotelian philosophico-scientific terms.

Look at any of the great works of systematic theology (Thomas's Summa, John Damascene's Exposition, Lombard's Sentences). There's nothing wrong with the reasoning in any of these works, and they proceed in an orderly, rational, and coherent fashion. Whether you find them credible will depend, of course, on whether you accept their basic assumptions. Criticizing them for not following the methods of 21st century science is a bit like criticizing theoretical mathematics for not having a good beat. That's not what they're *for*.

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

Jerry Friedman — 19 Dec 2009, 04:02 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

--- On Fri, 12/18/09, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Opinion and belief are the same word
in Greek. That word is 'doxos'.

It is sometimes translated as opinion and it is sometimes
translated as belief.

This uniform employment of radical meanings for terms is a
personal practice which I encourage others to adopt.

...

When you write "translated", do you mean "transferred"? "Employment" is "enfolding"?
"Personal" is "having to do with masks"? I must say I find your writing less comprehensible if I
believe what you say about how you use boundaries, I mean terms. It gives me a semantic
nightmare (if I may bring Lewis, C. S. in alongside Lewis C.).

Spearwielder Peaceman

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 04:04 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson writes:

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

It is certainly scientific in the old sense.
^^ ^^ ^^^ ^^^^^

It has been gone over for a long time by some brilliant people and the
loose ends are pretty much all tied up.

How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiabiles?

What about them?

.

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 04:05 · in reply to Matthew Weber

No doubt.

.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 7:31 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com> wrote:

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Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 04:07 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

What, you expect consistency?

Sheesh.

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--- On Fri, 12/18/09, brunians at brunians.org <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Opinion and belief are the same word in Greek. That word is 'doxos'.

It is sometimes translated as opinion and it is sometimes translated as belief.

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nightmare (if I may bring Lewis, C. S. in alongside Lewis C.).

Spearwielder Peaceman

Jerry Friedman — 19 Dec 2009, 04:40 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I'd settle for uniformity. But no doubt you are large, you contain multitudes of Brunians.

Jerry Friedman

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Spearwielder Peaceman

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Indeed.

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Spearwielder Peaceman

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 04:53 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

I think it was the third or fourth time I read Whitman, all of a sudden, he was there talking to me. One of the most remarkable things that has ever occurred to me.

It only happened because I had read something that Borges had written about Whitman. I had, before that, given up on Whitman.

I first heard of Borges when Gene Wolfe suggested that I might enjoy him.

.
Indeed.

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I'd settle for uniformity. But no doubt you are large,
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Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 09:57 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Jeff Wilson writes:

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It is certainly scientific in the old sense.

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It has been gone over for a long time by some brilliant people and the loose ends are pretty much all tied up.

How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiables?

What about them?

Unobservable phenomena and unfalsifiable hypotheses are scientific in neither the current sense nor that used a thousand years ago.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

James Wynn — 19 Dec 2009, 10:18 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

It's not which way your doxy swings, it's about the message before that.

Protestants don't slice any material bits off of the Creed.

No, but they've redefined terms (you know, like "I believe ... in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church ...") to suit themselves.

I'm not sure "to suit themselves" is the right term. They were led to their positions by a series of empirical observations of the Roman Catholic religion in practice. In the end they chose to believe that God and his Church were pure and the Pope and his bishops were damned rather than the other way around.

Too, they
tossed out bits of Scripture that didn't suit them....

Now that this claim has been confirmed by a non-brunians, I'm curious as to what those bits were.

then set up the
unprecedented principle of "Sola Scriptura."

Well, perhaps it only seemed unprecedented because the Church authorities were burning at people at the stake for translating the Bible into the vernacular (which is what St. Jerome did when he wrote the Vulgate). Was burning the translators merely a bad practice? Or was it based on a bad theology?

Look, Dan'l, the scandal of Indulgences was not just a bad "practice". Luther's point was that it struck to the heart of the doctrine of Salvation. If you think the Indulgences were wrong (as Luther did), you can either take his position that the claim of papal infallibility is "a creation of men" or you must presume the papal see was vacant at the time (as my Reformed Catholic friends believe has been the case since some time before Vatican II). Otherwise, you have to

accept that the Pope has the right to sell an escape from Purgatory for cold hard cash (see Acts 8:20).

No: the Protestant "reformation" was a series of heresies.
Luther had a point. There were things that were wrong with the practice (NOT the theology) of the Roman church.
Had [Luther] been patient enough to work within the Roman system, they might have been addressed much sooner

I think you need to check out a biography of Luther. What you are suggesting seems to have been Luther's intention when he nailed his little tract to the door. Unfortunately, the Pope really needed to pay for Saint Peter's Basilica, so he wasn't inclined to listen. I'm pretty sure that before Luther had successfully worked his way through the Roman system, he would have ended up so many other reformers who had tried that over the previous 400 years (heard of John Huss?). That definitely seems to have been the plan in Rome.

I really don't think you can put the long time it took the Vatican to "come around" at Luther's doorstep. He tried just about every route until he finally decided that "the Church" could not have ever been intended to be something that could be subjugated from Rome, Italy.

Speaking of Huss, he was definitely a guy who planned to "work within the Roman system". He accepted a promise that he would not be harmed if presented him to explain why translating the Bible the common-tongue was not heretical. They listened to his explanation and then burned him. When Pope Benedict XVI recently went to the Czech Republic, there was a lot of talk about how he might choose to admit that burning Huss was a bad thing (since the RCC produces lots of vernacular Bibles now). He didn't. So maybe reform would have taken a lot longer than Luther's lifetime even if some bishop didn't manage to shorten it.

-- some of them were not properly addressed until the second Vatican council, which might properly be seen as the Church's response to the legitimate complaints of the Reformers.

See above on Reformed Catholics.

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 13:36 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiables?

What about them?

Unobservable phenomena and unfalsifiable hypotheses are scientific in neither the current sense nor that used a thousand years ago.

Really?

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Adam Thornton — 19 Dec 2009, 15:58 · in reply to Jerry Friedman

On Dec 18, 2009, at 10:40 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:
I'd settle for uniformity. But no doubt you are large,

Brunians so fat, when he sit around the house, he sit AROUND the house!

Oh snap!

Adam

Adam Thornton — 19 Dec 2009, 15:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

On Dec 19, 2009, at 3:57 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

Unobservable phenomena and unfalsifiable hypotheses are scientific in neither the current sense nor that used a thousand years ago.

And so Jeff Wilson was torn limb from limb by an angry mob of string theorists.

Adam

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 16:24 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

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Absolutely; I have the nth geenration copies of the written testimony penned by fallible men to prove it.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 16:25 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Adam Thornton wrote:

On Dec 19, 2009, at 3:57 AM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

Unobservable phenomena and unfalsifiable hypotheses are scientific in neither the current sense nor that used a thousand years ago.

And so Jeff Wilson was torn limb from limb by an angry mob of string theorists.

