

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## Chuck Colson

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Southern Baptist Charles Colson is the most effective propagandist for the Roman Catholic Church in America. Nearly seven years ago, in January and February 1994, *The Trinity Review* reviewed several of Colson's books—*Born Again, Loving God, The Body, Against the Night, Who Speaks for God? The God of Stones and Spiders, Kingdoms in Conflict, Life Sentence*—in the course of which we pointed out some of Colson's anti-Christian and Roman Catholic ideas:

1. Colson asserts that the Bible is paradoxical (*Loving God*).
2. Colson praises the nun Teresa of Calcutta as one of the "contemporary giants of the faith" and as the "greatest saint in the world" (*Loving God*).
3. Colson asserts that faith is "not just belief, but belief lived out—practiced" (*Loving God*, 37).
4. Colson advocates "mere Christianity," the doctrines on which "all Christians agree" (*The Body*, 104, 108, 185).
5. Colson praises ecumenical discussions between Lutherans and Roman Catholics (*The Body*, 271).
6. Colson favors making the sign of the cross (*The Body*, 106).
7. Colson laments the lack of an ecclesiastical Magisterium among Protestantism (*The Body*, 132).
8. Colson heatedly attacks "individualism," "lone rangers," and the "entrepreneurial spirit" (*The Body*, 32, 134).
9. Colson advocates private communion (*The Body*, 140).
10. Colson laments the lack of a monolithic church structure (*The Body*, 199).
11. Colson laments the fact that Americans are free to choose the churches they will attend (*The Body*, 199).
12. Colson believes that Roman Catholics have better made visible the spiritual reality of worship" (*The Body*, 73).
13. Colson constantly uses the title "Father" in referring to Roman and Orthodox priests.
14. Colson vigorously defends "Mother Teresa's Christian commitment" (*The Body*, 87).
15. Colson endorses "natural law" (*The Body*, 196).
16. Colson praises Billy Graham for including Roman Catholic priests in staffing his crusades (*The Body*, 333).
17. Colson includes all denominations in Prison Fellowship (*The Body, Life Sentence*).
18. Colson endorses "Catholic evangelicals" (*The Body*, 101) as "a great movement of the Holy Spirit among people

completely committed to Christian living within the Catholic Church" (Foreword to *Evangelical Catholics*).

19. Colson asserts that "the church is hierarchical and authoritarian and ultimately answerable only to God" (*The Body*, 133).
20. Colson criticizes Protestants who opposed John Kennedy's election as President (*The Body*, 169).
21. Colson implies that anti-abortion activism is more important than a correct understanding of the doctrine of justification (*The Body*, 114).
22. Colson praises the Roman Church-State for "calling heretics to account" (*The Body*, 132).
23. Colson recommends reading Roman Catholic authors (*The Body*).
24. Colson asserts that Rome no longer offers indulgences (*The Body*, 271).
25. Colson uses "inclusive language" in his own books while denouncing such inclusive language as "code words...of a feminist orthodoxy" which "represent subscription to the entire [feminist] agenda" (*The Body*, 242).
26. Colson endorses a Roman Catholic monk as a "Christian"—a monk who teaches that obedience to God's commands is "not difficult" and "very simple" (*The Body*, 320).
27. Colson asserts that "it is so crucial for the members of the Body to put aside their less significant differences and join forces around our integrated world-view" (*The Body*, 199).
28. Colson endorses one world church: "It is about time for Christians who recite the creed and mean it to come together for fellowship and witness regardless of denominational identity" (*The Body*, 99).
29. Colson attends mass with his Roman Catholic wife (*Life Sentence*, 39, 93).
30. Colson asserts that "Christianity has been firmly established in Poland for a thousand years" (*Kingdoms in Conflict*, 196).
31. Colson enthusiastically praises Roman Catholic masses in Poland and the worship of the Black Madonna (*Kingdoms in Conflict*, 196).
32. Colson participated in mass in Northern Ireland (*Loving God* tapes).
33. Colson defends lying for pious purposes (*Kingdoms in Conflict*, 286).

