

Response to Paper by Dr. Rudy Brun

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I just read in the ITEST Bulletin Vol. 31, no. 2, Spring 2000 the very interesting article of Dr. Rudolf Brun on “Genes, Evolution and the Word of God in Creation.” I found many excellent positions and expressions in this paper but in the 3rd and last part “Towards updating the Christian Theology of Nature” I think that the systematic rejection of God’s action requires some comments in the case of humankind. My considerations:

1. In Genesis 1.26 one reads: “And God said, Let us make man, wearing our own image and likeness.” This goes surely beyond the capacities of nature, it can only be a direct gift of God. But the article remains silent over this peculiarity which refers to humans alone. One is then led to see here a definite action of God, fulfilling the evolution.

2. According to a traditional Christian (at least Catholic) doctrine, God creates directly the “soul” of humans. For reasons that I have developed elsewhere (See my paper “A scientific bipolar Anthropology” in the volume *Studies in Science and Theology, 1994, 2 Origins, Time and Complexity, Labor et Fides*, Geneva, Switzerland. [The second part of the Proceedings of the ESSAT Conference held near Castel Gandolfo (Rome) in 1992.]) I prefer to replace the soul by the spirit, since animals are already endowed with a soul, which is quite natural. But, anyway, soul or spirit, there is again an intervention of God in our created world.

3. For the Judeo-Christian tradition, interventions of God are a necessity for the communication of a Revelation to humans.

4. The preceding items are in harmony with the traditional view of a goal-oriented creation of beings called to share, by love, the divine life. And these beings are precisely humans (at least on our earth).

If there are therefore interventions of God, they should not be systematically rejected as we have already to accept such divine interventions within our history. Christianity is fundamentally an historic religion, based on actions of God culminating in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Surely, the actions of God are restricted to events of paramount importance and that is the case for man. The gift of the spirit means a complete transformation on the psychic and cultural levels, a transformation that the small difference between the genomes (1 to 2%) of humans and chimpanzees seems incapable to explain. With this gift, the well-known “step of reflection” of Teilhard de Chardin has been passed; and contrary to the step of life, one may think that it is not a purely natural phenomenon.