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For Your Calendar:

The October, 1983 Conference will be held in St. Louis, Mo., October 7-9, 1983. The topic will be the role of Christian men and women of science in the work and mission of the Church. Further details will be given in the July Newsletter.

The ITEST Board of Directors has tentatively decided on the following topics for the next three ITEST meetings (March, 1984 through March, 1985): (1) Artificial intelligence; (2) Scientific Contributions: A Theological Assessment" (a positive statement about science's and technology's contribution to the life and thought of Christianity); (3) Space Exploration and Colonization. We need your help on this. If you have alternate topics or speakers for the above programs, please let us know. We are quite open to your suggestions on this; in fact, we would welcome them very much.

In the January, 1983 Newsletter, we announced that ITEST is developing a single volume summary of all the Proceedings of the Conferences, Workshops, and Monographs published over the last fifteen years. Peggy Keilholz, a member of the ITEST Board of Directors, is editing and summarizing the approximately 3500 pages of material. It is hoped that the manuscript will be completed by the end of this calendar year. We also announced a little contest (with a one-year's free dues in ITEST as the prize) for a title for this book. We have received only 5 suggestions so far. We thank those 5 and encourage the rest of you to contribute.

The March Workshop was very well attended. There were 53 present for this excellent session. We would like to thank all the participants and faculty.

RELIGION & SCIENCE: Must There Be Conflict?

William Wallace, O.P.

(This is an excerpt from a paper prepared for the ITEST Workshop, "Is the Conflict between Science and Faith Being Revived?", March, 1983.)

To one inquiring whether religion and science must be in conflict, a sobering reply might be: propose an alternative. If not conflict, or Andrew Dickson White's "warfare," between religion and science, then how else characterize their ongoing relationship? It is that problem with which we shall be largely concerned here. Simple enough it is to deny the necessity of warfare, for that is the answer we expect and all would like to hear. Yet to do so is to take on a difficult task: to go against the historical record and claim that the skirmishes of the past were simple misunderstandings, or to propose

that the future, notwithstanding the ominous clouds gathering in genetic manipulation and other areas, will usher in an era of perpetual peace. Most people are neither scientists nor theologians, and yet I suspect they are sufficiently acquainted with both to realize that there is no easy answer here. If not warfare or its absence, it will be difficult to define a middle ground that can satisfy our reasonable expectations for the twenty-first century.

Before getting into that, let me dispose quickly of another reply to the question "Must there be conflict?" -- the forthright but irreverent answer, "Why not?" After all science is concerned with man's way of looking at things, and religion with God's way of looking at things, and we all know that God's ways are not our ways. Centuries ago Tertullian asked the pointed question, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?", meaning by that what has science, the rational thought of the Greeks, to do with the heavenly city wherein God has made himself known to man. His answer was simple enough: "Nothing." And if we accept that, then of course this can be a very short lecture. But some astute Fathers of the Church, and I am thinking of Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa, saw that a premature divorce between reason and faith could do more to hurt Christian apologetics than the attempt to promote a marriage between them. The Church of the present day has inherited this mentality, and in its spirit we address the problem before us. But the mere mention of these Fathers of the Church should alert us to the fact that the debate between science and religion is but one phase of a larger controversy that has been going on for twenty centuries, that, namely, of the respective provinces of reason and belief in man's attempts to know about God and the universe he has made.

What then of the middle ground between conflict and concord, if we rule out the forced isolation that comes by erecting this high wall of separation? There are various possibilities: dialogue, even with the recognition that this can get heated and erupt into controversy; if it does, conflict resolution, which at least can end in compromise; more optimistically, collaboration on the part of scientist and believer, where in areas of competence are recognized and some form of complementarity reached. These are some of the avenues we might explore. In my view, conflict, controversy, and compromise have in the main characterized the past history of the science-religion relationship. Yet there have also been periods of collaboration, and even of euphoria when a genuine complementarity seemed realizable, if not completely attained. Its true attainment, I am afraid, remains largely a program for the future, but we will have made some advance if we come to recognize this, and think seriously how it may be brought about in the decades that lie ahead....