Here are 33 reasons to Chuck Colson, and now he has provided even more in his latest book, *How Now Shall We Live?*

Since we reviewed those earlier Colson books, Colson has publicly attacked the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone in *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* and *The Gift of Salvation*, and, if their pattern holds, we can expect another such quasi-Romanist document from the Cardinal Cassidy Colsonites this year. Colson's jihad against Biblical Christianity continues to open new theaters of conflict, and he and his Romanist and crypto-Romanist friends have already inflicted many casualties, including some within the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in America.

Now Colson, Colson's collaborators and ghostwriters, and his vast network of enablers have presented us with another book, *How Now Shall We Live?* an awkward title that bastardizes Francis Schaeffer's *How Should We Then Live?* Colson desperately wants to be recognized as Schaeffer's intellectual heir (he dedicated the book to the memory of Schaeffer), and some of Colson's followers are former disciples of Schaeffer. Harold O. J. Brown, Professor of Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, described the book in a review in *Christianity Today* as "a magnum opus in the best Schaefferian tradition." Now a "magnum opus," for you po'folks who read *The Trinity Review* instead of *Christianity Astray*, *Credenda-Agenda-Preterenda* and *Whirled*, is Latin for "BIG MISTAKE." And the mistake is a whopper. At 45 chapters and 572 pages, *How Now* musters more theological, philosophical, and historical blunders than a cathedralful of chattering clerics at a World (or Vatican) Council.

The errors range from the inconsequential—on page xi, a mere three pages into the Introduction, Colson describes Abraham Kuyper as "the great eighteenth-century theologian" ("No, Chuck, if it's the 1800s, it's the *nineteenth* century")—to the soul-destroying. It is the latter that makes Colson so dangerous; the former are merely amusing. Far from being a "champion of the faith," as CEO Joel Belz of *World* magazine described Colson in a shameless puff piece in his neo-evangelical magazine, Colson is an enemy of the Christian faith—one of the slickest that has yet emerged from the theological swamp of American neo-evangelicalism.

Colson's trickery—there are few other accurate words for it—begins in the Introduction. Colson writes, "Christianity offers the only viable, rationally defensible answers to these questions.... Only Christianity offers a way to understand both the physical and the moral order.... God's revelation is the source of *all truth*..." (xi). Sounds good, doesn't it? Perhaps Chuck has been reading *The Trinity Review*? But before we add Colson to our stable of Christian writers here at *The Trinity Review*, we must understand that by the phrase, "God's revelation," Colson does not mean the Bible; he actually means everything else, including symphonies, in which we "hear his [God's] voice" (xii). No, I am not making this up, folks. Chuck the aesthete has exchanged the Creator for the composer, all the while unctuously pontificating about God and a Christian worldview. Colson denies *sola Scriptura*, just as he denies *sola fide*. There can be no "Christian world and life view" that omits, denies, soft-pedals, or perverts either of those doctrines.

And there is just the rub. There are many groups, organizations, and individuals abroad promoting what they call the "Christian worldview." But while they may have a worldview of some sort, it is not Christian, any more than the worldview of the apostolically anathematized Judaizers in Galatia. What removed the Judaizers from the fold of Christianity, and what removes many today, is their denial of justification by

belief alone. That doctrine is a *sine qua non* for Christianity and a Christian worldview. Deny it, ignore it, soft-pedal it, and no matter how pious and religious you are, you are not Christian. But Colson and many of the "Christian worldview" groups endorse and collaborate with those whom the Apostle Paul has anathematized. Poor Paul: He should have seen the importance of unity and worked together with the Judaizers to oppose the pagan worldview of the Roman Empire.

One reviewer of Colson's book (Christopher Mann writing in the Fall 1999 issue of *American Outlook*, a secular magazine) commented on the fact that "although the authors [Colson and Pearcey] expend much effort investigating examples of honest and dishonest science, they pay only a small amount of attention to the biblical worldview and the Bible itself. Only one chapter [out of 45] is devoted to this subject, yet the Bible and its scientific and moral implications are at the center of the debates today." Quite perceptive. *How Now* has no Scripture index, for it has very little Scripture in it. Instead of Scripture, Colson appends a recommended reading list that runs for 15 pages. Colson does not get his worldview from Scripture.

