

generic words for its god, it never defines him, it magnifies the “American Way,” it has its own saints (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln) and its own shrines (mostly in Washington, DC). Its holy day is July 4 and it holds that the USA is a “god-favored” nation. Schmidt attacks the Masons, the authors of the 1786 Virginia Religious Freedom Act, and even the U.S. Constitution (a hand offered to future polytheists). He concludes by arguing that “faith” is not to be equated with “religion.” As an example, the phrase “Hindu religion,” is OK; the phrase “Hindu faith” is without meaning. The word “interfaith,” he says, is an oxymoron. He concludes with four scriptural arguments forbidding Christians from participating in civil religious exercises.

Adams returns again with “The Church in the Public Square in a Pluralistic Society.” Summarizing the preceding essays, he presents ten theses, all keyed to recognizing that American Civil Religion is the state religion, and warning Christians against it.

Two short essays conclude the book. Adams writes about the tensions involved in being a Christian, the experience of living as “strangers in a strange land.” He writes at length on “the scandal of particularity,” and the need to not confuse the two kingdoms, the church and the secular realm.

Finally, Mark Sell writes on the two kingdom concept. It is best to read this essay first before engaging the other authors, for it is foundational to what they have to say.

I found the book interesting; it gave me insight into some of my Christian brothers with whom I have issues. I recommend everyone read it and Lutherans buy it.

Reviewed by John W. Burgeson, Rico Community Church, Rico, CO.

Serial Endosymbiosis Theory and the Hierarchy of *rps* Genes

I agree with Michael Buratovich concerning the validity of the serial endosymbiosis theory, and that neo-Darwinian mechanics alone do not explain the grand history of universal phylogeny (*PSCF* 57, no. 2 [June 2005]: 98-113). However, I disagree with the Buratovich hypothesis that the hierarchal transfer of ribosomal protein small unit (*rps*) genes from mitochondrial genomes to nuclear genomes indicates inbuilt Intelligent Design (ID) instead of neo-Darwinian mechanics, where inbuilt ID involves “purposeful forces that are wholly natural in their scope and activity.”

Buratovich explains that the hierarchal transfer of *rps* genes relates to the importance of each *rps* gene to the function of the ribosome. This suggests that the hierarchal transfer of *rps* genes relates to the selective advantage of the particular *rps* genes. And basic population genetics probability indicates that the percent of selective advantage of a particular mutation relates to the probability of fixation by natural selection for the particular mutation.

Likewise, the percent of selective advantage of particular *rps* genes relates to its probability of fixation that results in gene transfer from a mitochondrial genome to a nuclear genome. This indicates that probabilistic neo-Darwinian mechanics alone could have been responsible for the hierarchal transfer of *rps* genes.

Perhaps the major flaw of the Buratovich hypothesis is that Buratovich seeks to find inbuilt ID other than neo-Darwinian mechanics in the processes of evolutionary genetics. While I encourage an exhaustive search for inbuilt biological ID, I conjecture that biologists will never find inbuilt ID apart from neo-Darwinian mechanics. But outside manipulation may have occurred in natural history.

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Soul-Doctrine

Jeeves and Rüst grant that common soul doctrine is unfounded in Scripture (*PSCF* 57, no. 3 [Sept. 2005] 170-86; 191-201). But both seem concerned over how to discard mythology without becoming heretics. Only in real Protestantism can one suggest that both Plato and Calvin were incompetent on the subject of the Hebrew “soul.”

Realizations about Greek ghosts have long existed among the “patently heretical” notions (p. 188) that Siemens (*PSCF* 57, no. 3 [Sept. 2005]: 187-90) is anxious to label and condemn. Tyndale and Luther both taught that the Greek immortal soul doctrine and its dualism are in clear opposition to Scripture.¹

Rüst grants souls only to higher animals. However, the seas brought forth “abundantly the moving souls” during creation (Gen. 1:20). This unique *abundance* suits Cambrian invertebrates.

The meaning of the Hebrew term for living animals—translated “soul”—is in Scripture, not Greek philosophy. Tyndale realized that Greek doctrine steals Christ’s argument by which he proved the Resurrection. Abraham is alive, and this *proves* he will physically awaken. No mention is made of the alien notion of ghosts awake in heaven.

Scripture speaks of identity, not a ghost addition. Animals *are* souls. Humans *are* souls. Adam was not given a soul; he *became* a soul. The *religious* “soul” is no more (or less) than “person,” “self” or “creature.” It includes such abstract, but physically linked realities as thought, feeling and memory—but never *apart* from the physical. The Resurrection is God’s anti-Greek declaration of reorganizing this *very same dust*. Humans struggle to accept the audacious claim, primarily because they demand immediate gratification over millennial patience.

Jesus is the *one unique person* ascended to heaven. David is still in his tomb (Acts 2). Further, Paul did *not* offer condolences by claiming the dead to be awake in heaven; instead, he gave assurance that the sleepers would be gloriously awakened—literally. The physicality of resurrection is crucial to the Gospel message. Orthodoxy rejected extreme Gnosticism and came to regard its own moderate infection of the disease as correct.