

The Evolution of Apartheid: Darwinian Influences on the Development of Supremacist and Segregationist Policies in South Africa

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Abstract

The system of racial subjugation and oppression operating in South Africa until 1994, labelled Apartheid (apartness or separation), is universally known as an example of racism. It is generally associated with the Afrikaans speaking people of the country as the perpetrators, and a Christian Nationalist system of government when ascribing blame for the unjust laws of the era. What is often forgotten is that the system began in a time when such discriminatory ideas were rife throughout the western world, and South Africa was just the last country continuing to govern under overt laws of racial segregation. While the vast majority of citizens of South Africa in the twentieth century identified as Christian, both black and white, often overlooked or ignored was the role that Race Science played in justifying the policies of the time by many of South Africa's academics and politicians. Racism filtered down to the general public through them under the banner of "science."

Keywords: apartheid, racism, white supremacy, Christian Nationalism, Darwinism, eugenics

Introduction

One of the best documented examples of racism in the twentieth century, after Nazism, was Apartheid in South Africa. By this association, it is not implied that these two examples of institutionalized racism were similar in their goals or methods. South African Apartheid was never a program of genocide. While brutalities were increasingly perpetrated in the implementation and defense of the system, apartheid was never designed, nor descended, into a program of extermination. Both the practical need for labor for its burgeoning mining industry and Calvinistic and Christian decency amongst the ruling white population (though patronizing toward black and colored people) ensured that South African racism would never become another Holocaust. The "final solution" of Apartheid, unjust as it was, was to ensure separate social, educational, and developmental lives between the black and white populations with pragmatic interaction in the economic sphere alone where black labor was required.

Apartheid was formalized under the National Party government that came to power in 1948, which was predominantly composed of white Afrikaans speaking people in its leadership, administration, and support base. The Afrikaners (sometimes referred to as "Boers" which is Afrikaans for farmer) were the descendants of the early Dutch, German, French

Huguenot, and even Jewish immigrants to South Africa from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.

While the ideological foundations of Nazism have been clearly and persuasively linked to Darwinism, those of apartheid remain elusive. The influences, circumstances, and ideologies leading to major historical events are usually nuanced and varied. The provenance of South African white supremacy and apartheid is no exception. In a book about the connection between Darwinian and evolutionary belief and the subject of race and racism, in a chapter specifically about Apartheid, the author writes, "evolutionary influence on Afrikaner thinking seems to have been minor and very indirect" (Wieland 2011, 288). Some Christians holding to replacement theology, the idea that the Church has replaced the nation of Israel in God's covenant promises, reject the notion that Darwinism played a role in the formulation of Apartheid. Instead, they believe that the system was a valid attempt to preserve God's covenant with His people as represented by the Dutch/Afrikaner nation.¹

A clue to why this link is not so apparent lies within that sentence itself in the word Afrikaner. The system of Apartheid is often attributed to the South African Afrikaner people generally from which culture the majority of the National Party² leadership came and specifically toward Hendrik Verwoerd,³ the second

¹ The Republic of South Africa under the National Party government, celebrated The Day of the Covenant for decades, celebrating the Boer victory over the Zulu army, although massively outnumbered, at the Battle of Blood River in 1838. The Boer leaders were said to have made a covenant with God that they and their ancestors would faithfully honor Him, the word "Covenant" implying that God was a party to the vow, much as God had made a covenant with Abraham.

² The National Party, who identified around the Afrikaans language, (white) culture, and Christian heritage, won power in the 1948 elections from the more internationalist United Party led earlier by Jan Smuts.

³ South African Prime Minister from 1958 until his assassination in 1966.

National Party Prime Minister often labelled “the Architect of Apartheid.” The word architect implies the idea of originator or designer of a concept. In the case of the origin of the South African system of racism labelled Apartheid shortly before World War 2, the idea that the Afrikaner nation and Verwoerd were the originators of the system obscures reality. This was an illusion created mainly by English South African politicians and intellectuals after World War 2 as they tried to distance themselves from blame for a system which became increasingly criticized internationally as awareness grew of the terrifying consequences of scientific and political racism that had occurred in the Nazi genocide.

The reasons for this desire to disassociate include a general culture of them and us between South Africans of English and Afrikaans cultural backgrounds through much of the twentieth century. This cultural war stemmed mainly from the South African War (Anglo-Boer War) between the two groups at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴ English opposition to racial discrimination and segregation was for the most part post World War 2. In fact, there was no organized anti-racist movement in South Africa from early in the twentieth century until after World War 2 (Dubow 1995, 189) even though under successive governments, discriminatory legislation had steadily increased during that period. In one of the ironies of our age, the term racist in South Africa, as in the rest of the world, was not even considered a derogatory label in the first half of the twentieth century (Dubow 1995, 1). It was mainly the clear division of party politics along language/cultural lines after World War 2 that led to the sudden “crisis of conscience” among English speaking intellectuals and politicians and amnesia toward the role they had played in the development of institutionalized racism in South Africa. Institutional racism is a system of discriminatory legislation based on race and enshrined in the laws of a country as was the case in Apartheid South Africa. It is not endorsing the neo-Marxist notion that light-skinned people or cultures are inherently racist, an ideology which is itself a prime example of racism.

The second factor contributing to the obscuring of the role of scientific Darwinian racism in South Africa was that such disassociation allowed intellectuals to cling to their sacrosanct theory of evolutionary origins without the taint of racism that became increasingly odious after World War 2. After the war, evolutionists throughout the western world abandoned the “dirty water” of racism while protecting the Darwinian “baby” that had muddied the water in the first place. Modern liberals choose to ignore the role of science in racist

movements in South Africa in order to pin the blame for segregation and Apartheid on Afrikaner Nationalism. They ignore the influential role of many overtly social Darwinian English speakers in the formulation of segregationist policies early in the twentieth century. The role that scientific racism, parading as science in contrast with the scientific method of observation and experimentation, played is subjugated to that of other motivations such as religion, politics, nationalism, class, and capitalism.

The fact is that racist policies and legislation in South Africa go all the way back to its founding and systematized segregation as far back as the post-South African war period with the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903 to 1905. This commission was set up by the British colonial government to provide answers to “the native question” and made recommendations relating to geographical separation of the races, land ownership, industrial labor policies, and the segregation of whites and blacks in the political realm. These recommendations under British rule undergirded the legislation that would develop 50 years later under Afrikaner rule. While it was relatively easy for academics after World War 2 to shrug off as “pseudo-science” the pre-war Darwinian racism, it was politically not as easy. Because the black population were in the overwhelming majority, walking away from racist policies for South Africa was not as easy as, for example, in the USA and Australia where non-white populations were a minority. Contrary to this dismissal of the role of scientists engaging in such dubious disciplines as phrenology, in the development of Apartheid, the fact remains that “mainstream biological scientific racism coincided with social imperialism and racial segregationist movements in South Africa” (Rich 1990).

Deflecting Blame

Hendrik Verwoerd, a Dutch-born South African politician, was a professor of psychology and philosophy and later Prime Minister of South Africa. He is regarded as the “architect of Apartheid” and nicknamed the “father of Apartheid.” To blame Verwoerd or Afrikaner Nationalism alone for Apartheid is only half the story and possibly the half that had less direct correlation with scientific racism. While biological race theories continued to be promoted by some Afrikaans academics such as one leading ideologue of Apartheid after World War 2, Prof P.J. Coertze, such Darwinian ideas were in lock-step with most intellectuals throughout the world prior to the late 1940s (Dubow 1995, 103).

