

# An evolution-imbibing compromising evangelical and his left-wing ideology

***Saving the Original Sinner***

Karl W. Giberson

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The author is identified as a teacher of science and religion at Stonehill College. This book offers nothing new. It is not, as the reader may assume from the title, a book about Adam and Eve (figure 1). Rather, it is a superficial and overgeneralized history of Christianity, as imagined by the author, and supplemented with a series of jibes, straight out of secular leftist ideology, directed at American evangelical Christianity. Giberson's remarks about creationism are especially uninformed. They betray very little, if any, understanding of the issues involved.

The reader might be forgiven for seeing the first part of this book as just one long whine, by the author, about his personal experiences. He relates how he once believed in Special Creation, how he became impressed by the 'evidences' for evolution, but then goes on to bemoan how he felt uncomfortable in the Christian college in which he taught, how he was frustrated by doctrinal 'gatekeepers' there, how he left the university, and how he got a new job in a so-called Christian university that welcomes challengers to orthodoxy. He portrays himself as a persecuted heretic and martyr, at one point even juxtaposing himself with Galileo!

## The role of presuppositions

The author scoffs at the notion (presented, for example, at the Creation Museum in Kentucky) that one's starting point determines whether one believes in evolution or Special Creation. Instead, he would have us believe that it all depends upon 'evidence'. His offhanded dismissal of the reality of presuppositions borders on the naïve.

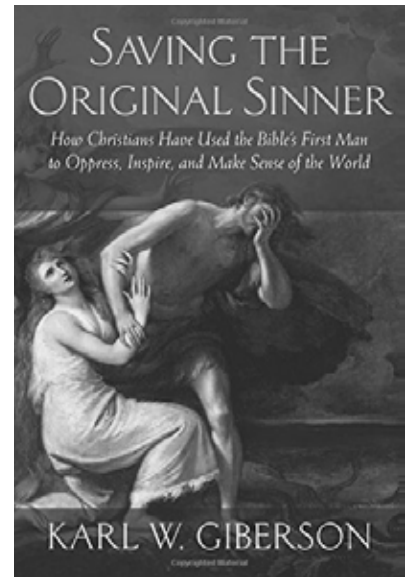
Giberson seems to have no understanding of how one's *a priori* assumptions determine what evidence is acceptable, what (if any) limits there are to human reason, whether or not God's Word is more authoritative than human reason (including science), what (if any) role God plays in the universe, and especially how the evidence is interpreted.

One's worldview is crucial. This is no American fundamentalist imagination. In fact, the Germans, as part of their philosophy, have their term for it—*Weltanschauung*. One's worldview makes all the difference in the world.

## Heterodox thinking at universities

Giberson's remarks about evangelical colleges acting against evolution-believing professors need to be clarified. There is no valid symmetry between evangelical colleges censuring professors that deviate from biblical orthodoxy, and secular colleges censuring evolution-questioning professors. Let us elaborate.

Christian colleges are not neutral institutions. They are exclusive, private schools. They openly exist in



order to promote a certain worldview and religion. In the US, at least, Christian colleges receive no taxpayer monies, so their only support is from those who choose to attend them.

Secular colleges, on the other hand, are (or are supposed to be) neutral institutions—inclusive, public, and pluralistic in every way. Secular colleges receive taxpayer moneys and should therefore, all the more, be neutral in viewpoint.

This asymmetry has practical consequences. The one who chooses to teach in an evangelical college knowingly enters an environment where there is a biblical orthodoxy which is to be upheld. He or she knows beforehand that deviation from this orthodoxy can result in censure, or even termination, just as surely as a Christian professor who converts to another religion could reasonably expect to face dismissal. No-one is forced to subject himself or herself to these strictures because no-one is forced to teach in an evangelical college.

On the other hand, the one who chooses to teach in a secular college enters an environment where he or she expects to be viewpoint-neutral and where he or she expects not to be censured or terminated for holding to

non-conformist or unpopular views. Consequently, for all these reasons, the dismissal of a non-conformist professor from an evangelical college is acceptable, but the dismissal of a non-conformist professor from a secular college is an intolerable act.

