

VII.
REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC QUESTIONS, RELIGION & MORALS

Introduction

A recent survey of opinion in Britain, carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, revealed that, "People feel a deep sense of unease about some of the changes shaping British society...They said that we no longer share a set of common values and that we have lost our 'moral compass'" (Consultation on Today's Social Evils by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Statement release 20th April 2008 – [www.socialevils.org]).

No Christian Church can look with satisfaction at the present political and social situation within the United Kingdom. Things are not right in the country. People are aware that moral standards have fallen. Social problems are at least perceived to be greater than ever, with the police force stretched to its limits and an unprecedented level of youth violence seen on the streets of our cities. People speak about a 'culture' of violence in inner cities. Even the banking system has demonstrated a level of uncertainty that would have been unknown ten years ago. What is the answer?

The sad reality is that the political parties do not appear to have one. Each party tinkers with this policy or that policy, and then packages its policies in a strong covering of self-belief intended to woo the customer. Yet, when it comes down to it, there is still very little to separate the main political parties. Both are striving to establish their camp in the centre ground where they may attract the most floating voters and win the big prize. To this end, principle takes a back seat to expediency, and political correctness is the order of the day.

The Church

Sadly, and all too often, the visible Church can and does proffer no definitive answer to the ills of the age. Thus, when the Church is either silent, or simply gives sweet-sounding platitudes, it loses all credibility in the eyes of the watching world. It becomes irrelevant. It is of little use for the Church to condemn the spirit of the age, if it at the same time is unable to supply the answer with an informed, authoritative voice. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ then become all the more pertinent: "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).

Yet, the Church does have the answer. She can speak with the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. And she can speak with the knowledge of the mind of God as revealed in His Word: the Bible.

In order to address any question, one must first identify the problem. Can a few political manoeuvrings rectify the situation today, or is there a deeper, underlying problem to be faced? The Church may restate the obvious i.e. that the underlying problems are spiritual, and that the country has departed from the Word of God. However, spiritual problems usually manifest themselves outwardly. And we must specifically identify where our nation has departed from the Word of God.

One such departure from the Bible which continues to have a devastating and almost universal impact upon our national life is to be found in the confusion that prevails with regard to who and what man is. The blood transfusion of an animal is of no use to a man. A sick animal requires a vet; a sick person requires a doctor. Thus, it is important to know what man is in order to properly cater for his needs and address his

problems. To be wrong on this foundational point is to build all else on a falsehood. The edifice is supported by sand, and will eventually prove fatal. Yet it is on this very point that our politicians and people go so utterly wrong.

A Question of Identity

What is man? Where has he come from and where is he going? Is his constitution distinctly unique, or is he but one of many? These are not just abstract theological questions to be pondered within theological seminaries. These are questions that drive home to the very heart of politics in Britain today. How a particular political party responds to these questions, will largely determine the way by which that party will govern. Indeed, many of the sins of our nation today stem directly from Government either neglecting these questions, or arriving at wrong answers to them. Whatever the reason, humanism has become the backdrop to the political scene.

The Church has something very clear to say on this subject, simply because the Bible speaks with no uncertain sound when it comes to what man is.

Created

From the first chapter of the Book of Genesis we are told of the unique constitution afforded to man. He did not evolve from the apes; neither did he simply develop his intelligence to become superior to the animal kingdom. On the contrary, he was created by God as the pinnacle of the creation. He was uniquely created in God's image, crowned with honour and dignity, and was given dominion over the rest of the creation: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26). Rather than his intelligence evolving, he was fully capable of naming the animals from the first: "...whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."(Genesis 2:19).