As long as they don't eat the limbs

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 16:50 · in reply to Adam Thornton

Merely a hundred, hundred-twenty pounds overweight.

I've been fatter.

.

On Dec 18, 2009, at 10:40 PM, Jerry Friedman wrote:

I'd settle for uniformity. But no doubt you are large,

Brunians so fat, when he sit around the house, he sit AROUND the house!

Oh snap!

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brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 16:58 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

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Unobservable phenomena and unfalsifiable hypotheses are scientific in neither the current sense nor that used a thousand years ago.

Really?

Absolutely; I have the nth generation copies of the written testimony penned by fallible men to prove it.

I see.

You're in college, right?

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brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 16:59 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Adam Thornton wrote:

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James B. Jordan — 19 Dec 2009, 17:20 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

doxologia, paean or prayer, comes from doxa, glory, splendor, brightness, fame, prestige. That's the meaning in koine. In earlier attic Greek, doxa meant opinion.

Go here for a bit of info: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doxa>

It's not one or the other. It's context. In the Church, doxology means "word of praise," and orthodoxy means "correct praise" or "correct opinion." The Russian church is called "pravo-slavnie," "true praise," or in English "ortho-dox."

JBJordan

At 02:02 PM 12/18/2009, you wrote:
Opinion and belief are the same word in Greek. That word is 'doxos'.

It is sometimes translated as opinion and it is sometimes translated as belief.

This uniform employment of radical meanings for terms is a personal practice which I encourage others to adopt.

Some others have.

I freely admit that most others use terms in other, less perfect ways.

.

.

Um, no. In English, usually "right opinion." In Eastern Orthodoxy, "right praise." It can be either. "Right Praise" is original, since the arguments were over the date of Pascha and other liturgical matters.

JBJordan

At 01:10 PM 12/18/2009, you wrote:
Um, no it isn't. "Ortho" = "right" and "doxa" = "belief."
Right-believing.

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 11:08 AM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 10:53 AM, <brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

Remember, I always use the radical meaning of a given term.

The radical meaning of "orthodoxy" is "right-worshipping."

--

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.
Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 17:33 · in reply to James B. Jordan

That's interesting.

Epictetus, who is in koine, uses it in the earlier sense.

It is also the sense in which I use it.

doxologia, paean or prayer, comes from doxa, glory, splendor, brightness, fame, prestige. That's the meaning in koine. In earlier attic Greek, doxa meant opinion.

Go here for a bit of info: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doxa>

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Matt +

The Ides of March have come.

Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 Dec 2009, 18:01 · in reply to James Wynn

On Sat, Dec 19, 2009 at 2:18 AM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
No, but they've redefined terms (you know, like "I believe ... in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church ...") to suit themselves.

I'm not sure "to suit themselves" is the right term. They were led to their positions by a series of empirical observations of the Roman Catholic religion in practice. In the end they chose to believe that God and his Church were pure and the Pope and his bishops were damned rather than the other way around.

So there were only two choices? How binaristic.

Too, they
tossed out bits of Scripture that didn't suit them....

Now that this claim has been confirmed by a non-brunians, I'm curious as to what those bits were.

Among other things, Ecclesiasticus (a/k/a Sirach), the first two books of Maccabees, and chunks of Daniel and Esther. You will often find them in Protestant bibles listed as "apocrypha," a term more properly reserved for books like the Apocalypse of Peter.

then set up the
unprecedented principle of "Sola Scriptura."

Well, perhaps it only seemed unprecedented because the Church authorities were burning at people at the stake for translating the Bible into the vernacular (which is what St. Jerome did when he wrote the Vulgate). Was burning the translators merely a bad practice? Or was it based on a bad theology?

It was unprecedented because Scripture had never been the basis for the faith: rather, the other way around. The Church had written the New Testament and established the canon of the Old (independently and differently from the soi-disant "council of Jamnia"), and therefore could not have been based on them.

Look, Dan'l, the scandal of Indulgences was not just a bad "practice".

That's exactly what it was.

Luther's point was that it struck to the heart of the doctrine of Salvation. If you think the Indulgences were wrong (as Luther did), you can either take his position that the claim of papal infallibility is "a creation of men" or you must presume the papal see was vacant at the time (as my Reformed Catholic friends believe has been the case since some time before Vatican II).

Actually, the concept of papal infallibility didn't even exist at the time. It was not defined until the first Vatican Council in the 1800s. Which might militate toward considering it a "creation of men," but that's a different question.

The claim of the Church's infallibility is strictly limited: when something is solemnly declared, under defined circumstances and using defined formulae, it cannot be wrong in a way that will lead to damnation; further, infallibility applies only to matters of faith and morals.

Thus, the Church has not and cannot issue an infallible proclamation on, for example, the question of married or female clergy. These are questions of practice and discipline, not faith and morals.

The entire concept of indulgences is complicated. The idea that you describe below...

Otherwise, you have to accept that the Pope has the right to sell an escape from Purgatory for cold hard cash (see Acts 8:20).

...is and was based on a fallacy. Purgatory has never been defined as a "place," only a fact. Simply enough, it is clear that most of us do not achieve full sanctification in this life; yet the nature of God is such that something less than fully sanctified cannot exist in His presence. Ergo, somewhere after death, the blessed undergo some process which completes their sanctification. We call this process "Purgatory," and folk-Catholicism makes it a place.

Priests and Popes are often guilty of folk-Catholicism, but the guidance of the Holy Spirit (which is the basis for the claim of infallibility - backed up by the Scriptural promise that the Holy Spirit will "lead you into all truth") has always prevented it from being defined.

I think you need to check out a biography of Luther.

I've read two, including the excellent "Here I Stand." He was - in my opinion - an oathbreaker who started his own anti-Church because he couldn't bring himself to follow his vows of obedience and chastity.

I'm pretty sure that before Luther had successfully worked his way through the Roman system, he would have ended up so many other reformers who had tried that over the previous 400 years (heard of John Huss?). That definitely seems to have been the plan in Rome.

I may have spoken misleadingly. I don't mean to suggest that Luther would have achieved the reforms he originally sought in his lifetime. The Church is like a dinosaur; you kick it in the ass and a hundred years later it turns around and says, "Huh?" This is both strength and weakness: the weakness is obvious, the strength is that it doesn't easily change vital opinions to accommodate the fashions of the age.

I really don't think you can put the long time it took the Vatican to "come around" at Luther's doorstep.

I don't, entirely. I believe that the Deformation made the real reform take longer, but it would have been a long road in any case.

-- some of them were not properly addressed until the second Vatican council, which might properly be seen as the Church's response to the legitimate complaints of the Deformers.

See above on Reformed Catholics.

Those guys are serious heretics. I don't think most modern Protestants are really "heretics"; they live in a new orthodoxy that happens, in my opinion, to be wrong, but are not damned for it. As an Evangelical minister of my acquaintance puts it, "We aren't going to be met at the Pearly Gates with a theology quiz."