Verwoerd was largely a technocrat who systematized and formalized a set of policies and

⁴ Often referred to as the Anglo-Boer War or Die Vryheidsoorlog (Afrikaans for War of Freedom).

political agendas that had developed over the preceding half century with Darwinian racism as one of the drivers. Verwoerd's guiding ideology for Apartheid was primarily nationalistic, political, and cultural; not scientific. In his role as chair of Applied Psychology and Psycho Technique at the University of Stellenbosch in 1927, he applied his efforts to vocational guidance and testing to try and solve the "poor white" problem and gave very little, if any, attention to racial connotations at that time. In fact, in the early 1930s primarily motivated by Christian nationalist ideology, he maintained that there were no objective and demonstrable differences in the intelligence of blacks and whites. His later Apartheid efforts were to systematize what he believed God had predestined for the Afrikaner nation (Dubow 1995, 231). The role of Darwinian scientific racism in the development of Apartheid is obscured behind the smokescreen of labelling Verwoerd as its architect and the Afrikaner people as its adherents.

If the National Party had not gained power in 1948 it is likely the societal outcome would have been little different although maybe not under the same regulatory title of Apartheid. In 1957 the leader of the so-called liberal opposition in South Africa, Sir de Villiers Graaf said, "When we get into power again there will also be discrimination" (Arnold 2005, 331). He also stated, "The introduction of Apartheid—that is, the legalized separation of races—from 1948 onwards was not so much a new policy, for by then racial segregation had become ingrained in the South African system, but, rather, the formal entrenchment of the system to ensure the continuation of white political and economic control over all aspects of South African life" (Arnold 2005, 330). The ideological roots of Apartheid are varied and difficult to nail down. The academic Saul Dubow upon whose research this paper heavily leans stated, "There are a number of reasons why the influence of scientific racism remained relatively restricted in South Africa. In the first place it should be remembered that, however influential individual advocates of scientific racism might have been in particular spheres of intellectual and social life, there was never a 'critical mass' of like-minded thinkers with the capacity to create a firm institutional basis for the propagation of their theories" (Dubow 1995, 284). True, but the predisposition of politicians to dress their favorite policies in the "authority garb of science" then, as more recently, cannot be ignored.

Christian Nationalism, as applied in South Africa, the idea that the preservation of a Christian culture was inextricably linked to separate races along the lines of skin color, was a major influence as well. The *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church) was strongly influenced

by Covenant Theology. This is the doctrine that the Church replaced Israel, and Afrikaner Christendom was therefore to be kept as a separate, unique nation. The problem with this motivation though is that many of the black leaders of African resistance were also devout Christians, and Apartheid policies drove a wedge not only between Christians and non-Christians, but also between Christians of different skin shades. This is a clear contradiction of the biblical principle of oneness and unity in Jesus Christ where the divisions of a fallen world are broken and "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one..." (Galatians 3:28). It is ironic that those white South Africans today who continue to claim Christianity as the *raison d'être* justifying Apartheid, find themselves on the same side as Marxists, who also blame Christianity for Apartheid. The latter seeking to cast shade on the very strong influence that Christian doctrine and Christian leaders played in the resistance and eventual demise of Apartheid.

The Power of the Gospel

When the British retook the reins of the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1806 in order to control this important route to the East during the Napoleonic wars, Britain was in the midst of a cultural revolution set in motion by Christian revival in the late eighteenth century and an evangelistic awakening of the 1830s. This was an era that lasted late into the nineteenth century in which Christian values were having an increasing influence on every aspect of British society. Under the leadership of evangelical Christians such as William Wilberforce, George Müller, and many others, societal institutions were being transformed.

For a large part of the century David Livingstone toiled through unimaginable hardships to bring the Gospel to Africa and to open it to the three C's of Christianity, civilization and commerce. He had seen the benefits that the Bible and Christianity had brought to his native Great Britain and was burdened to open Africa to the same. His was not a patronizing white man's burden, but a deep desire for souls to be saved and set free from superstition and spiritual darkness. It is said of him that "for all his human failings, (he) sought to take the gospel to every man. He never looked down upon the natives; he saw each person in relation to their standing with God" (Mackenzie 2005, 65). A medical doctor and skilled student of God's creation, he was acknowledged and supported by the Royal Geographical Society and counted among his friends and scientific collaborators Sir Richard Owen and Sir Thomas Maclear, Astronomer Royal at Cape Town. His indignation burned against the slave trade

that continued to flourish in Africa mainly under Portuguese and Arab operations. He is also credited with having, “dealt the death blow to African slavery by closing the open sore of the world” and having, “rolled away the great obstacle to the evangelism of the continent” (Mackenzie 2005, 92).⁵

Livingstone was among the vanguard of thousands of British, American, and European missionaries that went to the new world of Africa, Asia, and the Americas during this period. They were supported by a wave of evangelical fervor in their home countries as they took the Gospel, medicine, and schooling to these regions. These schools were responsible for the education of most leaders of African resistance to colonialism, excluded as they were, based on the color of their skin from most of the advantages in education, commerce, property ownership and political franchise extended to white populations in Africa. A biblical worldview provided them with a philosophical basis for equality that no other belief system, including evolution, ever could (all mankind descended from Adam and Eve, made in the image of God). Years later the leader of the ANC (African National Congress founded in 1912 by predominantly Christian African leaders to resist racist legislation in South Africa) went on to win the first multi-racial election in the country in 1994. The ANC has remained in power ever since, having changed over the decades of Apartheid state persecution, from a Christian to a dominantly Marxist ethos.⁶ Chief Albert Luthuli, a devout Christian, said of these types of Christian missionary schools in reaction to their closure by Verwoerd under the African Education Act that “the thing which disgusted us most was the Minister’s glaring refusal to say one word of thanks to the group most responsible for initiating all social services among Africans—the missionaries. It was they who started education, health services, social training institutions, the training of nurses, and who were first behind the training of African doctors” (Luthuli 2006, 36).

By the time of David Livingstone’s death in the heart of Africa in 1873, Zanzibar which had been the center for the African slave trade, had become one for legitimate African trade and served as a port for British anti-slavery patrols.

The British Cape Colony, now one of the South African provinces called Western Cape, was naturally also affected by this resurgence in biblical values in the nineteenth century and with it a biblical sense of who man is as made in God’s image and therefore equal before the law where, “even the most antagonistic of the Cape’s legislators...had hitherto

been hesitant to erode the principle that all persons, irrespective of color, were equal before the law—one of Britain’s priceless nineteenth-century gifts to the Cape (and thus to South Africa)” (Rotberg 1988, 455). In the aftermath of Apartheid many people are not aware today that in the second half of the nineteenth century all men in the Cape Colony enjoyed the same qualified voting rights as those back in Britain. The Cape Qualified Franchise first appeared in 1853 when the Cape Colony received representative government and elected its first parliament. This was formulated without regard to race and a non-racial voter’s roll became part of the Cape’s 1853 Constitution subject to the same voting criteria for men as they enjoyed back in Britain based on education and property ownership.

These values continued to be defended into the early twentieth century by men such as John X. Merriman the son of an English curate who was vehemently anti-imperialist and anti-discriminatory. He was the prime minister of the Cape Colony from 1908 until 1910 and as the leader of the South African Party did his utmost to extend the Cape Qualified Franchise to the rest of South Africa. Unfortunately, he was paddling against a raging river best illustrated by the scramble for Africa toward the end of the nineteenth century. In the wake of the Berlin Conference assembled by Otto von Bismarck in 1884 to divide the African continent up between the European colonial powers of the day, Europe began rapidly adding a fourth C—Conquest—where, “the Maxim gun, not trade or the cross, became the symbol of the age” (Pakenham 1991).

A New Gospel

The publication of *On the Origin of Species* (subtitled *Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*) in 1859 had a devastating effect on how western man would begin to view himself and other societies. Darwin published another book, *The Descent of Man*, a few years later in which he stated, “At some future period, not very distant, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races” (Darwin 1871). Western society naturally regarded themselves as the former and the native inhabitants of the African colonies they governed as the latter. These ideas became the foundation of twentieth century white supremacy with the notion that light-skinned people were innately superior based on the biology of skin color. The darker races were believed to be more closely related to our imagined ape-like evolutionary ancestors than light skinned people.

⁵ The latter phrase taken from amongst the last words he wrote and inscribed on his tomb at Westminster Abbey.