So enter finally the scientific creationists. Evolution had been proposed from the beginning as a theory, and in this way it was no more offensive than Galileo's heliocentrism in the early seventeenth century. The uproar came when a stronger claim was made: that evolution was a fact, certified and established beyond all doubt by the findings of science. If evolution's truth-status could be questioned, if Kuhn's views, for example, about the nature of science were correct, then why teach evolution to our children in the schools? At least give the alternative equal time: if you must teach scientific evolutionism, then teach scientific creationism along with it. Note the adjective, "scientific" creationism, for the creationists saw that the American creed, the law of the land, would be their undoing if religious belief were suspected, if their teaching were not as scientific as that of their adversaries. The battle was lost in the courts, as you are well aware, and I suppose you noted how the A.C.L.U. secured the victory in this most recent battle between science and religion. They brought

in the "authorities," scientific authorities to be sure, to say that creationism was not science and thus had no place in our schools. Be not deceived: knowledge did not define the parameters of the engagement, any more than it did in the tribunals of the Inquisition. Authority again had the last word, only this time it happened to be on the side of science rather than on that of religious belief....

At the outset we asked about conflicts between science and religion, and now we see why the potential for conflict is always there. The basic reason is that the problems being addressed permit of no instant solution. Science is time-conditioned and must undergo its own evolution. Religious doctrine also evolves, through in the hands of a conservative guardian most conscious of its authoritative responsibility. Tension is the inevitable concomitant of such wary collaboration between reason and faith. But the goal is so priceless -- truth about God, man, and the cosmos -- that we do well to live with it as we approach 1984 or 2001, with the many problems they most certainly will have for us.

SCIENCE AND FAITH: ONE TRUTH

F. G. Shi nskey

(An excerpt from a paper prepared for the ITEST March, 1983 Workshop.)

....Today, that breach between science and religion needs to be healed. However, the same forces that originally opened it will try to keep it open. Any attempt to reconcile faith in a Creator with science will be vigorously opposed by the established scientific community which has been working for the last three and a half centuries in a theological vacuum.

Existing prejudice is summed up quite well in the words of Jake Page quoted earlier: "By proving the universe their way, the scientist's have written a considerable agenda of theological questions." Which I might add, they have not bothered to ask. More to the point, perhaps, is the theologians' failure to question the scientist. They have either ignored their findings altogether or accepted them without question. In either case a much-needed dialogue has failed to develop.

The man who in my estimation was the greatest theologian of our time, C.S. Lewis, was not receptive to the theory of evolution. While not a scientist, he did not shy from refuting the argument of its proponents: "Yet those who ask me to believe this world picture also ask me to believe that Reason is simply the unforeseen and unintended byproduct of mindless matter at one stage of its endless and aimless becoming. Here is flat contradiction. They ask me at the same moment to accept a conclusion and to discredit the only testimony on which that conclusion can be based".

Neither could Lewis accept the popular notion of unlimited progress in culture: "A great many of the changes produced by evolution are not improvements by any conceivable standard....There is no general law of progress in biological history. And,...even if there were, it would not follow -- it is, indeed, manifestly not the case -- that there is any law of progress in ethical, cultural, and social history. No one looking at world history without some preconceived conception in favor of progress could find in it a steady up gradient". In other words, Teilhard de Chardin's vision of a natural tendency of all living beings toward self-perfection has no basis in fact.

Lewis was a professor of literary history, but he did not confine his mind to that particular box. The rationality of current secular thought needs to be challenged by such as he.

Reconciliation

What is currently needed is a forum to reconcile the scientific and theological questions of our day in an academic atmosphere. It would be hopeless to expect any such exchange to take place in a public arena or under secular sponsorship - the present antireligious climate in all levels of government would never allow it. The necessary dialogue must take place under the aegis of Catholic universities if it is to take place at all. To date, science courses in Catholic universities present no significant differences from those offered in secular institutions, i.e., they lack any theological orientation. And if theology courses examine current issues in scientific thought, I would be very much surprised.

In the last few years, concern over the impact of science and technology on society has occasioned a new dialogue between technical colleges and the humanities. Courses are now given at many universities exploring the history of technological development and its influence over labor, the economy, the military, and the dignity of man. Their purpose is to give technologists a better awareness of their role in society, and others a better understanding of how technology may affect their lives.

This same approach can and should be taken to integrate theology and science in universities teaching both subjects. There needs to be a new awareness of the scientists responsibilities to God, to the environment, and to humanity, especially as we face the threat of annihilation by our own hands. After all, scientists and technologists are the ones who have placed nuclear arms in the hands of those who threaten to use them.