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Matthew Weber — 19 Dec 2009, 18:10 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Sat, Dec 19, 2009 at 10:01 AM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

Thus, the Church has not and _cannot_ issue an infallible proclamation on, for example, the question of married or female clergy. These are questions of practice and discipline, not faith and morals.

This is a bit of a tangent, but I figured it was worth mentioning : I agree with you that clerical celibacy is a matter of discipline and not doctrine or dogma. The ordination of women, though, seems to be of a different order. Theologians disagree on whether that's a matter of discipline or doctrine; predictably, the more progressive claim it's a disciplinary issue and the more traditional hold that it's doctrinal. The issue, it seems to me, is whether the proper matter for the sacrament of Orders is a human being or a male human being. Traditional practice and thought on the topic seems to imply the latter.

There are other provinces and jurisdictions of the Church Catholic which have always had married clergy (the Roman Rite among them, until the early medieval era); prior to the late 20th century, I can't think of any church with a claim to the Catholic tradition that ordained women.

Matt +

The Ides of March have come.
Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From PLUTARCH, Lives, Caesar, sec. 63

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 19:34 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:
brunians at brunians.org wrote:

How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiables?

What about them?

Unobservable phenomena and unfalsifiable hypotheses are scientific in neither the current sense nor that used a thousand years ago.

Really?

Absolutely; I have the nth generation copies of the written testimony penned by fallible men to prove it.

I see.

You're in college, right?

Yes, two of them at the moment.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 19:44 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Matthew Weber wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 7:31 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com
<mailto:jwilson at io.com>> wrote:

brunians at brunians.org <mailto:brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

It is certainly scientific in the old sense.

It has been gone over for a long time by some brilliant people
and the
loose ends are pretty much all tied up.

How about transubstantiation, and other unobservable unfalsifiables?

Could you unpack what you mean by "transubstantiation"? Where I come from, the word is used to describe a theory of how the Real Presence in the Eucharist works; a theory couched in 13th-century neo-Aristotelian philosophico-scientific terms.

It is a conjecture that in the sacrament of Holy Communion the substance of the bread and wine literally becomes the substance of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, while the species, the appearance available to the senses remains exactly as before. To be a scientific theory, this would have to be supported by a body of observations and experiments that would show a different result if the conjecture were false. Not only has this not been done by the Church's thinkers, people attempting to procure samples of the Eucharist for examination are harassed and charged with kidnapping and assault, and falsification has been discouraged historically by threat of anathema, despite the continuity of species making it unfalsifiable by definition.

Look at any of the great works of systematic theology (Thomas's Summa, John Damascene's Exposition, Lombard's Sentences). There's nothing wrong with the reasoning in any of these works, and they proceed in an orderly, rational, and coherent fashion. Whether you find them credible will depend, of course, on whether you accept their basic assumptions. Criticizing them for not following the methods of 21st century science is a bit like criticizing theoretical mathematics for not having a good beat. That's not what they're /for/.

The methods of 21st century science are also those of 17th century Galilean science and the 11th century Book of Optics, but I agree that scientific rigor is not what religious texts are for. I think that their highest purpose is explaining that religion is useful despite being primarily concerned with things that are not subject to scientific inquiry.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Dec 2009, 19:52 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Jeff, you are using the modern definition of the term 'science'.

Traditionally, any coherent and systematically organized body of knowledge is a science.

The term was redefined in the 16th, 17th century or so, along with many other terms.

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Matthew Weber wrote:

On Fri, Dec 18, 2009 at 7:31 PM, Jeff Wilson <jwilson at io.com
<mailto:jwilson at io.com>> wrote:

brunians at brunians.org <mailto:brunians at brunians.org> wrote:

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IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 19 Dec 2009, 20:22 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Jeff, you are using the modern definition of the term 'science'.

Traditionally, any coherent and systematically organized body of knowledge is a science.

That's the archaic _educational_ sense, then, so one could say that Christianity was an artistic faith, as the arts were equally such.

I was thinking you were using it in the sense of research, as Aquinas determining the canonical nature of angels and their process of falling in the 13th century, two centuries after Alhazad was measuring light with surveying instruments to make sure it was traveling in a straight line.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

James Wynn — 20 Dec 2009, 06:13 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I,

In the end they chose to believe that God and his Church were pure and the Pope and his bishops were damned rather than the other way around.

So there were only two choices? How binaristic.

When you are presented with a choice with existential

Too, they tossed out bits of Scripture that didn't suit them....

I'm curious as to what those bits were.

[The deuterocanon]

Ah! Well, they didn't "toss" the deuterocanon because there was some theology in them they didn't like ("suit them"). They tossed them because they considered their origins questionable in the extreme and not included in the Hebrew canon.

You're entire denunciation of Luther and the "Deformers" is based on a presumption that that "the Church" is synonymous with the the Roman Church hierarchy: Therefore, it is *they* (a group that includes the church leadership 1500 years later and even at its most corrupted) and not the Apostles who wrote the New Testament. And the authority of those apostles (you seem to presume) is based on their membership within this group. But one cannot view "them" (that group) as such an eternal entity. Otherwise, where was the Church during the *years* when the leadership was deeply divided about who was the Pope?

Was it the Roman Church who "wrote" the Bible or the Eastern Orthodox one? If it was both, why can't the Lutheran Church make the same claim since they branched from the same root? And if the Reformed Church (not to be confused with Reformed Catholics) were also that church which wrote the Bible, then why can't they reconsider the canon of the Old Testament? After all, we're not talking about vital doctrine to either Christians or Jews. The harumphing over "tossing out bits of Scripture" seems to have more to do annoyance at the Reformer's ephrontery rather than concern that the Scripture was actually losing something vital.

Having lived for a time in Rome himself and having seen concupiscence and venality as rule among the leadership there, Luther had already dispensed with the idea that "the Church" could be closely identified with those men.

Look, Dan'I, the scandal of Indulgences was not just a bad "practice".

That's exactly what it was.

I repeat:

Luther's point was that it struck to the heart of the doctrine of Salvation.

Either the Pope was (and could be) wrong about the doctrine of Salvation and made existential promises (From The Chair) that he certainly could not deliver on -- or he was a pretender: not the *real* head of the "True Church" (as my Reformed Catholic friends believe is the case now). Luther believed the first when he nailed his theses to the door, and probably believed the latter as well by he was debating Transubstantiation with Zwingli.

Actually, the concept of papal infallibility didn't even exist at the time.

It was not defined until the first Vatican Council in the 1800s.

The concept was not created at the Vatican Council.

I don't, entirely. I believe that the Deformation made the real reform take longer, but it would have been a long road in any case.