Finally, Giberson’s laments are devoid of perspective. He is effectively complaining about all the water in the lakes of the world, while ignoring what is much more significant—all the water that is in the oceans of the world. Secular colleges, to say nothing of nominally Christian colleges, outnumber evangelical ones by many multiples. More and more, secular colleges are becoming hotbeds of intolerance against Christianity and against traditional moral values. Christians are demonized and silenced, and commonly face discrimination. It is more and more difficult for professors who are not political leftists to get tenure. A study of 1,643 full-time faculty at 183 four-year schools found that political leftists outnumber political conservatives by 87% to 13%, while 51% rarely or never attend church or synagogue and less than a third attend services regularly.<sup>1</sup> Secular college is getting further and further away from the neutral forum that it is supposed to be. Ironically, this is what creates a demand for evangelical colleges in the first place!

Secular colleges are dominated by humanism and are thoroughly evolutionized. So are a great many so-called Christian colleges. This is a long way from the founding of the University by the Church in the Middle Ages, and the founding of the earliest and most prestigious American universities by Christians. What, then, is so terrible if some evangelical colleges dare buck the trend, offer a dissent to the prevailing evolutionary worldview, and maintain a faculty that consistently supports this dissent?

### Genesis 1 bows in homage to evolution

Many compromising evangelicals had, in the past, tried to spin a contrived ambiguity about Genesis 1, in a transparent but less-than-candid attempt to force it to agree with evolution. They had us believe that we could not really know what Genesis 1 meant, and so there were dozens of equally valid interpretations of it. The days in Genesis 1 may be non-literal. They can be unequal to each other in length. There may be one or more gaps between them. Better yet, they can overlap.

In contrast, Karl Giberson recognizes the fact that the unembellished interpretation of Genesis 1, held almost universally until recently, had unambiguously pointed to a literal Adam and Eve (figure 1). He comments:

“Most expressions of Christianity, from Augustine to Al Mohler, have never been without a historical Adam and Eve, despite more liberal Protestant traditions moving in that

direction as early as the nineteenth century. And even as evolution was tentatively embraced by sophisticated evangelicals over the course of the twentieth century, Adam and Eve were inserted somewhere” (p. 10).

Unlike those compromising evangelicals who are kidding themselves about what they are doing and why they are doing it, Giberson is not. He is forthright about the fact that any ‘reinterpretation’ of Genesis 1, and Adam and Eve, is nothing more than a sop to evolution. He continues the statement quoted above, on Adam and Eve being “inserted somewhere”, as follows, “And, then, as mounting evidence made that insertion ever more implausible, theological pressures were brought to bear” (p. 10).

Giberson’s comments perfectly demonstrate the fatal problem of being a compromising evangelical—of trying to have a foot in both camps. What takes place when you try to do that? First the Bible is twisted and redefined to bow in homage to evolution. Then a new development



Figure 1. Adam and Eve have always been understood to be literal human individuals.

in evolutionary thinking arises. Because of this, the original twisting and redefinition of the Bible does not work any longer. So what happens? Is the futility of compromise finally recognized? Not at all. The Bible is again twisted and redefined—in another way, and even more severely than before—to keep it in the position of prostrate homage to evolution. Then the cycle repeats itself.

Worse yet, Giberson is now so impressed by ‘science’ that he appears close to giving up any pretence of harmonizing Genesis and ‘science’. He quips:

“No Christian thinker has found a satisfactory resolution to the origin of sin, the nature and extent of the curse, and the closely related *problem of evil*. Adam and Eve are part of this mystery . . . . The challenge of taking God’s Two Books seriously has grown dramatically in recent years as genetic evidence has made it clear that Adam and Eve cannot have been historical figures, at least as described in the Bible. More scientifically informed evangelicals within the conservative traditions are admitting that the evidence is undermining creation, fall, redemption theology. . . . The task is beginning to look impossible from any perspective, as we will now see from the implausible and inconsistent proposals that are circulating [emphasis in original]” (pp. 167–168).

The author never tires of hammering this point. Giberson restates that “Adam and Eve, as described in Genesis, cannot have been historical figures. Recent work in genetics has established this unsettling truth beyond any reasonable doubt” (p. 173). Oh, really? *Not once* does Giberson tell us what this evidence is!

A more fundamental question needs to be raised: Who is one’s god? Is God one’s god or is evolution one’s god? The answer, unfortunately, seems obvious in the case of Karl W. Giberson.

### A subtle hostility to Christianity

The author would have us believe that the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of Scripture implies mechanical dictation of the words and absence of the human element in the Bible (p. 23). What a ridiculous strawman Giberson has made!