MASS MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

Marianne Postiglione, RSM

(An excerpt from a paper prepared for the ITEST March, 1983 Workshop.)

....One issue that has surfaced again in recent years is the "creation-science" vs. "evolution theory" of the story of creation in the Bible.

Generally, from the Catholic Press I see and sense a desire to present the issue in a balanced manner.

The December 1982 issue of U.S. Catholic, a monthly periodical, reports the results of a survey taken of its readers on the question of interpreting the creation story in Genesis literally, or using the Bible story "to teach religious, not scientific, truths" (Daschbach, p. 13).

Respondents answered eight questions. They range from the easy question to the complex. A sample follows:

- 1) I believe God created the world in six 24-hour days.
6% agree, 88% disagree, 6% other
- 2) Believing in evolution means denying God created the universe.
7% agree, 93% disagree, 0% other
- 3) Along with Father Daschbach, I think the creation story should not be taught in science class.
80% agree, 15% disagree, 5% other.

One respondent placing the issue in perspective noted that while "Genesis as religion is priceless; as science, it isn't worth a plug nickel"

Yet the controversy between advocates and opponents of creationism and evolution theory has not been laid to rest. It rises periodically, phoenix-like from its own ashes.

Recently the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana issued a joint statement in response to legislative efforts to force public schools teaching evolution to give equal time to the teaching of creationism.

On the other hand, the Bishops denounced any teachings of atheistic evolution or any system of science which attempts to disprove the existence of God. On the other hand, they state that "the Bible teaches that God is the Creator of all things, and that he left it to the human mind to discover the laws and wonders of nature."

In this story the headline was slightly skewed, revealing only one side of the issue, "Louisiana Bishops Reject Atheistic Evolution." Only in the second paragraph do we find out why the Bishops made the statement.

Certainly this style of headlining "entices" the reader to continue beyond the first paragraph. However, the writer of the article did present both sides of the issue fairly and proportionately, neither building up nor tearing down either viewpoint. The implication for personal, private judgment on the issue remains with the intelligent consumer. The editor makes no play for the sensational nor the exaggerated. Naturally, we would expect the Catholic Press to present current Church teaching that the Bible is the inspired word of God in literary form, not a scientific treatise. However, kudos to the Press for resisting the temptation to "pontificate" haughtily to the "masses" on this issue.

Now to the fray - the secular press. Although there are many methods of reporting in the secular press, I will concentrate on two prevalent ones - "game-theory" technique and "miracle-theory" technique....A 1980's set of catch-words packaged in assorted sizes and shapes and appearing as headlines in the news may also serve to confuse the "addled minds" of the information society of the late 20th century. "Miracle cure," "Modern miracle," (as opposed to "old" miracle?), "Miracle baby," these headlines clearly portray a technique used in reporting developments in the new bio-medical technologies.

"If you can't get their attention by the gametheory technique, use the emotional attraction of a "miracle." Tactics of headline editors used to attract the attention of readers.

For many people who have seemingly lost their faith in a supernatural savior with promises of a happy life in the hereafter, science offers them a concrete, flesh and blood guarantee of a better life here on earth, with almost total freedom from bodily pain, disease, and even perhaps, death itself -- that according to the media. The media portray a potential "Great Awakening of Science" similar to the 19th century "Great Awakening of Religion" where people by the thousands flocked to oases of spiritual regeneration often confusing illusion with reality and eventually becoming disenchanted with expectations unfulfilled.

The media tend strongly in the direction of offering the "miracles" of science as substitutes for a faith gone lifeless....

IS THE SCIENCE-THEOLOGY CONFLICT BEING REVIVED?

Philip Hefner

(An excerpt from a presentation at the ITEST March, 1983 Workshop.)

