

8. 'Natural selection' is not the same as 'Darwinism', and creationists accept the former as they reject the latter. After all, creationists like Edward Blyth thought of natural selection before Darwin. For an introduction to the creationist view, see Wieland, C., Muddy waters: clarifying the confusion about natural selection, *Creation* 23(3):26–29, 2001.
9. Bell, ref. 1. See also Meyer, S.C., Teleological evolution: The difference it doesn't make, 1 January 1999, <www.arn.org/docs/meyer/sm_teleologicalevolution.htm>, 16 September 2007.
10. Who famously suggested that science and religion could be reconciled by relegating them to 'non-overlapping magisteria'. See Gould, S.J., Nonoverlapping magisteria, *Natural History* 106:16–22, March 1997; Gould, S.J., *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life*, Ballantine, New York, 1999; and see critique in Sarfati, J., *Refuting Evolution 2*, Master Books, Green Forest, AR, pp. 38–41, 2002.
11. For an excellent example of proceeding from a rejection of Genesis to a rejection of the Resurrection, see Ruse, M., *Darwinism and Its Discontents*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 280, 2006, and review: Weinberger, L., Still discontent, *Journal of Creation* 21(3):32–36, 2007.
12. Sarfati, J., Presuppositionalism vs evidentialism, 6 June 2005, <www.creationontheweb.com/presupp>.
13. Although he would have had a range of other, and even more potent, arguments available to him if he were presuppositionally self-conscious, such as undermining Dawkins' belief in his own rationality. See generally Bahnsen, G.L., *Always Ready*, Booth, R.R., (Ed.), Covenant Media Foundation, Nacogdoches, TX, 1996.

A foundation with a few cracks

A review of
Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview
by J. P. Moreland and
William Lane Craig
Inter-Varsity Press, 2003

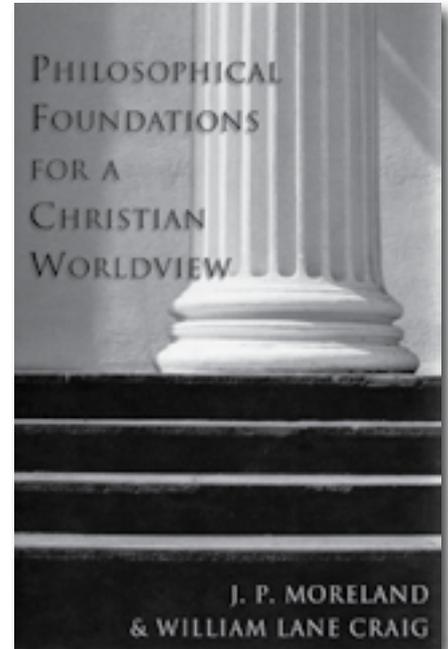
Andrew Kulikovsky

This massive tome is the product of two of the leading Christian philosophers from the evangelical tradition. Both Moreland and Craig are philosophy professors at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. Their book aims to present a rigorous philosophical justification for not just the existence of God, but the existence of the God of the Christian Bible. In doing so, the authors also expound the basic underlying concepts of knowledge, rationality, morality, truth, good and evil, mind and body, which make it possible to know and to reason.

The book is divided into six parts: Part I provides an introduction to philosophy, argument and logic. Part II discusses epistemology—the concept of knowledge and the possibility of knowing. Part III explores metaphysical questions—what exists and what is real? Part IV examines the philosophy of science. Part V considers the philosophical bases behind various theories of ethics, and part VI expounds the philosophical basis for Christian theism.

Why discuss philosophy?

The mere mention of the word 'philosophy' usually causes most people to switch right off. What is even more disturbing is that, when Christians hear this word, many turn antagonistic! It is unfortunate that many Christians today have—for a variety of reasons—tended toward anti-intellectualism: an open disparaging of intellectual and academic endeavours.



Thus, it is not surprising that the authors begin by highlighting the value of philosophical study. The truth is that everyone is influenced by philosophical ideas—either their own or someone else's—whether they realise it or not. Belief in God is a philosophical idea. Reading the Bible (or any other book for that matter) in the belief that it communicates intelligible information (as opposed to gibberish) assumes the truth of a number of philosophical concepts. Ultimately, our views about life, death, reality, good, evil, right, wrong, justice, psychology, mathematics, education, society, etc. are all informed by philosophical ideas and discussions—even if we are not aware of it. This is precisely why it is essential for all Christians to have at least some knowledge of the philosophical foundations of their faith. Those who do not will either fall away, become insulated and ineffectual witnesses, or—even worse—hold syncretistic and heretical views which they then propound throughout the church as being the Christian or biblical view.