## Rewriting History

On page ix, the very first page of the Introduction, in listing the persecutors of the Christian church, Colson mentions pagan Rome, the barbarians, the Turks, and modern tyrants. He conveniently omits the ancient Jews, and, more significantly, papal Rome, which has persecuted millions of Christians, kept Europe ignorant of the Gospel for a thousand years, still keeps its own subjects ignorant today, and continues to persecute Christians 2000 years after the coming of Christ. Colson omits Rome from his list of persecutors, for he has made a theological and political alliance with Rome.

## The Religious New World Order

On page x, Colson quotes the Roman priest Richard John Neuhaus, one of his collaborators in the ecumenical movement called *Evangelical and Catholics Together*, as optimistically predicting the "desecularization of world history" in the next millennium. That is, Colson and Neuhaus look forward to the re-divinization of world history—to a time when priests and witchdoctors once again rule the world.

One of the cultural consequences of the widespread preaching of Christian doctrine was the de-divinization—the "secularization"—of the world. Pagan religions, including Roman Catholicism (read the Roman Catholic historian Carlos Eire's book, *War Against the Idols*, for details) had populated the world with fairies and nymphs, spirits, demons, wonderworking and weather-controlling crucifixes, and miraculous relics—and all that was swept away by the preaching of the Christian Gospel in Europe and North America. The world was de-divinized, secularized, and industry and business developed as a consequence. Now that the Reformation is over, Colson and Neuhaus are heralding the coming of a new religious world order. Following the lead of Pius IX, author of the *Syllabus of Errors*, they are preaching a new Crusade against Modernity and in favor of Medievalism. (They are echoed by some who call themselves Reformed.) The unctuous blathering of politicians about God and values is a harbinger of great religious deception to come.

## Cosmology, not Soteriology

Colson quite deliberately removes justification by faith alone from its Biblical position as the "principal article of [the Christian] religion" (Calvin) and the "article by which the church stands or falls" (Luther) when he writes that "the dominating principle of Christian truth is not soteriological (i.e., justification

by faith) but rather cosmological (i.e., the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos...)."

The Apostle Paul disagreed: "I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 *Corinthians* 2:2). Apparently Paul did not know what the dominating principle of Christianity is. *Contra* Colson, soteriology is the "dominating principle" of Christianity. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." Christ the Savior is the *only* revelation of, the *only* spokesman for, the *only* Son of, and the *only* way to, the sovereign God. By displacing Christ and salvation with cosmology, Colson is deliberately attempting to set one teaching of the Bible against another.

Colson mentions justification by name only once in this large book, and then it is to depreciate its importance: "Being justified before God is a wonderful gift, yet it is just the beginning" (279). (The sole entry for "justification" in the index is page 12—a blank page, which aptly sums up Colson's soteriology.) His book jacket takes the same condescending attitude toward salvation: "True Christianity goes far beyond John 3:16." Colson simply does not understand that all of Christianity flows from Christ. He thinks he has discovered something higher and deeper and more important than salvation, when there is and can be nothing higher or deeper or more important. His depreciation of soteriology and Christ is at the foundation of his alliance with Rome and other anti-Christian organizations that profess to believe in God.

One problem with asserting that cosmology is the defining doctrine of Christianity is that the demons—at least the ones mentioned by James and the one who speaks to Christ in *Mark* 1—believe in God and the power of God, but they do not believe the Gospel. Monotheism is not Christianity. It is the doctrine of salvation that defines Christianity; that is one of the lessons of *Galatians*.

## Common Grace

Colson is an advocate of "common grace." In fact, "common grace" is the reason that he wrote this book: "Because we wanted to communicate a fuller sense of how we cooperate with God's common grace, Nancy Pearcey and I felt compelled to write this book" (xii). "We"—that is, presumably, all people, at least all nominal Christians, not just Chuck and Nancy—"cooperate with common grace." And it is common grace upon which a Christian culture can be built. "As God's servants," Colson writes, "we may at times be agents of his saving grace, evangelizing and bring people to Christ. But few of us really understand common grace, which is the means by which God's power sustains creation, holding back the sin and evil that result from the Fall, and that would otherwise overwhelm his creation like a great flood. As agents of God's common grace, we are called to help sustain and renew his creation..." (xii). And that is done apart from saving grace, Colson says.

