



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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★ *Peace on Earth to All Men of Good Will* ★

The First Christmas: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. Full of grace and truth. John 1:1

SAVING WESTERN CIVILISATION PART V by James Reed, Brian Simpson & Chris Knight: Peter Slezak ("Adversaries of Pity and Proof", *The Australian*, 19/11/08, p.29), has given an astonishingly inconsistent argument for atheism, atheism being a position quite trendy nowadays. Slezak is in the School of History and Philosophy at the University of New South Wales, so as a philosopher this criticism, if it sticks, is damning. According to him Christian philosophers should "keep their anti-science rationale out of the sociopolitical sphere of thought". Slezak's comments were prompted by the recent visit to Australia of John Lennox of Oxford University.

Continuing his argument, Slezak says that the clearest sign of the incompatibility of religion and science is the fact that attempts are made to demonstrate the compatibility of science and religion. There are brilliant scientists who believe in God.

This, according to Slezak, is "a poor substitute for argument and evidence". Yet the same appeal to authority is made right throughout science: the climate change debate is full of the rhetoric "leading scientists believe". So this is why we believe that Slezak is inconsistent: this line of argument will quickly undermine his own materialism as we will see.

Slezak says that there is no alternative to materialism/naturalism since it is by definition the totality of science (defined narrowly to mean physics, chemistry, etc.). But why should physics, chemistry, etc., be taken to exhaust the domain of human knowledge? The great theoretical physicist John Wheeler said that there would still be one question confronting even a physical Theory of Everything (TOE): why does nature obey one particular set of equations rather than some other? The supersymmetry theory of particle physics admits the possibility of a sudden change in the laws of physics occurring, whereby the gluons that bind quarks (the ultimate building blocks of matter) together in protons and neutrons could become super-heavy by about a hundred million times so that the atoms would literally fall apart. So, why is the universe as it is?

The fine-tuning-of-the-universe, or new design argument, begins with the observation that if things

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were a little different there would be no "us" at all; a two percent increase in the strong nuclear force would prevent quarks from forming into protons and atoms wouldn't exist at all. This is the same for other forces and physical constants – that the universe is made of matter rather than anti-matter, for example. It is certainly true that if the universe was different, we wouldn't be here to ask any questions, but this still leaves open the question of explanation. The explanation cannot be causal (that is, x causes y) because the question is about the very existence of the causal nexus itself and it would obviously be question begging to give a causal explanation of the causal nexus.

Theism, the idea that a creator God exists is an answer to John Wheeler's question as it supplies a reason for why the physical universe exists. There can be further questions asked such as "Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?" which theism can respond to by the idea of God as a "necessary being". Atheists though have available a number of responses to Wheeler's question which *allegedly* avoids a Designer.

For example: (1) It makes no sense to ask why our universe is as it is. (2) The existence of the universe is logically necessary. (3) The existence of the universe is a brute fact or sheer coincidence. (4) Many universes exist, and ours is but one. (5) The universe is not a coincidence but exists for some, perhaps unknowable reason.

The first three and last options have usually been rejected by most philosophers. It does make sense to ask why the universe is as it is and the question is perfectly meaningful: philosophers understand it, examining arguments relating to it and debate the merits of competing explanations. Nor is our universe logically necessary as we can easily construct models of alternate universes. The existence of the universe could be a brute fact, but if it is we cannot know that it is because the same lack of evidence about the ultimate nature of the universe, the under-determination of all data, also precludes us from even saying that there is coincidence at work. How in fact could we even know?

Many physicists are now opting for a multiple universe account of reality for the technical reason that the latest mathematical theory – string theory – has multiple dimensions. These dimensions though are mathematical constructs, abstract spaces and may not even be real or even consistent.

Outside of physics it is not generally known that the two main physical theories – the theory of the large (general relativity) and the theory of the small (quantum mechanics) are mutually inconsistent. String theory is an attempt to solve this contradiction, but the theory has not yet succeeded. And even so, we could still ask: "Why is the world as string theory says it is rather than something else?"

Philosophers and Christian scientists who seek to rationally justify their belief in God are preoccupied with biology and biological order. We (or at least the two writers with scientific training in this team) believe that sounder arguments can be given for the existence of God from physics itself.

Contrary to Slezak, modern science has not moved beyond God, but has brought us closer to Him. Readers, we hope, will forgive some of the technicalities made here because it is important that we can feel secure that our faith has a sound rational grounding.

We wish you the joy and blessings of this Holy Season – James, Brian and Chris.

AH! ICE AGE : I TOLD YOU SO! by James Reed: Those who know me know that I am no scientist – but have long felt that the world is not heading towards any sort of "global warming" but quite the contrary, that a new ice age is due. This is what I was taught in school science: our industrial age and even human civilisation itself, is a blip between the coming and going of sheets of ice.

Scientists now say that the Earth's coming ice age has probably been averted because of the build-up of man-made greenhouse gases. (*The Australian*, 14/11/08, p.7). In other words global warming has saved us from... wait for it... wait for it...an ice age!

The scientists say that this is not an argument in favour of global warming. Well, if it is not, it is difficult to see what could be. An ice age would truly destroy human civilisation. Additional warming, over a century can be adapted to using technology. No technology can halt an ice age once it starts. Maybe I should write a book entitled "The Joys of Greenhouse Gases".

