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Myths About the Church, Creationism, and Nazi Germany Demolished

By Jerry Bergman, PhD

Many false myths exist about the creation worldview that creationists have attempted to overcome. Unfortunately, myths die hard, if they die at all. One of the most widely believed false myths is that the Church taught that the world was flat, which caused the Catholic Columbus to fear that he would fall off of the Earth's edge if he sailed too far West. In fact, Columbus knew the earth was not flat and even estimated the distance from the Canary Islands to Japan was 2,800 miles. He turned out to be wrong about this fact. We know that it was actually closer to 14,000 miles. On his way to the East, Columbus bumped into America, which he thought was India, thus he called the people there Indians, the name that stuck. In fact, the consensus in the Middle Ages was that the Earth's shape was round, not flat.

All this was well documented in University of California, Santa Barbara, Professor of History, Jeffrey Russell's book *Inventing the Flat Earth*.¹ Neither Christopher Columbus nor most of his contemporaries believed the earth was flat. Yet this illusion persists today, firmly established thanks to the media, textbooks, teachers—even some noted historians.² Another illusion also exists today.

The Establishment of Evolution

The establishment of evolution as the official court enforced creation story of our age was a result of the culmination of a large number of historical events.³ One is the Dark Ages Myth, which is the claim made, or implied, that the rise of Christianity was a result of the powerful Church suppressing both science and thinking. The false claim is that this cultural darkness was caused when “the leaders of orthodox Christendom built a grand barrier against the progress of knowledge.”⁴

The idea that Columbus was the only round-earthier against a multitude of flat-earthiers was fabricated by Washington Irving. Then 19th-century atheopathic anti-creation propagandists like John William Draper⁵ (1875) and Andrew Dickson White⁶ (1897) spread this myth as part of their “conflict thesis.” The conflict thesis supported by Draper and White has been widely rejected by historians of science.

The myth concluded that the Dark Age was broken only by the Renaissance (French for rebirth) in which knowledge, science, and, eventually, evolutionism overthrew creationism in 1859. The Renaissance, the myth

added, occurred due to the decline of church power in major Italian cities, allowing secular teaching to eventually become dominant. The next step was the further decline of church authority which birthed the *Enlightenment* or *Age of Reason*. This was where science's answer to the old theological questions, evolution, came to completely dominate in society in modern society. Examples included how all life forms originated and, by extension, the meaning and purpose of life. Stark concluded that this myth now dominates our textbooks even though "historians have known that this scheme is a complete fraud."⁷

I have often come across claims that conclude, or infer, that the Christian Church is evil, anti-Semitic, and especially opposes science and reason. The more I read the more I came to reject this view and accept the position that Stark has documented in his writings.

Hitler's Pope

Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, the so-called Hitler's Pope, actually did what he could to save Jews. The estimate Stark gave was by his (Pope Pius XII's) own effort, and in spite of risking the wrath of Nazi Germany, Pope Pius XII saved "at least 700,000, but probably as many as 860,000 Jews from certain death at Nazi hands."⁸ It is often claimed Pope Pius XII could have done much more, but the Vatican lacked an army and did not have even one tank or plane. To a large degree his life was at the mercy of Hitler and the German government, as well as most of Europe, which was then under German control or influence.

It is also well-documented that Nazi Germany "bitterly attacked the Catholic Church, had closed all the Catholic schools, and had arrested thousands of priests and nuns and sent them to Dachau and other death camps."⁹ Hitler made it very clear that he was going to destroy the Catholic Church in time and actually had to hold back the many impatient high level Nazis in his government who wanted to immediately act against the church. Hitler stressed that we have to fight one battle at a time. Hitler was, if nothing else, a very good politician and realized the Nazi Government must at least try to appear supportive of the churches until they are no longer needed. Books, such as *Hitler's Pope* attempted to paint the Pope as pro-Nazi, or at least a person who did nothing to help the Jews. The views of Hitler were very clear.