Now, the Scriptures know nothing of Colson's "common grace"; they teach only saving grace. The whole of history and creation, Paul tells us in *Romans* 8:28, is governed for the good of believers: "All things"—the Greek is the word for the universe—"work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose." Colson is urging us to go beyond soteriology and "special grace" and become "agents of common grace." He has not learned even the first lesson of Christian political theory: Any civilization that exists is due to God's special grace toward his people. Christ taught this in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on.... For after all these things the Gentiles seek.... But seek first the kingdom of God and his

righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." *How Now* is a sustained attack on Christ's command to seek first God's righteousness, that is, his justification and salvation, to make seeking that righteousness the priority, the dominating principle, of one's doctrine and life. All the rest follows from that. To put anything else first is unbelief.

## Human Experience

"Christianity is, after all, a reasonable faith, solidly grounded in human experience" (xiii). The Apostle Paul disagrees: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him, but God has revealed them to us through his Spirit.... No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 *Corinthians* 2).

## Idolatry

Colson enthusiastically informs us that the head of Prison Fellowship in Ecuador is a Roman Catholic and that Prison Fellowship services (Prison Fellowship acts as a ersatz-church with officers and priests) are held in a room in which "pictures of Christ and other religious symbols were everywhere..." (7).

## God and Un-Logic

On page 15, Colson asserts that "God created...the laws of logic," which, if it were true, would make God illogical, or at least non-logical. From this it follows, for example, that if the word "David" refers to the King of Israel for us, the word "David" cannot mean the King of Israel for God. We think A is A, but God, since he is not logical, thinks otherwise. Therefore, we have and can have no knowledge—no propositional revelation—of God.

However God gets along without logic, Colson says that we have no trouble obtaining knowledge apart from Scripture: "In every area of life," Colson asserts, "genuine knowledge means discerning the laws and ordinances by which God has structured creation...." But the Scriptures say that genuine knowledge is that received as a gift from God through his Word, his propositional revelation, not by "discerning the laws...of creation." The worldview that Colson promotes is the Roman Catholic worldview, not the Christian. Colson quotes Al Wolters with approbation: "It is by listening to the voice of God in the work of his hands that the farmer finds the way of agricultural wisdom." Colson continues: "The same is true in economics, politics, the arts, medicine, communications, and education—in every area of society. We learn how to take care of God's creation by familiarizing ourselves with the creational structures and living in tune with them, and we formalize that knowledge in a Christian worldview" (516). That is, Colson's worldview is not derived from Scripture, but from experience.

## The Deficiency of Scripture

The Scriptures are insufficient, Colson tells us: "When advancing the biblical perspective in public debate, we ought to interpret biblical truth in ways that appeal to the common good. [Question: How many different interpretations of Biblical truth are there?] So although we believe that Scripture is God's inerrant revelation, we do not have to derive all arguments directly from Scripture....The answer [to people who object to Colson's syncretism] is that of course God's Word is sufficient for salvation—for *saving grace*. But here we are talking about *common grace*—that is, carrying out God's work of maintaining creation..." (33-34). For this task, the Bible is insufficient. Colson argues that we must turn to science, politics, law, arts, medicine, and education. In this he contradicts 2 *Timothy* 3: 16-17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Colson simply does not teach Christian ideas.

What is interesting about Colson's entire argument is that it is directly contrary to what Francis Schaeffer taught. Schaeffer argued that the Thomistic view, the nature + grace view, was fatal to Christianity. Colson has simply re-named nature: Colson calls nature "common grace," and spends much of his book advocating "natural law." Schaeffer's diagram looked like this:

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Grace  
Nature

Colson's diagram looks like this:

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Saving Grace  
Common Grace

In both diagrams, the Bible informs the upper storey; the lower storey is independent of the Bible. The result of this, according to Schaeffer, is that nature "eats up" grace. In Colson's scheme, common grace first overshadows and then supplants saving grace. In Colson's anti-Christian worldview, cosmology dethrones soteriology; monotheism, not justification, defines Christianity; and the cultural war is more important than proclaiming and contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Far from Colson being a disciple of Schaeffer, he is seeking to overturn Schaeffer. It is appalling that the so-called disciples of Schaeffer do not understand what Colson is doing.