I'd say they sped it along. I think the RCC made some pretty significant and good internal reforms due to Reformation. It was also vital to the RCC making accommodations with Rationalism. The Reformation was largely a creature of Rationalism and the printing press. Sola Scriptura would have been a meaningless platitude without the ability of the masses to easily obtain Bible's in their own tongue. Perhaps the Church leaders recognized that, and so kept such a brutal thumb on those who attempted to duplicate St. Jerome's great feat.

[Reformed Catholics] are serious heretics. I don't think most modern Protestants are really "heretics"; they live in a new orthodoxy that happens, in my opinion, to be wrong, but are not damned for it.

When most Protestants speak of "orthodox", they are referring to something akin to Augustinian theology. Luther, Calvin, and 95% of educated Protestants accept Augustine or near-Augustine as the "orthodox" coin of the realm. And he's a RC saint. I realize Catholic priests mean something more extensive by the term and Eastern Orthodox mean something wholly different. But Augustine is a nice broad tent that even has room for Reformed Catholics (who in my opinion, are merely doing what you think Luther ought to have done).

J.

John Watkins — 20 Dec 2009, 13:42 · in reply to James Wynn

James,

Your comment is all very well and good for the deuterocanon as far as it goes, but I think intellectual honesty requires a few additional acknowledgements.

1) Most of the early Christians the Protestant Reformation identified itself with freely quoted from the so-called deuterocanon, implying that they accepted its veracity. St. Paul even quotes from Maccabees in Hebrews, and obviously Jerome acknowledged the deuterocanon as canonical.

2) The Jewish acceptance or non-acceptance of the contents of the deuterocanon is a wee bit more complex of a story than you're admitting. It's not as though the deuterocanon was intentionally plucked off the Hebrew scrap heap by the Catholic Church--the majority of it was included in the Septuagint, which served as the de facto Hebrew canon in the first century. The modern Hebrew canon didn't emerge for some time after that, and arguably the rise of Christianity, which did use the Septuagint, influenced the Hebrew decision to break away from it.

I agree with your larger point about the Reformation spurring the Counter-Reformation, and

don't really want to attempt to heal any six-hundred-year-old wounds on this list. Obviously your observation about Augustine and his philosophy and theology establishes that there ought to be enough common ground to have a nice, productive dialogue bringing Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant views to bear on any given issue without engaging in insults.

On Sun, Dec 20, 2009 at 1:13 AM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
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Protestants are really "heretics"; they live in a new orthodoxy that happens, in my opinion, to be wrong, but are not damned for it.

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J.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 20 Dec 2009, 19:48 · in reply to James Wynn

On Sat, Dec 19, 2009 at 10:13 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:
[The deuterocanon]

Ah! Well, they didn't "toss" the deuterocanon because there was some theology in them they didn't like ("suit them"). They tossed them because they considered their origins questionable in the extreme and not included in the Hebrew canon.

That was the excuse given, yes.

The fact is that the (modern) Jewish canon was not set until after the rise of Christianity.

The fact is that the early Church fathers, including Paul, freely quoted from the "deuterocanon." If the "Reformation" was a return to the form of the early Church, they ought to have taken that into account.

The fact is that the deuterocanon - particularly Maccabees and Tobit - contained theological statements that were inconvenient for Luther, Zwingli, et alia. Luther even wished he could deform the New Testament by removing the Epistle of James, "an epistle of straw" with "nothing of the Gospel in it." (Why? He doesn't state this clearly but I suspect it was because James' epistle militates rather strongly against a pure "Sola Fide" approach: "What good is faith without deeds" and all that.)

You're entire denunciation of Luther and the "Deformers" is based on a presumption that that "the Church" is synonymous with the the Roman Church hierarchy:

Not the hierarchy, no; the massed body of believers that constitutes the Mystical Body of Christ. Luther et al. chose to dismember that Body.

Incidentally, along with the Roman church, I do believe that Protestants are members of that Body. Just to be clear on that.

Therefore, it is **they** (a group that includes the church leadership 1500 years later and even at its most corrupted) and not the Apostles who wrote the New Testament.

No. It is the Mystical Body of Christ, long before the fifteenthundreds, who selected the "apostolic" texts that constitute canon. There is some reasonable doubt as to the apostolic origin of some of those texts, and there were other texts of seemingly apostolic origin which did not get selected. The canon was selected by the Church - there was no divinely-given Table of Contents.

And the authority of those apostles (you seem to presume) is based on their membership within this group.

No. Rather, the authority of the church hierarchy derives from its continuity with the Apostles.

But one cannot view "them" (that group) as such an eternal entity. Otherwise, where was the Church during the **years** when the leadership was deeply divided about who was the Pope?

I don't know that part of history well enough to answer that question adequately. I freely admit my ignorance.

Was it the Roman Church who "wrote" the Bible or the Eastern Orthodox one?

That's an interesting question, and complicated by the fact that some of the Eastern churches include in their canon additional texts that are not a part of the Roman canon (not to mention a couple of other ancient canons such as the Coptic). I don't have easy answers for all questions.

If it was both, why can't the Lutheran Church make the same claim since they branched from the same root?

My claim is that the Lutheran church chose its canon for wrong reasons, listed above.

Let me put it this way: if you take the attitude you are proposing here, then the logical result is that you have no argument against the Book of Mormon, or the "corrected" Bible of the

Jehovah's Witnesses.

And if the Reformed Church (not to be confused with Reformed Catholics) were also that church which wrote the Bible, then why can't they reconsider the canon of the Old Testament?

Since I deny that the Reformed Church was at that time "also that Church," I can't answer this question meaningfully.

After all, we're not talking about vital doctrine to either Christians or Jews. The harumphing over "tossing out bits of Scripture" seems to have more to do with annoyance at the Reformer's ephrontery rather than concern that the Scripture was actually losing something vital.

Disagree strongly. There are theological points in the "deuterocanon" that are indeed vital. One of the interesting effects of the Lutheran rejection is that the Protestant Bible manages to contain a book with not one mention of God - the only references to God in Esther are in the parts that the Protestants threw out.

Second Maccabees provides the scriptural basis for the practice of praying for the souls of the dead, something that many Protestant churches regard as next to necromancy.

Having lived for a time in Rome himself and having seen concupiscence and venality as rule among the leadership there, Luther had already dispensed with the idea that "the Church" could be closely identified with those men.

That's because the hierarchy isn't the Church. Never was, though the hierarchy made that mistake for some centuries.

Look, Dan'l, the scandal of Indulgences was not just a bad "practice".

That's exactly what it was.

I repeat:

Luther's point was that it struck to the heart of the doctrine of Salvation.

Either the Pope was (and could be) wrong about the doctrine of Salvation and made existential promises (From The Chair) that he certainly could not deliver on ?-- or he was a pretender: not the **real** head of the "True Church" (as my Reformed Catholic friends believe is the case now). Luther believed the first when he nailed his theses to the door, and probably believed the latter as well by he was debating Transubstantiation with Zwingli.