This book is extremely detailed and comprehensive (it is 654 pages in length), and space does not permit a thorough

evaluation of all its content. Therefore, my comments will focus on key chapters and other sections that will be of interest to creationists.

Formal logic and theories of truth

Chapter 2 of Part I presents an introduction to formal logic and logical reasoning that covers both deductive and inductive reasoning. This chapter is very well written, with good explanations and examples. There is much to be gained from spending the time and effort to carefully study it. However, the one weakness of this chapter is that—apart from the fallacy of affirming the consequent—it does not cover the myriad of other common logical fallacies. This is a critical omission because much of what passes for logical argument these days, in popular culture, in academia, in the church pulpit, and in Christian publications, is riddled with logical fallacies.

In chapter 6 of Part II, the authors discuss theories of truth and postmodernism, and rightly argue for the correspondence theory of truth, i.e. that a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to actual reality. The chapter also includes basic critiques of relativism and postmodernism.

The philosophy of science

Part IV covers the philosophy of science, and its first chapter examines scientific methodology. However, the authors' treatment of the scientific method is surprisingly shallow, naïve and unsophisticated. They appear to treat science as a discipline that has arisen independently of Christianity and for which Christianity has to be forced to 'interact' with:

'If Christians are going to speak to the modern world and interact with it responsibly, they must interact with science. And if believers are going to explore God's world by means of science and integrate their theological beliefs with the results of that exploration, they need a deeper understanding of science itself' (p. 307).

However, there is only passing reference to the philosophical and

intellectual origins of science as being rooted in the Christian worldview. Science requires an orderly and real universe, consistent with a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33), and the right to investigate creation (Gen. 1:28). So it is not surprising that, as Rodney Stark noted, science arose in history once and only in the Christian West.¹

In response to their question: 'How should science and theology interact?' (p. 307), surely the Christian response should be guided by truth, not by some artificial model of interaction. Rather, the question that should occupy every Christian's mind when assessing any truth claim—be it from science or the Bible—must be 'is this the truth?'

Moreland and Craig rightly reject naïve inductivism as an adequate scientific method, and opt instead for the 'hypothetico-deductive method' where the scientist puts forward a hypothesis along with a set of tests that could be used to verify or falsify that hypothesis. But what they fail to point out is that a mere explanation—even one that is derived from scientific data and observations—is not a proof. The history of science reveals that many scientific explanations have turned out to be wrong—indeed, spectacularly wrong.

In regard to the history of science, they make only passing reference to Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.² Kuhn's book is one of the key works on the philosophy, history and development of the scientific method. Kuhn examined how science has actually been conducted in history, and his historical observations have highlighted numerous philosophical and psychological issues regarding the scientific method and the truth claims of scientists. His main thesis is that most scientific research has been conducted within a paradigm, and only in rare periods of 'scientific revolution' is the paradigm overturned by the weight of anomalies and replaced by a new one. None of these important observations are really taken up by the authors in their analysis.

Another notable exclusion is Michael Polanyi. There is no reference at all to his devastating critique of logical positivism—the view that the only authentic knowledge is that which

is gained through positive affirmation by strictly applying the scientific method. In his book, *Personal Knowledge*,³ Polanyi embraced the existence of objective truth—something that is surely central to the Christian worldview. Moreover, Polanyi also criticised the notion that the scientific method could mechanistically supply us with such objective truths. Perhaps the reason why Moreland and Craig chose to ignore Polanyi's work is because they (and many other Christian philosophers and theologians) tend to believe that the scientific method can indeed mechanistically supply us with such truths.

In their discussion of the formation of scientific ideas, Moreland and Craig never explicitly acknowledge that ideology often plays a big role, although they do perhaps hint at it when they state that metaphysical and theological views may guide a scientist. Again, they note the various ways scientists explain observations and empirical data, but they do not acknowledge that scientific explanations are simply explanations, nothing more. They are not proofs. That an explanation fully accounts for all observations and even predicts future observations is no guarantee that the explanation is in fact a true representation of reality. This point has been demonstrated time and again in the history of science. Indeed, it is also an example of a common logical fallacy known as 'affirming the consequent' which Moreland and Craig discuss in their chapter on formal logic. In other words, the fact that scientists assert that some hypothesis, H, predicts some event, E, and that event is observed, it does not necessarily mean that hypothesis, H, is true.