⁶ African National Congress, one of the many resistance movements to racial discrimination in South Africa from the early twentieth century who eventually became the governing party after elections in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

Armed with such “scientific” authority, many western countries and individuals began to run rampant over the ‘inferior’ native populations in Africa in their lust for wealth and land. Toward the end of the nineteenth century in central Africa, King Leopold II of Belgium, under the guise of philanthropic initiatives, became effectively the owner of the Belgian Congo (later Zaire and today the Democratic Republic of Congo). Covertly using Belgian state funding for his activities, he eventually plundered vast personal wealth from his African kingdom mainly from ivory and minerals. As the automobile began to populate the roads of the West, it was from rubber that he made his greatest fortune. Outright barbarity was employed in forcing local inhabitants into feeding his greed. By some estimates as many as 8 to 10 million Africans perished from murder, disease, overwork, and starvation before Leopold’s real motives and activities in the area became publicly known (Hochschild 1999, 3).

There is very little written in English about Leopold and what his philosophical ideas were, but he was certainly a product of the Darwinian age and was overtly supported by some outright Darwinists. As opposition to what he was doing in the Congo began to be publicized in the USA, Frederick Starr, a University of Chicago anthropologist who was an ardent believer in the inferiority of primitive peoples, received one of Leopold’s innumerable medals and a full-year, all expenses paid tour of the Congo. In return he produced a series of 15 enthusiastic articles in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* under the heading, “Truth about the Congo Free State” (Hochschild 1999, 244) in which he acted as a propagandist for Leopold’s activities. Though less well documented, similar atrocities occurred in other rubber growing countries in Africa under other colonial powers (Hochschild 1999, 280).

Around the same time as Leopold was raping the Congo, in German South West Africa (today known as Namibia) in response to a contrived uprising by the Herero people against German encroachment on their land, about 80% of the nation (and about 15% of the Nama people who later joined the Herero resistance against the Germans), were systematically killed through battle, deliberate starvation, and thirst, as well as worked to death in barbaric death camps. This genocide (1904–1907) was couched in overtly Darwinian terms of justification by its chief protagonists (Ambler 2006b, 2011). Social Darwinism gave militarists and racists the scientific authority to, “explain away terrible acts and justify the destruction or enslavement of other peoples as being natural, inevitable, and therefore somehow moral” (Olusoga and Erichsen 2010, 294). In a prelude to the Holocaust, the victims were regarded as only part-

human and their slaughter of no more significance than the hunting of animals.

The racist offspring of Darwinian race science could be fully practiced in the colonies isolated from the Western public eye. By contrast in South Africa with its Christianized culture and substantial European population, these ideas were more subtle and covert. Nevertheless, they are discernible in many ways. In the South African War between the British and Afrikaans (Boer) republics that was fought at the end of the nineteenth century, much of what occurred was framed in terms of race. Kitchener employed a scorched earth strategy by burning the Boer farms and putting their wives and children into concentration camps where about 30,000 died from disease and malnutrition (Pakenham 1979, 493). A negotiated peace later led to the Union of South Africa in 1910 between the former Boer Republics and British Cape and Natal colonies. The Act of Union in 1909 had no black participation and gave the white government total control over the black population. Drawn up by the British, it was in fact an, “entrenchment of the colour bar” (Arnold 2005, 330). The Native Land Bill also gave about 90% of the land to the white population of one million and reserved about 7.3% for the four million blacks (Arnold 2005, 330). The politics in this era was increasingly framed in the language of scientific racism.

In the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk or NGK), the most influential denomination with the highest membership amongst Afrikaans South Africans, a movement away from biblical unity (people of all ethnicities worshipping together) began to occur. At first congregations were mixed but in 1857 congregations were divided into black and white meetings communicated at first as a concession to weaker white (and some black) congregants who objected to taking communion with members of the other “race” (Dubow 1995, 251). This began a steady regression to a separate mission church for non-whites in 1881 (Dubow 1995, 251). By 1921 overt Darwinian language began to be used in DRC documents to justify segregation. In a pamphlet titled, *The Dutch Reformed Church and the Native Problem*, reference was made to, “the laws of evolution and heredity which ensured that Africans could not immediately attain to the moral stature of those who have generations of Christian forebears behind them” (Dubow 1995, 251). Attempts to support Apartheid segregation from Scripture continued as late as 1942 by W.J. van der Merwe and in 1944 by J.D. Du Toit (Totius) in his keynote speech to the Volkskongres titled, “The Religious Basis of our Race Policy” (Dubow 1995, 258). The DRC had fallen far from the evangelicalism which characterized them going back to Andrew Murray

in the mid 1800s (Dubow 1995, 253). This process of abandonment of biblical values continues today with the increasing acceptance by the NGK of homosexual relationships and gay marriage.

As an indication that theological justification of segregation was not always a part of DRC history and that something had changed, only as late as 1957 were they able to agree on an "Apartheid bible." This is an interpretation of various Scripture passages that condoned or supported segregation such as using God's separation of people by language at Babel to justify separation by skin color (Dubow 1995, 265). This was supported by the assertion by Gustav Preller, a prominent character in the development of the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner nationalist mythology in 1937 that "science is only now gradually discovering the remarkable physiological differences between the brain of the white man of European descent and that of the Bantu—differences which are innate and constitute the measure of their respective intellectual capacities, but it is a striking fact that the Boers of a hundred years ago were aware of these natural differences" (Dubow 1995, 268).

Darwinian ideas began to permeate South African education. In 1935 the University of Witwatersrand and later University of the Orange Free State geneticist and zoologist Professor Gerrie Eloff, was perhaps the most overt race science and eugenicist educator. Drawing heavily on Eugen Fischer's anthropological studies on the Baster people of Rehoboth in German South West Africa, Eloff's ideas were given semi-official status in Afrikaans nationalist publications. He was a strong proponent of breeding for a stronger Afrikaner race and condemned interbreeding with other races (Dubow 1995, 270).

The social sciences also promoted a move away from the message of salvation and conversion as the remedy to social deviance toward materialistic explanations and solutions. The influential University of Pretoria criminologist and sociology professor Geoff Cronje wrote a series of books beginning in 1945 elaborating Apartheid theory. A member of the Ossewabrandwag (an Afrikaner nationalist organization established to oppose South African participation with the Allies in World War 2 and engaged in acts of sabotage against the Smuts pro-British government) and German sympathizer during World War 2, he believed that the, "mixing of blood between white and black races produces inferior material in biological terms (physically and mentally). Miscegenation [sexual relationships between people of different ethnic groups] between whites and non-whites is... shown by biological research to be detrimental" (Dubow 1995, 274).

Biblical norms and values were at this time increasingly displaced by this new gospel of survival of the fittest on the African continent including South Africa. Although institutional Christianity itself was unfortunately not immune to this erosion, it was in fact Christians who played a key role in resisting and exposing many of the horrors of social Darwinism. In the afterword to a later edition of his book on the Belgian Congo horrors (even though he documented many examples of Christian (and other) opposition to what Leopold was doing), the writer Adam Hochschild stated that he had, "understated, in this book, the importance of the evangelical tradition in the appeal of Congo reform to the British Public," and, "overlooked the way Baptist missionaries had already started to draw large crowds in Scotland to magic lantern slide shows about Congo atrocities two months before Morel founded the Congo Reform Association" (Hochschild 1999, 315). German Rhenish missionaries were also the most vocal and persistent objectors to what was happening to the Herero and Nama people in German South West Africa in the early twentieth century.

Albert Luthuli stated in his auto-biography that

the Christian faith sprang from Asia Minor, and to this day it speaks with a Semitic voice. Western civilisation is only partly Western. It embraces the contribution of many lands and many races. It is the outcome of interaction, not of Apartheid. It is an inheritance, something received to be handed on, not a white preserve. I claim with no hesitation that it belongs to Africa as much as to Europe or America or India. The white man brought it here, originally, but he brought a lot of other things too. (Luthuli 2006, 33)

The "other things" he alluded to were largely the product of minds infected with an infatuation with Darwinism that swept the Western world from the late nineteenth century onwards.