But Indulgences have **NOTHING** to do with salvation. A soul "in Purgatory" **is** a saved soul; it is on the way to Heaven. The **practice** of selling indulgences was about the purely speculative nature of Purgatory. No Pope or Council, even in the darkest of times, provided a definition of Purgatory that would actually support the practice of selling indulgences.

Incidentally, indulgences are still present in the Catholic faith. It's just that you can't buy them.

Actually, the concept of papal infallibility didn't even exist at the time.

It was not defined until the first Vatican Council in the 1800s.

The concept was not created at the Vatican Council.

I didn't say it was. I said it wasn't defined (i.e., made a part of actual Catholic ecclesiastical theology) until then. The concept did exist as early as the seventeens, and maybe a little

earlier.

I'd say they sped it along. I think the RCC made some pretty significant and good internal reforms due to Reformation. It was also vital to the RCC making accommodations with Rationalism.

Yes. The RCC has the ability to do this. A number of Protestant churches still don't, which is why we have people who believe that the fossil record is a lie.

The Reformation was largely a creature of Rationalism and the printing press.

I would add "the rise of the bourgeois class."

Sola Scriptura would have been a meaningless platitude without the ability of the masses to easily obtain Bible's in their own tongue. Perhaps the Church leaders recognized that, and so kept such a brutal thumb on those who attempted to duplicate St. Jerome's great feat.

Interestingly, it isn't that the Church forbade translations into then- modern languages; it is that the Church forbade doing so without the guidance of the Church. Consider the Douay-Rheims translation, which dates from the fifteens.

When most Protestants speak of "orthodox", they are referring to something akin to Augustinian theology. Luther, Calvin, and 95% of educated Protestants accept Augustine or near-Augustine as the "orthodox" coin of the realm. And he's a RC saint.

Not merely a saint, but a Doctor of the Church - his theology is considered to be baseline for Catholics. But then, Augustine (i.e., the City of God) clearly supports the idea that the Church has a natural hierarchy.

I realize Catholic priests mean something more extensive by the term and Eastern Orthodox mean something wholly different. But Augustine is a nice broad tent that even has room for Reformed Catholics (who in my opinion, are merely doing what you think Luther ought to have done).

No; I think they're doing what Luther did, i.e., breaking from the central Church because they can no longer accept the authority of the hierarchy.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

James Wynn — 21 Dec 2009, 01:15 · in reply to John Watkins

John,

I absolutely agree with pts 1&2. On pt 2, I'll go farther and posit that Judaism was *recreated* to a large extent in the 2nd century to enable it to go on after the destruction of the Temple (I didn't just think this up. An Orthodox Jew asserted this much to me about 10 years ago). This Neo-Judaism (as you imply) was formed to a great extent as a counter-Christianity and so the Septuagint was scrapped (being the Bible Christians used) where as before it was accepted as a divinely inspired translation (yet, the Orthodox Jews I've talked to still accept the "70 translators" story as factual). So, following the Hebrew Bible as the rule was essentially giving the day to Christianity's enemies without getting anything in return.

But that leads to my main point: The Reformers (or Deformers if one wants to insist) did not dispense with the deuterocanon just because they didn't "like" them. They had no reason at all to dispense with them other than that they were convinced that the books were self-evidently not authored at the time or by the people they claimed. It was an act of Rationalism to drop

them, and the Reformation was a child of a more Rational age. IIRC Luther suspected Revelation should have been dropped as well.

Finally, just because a writer (even a divinely inspired one as the Reformers saw it) quotes from a text, does not make that text itself divinely inspired. The Book of Enoch was also quoted by Jude and by various Church Fathers thru the end of the 2nd century. This, even though it was deliberately excluded from the Septuagint. Then, at some time in the 3rd century they stopped quoting from it and it was soon "lost". I suspect this occurred when Christian scholars ceased to consider it trustworthy as Scripture.

Luther was a man of many faults, looking back at him 400 years later. Dan'l accused me of being binary, but Luther tended to see all things binarily. In his view, the rebels in the Peasant's War were violating the Bible's command to be subject to one's rulers and so he bestowed a blessing on those who cut them down (Irony? Maybe. But see the end of this paragraph). When Zwingli died in battle defending Zurich, Luther's attitude was "Serves him right" for carrying a sword as a priest. But to call him an oath-breaker, I think, is out-luthering Luther. It seems to me, he had come to believe that those who demanded the oath celibacy from him were frauds (the church leaders in Rome who --often as not-- never followed the oath themselves and were in many cases cynical skeptics toward Christianity as a whole) and that that oath was part of their fraud. Maybe he was wrong, but he saw what he saw and drew his conclusions, and I don't think there is enough counter-evidence to condemn him as an oath-breaker.

J.

Jeffrey Brent McBeth — 21 Dec 2009, 02:16 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Let me put it this way: if you take the attitude you are proposing here, then the logical result is that you have no argument against the Book of Mormon, or the "corrected" Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Disclaimer, I am a Mormon. I also am skipping the context of the above paragraph, as it isn't relevant to the information below.

Just a quick point out. The Mormons went with the King James version of the Bible (without Maccabees, etc). We are encouraged to seek out the other books, but are told that we are on our own with respect to its nature as scripture.

Oh, and fascinating discussion, even if it has fallen off the tracks :)

Jeff

"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them."
-- Mark Twain

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 21 Dec 2009, 02:16 · in reply to James Wynn

On Sun, Dec 20, 2009 at 5:15 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote: Luther was a man of many faults, looking back at him 400 years later. Dan'l accused me of being binary, but Luther tended to see all things binarily. In his view, the rebels in the Peasant's War were violating the Bible's command to be subject to one's rulers and so he bestowed a blessing on those who cut them down (Irony? Maybe. But see the end of this paragraph). When Zwingli died in battle defending Zurich, Luther's attitude was "Serves him right" for carrying a sword as a priest. But to call him an oath-breaker, I think,

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Obviously, I disagree. If others broke their oaths, that does not excuse him breaking his. If the Pope and all the Bishops jumped off the Wurtemberg tower, would that mean Luther should? As it were.

Luther was setting himself up as better than the Church hierarchy. To begin that project by breaking his oaths casts the whole project in doubt.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 21 Dec 2009, 02:19 · in reply to Jeffrey Brent McBeth

On Sun, Dec 20, 2009 at 6:16 PM, Jeffrey Brent McBeth <mcbeth at broggs.org> wrote:
Disclaimer, I am a Mormon. ?I also am skipping the context of the above paragraph, as it isn't relevant to the information below.