The authors rightly acknowledge the difference between historical (origin) science and empirical (operational) science, and that collecting data from experiments often involves interpretation in the light of a host of theoretical background assumptions about what is being observed and the instruments used to observe it. They also rightly reject scientism (the belief that scientific truth is the most authoritative truth) in both its strong and weak flavours, although I have to wonder—in light of some of their other

comments—whether they actually hold to this rejection of scientism in practice.

Moreland and Craig note that the uniformity of nature is one of the presuppositions of the scientific enterprise. But in the Christian worldview, the strict uniformity of nature cannot be sustained because it excludes the possibility of miracles, or any other form of supernatural activity. Of course, Christians can believe in *general* uniformity because God has created an orderly universe, but they must still allow for divine intervention.

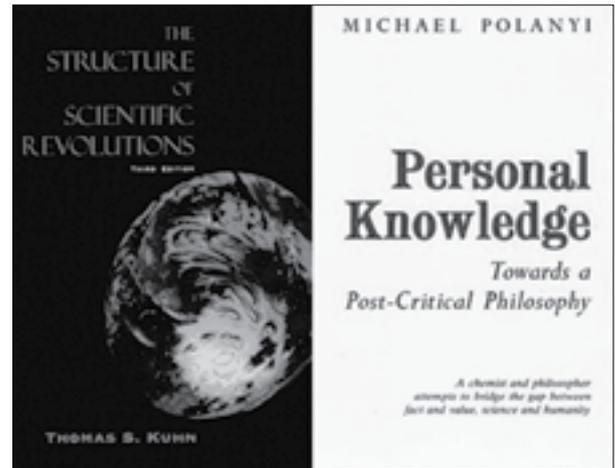
Integrating theology and science

In any case, Moreland and Craig suggest there are six (not necessarily mutually exclusive) models for ‘integrating’ science and theology: (1) science and theology focus on two entirely different areas of investigation; (2) science and theology are two different but complementary approaches to looking at the same reality, and only contradict when one intrudes onto the other’s territory; (3) science fills out details in theology or helps to apply theological principles and vice versa; (4) theology provides metaphysical and epistemological foundation for science by justifying or helping to justify science’s necessary presuppositions; (5) science provides boundaries in which theology must work, and science can inform theology but theology has nothing to add to science; and (6) science and theology involve descriptions that can directly interact with each other in mutually reinforcing or competing ways. They argue that all these views may be appropriate in different circumstances, and, with a number of qualifications. But in light of the qualifications they give, and in view of science’s philosophical basis and historical experience, there is a much simpler model that incorporates all of the above: *The truth claims of theology based on sound exegesis of the biblical text (using the historical-grammatical method of interpretation upon which all meaningful human communication is based) are superior to all other competing truth claims, and scientific truth claims are only valid and reliable when they describe natural processes or phenomena where God has not chosen to directly act or intervene.*

Regarding the disagreements between progressive creationists and young-earth creationists, Moreland and Craig assert that the main issues are the interpretation of the Hebrew word *yôm* (‘day’), the age of the universe, and the ‘usefulness of the flood for doing geology’ (p. 354). This is not just extremely simplistic, it is inaccurate. The fundamental difference is where the two groups place the most authority. Young-earth creationists consistently hold to the authority and inerrancy of scripture, and that scientific data must be interpreted in relation to what the Scriptures teach, following the integration principle I specified above. Progressive creationists, on the other hand, although they affirm the authority and inerrancy of scripture, do not hold to it consistently and often pay only lip service to it when interpreting the early chapters of Genesis. Their exegesis is guided by the premise that it is an absolute incontrovertible scientific fact that the universe is around 12 billion years old, the earth is around 4 billion years old, and Noah’s Flood, whether global or local, had negligible impact on the earth’s topography.

The Intelligent Design movement

Regarding the Intelligent Design (ID) movement, the authors give the impression that this is a relatively new and fresh creationist movement. This is nonsense. The ID movement dates back to the time of William Paley (and design arguments go back much further, e.g. Cicero, Gregory of Nazianzus, Thomas Aquinas) and has been advanced by every significant young-earth creationist advocate ever since. The only thing that is ‘new’ about the ID movement is that progressive creationists and some theistic evolutionists also participate in this movement.



Moreland and Craig make only passing, or no reference at all, to important work in the area of philosophy of science, such as Thomas Kuhn’s examination of the problems regarding the scientific method and the truth claims of scientists, and Michael Polanyi’s criticism of the notion that scientific method can supply us with objective truths.