We will next look at the Darwinian ideology of a few key characters influential in the development of racial segregation which culminated in the system later named Apartheid in South Africa.

"Dregs of Darwinism"—Cecil John Rhodes

There is probably no one who better illustrates this than Cecil John Rhodes, a man who achieved remarkable things in his relatively short lifetime. English born Rhodes believed that if there was a god, his goal for him was to, "paint as much of the map of Africa British Red as possible" (Rotberg 1988, 415). In pursuit of this goal he became one of the wealthiest men in the world controlling 90% of the world's diamonds, numerous gold mining interests, and practically owning Rhodesia (a country named after him which later became the separate states of

Zambia and Zimbabwe) (Rotberg 1988, 288). In this process he was largely involved in and responsible for introducing and expanding modern industrial, agricultural, mining, transport (railway), and communication (telegraph) technologies and even liberal political rights to southern Africa. In other words, he took much that is admirable from his native Britain and brought it to South Africa.

What is often forgotten is that he meant these advantages to exclusively benefit the white, preferably English speaking population on the continent. "When they spoke of giving the vote to the 'inhabitants' of Rhodesia they talked in their colonial blindness of whites only" (Rotberg 1988, 575). He was a prime example of the white supremacist mood of his day. When speaking in favor of a bill to allow farmers to sell alcohol to Africans he, "carried the day with innuendo, half-truth... and sneering scorn for Africans" (Rotberg 1988, 474). As premier of the Cape Colony, he regularly made assertions such as, "It was really ridiculous to suppose that these poor children could be taken out of this absolute barbarism and... come to a practical conclusion on... politics" (Rotberg 1988, 470). During the Boer siege of Kimberley which resulted from the infamous Jameson raid orchestrated and financed by Rhodes for commercial and political ends, he ensured that the white population were adequately cared for from the limited resources while many of the Africans and coloreds (mixed race people) in the town grew ill and died from scurvy and hunger (Rotberg 1988, 630). In the final chapter of a comprehensive biography of Rhodes, the biographer recognizes the extraordinary contribution of Rhodes in many fields while acknowledging that it was largely at the expense and detriment of non-white inhabitants of the countries he impacted. "Rhodes acted, it is now clear, for both ultimate good and ultimate evil" (Rotberg 1988, 690). Although Rhodes was the son of an English vicar and regarded himself as a Christian, in the cultural sense of coming from a Christian England, he had no concept of a personal, imminent God that had revealed Himself to mankind.

He was also a master at deception whether to convince voters or members of the Cape parliament to vote with him or to hide his misappropriation of funds from shareholders of his own companies. He also embodied the imperialistic methods of his day in his use of violence to achieve his ends. In a note in his Commonplace Book in 1895, he approvingly copied a quote that "Humanity is too apt to forget that the world yields itself only to the violent" (Rotberg 1988, 530). He was apt to put this into practice to whatever degree he could get away with in achieving his goals. During his campaign to control what would become

Rhodesia in response to an uprising among the Ndebele people, he ordered a major to, "do the most harm you can to the natives around you." Further, he "ordered a police officer to 'kill all you can,' even those Ndebele who begged for mercy and threw down their arms" (Rotberg 1988, 557). Associates later recounted how he would descend on a battlefield after a battle and count the corpses and then go and loot the corn and cattle of defeated villages.

His treatment of black laborers in his mines showed a similar ruthless disregard for their dignity, rights and freedoms. In order to avoid possible theft, workers on the De Beers mines were enclosed like prisoners in compounds for the duration of their contracts. Tunnels lead directly from these compounds to the mines themselves. Conditions in these compounds varied from good to atrocious, but all displayed a contempt for equality before the law (Welsh 2000, 291).

And so clearly the question must be asked as to what motivated Rhodes in a direction so contrary to a general British trend of the previous 100 years. He and his acolyte Alfred Milner regarded themselves as Progressives, enlightened by the scientific ideas of their day. He was a Freemason and also formed his own secret society to promote his imperialist goals (Rotberg 1988, 243). But the scientific momentum of the day was overwhelmingly that of race science and its counterpart social Darwinism. G.K. Chesterton said of Rhodes, "What he called his ideals were the dregs of Darwinism which had already grown not only stagnant, but poisonous." He went on, "But it was exactly because he had no ideas to spread that he invoked slaughter, violated justice, and ruined republics to spread them" (Rotberg 1988, 9). Indeed Rhodes himself claimed Darwinian inspiration for his ideas and actions. He said of a book by the social Darwinist William Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom*, that it had, "made me what I am." The book (Rotberg 1988, 100) was, "larded with philosophically impressive arguments about the true 'meaning' of man based on the post-Hegelian as well as neo-Darwinian notions that man's suffering on earth (his martyrdom) was essential (and quasi-divinely inspired) in the achievement of progress" (Rotberg 1988, 99). Elsewhere Rhodes wrote that "since 'we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race,' Anglo-Saxon influence could vastly improve those parts of the world 'at present inhabited by the most despicable specimens of human beings'" (Rotberg 1988, 100). Like many after him, his was a sort of a pantheistic Darwinism with nature itself exerting some kind of predestined evolutionary course for the human race. This was very similar

to the nationalistic mythology⁷ that developed later amongst the Afrikaner culture.

In 1890 Rhodes manipulated, bullied, and bribed himself into the position of Prime Minister of the Cape Colony a position he held until 1896. He was greatly assisted in his campaign by the Afrikaner Bond, a political movement formed to resist British imperialism and promote independence for the Afrikaner Republics of the Free State and Transvaal (Walsh 2000, 309).⁸ This was a clear conflict of interest as he was able to significantly control policies and legislation favorable to his business interests. It also marked the beginning of the end of the non-discriminatory policies practiced by Britain, however imperfectly, in their colony at the southern end of Africa up until this time. While Rhodes had sponsored and supported legislation to disenfranchise non-whites prior to this, under his premiership this process accelerated. Much of this involved the ability of black people to own land, where they could own it, and the size of parcels of ground allowed to them. This had the dual benefit of reserving most land for whites and also of reducing the black vote as the qualified franchise criteria included land ownership (Walsh 2000, 309). "It is not wholly unfair to suggest that Rhodes' legislative victories in the early 1890s proved essential precursors to Apartheid" (Rotberg 1988, 455). Rhodes' parliamentary bills were in many ways the forerunner of the segregationist legislation that followed in the twentieth century, "and of the combination of laws which together constitute Apartheid" (Rotberg 1988, 472).

These events serve to dispel the notion that Apartheid was some aberration appearing suddenly with the electoral victory of the Afrikaans Nationalist government in 1948. The story of Apartheid began more than 50 years prior and was strongly propelled by the Darwinian race supremacy of the day. Rhodes was not the only highly influential South African leader ideologically authorized by scientific racism. Rhodes' legacy lives on internationally through the Rhodes Scholarship he founded and from which many of the twentieth century's international political and institutional leaders have emerged.

Statesman or Supremacist?

The only man to be the prime minister of the Union of South Africa twice was Jan Christiaan Smuts, as leader of the South African Party from 1919 to 1924, and of the United Party from 1939 to 1948. Distinguished Boer general of the South African War he later became a close friend of Winston Churchill and a Field Marshall in the British army. He was

also an influential statesman on the world stage, regarded as the Founding Father of the League of Nations, and one of the founders of the United Nations (Ambler 2006a). Certainly a remarkable man, but not everyone shared the same opinion and perspective on his achievements. Albert Luthuli called him a "subtle and relentless white supremacist" (Luthuli 2006, 92).