The author uses the BCE/CE system instead of BC and AD (e.g. p. 100). Is this incidental or does it imply a devaluation of Christianity?

### Casting aspersions on Adam and Eve

Giberson repeats left-wing and atheist talking points, blaming the Adam and Eve account for such things as opposition to homosexuality and, earlier, the justification for the subordination of blacks and women.

However, based solely on the information that Giberson provides, his contention becomes self-refuting. It quickly becomes obvious that there is no straightforward relationship between Adam and Eve and the past attitudes of whites towards non-white peoples. So personal interpretation abounded. Some racists rejected monogenism and argued that blacks were too primitive to have been descended from Adam and Eve. Abolitionists, as well as some racists, accepted monogenism. The latter argued that non-whites were degenerate descendants of Adam and Eve. Both sides, during the American Civil War, cited Adam and Eve to support their positions. The difference is that the racist side invented interpretations never seen except in racist societies, showing that the racism was read *into* Scripture rather than exegeted *from* Scripture. Furthermore, almost all the early Darwinists were racists and eugenicists—including Darwin’s own cousin and sons.<sup>2,3</sup>

Interestingly, Giberson brings up a modern development—*The Bell*

*Curve*—which he regards as a justification of racism. He thus unwittingly demolishes his own argument about the Adam-and-Eve account being a foundation of racism. Obviously, without even mentioning the racism of Darwinism, we can see that institutionalized racism can do just fine without belief in Adam and Eve.

As for sexism, Giberson dusts off the old feminist accusation of Genesis 2 blaming women in general because Eve first partook of the forbidden fruit. However, this is vitiated by the fact that it is also called the Sin of Adam. Both Adam and Eve, and not only Eve, were expelled from the Garden of Eden, and Paul links death to Adam’s sin in Romans 5:12–19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21–22.

Had Genesis 1 been designed to teach the subservience of women to men, it would probably have said that Eve was created from Adam’s foot, and not from his side. Had it intended to communicate a contempt for women, it could have taught that Eve was made from Adam’s bodily waste, or something to that effect. Instead, the Genesis account has the creation of Eve from Adam’s side, which makes her the equal of Adam.

Of course, it is possible that the two genders have differential vulnerabilities to particular sins, and this differential rests upon the greater female, and lesser male, sensitivity to spiritual stimuli. Thus, females may be more prone to be enticed by forbidden spiritual experiences, while males may be more prone to be enticed by spiritual indifference. This, in turn, could explain why women have always been overrepresented in witchcraft, while men have always been overrepresented among the unchurched.

If so, both tendencies can simultaneously explain Satan’s strategy in causing the Fall. His enticing of Eve was based on her vulnerability to a forbidden experience *and* was simultaneously based on the vulnerability of Adam to spiritual indifference (inadequate spiritual



leadership). Both Adam and Eve are thus equally guilty.

On another subject, the author brings up Adam and Eve as a contradiction to ‘Adam and Steve’. Here, for once, he is correct. There is no doubt about the fact that God’s model for marriage is one man and one woman, and that homosexuality has no legitimacy in the Word of God. Jesus evidently agreed by citing this account to show God’s design for marriage: one man and one woman (Matthew 19:3–6). It would seem that Giberson knows better than Jesus.

### Another hatchet job: American Christians are racist

Giberson takes another run at Christianity as he dusts off Martin Luther King’s 1963 remark about 11 am Sunday mornings being the most segregated hour in America (p. 135). He accuses the American church, even today, of being more segregated than schools, the military, businesses, etc. The insinuation is obvious.

The author’s complete superficiality in terms of sociology is no less extreme and flippant than that evidenced in his treatment of science and religion. Let us examine some elementary facts.

African-Americans tend to be concentrated in large urban areas. Residential patterns in the US still tend to be segregated. On this basis alone, it is hardly surprising that most attendees in a black neighbourhood church are black, and most attendees in a white neighbourhood church are white. Megachurches, where race mixing is more likely to occur because worshippers theoretically are more likely to come from a variety of neighbourhoods, are still the exception. But even then, because megachurches tend to occur in the suburban areas of large American urban centres, these congregations still tend to be overwhelmingly white.