Moreland and Craig do offer a very good and thorough response to the ‘god-of-the-gaps’ objection often raised against creationists (cf. pp. 120–7), as well as a refutation to the objection that creationist thinking and assumptions leads to a stifling of general curiosity, and therefore inhibits potentially fruitful lines of scientific research.

In summary though, their analysis of the philosophy of science is greatly lacking, and they appear to have little appreciation of the impact of the limitedness of human knowledge and understanding, and the fallenness of humanity, on our ability to observe, to interpret and to reason. They also tend to play down the role of biblical revelation, and exaggerate the value and reliability of scientific data.

Philosophy of time and space

This is another topic that Craig has written on extensively, and the material in this book is largely lifted straight from these previously published works.⁴

Craig follows Newton in holding that God occupies a special space-time frame of reference called ‘absolute’ space-time. Furthermore, Craig rejects Einstein’s special theory of relativity in favour of Lorentzian relativity because Einstein’s theory implies that no such special reference frame exists. They stop short, however, of endorsing Newton’s views on divine eternity and omnipresence.



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But why think that God is constrained by space-time at all, especially in light of Genesis 1:1? If God created everything 'In the beginning' (of time), then time had a beginning at the point at which God created. In other words, God not only created space, he also created time.

Craig (and presumably Moreland) favour the A-theory (or tensed view) of time over the B-theory (or tenseless view) of time. They begin defending the A-theory by appealing to common experience of temporal reality: that we experience things in the here and now; the past consists of events that have already occurred, and the future has not yet happened. They assert that this common experience is a properly basic belief which is reasonably justified and should be accepted *prima facie*, unless and until it is defeated. This is very weak argument. Our common experience is that world is governed by naturalistic events and processes, and therefore it would be reasonably justified to *prima facie* accept methodological naturalism as the governing principle of scientific investigation, but I doubt Craig and Moreland would accept that line of argument.

Moreland and Craig attack the B-theory by attacking D.H. Mellor's defence of it. Mellor argued that there really is no such thing as the present despite our common experience. But Mellor's theory is clearly inadequate.

There is no need for a B-theorist to deny that our experiences are present. A B-theorist need only take issue with what 'the present' actually refers to. I am reading Moreland's and Craig's book 'in the present'. When Moreland and Craig actually wrote it, it was 'in the present.' But these two 'events' did not occur at the same time! Thus, the present is a relative concept. Although it is a common experience, it's specific meaning and significance is unique to each particular person. Likewise, events that we have already experienced are 'in the past', and events we are yet to experience are in the future.

Craig argues: 'On the B-theory of time, feelings of relief and anticipation must be ultimately regarded as irrational, since events are really not past or future.' He argues that the B-theory implies there is no objective 'here' or 'now' and no sense of temporal becoming or of moving toward one event and away from another. But this line of argument indicates Craig's deep confusion over what the B-theory means and implies. Moreover, it appears that Craig presumes that the B-theory of time constrains not only human beings but also God.

The B-theory posits that time is a series of temporal moments with a beginning and an ending. In a Christian worldview, this entire series of temporal moments was created at once by God. As Creator, this series is external to God and He is not subject to it. However, all of God's creatures, including human beings, are created in space-time and therefore are constrained by it. God's creatures would experience temporal becoming (just like the A-theory) throughout their lifetime (which would consist of a limited span of consecutive temporal moments from the entire temporal series which makes up all of history). Thus, feelings of relief and anticipation are not irrational. A person feels relief when they have experienced pain or stress in the immediate past, but no longer experience those sensations in the present. A person feels anticipation when they have a strong and reasonable belief that they about to experience something that they are, or are not, looking forward to. These feelings are responses to the events (including knowledge of impending pain or impending joy) in

the temporal sequence they 'presently' experience in their subjective space-time frame of reference.

The tenselessness of time in the B-theory is not detectable to those who are constrained by it. It is only noticeable to God who stands outside of time. The whole series of temporal moments on the B-theory of time exist 'tenselessly' in relation to God. Although all the temporal moments in the sequence occur 'tenselessly' with God, that does not mean they occur tenselessly in relation to each other. Because God stands outside of time, he can observe and act at any moment in the created sequence. For Him, there is no such thing as an objective 'here' and 'now' or 'past', 'present' and 'future'. These terms only have objective meaning inside the space-time continuum, and simply describe the relationships between particular actors and specific events. Nevertheless, even though God stands outside of time and the temporal sequence exists 'tenselessly' with Him, He is still able to identify one particular event as being earlier than, or later than, some other event. Indeed, this view of the B-theory of time is essentially the same as that described by Cambridge philosopher John Ellis McTaggart in 1908. However, Craig responds with the following argument:

'McTaggart observes that pastness, presentness and futurity are mutually incompatible: no event can have all three. But given McTaggart's tenselessly existing series of temporal events, every event does have all three! Take an event tenselessly located at t_1 . At t_1 that event is obviously present. But because all events are equally real, the event also has pastness and futurity because at t_2 it is past and t_0 it is future. The moment t_1 is not any more real or privileged than t_0 or t_2 , and the event in question must be characterised by the tenses it has at all these times, which is impossible' (p. 388).