Protected

When Cain killed Abel (Genesis 4) his punishment was worse than death; indeed, it was a punishment that he confessed "is greater than I can bear" (verse 13). Thus, man is not only personally responsible before God, but has a conscience which can torment him. Later, man's unique responsibility before God, and to his brother, is unfolded. In establishing the Covenant with Noah, the death penalty is introduced for premeditated murder: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Genesis 9:6). Throughout the Old Testament, those guilty of deliberate murder were to be executed (see Exodus 21:12-14; Numbers 35:16-32). This requirement has never been abrogated. Indeed, the New Testament confirms it: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil...do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same...But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; *for he beareth not the sword in vain*: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:3-4). The beast of the field may be killed; fish of the sea may be caught. But man is uniquely protected. The reason for this protection is that man is made in the image of God.

Blessed

Despite the fact that human nature was debased and cursed by the sin of Adam, yet the Lord Jesus Christ condescended to take human nature and unite it with His own Person, thus exalting and blessing it. This is what the Psalmist rejoices in: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands" (Psalm 8:3-6). It is human nature that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, has set "at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is

named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:20-21). The heavens and the earth will one day pass away, but the union between God and our nature will never be dissolved.

Fellowship

Not only is human nature capable of such glorious exaltation as it experiences in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is also capable of fellowship and communion with God. What beast of the field is capable of saying, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:2)? Which bird of the air, or fish of the sea can sing, "O come, let us worship and bow down: Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God" (Psalm 95:6-7)? And while even the sound of the rustling of the trees redounds to the Glory of the Lord, only man, who is uniquely constituted for such, can say, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

In forming their opinions, can it be said that the political leaders of our day reflect the unique nature of man? Do they know what man is, or is there a crisis of identity in Britain? This is surely the first question that should be addressed by political leaders of all persuasions.

Britain Today

In the current year, as it is required, the Committee has sought to monitor developments within the public sphere which are of Christian concern. In doing so, the Committee now seeks to highlight this one concern of human identity.

As we have seen, the Bible is clear when it comes to the identity of man. Man was created in the image of God, and thereby has a unique place in creation. Sadly, a rejection of this is at the heart of much of the mischief in our own day.

Firstly, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill which is making its way through Parliament strikes at the heart of our understanding of what it is to be human. Among other things, it will let scientists grow human-animal stem cells for research. In most cases, this will involve the removal of the nucleus from an animal egg, to replace it with a human nucleus. The resultant embryo will be 99% human and 1% animal. Other forms of embryo will be developed (*chimeras*) by bringing human and animal cells together. The resultant embryo will be part human and part animal. Mixing DNA together will produce a hybrid; what one writer has called 'a new part-human species'. A true hybrid would be 50% human and 50% animal.

The question remains, are these new creations human or are they animal? Sir Liam Donaldson, the Chief Medical Officer for England and the UK's Chief Medical Adviser, when pushed by the House of Commons to say whether he believed these embryos were animal or human, replied that no sane person would be able to say 'yes' or 'no' to that question.

This unethical proposal on the part of Government is all the more incredible when one considers that there are alternative and successful forms of research available e.g. adult stem cells. While non-embryonic methods have been successful in treating many diseases, to date there has been no treatment developed through embryonic research. It would appear that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill seeks to permit scientific research simply for the sake of science and nothing else.

Secondly, the evolutionary theory is at the heart of medicine today. Hitler sought to exterminate the weak and vulnerable in society. His regime executed those with mental and physical disabilities. Such citizens did not fit into his idea of the 'super' race. In some respects, the abortion laws in Britain today operate on the same principle.