Jeffrey: Equal disclaimer - I hold no grudge against Mormons in general or the CoJCoLDS. I picked Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses as two examples of Protestant groups whom "mainline" Protestants often think have "gone too far" and are "not really Christians." My point is that the basis of Protestantism is logically inconsistent with making those judgements.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Matthew Weber — 21 Dec 2009, 02:28 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Sun, Dec 20, 2009 at 6:19 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danl do at gmail.com> wrote:
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<<http://www.urth.net>>

I don't think that's quite fair to Protestantism. There are still plenty of Protestants whose creedal orthodoxy is as sound as any Catholic's. Most of them aren't mainline Protestants, though, but members of traditionalist groups that have split from the main line : the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod vs. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church in America vs. Presbyterian Church (USA), the various Anglican continuing churches vs The Episcopal Church (at least semi-Protestant), etc.

I agree that Reformed Christianity is problematic, but that's chiefly due to the innovative nature of its theory of authority (and its rejection of, or indifference to, traditional Christian polity and ecclesiology--which springs from the same defective theory of authority).

Matt +

I came, I saw, I conquered.
Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), From SUETONIUS, Lives of the Caesars, Julius,
sec. 37

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Dec 2009, 02:46 · in reply to Jeffrey Brent McBeth

I personally have no problem with the Book of Mormon or the "corrected" Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Both Mormonism and JWism are perfectly fine religions.

Remember, I am **not** a Christian. Brunians accept everything that Catholics accept, and we accept a few extra bits, which is why we are Brunians and not Catholic Christians. We are a deviation from Christianity in the same sense that (Catholic and Orthodox) Christianity (and Islam to a much lesser extent) is a deviation from Judaism.

Let me put it this way: if you take the attitude you are proposing here, then the logical result is that you have no argument against the Book of Mormon, or the "corrected" Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Disclaimer, I am a Mormon. I also am skipping the context of the above paragraph, as it isn't relevant to the information below.

Just a quick point out. The Mormons went with the King James version of the Bible (without Maccabees, etc). We are encouraged to seek out the other books, but are told that we are on our own with respect to its nature as scripture.

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James Wynn — 21 Dec 2009, 03:49 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Ah! Well, they didn't "toss" the deuterocanon because there was some theology in them they didn't like ("suit them"). They tossed them because they considered their origins questionable in the extreme and not included in the Hebrew canon.

That was the excuse given, yes. The fact is that the (modern) Jewish canon was not set until after the rise of Christianity. The fact is that the early Church fathers, including Paul, freely quoted from the "deuterocanon." If the "Reformation" was a return to the form of the early Church, they ought to have taken that into account.

See my post to John. For he record, I think excising the deterocanon was justified, although I recommend them for reading anyway.

The fact is that the deuterocanon - particularly Maccabees and Tobit - contained theological statements that were inconvenient for Luther, Zwingli, et alia. Luther even wished he could deform the New Testament by removing the Epistle of James, "an epistle of straw" with "nothing of the Gospel in it." (Why? He doesn't state this clearly but I suspect it was because James' epistle militates rather strongly against a pure "Sola Fide" approach: "What good is faith without deeds" and all that.)

Oh! So Luther not *liking* the Book of James was not enough?! You need to make up reasons for him not liking it? As I pointed out to John, Luther didn't like Revelation either. Wow! Luther's opinions carried soooo much weight among the Reformers who set the Protestant canon, didn't they? And his opinions about transubstantiation was law for the Reformers, right? Incidentally, Paul had no trouble with the "no true faith without works" concept and I can't see that the Reformers did either. Ephesians and James both breezed into the Protestant canon.

Not the hierarchy, no; the massed body of believers that constitutes the Mystical Body of Christ. Luther et al. chose to dismember that Body.

Well, by your lights he wasn't the first member of that body to do so, was he? The Bishop of Rome and the Primate of the Orthodox Church chose to damn each other's half of The Mystical Body of Christ (TMBC) to Hell centuries earlier. Or maybe he only intended for TMBC to be liberated (from the bishops on down) from (as he saw it) unrepentant parasites who were taking advantage of it.

Incidentally, along with the Roman church, I do believe that Protestants are members of that Body. Just to be clear on that.

Then it's not dismembered. And Luther is part of TMBC too. And he asserted that the Church leadership was gravely in the wrong, not because they were *inconsistent* regarding their own Church ordinances, but because they had violated Scripture in which they claimed their authority was documented. Who was to judge between Luther and those in power whom he accused? Sola Scriptura.

There is simply no way to dispense with that concept once one accepts that Church leaders can often be --not just sinners-- but woefully corrupt.

No. It is the Mystical Body of Christ, long before the fifteenthundreds, who selected the "apostolic" texts that constitute canon. There is some reasonable doubt as to the apostolic origin of some of those texts, and there were other texts of seemingly apostolic origin which did not get selected. The canon was selected by the Church - there was no divinely-given Table of Contents.

Well, to paraphrase RC Flannery O'Connor, if the "apostolic texts" are not authentic, to hell with them.

What Luther saw in Rome caused him to doubt that a significant portion of parliament of the Pope and Cardinals were part of TMBC. So why did the Body need them? Why should those people be forever the mouth and hands of the Body if many of them didn't even believe and/or got their positions by emphatically unspiritual means?

No. Rather, the authority of the church hierarchy derives from its continuity with the Apostles.

And if the Apostolic Texts are in doubt, so is the continuity of the Apostles. Furthermore, the authority of Rome to make law for other Christians is founded on an interpretation of a passage in Matthew. It matters who wrote those books and whether Jesus actually said those things.

If it was both, why can't the Lutheran Church make the same claim since they branched from the same root?

My claim is that the Lutheran church chose its canon for wrong reasons, listed above.

Well, there's nothing wrong with that. And if someone has the same opinion about the Epistle of Barnabas that's fine too. And me and the compilers of the Protestant canon will disagree with you both. As you sort of referenced, the Eastern Orthodox Church considers 1 Esdras (part of the Septuagint) to be canonical, but rejects 2 Esdras. The RCC and Protestants consider neither to be. There are enough examples of this sort to torpedo the theory that the canon is an immutable creation of TMBC. It has always been tinkered with around the edges by The Church and by Jews before them.

Let me put it this way: if you take the attitude you are proposing here, then the logical result is that you have no argument against the Book of Mormon, or the "corrected" Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Sure I can. I can examine the totality of the JW arguments for their translations, and choose to accept them or not. TMBC is not necessary for me to decide whether they are right or not about the 1st chapter of John or Philippians 4. The Book of Mormon is another issue altogether. It has nothing to do with accepting or rejecting books as worthwhile parts of the Jewish "Writings". It all depends on whether I believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God or a con man. If the Pope or Luther or Calvin were convinced he was the real thing, I suppose I would have to take that into account. But --like you, and unlike generations who were born in the Churches of the Pope, Primate or mullah-- I *chose* my religion, because I was convinced it was true.

[question posed by me]

Since I deny that the Reformed Church was at that time "also that Church," I can't answer this question meaningfully.

Then your position is precisely like Luther's toward the Roman hierarchy. Who shall choose between you? Sola Scriptura (the only common reference that both of you consider authoritative).