Hitler's Motivation When the Time is Right, to Destroy the Christian Church

Traudl Junge was the personal secretary to Hitler during much of his rule. She was closer to him, and probably knew more about him, than most of his associates. He could confide in her about his innermost beliefs and often did. In recounting her conversations with Hitler about human evolution, Frau Traudl wrote that Hitler believed that humans

are the highest state of some mammal which developed from reptiles and moved on to evolve into human beings by way of the apes. We are part of the natural creation and children of nature, and the same laws apply to us as to all living creatures. And in nature, the law of the struggle for survival has reigned from the

first life that existed on Earth. Everything weak is eventually eliminated. Only ignorant mankind, and above all the church, have made it their aim to keep the weak alive, those unfit to live, and the inferior people.¹⁰

She added that Hitler possessed an enormous power of persuasion in conveying these ideas, which are right out of the playbook of Darwin, to his fellow Nazis and the German public. The Nazi leadership absorbed the murderous Darwinian elements of Hitler's antisemitism and transmitted them downward to Hitler's eager disciples to operationalize them.

Hitler also believed that the Christian religion, in rejecting evolution, was horribly outdated. Hitler's religion was "the laws of nature, the survival of the fittest."¹⁰ These ideas constituted the core of Nazism and was the foundation of WWII. In the end, eliminating inferior people, such as Jews and Slavs (especially Russians and Poles) was the main long-term goal of the war.¹¹

The online *Holocaust Encyclopedia* detailed why the Nazis adopted the Darwinist "survival of the fittest" ideology.¹² For the Nazis, survival of a race depended on its ability to reproduce and accumulate land to support and feed its population. Also important was the vigilance of the people in maintaining the purity of its gene pool. Preserving the unique "racial" characteristics with which "nature" had equipped life for success in the struggle to survive was paramount. Since every race sought to expand, and the space on the Earth was finite, the struggle for survival inevitably resulted in violent conquest and military confrontation. For this reason, war was a part of nature, and a required part of life. Those who win deserve to win.

To define a race, the Nazis used physical appearance, behavior, and culture. These unchangeable traits were rooted in biological inheritance. They were immune to changes in environment, intellectual development, or socialization. For the Nazis, assimilation of a member of one race into another culture or ethnic group was impossible because the original inherited traits could not change: they could only degenerate through race-mixing.

The major concern was intermarriage of inferior races with the superior races, which pollutes the superior race. Inferior races that live among the superior race invariably intermingled sexually, as often happened among the Germans and Jews. For this reason, the inferior races must be exterminated. This was the long and short of the cause of WWII. Thus, if the Darwinian worldview had been rejected and the creation worldview had been accepted, WWII would never have occurred. This is the theme of my book which concluded that WWII was a war between Creation and Evolution, and Creation won at an enormous cost.¹¹

Killing Inferior Races Central to WWII

In 1944, Hungary was the home of some 900,000 Jews, most of whom had survived up until Holocaust organizer Otto Adolph Eichmann's arrival in 1944. Eichmann then knew Germany was going to lose the war, but eliminating as many members of the inferior races as possible was far more important. So, the Nazis sent as many as 20,000 Hungarian Jews a day to the extermination camps. They managed to murder 565,000 Hungarian Jews before the war formally ended and they were forced to stop. Eichmann was proud of his work

helping to support the superior race and was confident that a statue would be erected in Budapest to commemorate what he had accomplished to reduce the inferior race population. In the end, two out of every three Jews living in Europe before the war were murdered in the Holocaust totaling over six million.

The choice between using railroads to move badly needed supplies to the troops on the eastern front or to transfer the Jews to the concentration camps was easy. Exterminating inferior races was more important than winning the war. As Heinrich Himmler stated, "It is difficult now, but the world will thank us for what we have done to create a superior race." Himmler stated the challenges the SS had faced carrying out this "very difficult" mission were enormous but well worth it: "Most of you know what it means when 1,000 lie dead in a ditch."¹³ He made clear his reasoning:

Russians, Czechs, and other Slavs, ...possessed no inherent value as human beings. For the SS, these "human animals" were only valuable insofar as they labored under the lordship of the superior Aryan Germans.¹³

The cost of the war in terms of war materials was enormous. Nevertheless, we will find a way to save bullets. The Einsatzgruppen were assigned the task of murdering all the inferior races in all countries conquered by the Nazis which required a lot of bullets. The solution was to force Jewish women to hold their child so one bullet would kill them both. Often infant children would be observed weeping over their lifeless dead mother. Einsatzgruppen were not to waste bullets on killing them because, without their mother, they would soon die anyway.