These sentiments are very much borne out by statements made by Smuts in public speeches. At the Savoy Hotel in London in 1917 he claimed that "It has been our ideal to make it [South Africa] a white man's country" (Arnold 2005, 330). In a 1932 speech to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science titled *Climate and Man in Africa*, he stated,

We see in one the leading race of the world, while the other, though still living, has become a mere human fossil, verging to extinction. We see the one crowned with all intellectual and spiritual glory of the race, while the other still occupies the lowest scale in human existence. If race has not played the difference, what has? (Dubow 1995, 51)

These ideas on the San or 'Bushmen' people of Southern Africa echoed those of Matthew Drennan a physical anthropologist at the University of Cape Town at the time who believed the Bushmen were "living fossils" that were, "toward the simian end of the human scale," and "destined for extinction" (Dubow 1995, 47). While Prime Minister of South Africa in 1945, Smuts showed himself as racist as any future National Party ideologue with the assertion that, "There are certain things about which all South Africans are agreed, all parties and all sections, except those who are quite mad. The first is that it is a fixed policy to maintain white supremacy in South Africa" (Arnold 2005, 330).

Albert Luthuli, leader of the African National Congress from 1952 until 1967, agreed that this was Smuts' policy. In his memoir, *Let my People Go*, he stated, "There is a tendency nowadays to look back at the Smuts regime as a day of restraint and just government. In point of fact, however, the General did not once exert his undoubted influence to extend a helping hand to the masses who groaned under their disabilities, and it was he who gave Hertzog [Boer general and third Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa as leader of the United Party] the power to disenfranchise the African voters" (Luthuli 2006, 98).

Smuts' Darwinian underpinning of his beliefs is unequivocal. Darwin's books stand prominently displayed alongside books by Alfred Wallace, the contemporary of Darwin sometimes credited with

⁷ A jingoistic 'volk' mythology of heroes similar to those of German National Socialists leading up to World War 2 including the role of the evolutionary process to bring about a superior race.

⁸ An anti-imperialist political party formed to resist the Christian liberalising of British influence in South Africa.

having proposed natural selection as the mechanism that drives evolution, in his personal library at the Smuts Museum. Smuts himself wrote a book on evolution called *Holism and Evolution* in which he displays a pantheistic view more in tune with Wallace than Darwin's strict naturalism. In the book he draws mind, life, and matter together into a cosmic whole with a sort of evolutionary predestination. In this sense his ideas were very much in tune with Rhodes though they would have been politically miles apart, Smuts the Afrikaner internationalist, and Rhodes the British imperialist.

Race Supremacy of a Different Shade

It is conveniently even deliberately ignored today that the race supremacy ideas of the early twentieth century were not limited to light skinned people of European ancestry. Mahatma Gandhi, the revered Indian lawyer, civil rights leader, and foremost advocate of the movement to gain Indian independence from Britain, was himself a victim of, and advocate for ideas of racist supremacy in the early twentieth century. After qualifying in law in England, Gandhi set sail in 1893 for South Africa where he lived for 21 years during the pivotal period of increasing racism and discrimination that led to full blown Apartheid. Himself discriminated against in South Africa as a non-white, he nevertheless adopted some of the race supremacy ideas of the day. Gandhi wrote to the British colonial government of Natal in 1893 protesting that the, "general belief seems to prevail in the Colony that the Indians are a little better, if at all, than savages or the Natives of Africa" (Biswas 2015). He is said to have believed in a superior Aryan brotherhood, made up of whites and Indians that was superior to the African race. During the height of misguided campaigns to remove historical figures known for their racism from the public eye such as the Rhodes Must Fall campaign, a statue of Gandhi was removed from the campus of Ghana University in Accra in 2016 due to his racist views (Burke 2016). He was known to regularly use the derogatory slur of kaffir when referring to black Africans, "Ours is one continual struggle against a degradation sought to be inflicted upon us by the Europeans, who desire to degrade us to the level of the raw kaffir whose occupation is hunting, and whose sole ambition is to collect a certain number of cattle to buy a wife with and then pass his life in indolence and nakedness" (Lakshmi 2015).

This totally discredits the neo-Marxist notion that racism and race supremacy is exclusively perpetrated by light-skinned against dark-skinned people. It was part of the Darwinian zeitgeist of the day that infected people of many skin shades and nationalities, however admirable they may have been in other areas of their lives.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

The 1948 election campaign that brought the Smuts era to an end was not a clash of ideals regarding the 'native question.' While Smuts and D.F. Malan, the first National Party Prime Minister (1948–1954), had differences in application and methodology, they were equally determined in the commitment to segregation and discrimination. Their differences were pragmatic; Smuts was in favor of allowing blacks to migrate to the cities where labor was required for mining and industry. Malan, representing a largely farming culture, wanted blacks confined to rural areas. The epochal parting of the ways was a clash over other ideologies. Smuts was a confirmed internationalist while Malan was a nationalist. Smuts was very much pro-British while many in the Afrikaans community were old enough to remember British arrogance and brutality from the South African War. Indeed, many Afrikaners were pro-Nazi during World War 2.

D.F. Malan who took the premiership from Smuts in 1948 is today often made out to be a Christian fundamentalist and biblical creationist. While this is a convenient scapegoat for those seeking to place the blame for Apartheid exclusively on the shoulders of Christians, he was more complex than the straw man portrayal. Some facts are totally at odds with the popular portrayal of Malan.

In 1952 after years of advertising a reward for a live coelacanth in East African countries and Indian Ocean islands, ichthyologist J.L.B. Smith was informed of a live coelacanth that was caught and preserved for him in the Comoros islands. Prior to the coelacanth catch by a fishing trawler off the South African east coast in 1938, the fish was known only from the fossil record. Due to its unusual lobe-finned bones, it was believed to be a transitional form between fish and tetrapod creatures. The discovery of living examples of one believed to have gone extinct 66 million years ago is an obvious refutation of their designation as evolutionary transitional creatures. First, they have not evolved at all in the supposed eons since their extinction.⁹ Second,

⁹ An evolutionary counterargument would be that we would not necessarily expect all original species to have descendants continue to evolve – just a subset of them having experienced directional selection, while others remained well-adapted enough to their environment that 'stabilizing selection' could work to keep them 'living fossils'. This is the nature of presuppositional origins science under which both biblical creationists and evolutionists are constrained to operate as the past is outside of the reach of the scientific method of experiment and observation. This is partly why it is so inappropriate for Christians to hitch their theology to any form of secular origins science, which begins with the presupposition that God did not create and therefore scientists have to provide a naturalistic explanation for the origin of the universe and life. We should unapologetically confess our presupposition of the truth of God's Word.

the remains showed that the supposed evolving legs were not legs but rather lobe fins similar to other fish living today. This contradiction was seemingly lost on Smith who was desperate to get his hands on this 'living fossil' and supposed missing evolutionary link.

Smith contacted then Prime Minister Malan who placed a South African Air Force DC3 Dakota at his disposal to collect the specimen at significant expense to South African taxpayers. The evolutionary significance of the find was not lost on Malan. First, Smith, a convinced evolutionist, gave Malan a personal history of the coelacanth when he requested Malan's help in retrieving the specimen (Smith 1956, 122). Second, the discovery and identification by Smith of the 1938 specimen received worldwide news and acclaim. Smith was also sponsored in his search for the coelacanth by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, a state funded institution which had previously fallen under Malan. Malan also read the section on the coelacanth in Smith's book *Sea Fishes of Southern Africa* in preparation to listening to Smith's request saying, "This man Smith is well known. Bring me that fish book" (Smith 1956, 124). Malan must therefore have been fully aware of the context in which the coelacanth specimen was sought and for which he made such an extraordinary concession. Smith ensured that Malan was the first person back in South Africa to see the fish, and he seemed to readily accept the notion that this fish species was an early ancestor of man saying, "Do you mean to say, we once looked like that?" (Smith 1956, 182). Smith, for his part seems to have been totally enamored of Malan and in fact named the genus after him, *Malania* (Smith 1956, 166). The whole saga received huge international and national attention with the public queuing in South Africa to view the fish.