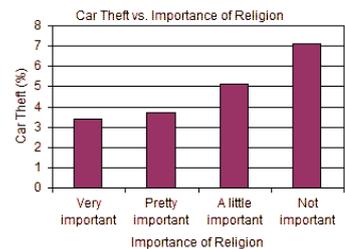
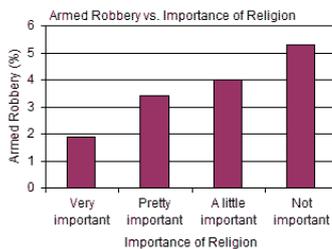
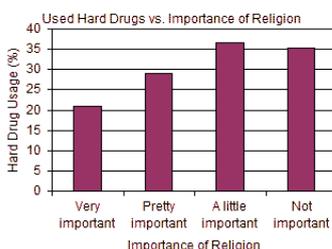
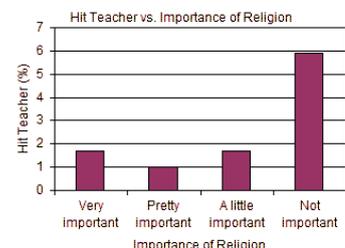
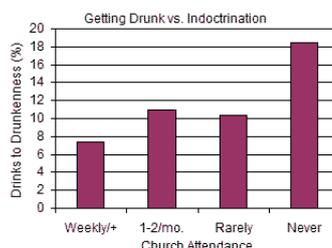
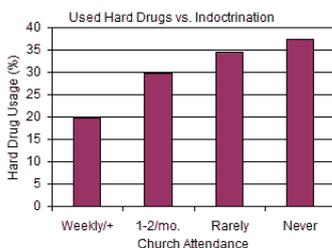
The year 2007 marked the 40th anniversary of the introduction of abortion in Britain. On Saturday, 27th October 2007 a rally was held in London to mark the occasion. A central plank of the abortion debate is the desire to have the 'normal' family. Thus parents, confronted with an unborn handicapped child, are given the choice of abortion. Such a child may need extra care. It may cause difficulties for working parents. Its life may not match up to what society considers to be *the norm*, so why bother giving it the chance?

Few beasts of the field will deliberately kill their own offspring. Mankind, for all its so-called advancement, takes the life of the unborn child – a child given by God – and thereby acts in a way worse than the brute beast of the field. We are therefore strongly opposed to the Report issued by the Parliamentary Science and Technology Committee during the year, particularly the idea that nurses and midwives should be permitted to carry out the abortive procedure. We are also opposed to any move to use the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill to introduce any amendments which would liberalise further abortion legislation.

It is not only at the beginning of life that the shadow of humanism is felt. Margo MacDonald, a member of the Scottish Parliament, has reopened the debate on euthanasia. Mrs MacDonald, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, said that she should be allowed to terminate her own life if her condition worsened. Her comments came in the Scottish Parliament during a debate on choices for patients coming to the end of a terminal illness – including the possibility of legal support for assisting them to die. We abhor the inference that man can be extinguished like the animal in the field. We reject the idea that death is the end. There is a judgement day to be faced, and with this in mind we reject unreservedly the idea of euthanasia being introduced into this country, whatever form it may take.

Thirdly, the occurrence of young people carrying knives is increasing. A Home Office Report entitled *Violent Crime and Street Robbery* discovered that 10% of boys aged 11-12 claimed to have carried a knife in the previous year and that 8% had claimed to have attacked someone intending serious harm. By the age of 16, the figures had risen to 24% and 16% respectively. The Report identified fear and victimisation as the main reason for this increase.

Richard Dawkins, in his book *The God Delusion*, makes the claim that it is dangerous to teach children a Christian world view. Indeed, he calls religious education child abuse. Yet he produces no evidence to substantiate his arguments. Consistently, research has shown that children raised in Christian homes, taught Christian values, disciplined according to biblical precepts, and encouraged in the Christian faith, develop into more stable, law abiding, respectful, and well balanced young people. For example, one of the largest studies of its kind was carried out by the University of Carolina in the United States of America. The survey examined the role of religion in the life of young people, and the occurrence of problems later. The following is but a sample of the results.



While there may be many answers to the problem of young delinquents in Britain today, a return to teaching the Ten Commandments in schools must at least be one to be considered. The Ten Commandments – frowned upon by secular lawmakers – encourage respect for God and man. If, as evolution teaches, there is no God then neither is there an absolute lawgiver. If there is no lawgiver, then law is what you want to make it. Once again, man acts just like the beast of the field. Young people are entitled to choose how they live and behave; after all they are ultimately accountable to no one for their actions.