Disagree strongly. There are theological points in the "deuterocanon" that are indeed vital. One of the interesting effects of the Lutheran rejection is that the Protestant Bible manages to contain a book with not one mention of God - the only references to God in Esther are in the parts that the Protestants threw out.

But that's not a theological point. Furthermore, the validity of those theological points are crucially supported by whether the authenticity of those books can be adequately defended. I understand that it doesn't matter to you if the deuterocanon books are authentic. But it matters to the RCC and it mattered to the Reformers and --I suspect-- it would matter to 99% of practicing Catholics.

Second Maccabees provides the scriptural basis for the practice of praying for the souls of the dead, something that many Protestant churches regard as next to necromancy.

Well, that's putting it pretty strong, but I agree that *every* Protestant church considers it a waste of time. Although, granted, I've known some squinty-eyed types who would see in it a plot by the RCC to hold people's love-ones hostage from beyond the grave. If the praying for the dead needs 2nd Maccabees to be authoritative, then it is in trouble.

That's because the hierarchy isn't the Church. Never was, though the hierarchy made that mistake for some centuries.

Frankly, the hierarchy is all Luther dispensed with. It wasn't until Christianity came to America that individual churches ceased to always be part of a total top-down, solid-state, unified structure. And Christians had been split into large divisions for (at least) 700 years before Luther.

But Indulgences have **NOTHING** to do with salvation. A soul "in Purgatory" **is** a saved soul; it is on the way to Heaven. The **practice** of selling indulgences was about the purely speculative nature of Purgatory. No Pope or Council, even in the darkest of times, provided a definition of Purgatory that would actually support the practice of selling indulgences.

Yet that is how the indulgences were (literally) sold at the time. You cannot overlay your appealing and enlightened doctrine of Purgatory on the marketing of indulgences 500 years later. I can't remember the source right now, but --as I recall-- the most successful salesmen gave very vivid descriptions of the loved-ones of buyers suffering in flames of torment which could be alleviated with the purchase of indulgences. And, of course, the indulgences were freely purchased for the buyers personal use as well. Some in advance. And in my experience, Catholics typically do not have a metaphoric concept of Purgatory. It's Hell. Temporary Hell, but Hell nonetheless. I've heard some recount how nuns gave very specific years of agonizing punishment in Purgatory for detailed lists of sins.

Incidentally, indulgences are still present in the Catholic faith. It's just that you can't *_buy_* them.

That a great deal of difference, doesn't it. But you can't build Saint Peter's Basilica on goodwill.

I didn't say [the concept of papal infallibility was created at the Vatican Council].

I said it wasn't defined (i.e., made a part of actual Catholic ecclesiastical theology) until then. The concept did exist as early as the seventeens, and maybe a little earlier.

The Council of Trent, two years before Luther died, said the Church's interpretation of the Bible was final. They weren't talking about TMBC. They meant the interpretation that came out of Rome.

Yes. The RCC has the ability to do this. A number of Protestant churches still don't, which is why we have people who believe that the fossil record is a lie.

There are Roman Catholics who believe this too. I really don't think the RCC is has it sooo over anybody on the issue of Rationalism that they can afford to be mocking. What I was getting at is that the Reformation forced the RCC to dispense with the underlying presumption that those keys Jesus gave to Peter allowed the Pope and Cardinals to say anything, anything at all, and have it be so. That's what I meant, and should have said.

I would add "the rise of the bourgeois class."

I'm disinclined to any "class-theory" of history.

Interestingly, it isn't that the Church forbade translations into then-modern languages; it is that the Church forbade doing so without the guidance of the Church. Consider the Douay-Rheims translation, which dates from the fifteens.

Very **late** fifteens. The 'Deformers' say, "Your welcome".

J.

I felt, probably unwisely, compelled to reply to this:

"And in my experience, Catholics typically do not have a metaphoric concept of Purgatory. It's Hell. Temporary Hell, but Hell nonetheless. I've heard some recount how nuns gave very specific years of agonizing punishment in Purgatory for detailed lists of sins."

This is not my experience (and I've been Catholic my whole life and went to Catholic school until I was 22). I'm not sure I've met a Catholic under the age of 30 who would agree with this characterization--and maybe not under the age of 50. It's true that the concept is not typically "metaphoric," but the rest is just off. I was specifically told (as an eighth grader, I think) that such interpretations of Purgatory were misunderstandings.

Frankly, the contrast between Dante's depiction of Hell and his depiction of Purgatory (even though Dante's Purgatory is no picnic) suggests to me that the distinction has been pretty clear in the typical Catholic imagination for some time.

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Protestants consider neither to be. There are enough examples of this sort to torpedo the theory that the canon is an immutable creation of TMBC. It has always been tinkered with around the edges by The Church and by Jews before them.

Let me put it this way: if you take the attitude you are proposing here, then the logical result is that you have no argument against the Book of Mormon, or the "corrected" Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Sure I can. I can examine the totality of the JW arguments for their translations, and choose to accept them or not. TMBC is not necessary for me to decide whether they are right or not about the 1st chapter of John or Philippians 4. The Book of Mormon is another issue altogether. It has nothing to do with accepting or rejecting books as worthwhile parts of the Jewish "Writings". It all depends on whether I believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God or a con man. If the Pope or Luther or Calvin were convinced he was the real thing, I suppose I would have to take that into account. But --like you, and unlike generations who were born in the Churches of the Pope, Primate or mullah-- I *chose* my religion, because I was convinced it was true.

[question posed by me]

Since I deny that the Reformed Church was at that time "also that Church," I can't answer this question meaningfully.

Then your position is precisely like Luther's toward the Roman hierarchy. Who shall choose between you? Sola Scriptura (the only common reference that both of you consider authoritative).

Disagree strongly. There are theological points in the "deuterocanon" that are indeed vital. One of the interesting effects of the Lutheran rejection is that the Protestant Bible manages to contain a book with not one mention of God - the only references to God in Esther are in the parts that the Protestants threw out.

But that's not a theological point. Furthermore, the validity of those theological points are crucially supported by whether the authenticity of those books can be adequately defended. I understand that it doesn't matter to you if the deuterocanon books are authentic. But it matters to the RCC and it mattered to the Reformers and --I suspect-- it would matter to 99% of practicing Catholics.

Second Maccabees provides the scriptural basis for the practice of praying for the souls of the dead, something that many Protestant churches regard as next to necromancy.

Well, that's putting it pretty strong, but I agree that *every* Protestant church considers it a waste of time. Although, granted, I've known some squinty-eyed types who would see in it a plot by the RCC to hold people's love-ones hostage from beyond the grave. If the praying for the dead needs 2nd Maccabees to be authoritative, then it is in trouble.

That's because the hierarchy isn't the Church. Never was, though the hierarchy made that mistake for some centuries.