This whole episode is at odds with the narrative that Malan was a Bible-believing creationist staunchly opposing evolution. Malan was from an Evangelical Gereformeerde (Evangelical Reformed) background and went on to become a Dutch Reformed minister. He grew up in Riebeeck West in what was then still part of the British Cape Colony. Cape Afrikaners were for the most part loyal Victorians identifying with the British trends and culture, often educated in England and accepting the prevailing worldview of the day which incorporated social Darwinism (Koorts 2014, 6). That Malan accepted this worldview trend of his youth is evident in his later ideas when framing his segregationist ideas. He even appealed to the English sociologist and anthropologist Herbert Spencer, regarded as the father of Social Darwinism, as an authority for his policy ideas (Koorts 2014, 7). In political debates against J.B.M. Hertzog of the

United Party, both sides campaigned on platforms of miscegenation fears, "black peril," and "oorstroming" (the idea of being swamped by the black population) (Dubow 1995, 181), and often referred to Eugen Fischer's 1913 book, *The Rohobother Bastards*,¹⁰ as scientific support for these fears (Dubow 1995, 183).

In a 1946–47 report of notes and correspondence of *Die Kleur Vraagstuk (The Colour Question)* Committee, Malan stated, "Differences of colour indicate a simple, but simultaneously an extremely important fact, namely that whites and non-whites are not of the same kind. They differ from each other in kind" (Koorts 2014, 369). Ideas that are clearly at odds with the very clear teaching of Scripture that there is only one humankind all descended from Adam and Eve the ancestors of all mankind (Genesis 3:20; Acts 17:26). Of course, these ideas had to be sold to a fairly conservative Christian electorate and increasing attempts were made after World War 2 to accommodate the concept of racial separation within a neo-Calvinist framework—the idea that the calling of a unique, separated people for God necessitated the separation of the races (Dubow 1995, 250).

As black urbanization increased after the war and competition for jobs with it, fears of the white population were easily exploited by clever politicians using religious, cultural, economic, and scientific justifications for their racist policies. J.G. Strijdom, Malan's successor and Verwoerd's predecessor as Prime Minister said, "Either the white man dominates or the black man takes over...The only way the European can maintain supremacy is by domination...And the only way they can maintain domination is by withholding the vote from non-Europeans" (Arnold 2005, 331). While not always necessarily appealing to any scientific authority, such sentiments were clearly in line with Darwinian belief of the innate superiority of certain races.

Ironically the man today most blamed for Apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd, was the heir of a long history of discrimination, white supremacy, segregationist policies, and legislation, much based on the scientific racism of the pre-World War 2 era while himself ambivalent to those theories. His motivation was unambiguously nationalistic with the Afrikaans language, Christianity, and skin-color defining that nation in his view.

Clearly, Darwinian race science played an important role in the development of South African race discrimination and Apartheid prior to Verwoerd. Undoubtedly as other important role players before and after Verwoerd are studied, this influence will become more evident. The brother of B.J. Vorster (Verwoerd's successor), Koot Vorster was a determined segregationist who argued that racial

¹⁰ *Die Rehebother Bastards und das Bastardierungs Problem beim Menschen.*

superiority was not just the psychological expression of a dominant group and, “not just an external, skin deep phenomena, but a ‘manifestation of a deep, radical physical and psychological difference’ leading to a ‘race-instinct’ that was fully justified” (Dubow 1995, 264).

Besides the politicians there were other major Darwinian influences capturing the public’s attention in the first half of the twentieth century.

A Darwinian Laboratory

One of the most racist claims made by Darwin was that, “In each great region of the world the living mammals are closely related to the extinct species of the same region. It is therefore probable that Africa was formerly inhabited by extinct apes closely allied to the gorilla and chimpanzee; and as these two species are now man’s nearest allies, it is somewhat more probable that our early progenitors lived on the African continent than elsewhere” (Darwin 1871, 199).

Although Darwin attempted to soften these words in his comments that followed, these words helped to ensure that Africa would become the prime anthropological laboratory in the search for a naturalistic origin of mankind. It is an argument based not on evidence but on a priori assumption that evolution is true. Darwin is saying that modern African apes such as gorillas and chimpanzees, look similar to their ancestors found in the fossil record in Africa and, therefore, that is where they probably originated. The implied corollary is that because modern African humans look (through Darwinian eyes) more like our assumed ape-like ancestors, man must have originated in Africa.

This explicitly racist notion ensured that Africa has ever since been the primary source of searching and claims for early human ancestry. From the Afar region in Ethiopia to the Sterkfontein Caves in South Africa, men such as Francis Galton, Eugen Fischer, Raymond Dart, Robert Broom, Louis Leakey, Donald Johanson, and Lee Berger became famous on the back of their evolutionary interpretations of fossilized apes or fully human fossils and artifacts.

Raymond Dart, an Australian who became the Professor of Anatomy at the University of Witwatersrand Medical School, claimed that his discovery of the Taung skull (*Australopithecus africanus*) in 1924 vindicated Darwin’s prediction that, “Africa would prove to be the cradle of mankind.” Men such as Dart, Robert Broom, Phillip Tobias and more recently Lee Berger became national and international celebrities based on their claims. Dart even produced his own South African radio series on human evolution in 1931 (Dubow 1995, 46). South Africa garnered international prominence and respect

for specimens and evolutionary interpretations of the findings. Many famous anthropologists came from Europe and America to play a role in the field of evolutionary anthropology. Of course, along with so many other former icons of evolution, many of these findings have since been discarded on the rubbish dump of Darwinian science (Wells 2000).

But the die had been cast. The pre-World War 2 Darwinian race science claims fed into the racist, white supremacist views of the time. They became an obvious political tool to provide scientific authority for racist policies and legislation sometimes discreetly supported by the scientists themselves and encouraged by the politicians. Smuts, already noted for his racist ideas, said in his 1929 Rhodes Memorial Lecture at Oxford University, that Africa was a “human laboratory” in which race science, anthropology, and the like, could be practiced (Dubow 1995, 14).

Saul Dubow, a South African born and educated professor at Sussex University in the UK, in a series of landmark books and publications has probably done more than anyone to highlight the connection between scientific racism and the development of Apartheid in South Africa. In his book, *Illicit Union—Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*, he states that, “physical anthropology did more than any other discipline to generate and sustain the racial paradigm in South Africa... The effect was to create a linear model of historical development whereby the Bushmen were seen to have been succeeded, in turn, by the Hottentots and the Bantu. The arrival of whites was incorporated into this linear narrative and the doctrine of the survival of the fittest was incorporated to legitimise the right of whites to assert themselves as settlers on the sub-continent” (Dubow 1995, 117). He went on to write, “For a white public seeking to rationalize its social supremacy, it was not always necessary to have direct access to or understanding of the details of scientific debate; a broad awareness of the existence of a body of knowledge justifying racism was sufficient” (Dubow 1995, 9).

Ideas have consequences. Mathew Drennan, Dart’s contemporary at the University of Cape Town around 1920, regarded the San (Bushman) people as “living fossils” who lay toward the “simian end of the human scale” (Dubow 1995, 47). He subscribed to the thoroughly discredited recapitulation theory of Ernst Haeckel. One of the items of faith of this idea was that the adults of inferior races were equal in intelligence to the children of superior races.

Although racist interpretations of evolutionary science have now been largely discarded, social policies still exist in South Africa that were based on these ideas. For example, the ideas of Smuts already discussed were echoed in the mid nineteenth century

by Sir Lourens van der Post who believed that the San people were a childlike race and an evolutionary throwback needing to be preserved as a sort of museum specimen of evolutionary process (Dubow 1995, 52). This led to the creation of reservations where these people were encouraged to continue their culture and traditional practices today couched in the language of multiculturalism. This has led to the spiritual, educational, and physical deprivation of this once proud people.

Evolutionary speculations led to a confusion of myths, hypotheses, and contradictory ideas about human origins. People groups were classified in many ways—Hamites, Negroids, Bantu—placing groups toward the superior or savage end of the evolutionary scale but always being careful to preserve the superiority of the Teutonic Anglo-Saxons (Dubow 1995, 82).