Young people are being raised in a society where respect for human life is often a secondary issue. For example, as opposed to the death penalty, murderers today are incarcerated for a relatively short period of time, and the sentence is seen as corrective rather than punitive. Indeed, a murderer can spend less time in jail for his crime than some other person who may commit serious corporate fraud. Why is this? Simply because of the humanistic philosophy that makes life cheap.

It is then not surprising when some young people emulate the philosophy of the day. There has been a recent spate of young teenagers going out and committing murder. In a recent case, one such young man showed utter contempt in court for his victim as he was convicted. Life to him meant nothing. Until our nation returns to an acknowledgement of the dignity of human life, it is to be feared that there will be many more young men just like him.

Fourthly, we have soldiers today serving in Iraq. This has apparently come about because of the policy of ethnic cleansing practised by Saddam Hussein. Yet, where does the idea of ethnic cleansing come from? Why is there a record in history of mass murder? For example, Saloth Sar, otherwise known as Pol Pot, was the leader of the movement known as the Khmer Rouge and ultimately Prime Minister of Democratic Kampuchea. During his time in power, he sought to restart civilization in ‘Year Zero’ through imposed agrarianism. It is estimated that between 750,000 and 1.7 million (26% of the population) died in his reign of terror.

Idi Amin was a Ugandan dictator who practised political repression and ethnic cleansing. The number murdered under his dictatorship can only be estimated at between 100,000 and 500,000. Adolf Hitler sought the racial subjugation and extermination of the Jews. The result was the Holocaust in which six million Jews were executed along with another five million people from other ethnic groups. The objective of Hitler – the superior race.

Why be surprised at such behaviour? Is this not what is at the very heart of *Evolution*? Man has no Creator. The strong survive and evolve, whereas the weak die and are extinguished. Is it not the common view that the human race has got to where it is by this very method? Why complain when evil men simply practise what is now taught in the majority of schools in our land?

Fifthly, racism is an issue that the Government is very keen to address. This is particularly so in light of the racial tensions that exist within many communities in Britain. This tension can, at times, even find expression in the sporting arena. For example, during the summer of 2007, cricketer Andrew Symons was taunted in Australia with ‘monkey chants’. Earlier, in 2006, the chief Executive of the Australian Cricket Board stated: “The weak-minded minority might think again if they realised they faced bans or huge fines of the type that now apply to spectators who trespass on Australian cricket arenas.” Similar taunts have been heard at football grounds in Britain.

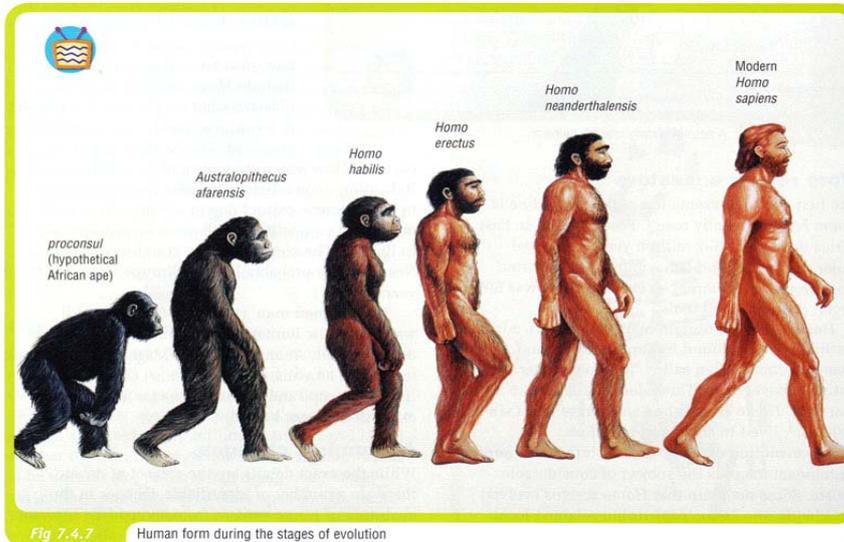
One commentator sees the answer to racism as follows: “The ‘fundamental’ of both Western civilisation and Christianity in the Western World ‘is their inability to recognise that they share the planet not with inferiors but with equals. Unless western civilisation intellectually and socially, politically and economically, and the Christian Church theologically, can learn to treat other men with fundamental