In his illegitimate argumentation, Giberson conflates churches, which

are private institutions where race mixing is not compelled, with public institutions that, by their very nature, require race mixing (by law and/or circumstances), such as businesses, schools, the military, etc. Complaining that churches are more segregated than public institutions, for this reason alone, is like comparing apples and oranges. It is beyond ludicrous.

Giberson would have us think that segregation is necessarily malevolent in nature. It is not. Self-segregation is usually not motivated by racism. It is motivated by preferring to associate with one’s own. For this reason alone, most Americans live in neighbourhoods that are primarily of the same race as they are. The desire to associate preferentially with one’s own means that the vast majority of the friends of white people are other white people, and the vast majority of the friends of black people are other black people. Since churches tend to be associations of family and friends, it is hardly surprising that they tend to (at least predominantly) be of one race or another. (However, I have been to many American evangelical churches where significant race mixing takes place.)

Other factors come into play in tending to reinforce black-and-white self-segregation in American churches. African-Americans tend to be a distinctive, even enclave, subculture. African-Americans, for example, tend to prefer more emotional styles of worship than most Caucasian-Americans would be comfortable with. African-American churches are commonly politicized, with a mixing of religion and politics according to matters of specific identity with, and of interest to, African-Americans. On the other hand, African-American Christians often feel that white evangelical churches are insufficiently concerned about social injustices.

Indeed, the underlying phenomenon is primarily *cultural* rather than racial, as extensively documented by the African-American economist Thomas

Sowell.<sup>4</sup> For instance, Northern blacks objected to the influx of the culturally different Southern blacks after the Civil War. The same applied to the early waves of Jewish immigrants to New York—Jews from Germany tended not to mix with the racially identical but culturally distinct Jews from Eastern Europe.

Clearly, self-segregation in American evangelical Christianity is a many-faceted phenomenon. Korean-American Christians tend to attend Korean-American churches. Are they also bad? According to Giberson’s unsophisticated reasoning, they are.

The foregoing is not meant to imply that there are no racially motivated divisions among Americans. There are. However, contrary to Giberson’s attack on Christians in general, and the Book of Genesis in particular, they are not the ones primarily responsible for the persistence of racial problems in the US. The primary blame rests with over 50 years of liberal politics. Liberalism has transformed American history classes to ones where there is a strong over-emphasis on slavery and past racial injustices—seemingly designed to keep younger generations of African-Americans thinking that they are perpetual victims.

But as the African-American economist Walter Williams often says: “Most of the problems faced by the black community have their roots in a black culture that differs significantly from the black culture of yesteryear. Today only 35 percent of black children are raised in two-parent households, but as far back as 1880, in Philadelphia, 75 percent of black children were raised in two-parent households—and it was as high as 85 percent in other places. Even during slavery, in which marriage was forbidden, most black children were raised with two biological parents. The black family managed to survive several centuries of slavery and generations of the harshest racism

and Jim Crow, to ultimately become destroyed by the welfare state.”<sup>5</sup>

It never ends. Decades of ever-more-expansive social programs fostered by liberals have tended to make America’s minorities dependent upon them—so much so that America’s Democratic Party, the main purveyor of these programs, can reliably count on 90–95% of the African-American vote. In addition, the liberals’ affirmative action programs (racial quotas and hiring preferences), even if well-intentioned, have directly pitted blacks against whites, thus perpetuating racial polarity and hindering the emergence of an American post-racial or colourblind society. They have also caused many black students to fail because lower admission standards mean that they are mismatched to the elite universities they attend, whereas they would probably have passed at less rigorous universities.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, there are psychological tests that purportedly measure biases that most people are not even aware of. These supposedly show that most people retain subtle biases against members of other races. If valid, they show that racial bias is no evangelical Christian problem. It is much more fundamental—a problem of the human condition.

### The corruption of language

Several years ago, Giberson tried to redefine biblical terms to make them fit evolution. Before describing the unfavourable reaction he got from fellow evangelicals, he reminds us what he had proposed:

“I suggested that what is labeled theologically as sin remains a useful insight into human nature, even after we abandon a historical Adam, his fall [note small letter], and the original sin he passed on to us. ... The story of Adam is thus the story of Everyman, unable to resist temptation, ignoring the better angels of his nature” (p. 170).

What happens when we redefine Adam? In the first place, the redefining of terms makes language itself increasingly ambiguous. Imagine someone lost his glove and insisted, with a straight face, that he had lost his sock. To him, ‘sock’ means ‘glove’. So he has redefined ‘glove’ to mean ‘sock’. If this bastardization of language were to go on and becomes popularized, terms such as ‘glove’ and ‘sock’ would no longer mean anything specific.