Of course, the history of mankind is filled with instances of domination of one person over another or one people group over another. Our sin nature tends toward pursuing our own interest (self or cultural), at the expense of others if necessary. But a Christianized culture required a more sophisticated rationalization of prejudice and evolution provided one. Mid eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinking led to the “emergence of natural history as a distinctive field of knowledge [which] posed a formidable challenge to the traditional biblical account of common descent from Adam,” and provided, “the rationalisation of old prejudices” (Dubow 1995, 25). This was done to overcome the clear Christian teaching of mankind equally made in the image of God (Acts 17:26) and fallen in the image of our common ancestor Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22) with faith in the last Adam Jesus Christ as the solution to our fallen state (Romans 5:17).

Well Born or Miscarriage?

“There is one strong, startling, outstanding thing about Eugenics, and that is its meanness” (Chesterton 1922, 146). The words of G. K. Chesterton were written when this scientific movement desired to take the reins of evolution and the goal of building a secular humanist utopia was still relatively new. Governments all over the western world were anxious to place a scientific imprimatur on their preferred sectarian policies and many scientists, intoxicated by the undoubted success of science from the previous centuries, were only too happy to oblige. But this was a new type of science born not of experiment

and observation but out of a philosophical desire to accelerate the death of God through naturalism. And to this end, science and the state were usually mutually willing partners. In his book *Eugenics and Other Evils*, Chesterton wrote,

The thing that is really trying to tyrannise through government is Science. The thing that really does use the secular arm is Science. And the creed that really is levying tithes and capturing schools, the creed that really is proclaimed not in sermons but in statutes, and spread not by pilgrims but by policemen—that creed is the great but disputed system of thought which began with Evolution and has ended in Eugenics. Materialism is really our established Church. (Chesterton 1922, 76)

South Africa in the early twentieth century was no exception to this trend. The science of eugenics, conceived in Darwinism,¹¹ became a convenient government tool to pursue policies that were perceived to be socially, politically, or economically useful. These policies resulted in a chain of influence and legislation that ended in full blown Apartheid by the middle of the twentieth century. Many of them resulted in the cruelty described by Chesterton.

Government supported educational and scientific bodies became the vehicles to provide the intellectual support for discriminatory policies. Eugenics movements sprung up in various areas. A. J. Janse, an entomologist and physiology professor and member of the Pretoria Eugenic Study Circle, said in 1928 that, “only by grading up of whites along eugenistic lines will tend to prevent South Africa from becoming a black country either through its desertion by whites or by mingling the blood of the two races” (Dubow 1995, 173). C. Louis Leipoldt, a revered Afrikaans poet, literary figure, and medical inspector of the Transvaal schools, while ambivalent to the idea of biological determinism stated that the, “most pressing question that clamours for authoritative answer in Africa, South as well as Central, is whether the white race can maintain itself in the continent as the superior race” (Dubow 1995, 174). While a medical student he edited the eugenic magazine *Social Hygiene*.

In cities such as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, both very English and Victorian at the turn of the twentieth century, fear of the bubonic plague and, “the language of biological contamination was an important part of the rationale for introducing urban segregation” (Dubow 1995, 129) which culminated in the Group Areas Act in 1950 proscribing certain areas

¹¹ The word had been coined by Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, in 1883 and was a field designed to rid society of unwanted traits which were believed to be hereditary, by restricting the breeding of undesirables and promoting the breeding of desirables. It resulted in such movements as abortion and forced sterilisation and reached its climax in the Nazi death camps. Much of the modern radical environmentalism movement can also be traced back to eugenic motivation—see Ambler, Marc. 2013. “Metaphors for Mankind?—A review of Merchants of Despair: Radical Environmentalists, Criminal Pseudo-Scientists and the Fatal Cult of Antihumanism by Robert Zubrin.” *Journal of Creation*, 27, no. 1: 25–30.

for certain races and resulting in the often ruthless uprooting of mixed and homogeneous communities and forced removals to the respective designated areas based on race. These ideas were mirrored in the view of some in the South African medical fraternity that tuberculosis was hereditary. This idea was readily accepted by the mining industry because it made the provision of better nutritional, housing, and working conditions to their workers unnecessary (Dubow 1995, 142).

One of the earlier advocates of the “full gospel of eugenics” was Harold B. Fantham, professor of zoology and comparative anatomy at University of Witwatersrand, who in 1918 was already giving lectures promoting the administration of South Africa according to evolutionary principles and administered by experts. He was a genetic determinist who believed that social advancement depended on the conservation of “good human germ plasm” and the eradication of “defective genes” (Dubow 1995, 133). He argued against humanitarian services believing that such interventions would prolong such defects and lead to “race degeneracy” (Dubow 1995, 133).

One of the contradictions of this movement is that social deviance or low IQ scores in the poor white community were ascribed to social conditions and substantial resources committed to ameliorating these conditions while the same tendencies among the black community were believed to be the result of biological and hereditary determinism (Dubow 1995, 159, 200). As late as 1947, in a paper in the *South African Journal of Science*, University of Stellenbosch zoologist C.C. Grobbelaar rejected the belief that an improvement in environmental factors could “overcome the eugenic laws that result in race deterioration” (Dubow 1995, 165).

The belief that crime was primarily hereditary in nature dominated academic criminology studies from the 1930s up until the 1970s. This view of criminal determinism meant that as early as the 1920s, “the language of science and medicine, of treatment, investigation and social and individual pathology predominated over earlier approaches based on principles of salvation and religious conversion” (Dubow 1995, 235) in dealing with social ills. Two major role players in this drift were Geoff Cronje and W.A. Willemse both of the University of Pretoria. They were highly influential in shaping criminal and social policy in South Africa. Willemse had studied at various German universities in the early 1930s and Cronje was a leading theoretician for Afrikaner nationalism and Apartheid in the 1930s and 1940s (Dubow 1995, 156). He wrote a series of books from 1945 onwards elaborating Apartheid theory. A member of the Ossewabrandwag and Nazi sympathizer his stated goal was to protect the purity

of the Boer nation’s blood. He stated that, “the mixing of blood between white and black races produces inferior material in biological terms (physically and mentally). Miscegenation between white and non-whites is...shown by biological research to be detrimental” (Cronje 1945, 74). The reality is that we know from biological research that miscegenation between white and non-white parents is actually beneficial because diseases common among whites, such as cystic fibrosis and among black populations such as sickle cell disease, are extremely rare from mixed marriages.

Cronje had been strongly influenced by Gerrie Eloff, a zoologist and geneticist at the Universities of Witwatersrand and Orange Freestate in the 1930s. He was the most overt race scientist and eugenicist of his day in South Africa and his ideas were given, “semi-official status in influential nationalist publications” (Dubow 1995, 272). He condemned interbreeding (and drew heavily on the anthropological studies of Eugen Fischer). The government established and financed the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (around 1945) which had as one of its mandates to establish a scientific basis for racial differences (Dubow 1995, 237).

Unfortunately, although many of these ideas were patently unbiblical in nature, they were presented under the banner of Christian National Socialism and were increasingly accepted by white South African Christians. This eugenic categorization of people was rejected by some Christians like Reverend H.B. Booth Coventry based on his experience with students at Fort Hare College (later University) (Dubow 1995, 218). The nonsense that intellectual and moral capacity were somehow biologically determined by race should have been forever laid to rest by outstanding products of Christian missionary schools and the South African Native College at Fort Hare such as, D.D.T. Jabavu (South African Xhosa educationist and politician), Robert Sobukwe (founder of the Pan Africanist Congress in South Africa), Sir Seretse Khama, (first president of an independent Botswana), Nelson Mandela, and many other African intellectual and resistance leaders. Unfortunately, voices such as these were seldom heard in the period between the two great wars.