But this is like arguing that it is impossible to be a certain age, and yet at the same time be older than my son, and younger than my father! Craig is being disingenuous here. If the event at t_1 is the present experience of a particular actor, then that event is only 'past' *with respect*

to t_2 , and future *with respect to* t_0 . It is NOT *inherently* past or *inherently* future. Nor, for that matter is it inherently present. It is only present for the particular actor experiencing that event.

Craig also notes that the Einstein's General Theory of Relativity implies a B-theory of time. However, he argues that the General Theory of Relativity should only be understood instrumentally—as a tool—rather than as a realistic description of the universe. This is a curious statement from Craig given that he had no problem accepting the objective reality of the General Theory of Relativity when he appeals to big-bang cosmology in his defence of the *Kalām* Cosmological Argument!

The existence of God

Chapter 23 deals with the Cosmological argument and is largely a summary of Craig's previously published work on this topic. As I have documented elsewhere, Craig's defence of the Cosmological argument is seriously flawed.⁵

Chapter 24 deals with other arguments for the existence of God including the Teleological, Axiological and Ontological arguments. The Teleological argument is essentially the argument from design and the apparent fine tuning of the universe. The weakness of this argument, however, is that it does not and cannot reveal the identity of the Designer, nor does it necessarily imply a personal God. Indeed, most people who have found this argument persuasive have retreated to deism rather than theism (most famous is the ID movement's recent trophy case, the leading former atheistic philosopher Antony Flew).

The axiological argument is one which I find most compelling. It is based on the assumption that there are, in fact, objective moral values. Even in our increasingly postmodern society this is not really a problem because not even the most ardent postmodernist can seriously deny that torturing babies for fun is objectively wrong! People may disagree over whether some specific notion is an objective moral value, but they cannot honestly deny such moral values exist. Given that objective moral values exist, the only way their existence can be

explained is by their origin in God, which, of course, implies that He exists. The atheist/humanist has no explanation for the origin and existence of such objective moral values. This is a powerful argument if it is explained and argued clearly, and this section in the book will certainly aid the reader in doing this.

Their discussion of the Ontological argument is relatively brief. In this argument, God is the maximally excellent and perfect being in every possible world, including the real world, or as Anselm put it, 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived.' Anselm argued that something existing in reality is greater than that which exists in the mind, so 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' cannot just exist in the mind. Anselm identifies this with God. In many respects, the argument is somewhat question-begging, so is not an independently powerful argument for the existence of God. However, as the authors point out, it is a good supporting argument when combined with the other arguments.

The remaining chapters examine the coherence of theism and look specifically at God's attributes, the problem of evil, creation, providence and miracle, and specific Christian doctrines including the Trinity and the Incarnation. Chapter 28 examines the case for divine creation *ex nihilo*. Again, this material is a condensed version of the material in one of Craig's other books that he co-authored with Paul Copan and which I have also recently reviewed in this journal.⁵

There are a number of other theological issues discussed in these later chapters, of which the solutions or explanations offered, I would take serious issue with. However, a detailed discussion would take many more pages. Suffice to say that, in relation to many of the theological issues Moreland and Craig cover, one would do better to consult one of the standard evangelical systematic theologies available today, and especially Carl Henry's multi-volume magnum opus *God, Revelation and Authority*.⁶

Summary

For an academic work, it is odd that there are very few footnotes or references. There are, however, lists of

further readings for each chapter listed in a section at the end of the book.

In addition, one very nice feature of the book is the summaries and keyword checklists at the end of each chapter. These serve as a good way for the reader to confirm that they have understood and grasped the basic points and principle outlines in the chapter.

Nevertheless, I was a little disappointed with this work—particularly the contributions of Craig. For such a large and apparently comprehensive work, many of the discussions still appear to be superficial. There are, however, many good discussions, and it would probably serve well as a good introductory work, but one would need to do a lot more reading in order to get a complete or more thorough grasp of many of the issues.

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