DAVID BELLAMY – BBC SHUNNED ME FOR DENYING CLIMATE CHANGE: Naturalist David Bellamy was interviewed by the *Sunday Express*, 5/11/08: For years he was one of the best known faces on TV. A respected botanist and the author of 35 books, he had presented around 400 programs over the years and was appreciated by audiences for his boundless enthusiasm. Yet for more than 10 years he has been out of the limelight, shunned by bosses at the BBC where he made his name, as well as fellow scientists and environmentalists. His crime? Bellamy says he doesn't believe in man-made global warming. Here he reveals why - and the price he has paid for not toeing the orthodox line on climate change.

"When I first stuck my head above the parapet to say I didn't believe what we were being told about global warming I had no idea what the consequences would be. I am a scientist and I have to follow the directions of science but when I see that the truth is being covered up I have to voice my opinions. According to official data, in every year since 1998 world temperatures have been getting colder, and in 2002 Arctic ice actually increased. Why, then, do we not hear about that? The sad fact is that since I said I didn't believe human beings caused global warming I've not been allowed to make a TV program. My absence has been noticed, because wherever I go I meet people who say: "I grew up with you on the television, where are you now?" It was in 1996 that I criticised wind farms while appearing on Blue Peter and I also had an article published in which I described global warming as poppycock.

At the beginning of this year there was a BBC show with four experts saying: "This is going to be the end of all the ice in the Arctic," and hypothesising that it was going to be the hottest summer ever. Was it hell! It was very cold and very wet and now we've seen evidence that the glaciers in Alaska have started growing rapidly – and they've not grown for a long time. I've seen evidence, which I believe, that says there has not been a rise in global temperature since 1998, despite the increase in carbon dioxide being pumped into the atmosphere. This makes me think the global warmers are telling lies – carbon dioxide is not the driver.

The idiot fringe have accused me of being like a Holocaust denier, which is ludicrous. Climate change is all about cycles, it's a natural thing and has always happened. When the Romans lived in Britain they were growing very good red grapes and making wine on the borders of Scotland. It was evidently a lot warmer. If you were sitting next to me 10,000 years ago we'd be under ice. So thank God for global warming for ending that ice age; we wouldn't be here otherwise.

People such as former American Vice-President Al Gore say that millions of us will die because of global warming – which I think is a pretty stupid thing to say if you've got no proof. And my opinion is that there is absolutely no proof that carbon dioxide is anything to do with any impending catastrophe. The science has, quite simply, gone awry. In fact, it's not even science any more, it's anti-science. There's no proof, it's just projections and if you look at the models people such as Gore use, you can see they cherry pick the ones that support their beliefs. To date, the way the so-called Greens and the BBC, the Royal Society and even our political parties have handled this smacks of McCarthyism at its worst.

Global warming is part of a natural cycle and there's nothing we can actually do to stop these cycles. The world is now facing spending a vast amount of money in tax to try to solve a problem that doesn't actually exist. And how were we convinced that this problem exists, even though all the evidence from measurements goes against the fact? God knows.

Lakes drying up...yes, but not from 'global warming'! Yes, the lakes in Africa are drying up. But that's not global warming. They're drying up for the very simple reason that most of them have dams around them. So the water that used to be used by local people is now used in the production of cut flowers and vegetables for the supermarkets of Europe.

One of Al Gore's biggest clangers was saying that the Aral Sea in Uzbekistan was drying up because of global warming. Well, everyone knows, because it was all over the news 20 years ago, that the Russians were growing cotton there at the time and that for every ton of cotton you produce you use a vast amount of water. The thing that annoys me most is that there are genuine environmental problems that desperately require attention. I'm still an environmentalist, I'm still a Green and I'm still campaigning to stop the destruction of the biodiversity of the world. But money will be wasted on trying to solve this global warming "problem" that I would much rather was used for looking after the people of the world.

Being ignored by the likes of the BBC does not really bother me, not when there are much bigger problems at stake. I might not be on TV any more but I still go around the world campaigning about these important issues. For example, we must stop the destruction of tropical rainforests, something I've been saying for 35 years.

Mother nature will balance things out but not if we interfere by destroying rainforests and overfishing the seas. That is where the real environmental catastrophe could occur.

AND YOU THOUGHT THEY REALLY WERE CONCERNED! It hasn't taken long for the U.K. Brown government to reveal its hidden agenda. The bidders at the auction of carbon emissions permits had hardly time to disperse before it was admitted the proceeds from Europe's first auction of carbon emissions permits would not necessarily be used to tackle climate change. (*The Times*, 20/11/08.)

Through the sale of four million permits for £13.60 per tonne the British Treasury admitted it had raised £54 million. By 2012, in the second phase of the scheme, 85 million permits will be auctioned, possibly raising more than £1 billion for the Treasury. From 2013, this figure is expected to rise to about £2.5 billion a year, according to WSP, the environmental consultancy.

REPUBLICANS AND ROYAL TITLES from David Flint's *Opinion Column*: Never ever stand between royalty, even minor European royalty, and republicans. If you do, you risk being knocked over in the rush. Perhaps similar sentiments can be expressed about titles. "Given her leftist leanings and vocally establishment past, she had some serious soul searching to do before accepting her DBE – and the "Dame" title that comes with it – in The Queen's Birthday honours list in 2003. [Dame Helen Mirren from The Queen.]

"I was ambivalent, I asked my sister, I asked associates and good friends. They all, to a man and a woman, said 'take it'...If my sister had said, 'Maybe not, Helen,' I wouldn't have.

"I think if my parents had still been alive they would have been proud, even though they were still intensely republican."

This was from an interview with Dame Helen Mirren DBE, whose most celebrated film was *The Queen*, 2007, by Susan Chenery in "The Last Laugh", in *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, 6-7 December, 2008.

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