Eugenic ideas were used by the populists of the day and often supported by the press to arouse resistance of the white public to swart gevaar (black danger). F.W. Bell, a member of the Transvaal Native Affairs Society, as early as 1908 drew on the so called expertise of British and American anthropologists who believed that Africans represented, “the lowest position on the evolutionary scale,” in calling for the removal of the Native Franchise, the right of non-

white men to vote on the basis of education and land ownership. He referred to Africans as the “lower race” (Dubow 1995, 89). Bell received discreet support for his ideas from the anthropologist Robert Broom and wholehearted endorsement from the *Cape Times* and *Rand Daily Mail* newspapers. The latter sneeringly expressed the opinion that Africans should, “be taught the virtues of manual labour and slow development instead of being given a smattering of European education and classed as a civilised people when all the time it is but a veneer” (Dubow 1995, 90).

Physical and biological determinists such as Raymond Dart, were so fixed in their ideas that it led the archaeologist J.F. Schofield to comment that their determinism, “out Calvin’s Calvin” (Dubow 1995, 98), a secular predestination ascribing traits and destiny of whole people groups based on race. Eugenics in South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, played a major role in determining winners and losers in business, sports, education, and politics through policy and legislation based on skin color. Chesterton could have been prophesying about South Africa when he stated, “It may be summarised thus: that the same inequality and insecurity that makes cheap labour may make bad labour, and at last no labour at all. It was as if a man who wanted something from an enemy, should at last reduce the enemy to come knocking at his door in the despair of winter, should keep him waiting in the snow to sharpen the bargain; and then come out to find the man dead upon the doorstep” (Chesterton 1922, 129).

Conclusion—

Forgetting What We Looked Like (James 1:24)

“Imagine for a moment what life would be like in South Africa if the evil white man hadn’t come to disturb the rustic idyll of the early black settlers” (Bullard 2008). This was the provocative opening line of an 2008 editorial piece by David Bullard, a well-known South African newspaper columnist. The piece went on in a sarcastic vein to describe an idyllic, naïve continent ignorant of the advantages that colonization would have brought them.

The storm of criticism and departure of Bullard from his position four days later indicate he touched a nerve. The article disappeared from the Sunday Times website archives and was for some time altogether lost in the murky depths of the ‘memory hole.’ In a strictly multicultural world, such an assertion was deemed out of bounds. The truth is that his sentiments probably had a vaguely familiar sensitivity to both black and white South Africans. He was clearly implying that if the (white) British had not come, neither would gold mines, whisky, cell phones and shopping centers, all of which Bullard clearly believes are the epitome of civilization.

Was he implying that the various benefits of civilization were inextricably linked to a certain people or pigment? Was this white supremacy wrapped in satire he hoped the natives would not understand? As an immigrant from England at the height of apartheid, this is feasible. Can it be denied that Western civilization brought amazing advances in law, agriculture, industry, medicine, science, education, and many other fields to the New World? What Bullard was inexcusably blind to was first the fact that the benefits of Western society were built not on skin color but on a cultural consensus of Christianity. Second, that most of those benefits were brought to the colonies not for the benefit and edification of all their inhabitants but almost exclusively for those of white European background.

Many that came to the colonies were like the Israelites who had, “eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:12–14). They had forgotten that these blessings of Western society had been born over hundreds of years of a cultural Christian consensus, and within a prevailing Christian worldview. A biblical view which revealed that God had, “made from one man every nation of mankind” (Acts 17:26) has many profound implications. That all mankind are equal before their Creator. God is holy and immutable and therefore provides a basis for fixed laws and morality, including His design for marriage, the very foundational institution of society. The same God is personal, omniscient, and purposeful and therefore design, order, and intelligence should be expected in His Creation. He has revealed himself objectively in writing which is a basis for desiring universal education. Kings and rulers are not divine though they have a divine right (responsibility) to rule justly. He has given man a mandate to be good stewards of His Creation and to enjoy the dignity and rewards of labor. In His love for us he had entered into His Creation, “not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

It was within this milieu that the most amazing advances in science, medicine, education, law, politics, technology, music, and the arts that the world had ever seen took place. The European sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas has written, “Christianity has functioned for the normative self-understanding of modernity as more than a mere precursor or a catalyst. Egalitarian universalism, from which sprang the ideas of freedom and social solidarity, of an autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, of the individual morality of conscience, human rights,

and democracy, is the direct heir to the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it. And in the light of the current challenges of a post-national constellation, we continue to draw on the substance of this heritage. Everything else is just idle postmodern talk” (Habermas 2006, 150). In other words, the western ideals which people around the world long for were born within a Judeo-Christian worldview.

It was also in the midst of this era that a competing worldview began to emerge and take credit for the very culture that bore it, the Enlightenment, so called.

Many persons bought into the Enlightenment creation myth of evolution and believed that somehow these advantages were the result of a biological process of ascent aided by survival of the fittest and scorn for the weak. And so those who enjoyed such privileges had every right to reserve them for themselves, and that a white skin was the seal of that privilege. They had said in their hearts, “my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth” and forgotten, “the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth...” (Deuteronomy 8:17–18). It was this secular humanist worldview that drove much of the scramble for Africa.

Unfortunately, it is a truism that the victors write the history books, “...a tendency which is reinforced by those who rewrite the history of their own disciplines to reflect an approved ‘great tradition’” (Dubow 1995, 3). This was true of the previous white South African intellectual and ruling elites, and it is true of the current crop; many educated and indoctrinated in Western secular humanism, or Communism, and therefore unwilling to acknowledge the difference between the Christian and Darwinian heritage that came to Africa. “A curious form of collective amnesia” (Dubow 1995, 1) regarding Western influences prevails. In one of those ironic twists of history, the new South African government in 1994, possibly afraid of being labelled as unscientific, wholly embraced the Darwinian ideology of much of their oppression. Evolution is dogmatically taught in schools and universities and like in the rest of the Western world, biblical creation beliefs on origins are vehemently opposed and ridiculed. Dubow gives an insight into this amnesia, “At present the creation of a successful multi-racial society seems to demand that questions about the past are not too searching” (Dubow 1995, 291).

But 30 years after the birth of multi-racial politics in South Africa, Darwinian influences remain and spread their contagion. About 400,000 unborn babies are murdered every year though abortion in South Africa as part of the ‘black cull,’ a heritage of the

death of man that evolution precipitated in the West (Anonymous n.d.). Crime and violence, much of it sexual in nature, are rampant; corruption puts the brakes on an economy desperately needing to grow to sustain its population and is largely the result of the abandonment of the fixed morality and values provided by the Bible. Western influence long since shed of its Christian heritage, continues to exert an imperialism of the mind on many South African black leaders.

To cap it all, racist prejudices and actions from all sides seem to be on the increase once again. The tragedy is that Christian compromise with Darwinism (deep time and evolution) indulged in by white Christians during the Apartheid era and which contributed to so much destruction, continues to be defended by those today who should know better and by many of whom claim to be Bible-believing Christians. These unbiblical compromises take various forms such as theistic evolution and progressive creation.

And yet Christianity is flourishing in many parts of Africa today. Could it be that the worldview on which the West was founded but has now abandoned could, in the providence of God, bring the same spiritual, social, and eternal blessings to the people of Africa that it has previously done in other parts of the world? Beliefs are not biological, ideas are not dependent on pigment, and faith cannot be segregated. The good news of the Gospel that we are all equally made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), and though fallen in the image of our common ancestor Adam and separated from our Creator (Genesis 3), we have the promise of spiritual liberty and everlasting life through faith in the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), the eternally begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

The Apostle Paul called on Christians to, “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). Since the dawn of Christianity, there has been no louder argument against the knowledge of God, nor denial of the clear teachings and beliefs of Jesus than that of evolution. Jesus said that He is, “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). As we willfully retreat from the knowledge of God, so we increasingly lose our way as a society. Cut off from the truth of Scripture, we deny ourselves the everlasting and abundant life offered us through a knowledge of God’s Son Jesus Christ. The history of South Africa is a testament to where secular arguments and lofty opinions can lead.

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