### Positively Medieval

Colson is such a Romanist that he describes the Middle Ages—specifically the 12<sup>th</sup> century—as "the days when Christian faith was robust, even heroic" (47). Christianity, far from being robust in the Middle Ages, was cruelly suppressed by priests, popes, and their henchmen; Christians were driven from society. The heroes were those who did not deny Christ when threatened by the fire and sword of the Antichrists whom Colson praises.

### Colson's Heroes

Speaking of heroes, whom does Colson admire? He calls the Roman Catholic Peter Kreeft a "Christian apologist" (119). Kreeft has called for a grand alliance of monotheists—Christians, Jews, and Muslims—to wage a jihad—or in Catholicese, a Crusade—against the secularists. Colson describes John Paul II as a "Christian leader" (303). Colson believes the legends about Patricius (300) who became St. Patrick, and praises him for establishing monasteries in Ireland. Colson refers to the establishment of monasteries as "an astonishing feat." He writes several pages in praise of monks, and three lines about the Reformation. It is the Reformation that Colson wants to reverse; it is the monasteries he wants to reinstate: "we want to transform our pagan culture as the monks did in the Middle Ages" (308). Colson's history is wrong: On the eve of the Reformation, Europe was still pagan—he should read *War Against the Idols* by Eire.

### Science

Colson thinks science is indispensable in presenting the "Christian" worldview. For example, he writes: "What we need to avoid...is giving the mistaken idea that Christianity is opposed to science. If we are too quick to quote the Bible, we will never break out of the stereotype spread by *Inherit the Wind*. We should not oppose science with religion; we should oppose *bad* science with *better* science."

In saying, "we should not oppose science with religion," that is, with the Bible, Colson disarms not only himself, but also all those who listen to him. The Bible describes itself as our *only* offensive weapon in *Ephesians* 6. The weapon Colson has chosen—something called better science—is no defense at all.

Yet Colson has an ambivalent attitude toward science. On the one hand, he thinks it can prove Christianity. He presents an argument for God from DNA and the design of the universe, a type of argument is very popular in some circles, but which has no value, simply because the argument is logically invalid. The Bible tells us it is invalid: "The world through wisdom did not know God" (*1 Corinthians* 1:21). Colson tells us that "In many ways, the scientific method is merely a codification of common sense..." (66), but that, of course, does not tell us whether common sense or the scientific method is a way to discover truth. The Bible says they are not, for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden and cannot be known except as Christ reveals them in his Word.

On the other hand, "Western science has destroyed the environment and polluted the air" (263). So while science is good for apologetics, it is bad for technology—at least "western science" is. Colson seems to favor some sort of mysticism. He condemns "Western thought" as "leading to fragmentation and alienation" (263). But Colson also asserts that "Everything in the universe is made of atoms..." (63). Oh really? What kind of materialism is this? Has Colson been reading Hobbes?

### Colson's Faith-Based Fascism

In keeping with the Medieval nightmare that he wants us all to share, Colson attacks capitalism and self-interest: "Whereas both classical [the word "classical" in this context, as in many contexts, means "pagan Greek and Roman"] and Christian [the word "Christian" here means "Medieval" or "Roman Catholic"] ethics had regarded self-interest as a vice to be overcome for the common good, [Adam] Smith contended that self-interest was actually good for society.... Instead of raising the moral bar, challenging people to go beyond self-interest [challenging people to go beyond self-interest is, of course, what all collectivist systems do, from medievalism to 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarianism; one can read about the challenges in histories of Romanism, Nazism, and Communism], Smith's system [capitalism] seemed to accommodate our sinful state. The system demanded the very impulses Christianity had traditionally renounced as immoral.... As the early days of industrialism proved, an autonomous, secularized capitalism exploits both workers and the environment, creating new forms of slavery.... Capitalism provides the best opportunity for economic growth and human freedom only if it is tempered by compassion and regard for social justice" (389-391). This, of course, is the fascist economic perspective of the Roman Church-State, which Colson dutifully follows. I explain faith-based fascism in my book, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church*. Read it, and you will see why Colson talks so much about "natural law," the "common good," and "social justice."

Faith-based fascism—the deliberate and gradual elimination of the separation of church and state by governments' collecting taxes to fund religious schools,

colleges, hospitals, welfare organizations, and other programs—is already well-developed in the United States, and this religious movement threatens to end religious freedom in America.