This has an even greater bearing on theology—where the stakes are so much higher than something as trivial as the distinction of a sock from a glove. If one is to redefine Adam, as Giberson does, why stop there? Why not redefine God? In fact, redefinition of God already takes place. Liberals have rejected Him as the Supreme Being, and have redefined him as ‘the ground of being’, the beautiful aspects of nature, or some other vacuous construct.

The redefinition of terms does not merely cause ambiguity and confusion. It can, or does, change the way people think, so that their mental (and spiritual) concepts are fundamentally altered. This was, for example, done intentionally by the totalitarian government in George Orwell’s *1984*, not only to make English more logical, but to profoundly change the way that people think, and to muddle or eliminate ‘unwanted’ ideas. That is why Newspeak was developed and put into use. In Oldspeak, the phrase ‘All men are equal’ evoked the thought that all human beings are endowed with the same rights. In Newspeak, the replacing phrase became ‘All mans are equal’. This would now mean, for example, that all humans are exactly the same size—a physical impossibility—and it deliberately eliminated the very idea that all humans have the same rights.

In like manner, the redefinition of God and the redefinition of Adam not only causes confusion, it also creates muddled thinking and spiritual emptiness. No wonder that so many

‘Christians’ in the West are not actually Christians, and why so many people have vague and erroneous ideas of what it means to be a Christian.

Finally, the redefinition of theological terms is a form of intellectual dishonesty. If one rejects a supreme being, that is one thing. If one loves nature, that is also one thing, but don’t call that God! Likewise, if, as is true of Giberson, one rejects a historical Adam, that is fine. If one believes in Everyman, that is also fine. But don’t call him Adam!

### A piddling of science

The poorest-quality part of this book is the section on science. Giberson makes flippant remarks about creationism. He glibly and effortlessly repeats stock arguments without evidence of any thought, much less deep thought. These arguments include all the old saw about ‘bad design’, especially the human knee, the tailbone, the appendix, and pseudogenes. To crown the silliness, he asks, “Did God really create all these second-rate systems?” (p. 163). In doing so, Giberson shows not the slightest awareness, much less understanding, of creationist refutations of these ‘problems’, often a long time ago. Furthermore, Giberson must answer the question in the affirmative, because God allegedly used evolution to ‘create’ these supposedly bad things.

The author insists that *raqia* can only mean that the sky is a solid dome. However, his reasoning is very superficial, and he does not satisfactorily explain why he thinks that this must be so. Once again, the claim has been refuted long ago.<sup>7</sup>

### Conclusion

One can often feel stimulated by well-reasoned books that one does not agree with. In my opinion, this is definitely not one of them. I frankly found this book so shallow that I regretted the waste of time in reading

it. The content is trite and the book has nothing new to offer. It is one long lament about Genesis 1 and about how it got him into trouble at a Christian university.

Personally, I am surprised at the adulation that Giberson has gotten, considering the apparent extraordinary shallowness of his thinking. On the other hand, perhaps I should not be so surprised. In some circles, any soi-disant evangelical who becomes a mouthpiece for evolution, and—better yet—promotes leftist ideology, becomes an instant hero.

### References

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2. Sewell, D., *The Political Gene: How Darwin's Ideas Changed Politics*, Picador, London, 2009.
3. Bergman, J., Darwin is the universal acid that affects everything (review of Sewell, ref. 2, *J. Creation* 25(1):19–21, 2011.
4. E.g. Sowell, T., *Black Rednecks and White Liberals*, Encounter Books 2006. The title refers to Sowell's extensive documentation that much allegedly authentic 'black culture', including 'ebonic' dialects, is actually a vestige of a disfunctional *white* southern redneck culture. This in turn came from the 'cracker culture' from the regions in Britain, mainly on the harsh English border, they emigrated from. This includes "an aversion to work, proneness to violence, neglect of education, sexual promiscuity, improvidence, drunkenness, lack of entrepreneurship, reckless searches for excitement, lively music and dance, and a style of religious oratory marked by strident rhetoric, unbridled emotions, and flamboyant imagery" (p. 6).
5. E.g. Williams, W.E., Black people duped, *jewishworldreview.com*, 5 March 2014.
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