Frankly, the hierarchy is all Luther dispensed with. It wasn't until Christianity came to America that individual churches ceased to always be part of a total top-down, solid-state, unified structure. And Christians had been split into large divisions for (at least) 700 years before Luther.

But Indulgences have **NOTHING** to do with salvation. A soul "in Purgatory" **is** a saved soul; it is on the way to Heaven. The **practice** of selling indulgences was about the purely speculative nature of Purgatory. No Pope or Council, even in the darkest of times, provided a definition of Purgatory that would actually support the practice of selling indulgences.

Yet that is how the indulgences were (literally) sold at the time. You cannot overlay your appealing and enlightened doctrine of Purgatory on the marketing of indulgences 500 years later. I can't remember the source right now, but --as I recall-- the most successful salesmen gave very vivid descriptions of the loved-ones of buyers suffering in flames of torment which could be alleviated with the purchase of indulgences. And, of course, the indulgences were freely purchased for the buyers personal use as well. Some in advance. And in my experience, Catholics typically do not have a metaphoric concept of Purgatory. It's Hell. Temporary Hell, but Hell nonetheless. I've heard some recount how nuns gave very specific years of agonizing punishment in Purgatory for detailed lists of sins.

Incidentally, indulgences are still present in the Catholic faith.

It's just that you can't buy them.

That a great deal of difference, doesn't it. But you can't build Saint Peter's Basilica on goodwill.

I didn't say [the concept of papal infallibility was created at the Vatican Council].

I said it wasn't defined (i.e., made a part of actual Catholic ecclesiastical theology) until then. The concept did exist as early as the seventeens, and maybe a little earlier.

The Council of Trent, two years before Luther died, said the Church's interpretation of the Bible was final. They weren't talking about TMBC. They meant the interpretation that came out of Rome.

Yes. The RCC has the ability to do this. A number of Protestant churches still don't, which is why we have people who believe that the fossil record is a lie.

There are Roman Catholics who believe this too. I really don't think the RCC is has it sooo over anybody on the issue of Rationalism that they can afford to be mocking. What I was getting at is that the Reformation forced the RCC to dispense with the underlying presumption that those keys Jesus gave to Peter allowed the Pope and Cardinals to say anything, anything at all, and have it be so. That's what I meant, and should have said.

I would add "the rise of the bourgeois class."

I'm disinclined to any "class-theory" of history.

Interestingly, it isn't that the Church forbade translations into then-modern languages; it is that the Church forbade doing so without the guidance of the Church. Consider the Douay-Rheims translation, which dates from the fifteens.

Very *late* fifteens. The 'Deformers' say, "Your welcome".

J.

O'Donnell, Tim BOSI — 21 Dec 2009, 10:28 · follows John Watkins

Hi John,

FWIW I agree. Similar experience - Catholic educated until 17 and I was clear from a young age that they were two different places/experiences.

James Wynn — 21 Dec 2009, 11:57 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Dan'I says:

Obviously, I disagree. If others broke their oaths, that does not excuse him breaking his. If the Pope and all the Bishops jumped off the Wurtemberg tower, would that mean Luther should? As it were. Luther was setting himself up as better_than the Church hierarchy. To begin that project by breaking his oaths casts the whole project in doubt.

This is so far off. Where to begin?

1) Getting married was not the START of his project. The start was that 95 Theses nailed to the door of the church. In response Luther was condemned as a heretic, his prospects not so different from Salmon Rushdie's after the fatwa and his life-style far less glamorous and much more austere. The condemnation occurred FOUR YEARS before he married. He had been excommunicated 5 years, and it was 8 years after his dramatic attempt to change to the direction in the Church.

2) Imagine some oneconvinced you that God had delivered a message to them that we all had swear an oath to live in uninsulated shacks in Alaska every winter. Then you learned that a) that person was probably the last person on the planet likely to be receiving special messages from God about the way all Christians should live, and b) that person was himself was maintaining a shack in front of a cozy mansion which was where he actually lived soaking in a sauna and drinking hot cocoa every cold winter night. c) Finally, you knew that the one source everyone agreed was "God's Word" said nothing about living in shacks in Alaska at all, and this guy didn't bother to follow any of that either.

Would you still believe your oath had been to God and not to a con man?

To accuse him oath-breaking under his particular circumstances (as he saw them), is like saying the people who ran away from the Jonestown cult during the kool-aid party were oath breakers because their oaths had actually been made to God.

I repeat: AS LUTHER SAW IT. I'm not saying the RCC is a Jim Jones cult. I'm only saying that Luther considered his oath wrongly extracted from him based on his personal, visual experience

in Rome and Bavaria, his knowledge of history, and a flat reading of the Scripture. And, for that reason, wrongly directed.

John says:

This is not my experience (and I've been Catholic my whole life and went to Catholic school until I was 22). I'm not sure I've met a Catholic under the age of 30 who would agree with this characterization--and maybe not under the age of 50."

I accept that your experience is more valid than my hearsay. But we're not talking about the last 50 years. We're talking about the early 1500s in Bavaria. The state of mind of the purchasers and the claims of the sellers are all that matter. It doesn't even matter if Purgatory is actually not every bit as bad as Hell, or even that it is not a "real place". It is sufficient that it be genuinely unpleasant and that the Church representatives were selling a promised sure-fire way to reduce the time there.

J.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 21 Dec 2009, 17:29 · in reply to James Wynn

James,

At this point I am going to drop the discussion, not because I am convinced, nor because I have no response to your well-thought-out points, but because I fear that we are edging towards uncharity -- or at least that I might become uncharitable if the conversation were to continue. Indeed, I admit that my use of the term "Deformation" was probably uncharitable and I apologize for it.

Further, neither of us is going to convince the other, and so the discussion is clearly unprofitable.

Thus I conclude by wishing you, yours, and all members of this list a very happy Feast of the Nativity.

--Dan'l

James Wynn — 21 Dec 2009, 18:22 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

At this point I am going to drop the discussion, not because I am convinced, nor because I have no response to your well-thought-out points, but because I fear that we are edging towards uncharity -- or at least that I might become uncharitable if the conversation were to continue. Indeed, I admit that my use of the term "Deformation" was probably uncharitable and I apologize for it.

Further, neither of us is going to convince the other, and so the discussion is clearly unprofitable.

Thus I conclude by wishing you, yours, and all members of this list a very happy Feast of the Nativity.

You as well Dan'!

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Dec 2009, 20:35 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Dan'l, James, All,

Thank you for making this discussion interesting as well as totally civil. I have enjoyed it

immensely. I'd like to wish everyone an excellent turn of the year, and an excellent coming year, whether and to what extent each of you spends it above or below ground.

James,

At this point I am going to drop the discussion, not because I am convinced, nor because I have no response to your well-thought-out points, but because I fear that we are edging towards uncharity -- or at least that I might become uncharitable if the conversation were to continue. Indeed, I admit that my use of the term "Deformation" was probably uncharitable and I apologize for it.

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--Dan'l