St. Thomas spoke of theology as being distinctive, not because of the many things that it talks about, but because of the perspective from which it talks about them -- it is concerned about things in terms of their relationship to God. (ST, Q1, article 3). This could also be said of the life of faith, that it is an attempt to understand all things in terms of their relationship to God. Science enters in at this point, that it largely defines how we understand the things that faith and theology seek to relate to God. I am thinking of science in this context as primarily a way of knowing and understanding. Science is the powerful force that it is today because it is such a spectacularly successful way of knowing the world around us, a way of knowing that enables us to do things that seem useful, desirable, and satisfying. There is a dark underside to this spectacular success, but we do not properly understand even that side except in terms of science as a powerful tool of knowing. Increasingly, all around the world, the scientific understanding is the one that persons assume, in the early years of growing up, as the basic, or "natural," knowledge of things. Most children who have been through the schooling systems of the world do not, for example, view the evolutionary model and its concomitant categories, as accidental attributes of their being, as if they had a prior concept of themselves to which evolutionary theories were superadded. Rather, they have come to know themselves at an early age as creatures who are the emergent products of evolutionary processes. They very likely, for example, have sat in their mother's lap looking at a picture book that describes their own development as a fetus in mother's womb. Within their first six years of school, they have learned about higher primates and the origins of the human species. They have also learned about the so-called "big bang" and the evolution of the universe and the earth's solar system; they may very well know in their primary grades about red giants and white dwarfs and the fate of our own star and its planet earth....

It appears all the more singular that theology has been so slow to integrate the scientific views of the world into its system of faith and knowledge. We need only reflect on the state of our catechesis to grasp the extent of our present inadequacy. The rather impressive level of scientific knowledge that our children may achieve by age 15 is hardly matched by their ability to relate Scripture to the scientific worldviews, say Genesis 1 to the big bang and evolution. As a seminary teacher of Christian doctrine, I know very well that there is not a single text available that presents the range of Christian doctrine in a manner that takes scientific knowledge into account. Nothing at all comparable to what Thomas did for Christian doctrine in the light of Aristotle or what numerous Protestants have done in the light of Kantianism or other branches of German Idealism or Existentialism. Here it is, at least 300 years since the Enlightenment and the rise of science, and we are struck nearly dumb, it seems. This is especially strange since in certain areas, such as pastoral psychology, religious education theory, and organizational theory, we have related Christian faith and practice thoroughly to scientific interpretations of reality. Basic Christian doctrine, however, has not been related in its wholeness, or even in very many of its parts, to the scientific worldviews....

My specific mandate for this presentation was to respond to the question: "Is the war between science and faith being revived?" I had the further injunction: answer not with Yes or No, "but with documentation and with some direction for the course ahead....while not excluding the future, concentrate upon the present situation and assess its significance theologically." I hope that I have done that. I have spoken of three challenges emerging out of the current interface between science and religion: the challenge to halt our intellectual retreat from the real difference that scientific knowledge makes for faith and the pilgrimage of coming to faith; to take seriously the need to valorize scientific knowledge and theory within a theological realm of discourse; to recognize the necessity and possibility of mythic reformulation.

Each of these challenges is an occasion of genuine tension within the religious community and within the theological community, as well as a point of potential tension between the scientific and theological communities. Nevertheless, there is no need for this to be an occasion for a renewed outbreak of warfare between science and faith. In my estimation the theological workers in the churches will be derelict if they do not take up these challenges in a positive and aggressive manner. Furthermore, the viability of the religious communities is at the point of testing on the question of whether they take up these challenges or not. There is no threat of warfare, however, unless the theologians resist the challenge and scapegoat science in some strange way for even broaching the questions at hand. If, for example, the stance of Gilkey toward Ferkiss (in RSF) should dominate, namely, that ridicule and scorn should substitute for a serious taking up of the torch; or if the continual harping of Gustafson and others that the "is/ought" gulf is an inviolable one is permitted to rule the day, then indeed, some form of internal or even external warfare might break out.

Contrariwise, if the scientific community, which is as unimaginative as any religious community in these questions--if the scientists should object when their body of knowledge and theories is shown to be commensurable with religious myth, and if in some bizarre way they should attack religionists for attempting a new synthesis, then indeed, there might be a new conflict in the offing. Personally, I cannot imagine such a new outbreak of warfare. What I can imagine more vividly is a stiff-necked refusal on either side to acknowledge the deep thrust that abounds in many of the religionists and scientists to effect a new synthesis. The result of such stiff-neckedness may indeed be disastrous, as Gilkey has also suggested. I trust that ITEST and its adherents join me in pledging our efforts to the future that opens new doors, rather than to a tomorrow that simply seeks to reiterate an outmoded past.