The Jews were trapped. In America, when public surveys asked if our immigration policy should be changed to allow a larger number of Eastern European refugees, mostly Jews, fully 83 percent said no. However, America fought to destroy the Darwinian evil. Dresden, Berlin, Collen, Essen, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, and Hamburg were all reduced to rubble. And in the end over 85 million fatalities occurred, the majority of whom were civilians in a war that was 16 times greater than all wars fought throughout history. It could have been worse. Hitler ordered that Paris be destroyed to become "a blackened field of ruins." Fortunately, the Paris German commander opted to surrender to avoid this senseless destruction. In the end, no man has ever walked the Earth that has inspired more destruction and death than Charles Darwin and his fellow travelers.

The Claim that Christianity is Anti-Science

The common claim that the Church was anti-science is also false. As has been well-documented by leading science-history historians, such as Ronald Numbers, David Lindberg, and numerous other scholars, this claim is unequivocally false.¹⁴ Stark documented that many claims pitting the Church against Science are fraudulent. One example Stark gives is Pope Leo XII refused to be vaccinated against smallpox because he and the Church believed that "smallpox is a judgement from God." And to submit thwarted God's will.¹⁵ In fact, the Pope had no objection to vaccination, and the church actually actively promoted vaccination as soon as its efficacy was documented.

Another example is the Church supported Natural Theology which taught that one can learn about God by studying His creation, just as one can learn about an artist by studying his artistic creations. Toward this goal, the Church invented universities devoted to the pursuit of advancing knowledge. Although schools have existed throughout most of Europe and Asia, universities, meaning a community of teachers and scholars, are a product of the medieval Church.¹⁶ This requires academic freedom to fulfill their goal of going beyond existing knowledge, also a Church invention.¹⁷

However, during the Classical period (or era), dissection of the human body was forbidden because “the dignity of the human body forbade dissection,” which explains why Aristotle, Galen, and Celsius had to rely solely on animal dissections.¹⁸ With the founding of the Christian universities this view changed because it was eventually accepted in Christendom, thanks to the work of the Church universities, that what was unique to humans was not the body, but rather the soul. This history is in contrast to the view that it was the Church that forbade dissection, preventing the progress of medicine, when the source was the Classical world which Christianity had to overcome. It was the Church that overcame this long-term probation, specifically in Catholic Italy first, then throughout Europe, resulting in major progress of human anatomical knowledge. Reasons for the overturning of the dissection prohibition include forensics—too many murders escaped detection, disease—postmortems were needed to determine the cause of death, especially during the plagues, or if the cause was uncertain, and the training of medical students.¹⁹ Since all Christian university instruction was in Latin, scholars from England to Russia could work together to achieve the common goals of academia.

Lastly, as there was no Dark Age, likewise there was no scientific revolution, an idea Stark tells us was invented to discredit the Medieval Church.²⁰ Science was built on a foundation that began with Christian university scholars notable for their piety and scientific prowess.²¹ The claimed Scientific Revolution supposedly begun by Copernicus actually was built on the work of his many important predecessors. Copernicus did not leap forward with his so-called heliocentric worldview, but used the knowledge he gleaned from his university professors and colleagues to arrive at a logical conclusion based on the insight he gained from many of his many predecessors, including Robert Grosseteste (1168–1253), Albertus Magnus (1200–1280), Roger Bacon (1214–1394), William of Ockham (1295–1349), Nicole D’Oresme (1325–1382), Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), and others who were all important in helping Copernicus produce his results.²²

Conclusions

This brief review has shown that the common claims against Christianity and the Creation worldview are false. An enormous amount of literature has documented the claims dealt with in this review in much more depth. Conversely, the secular worldview as illustrated by the most extreme manifestation of it, Nazism is not only opposed to Christianity but also to the welfare of humanity.

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