respect, these two in their turn will have failed to come to terms with the actualities of the twentieth century' (Smith, 1957)" [Causes of Racism in Britain – analysis of the roots of racism in Britain by Abdel-Qadar Yassine].

This statement challenges the Christian church to rethink its theology. Yet true Christianity has never held to the tenet that one race is intrinsically superior to another. Paul at Athens states: "God that made the world and all things therein...hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..." (Acts 17:24,26). Thus, the Bible supplies the first article of faith to any anti-racist.

It is true that some organisations would claim to be Christian and yet practise otherwise. For example, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the mid nineteenth century and again in the twentieth century claimed to be Christian. Yet it practised terrorism, hatred and violence. Was this Christian? It burnt Christian crosses as a means of intimidation, and organised lynch mobs to carry out murder. Was this Christian? The majority of people today would recognise the anti-Christian nature of these acts. However, the theological basis upon which the Klan was built was also anti-Christian. The KKK and similar organisations, while claiming to be Christian, actually proceeded on the basis of *Evolution*. The idea that the black man was slower to develop in the evolutionary cycle, and is therefore inferior in race by virtue of hereditary determination is derived from Darwinism, not Christianity.

Yet it is Evolution that is taught in our schools. The picture below is one which many will be familiar with from school days. It indicates not only where man is supposed to have come from (the apes), but also indicates a difference in development in skin colour. The last man pictured represents *homo sapiens* as fully developed. However, as one diligent observer noted, the penultimate one is darker in skin, indicating a stage behind in development. Is this not evolutionary racism at its worst?



Social Darwinism is what is encouraged today at any cost. Man must be considered the product of chance development and evolution. Why then should any cricketer, or any sportsman for that matter, be offended at being taunted with 'monkey chants'? According to the theory of the day, he is simply being reminded of his ancestors. Why should that offend him?

The Committee is concerned at the way the country is being governed. It calls on all political leaders to consider the unique position that man has in the creation and in the providence of God. It respectfully brings before the people of Scotland and the United Kingdom the consequences of continuing to fail to identify this unique position. Evolution, social Darwinism, and practical humanism are already having their influence, and it is not for the good. Only the Gospel of Saving Grace, faithfully preached and blessed by the Lord, can turn the tide. We pray the Government will continue to encourage such preaching by every means at its disposal. After all, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

JAMES I. GRACIE, *Convener*
WILLIAM MACLEOD, *Vice-convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the report and thank the Committee;
2. The General Assembly commend to the prayers of the Church the moral and spiritual condition of our nation;
3. The General Assembly commend to the nation the Biblical view of man as uniquely made in the image of God;
4. The General Assembly deplore the proposals within the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill which deny the unique nature of man, especially the experimentation in embryology;
5. The General Assembly reaffirm their opposition to abortion;
6. The General Assembly strongly oppose the proposal within the Report issued by the Parliamentary Science and Technology Committee suggesting that nurses and midwives should be permitted to carry out the abortive procedure;
7. The General Assembly oppose any move to use the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill to introduce amendments which would liberalise further abortion legislation;
8. The General Assembly reject unreservedly the idea of euthanasia in whatever form;
9. The General Assembly lament the level of youth violence within the country, and commend the teaching of the Ten Commandments in schools, as well as Christian values, Christian discipline and the Christian faith;
10. The General Assembly once again thank the Christian Institute and other similar organisations for the valuable function they perform in providing information and help regarding Christian issues affecting the nation.