

Testimony

A Pamphlet from Pax Christi Texas

Anticipating August 23, 2020

Communications with the editor should be sent to j6anthonyblasi@yahoo.com. Pax Christi International was founded in 1945 with the encouragement of Bishop Pierre Marie Théas of Montauban, France, by Marthe Dortel Claudot, as a Christian lay organization dedicated to preventing a repetition of the savagery of the twentieth century's world wars.

Editorial

After the calendar, the Sunday Liturgical Reading reflections are based on readings for the Twenty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time. Tom Keene's poem is *We Poets, We Scientists*. For more of Tom's poems, see <http://www.tomkeeneandthemuse.com/index.php>. Following the poem, and not unrelated to it, is a *Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science*, which Tom sent to me. While I have long written against reductionism and scientism, a few items in the *Manifesto* leave me simply pondering, and maybe that is a good thing.

Calendar

Online

Tuesday August 18, 11:30am-12:00pm CT, "Justice for Immigrants in U.S. Policy," sponsored by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. Register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fp8hZif3SFGmeVEYxu_TBw?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=5be3e8b4-8385-4177-8d0a-b36840bd2a43

Tuesday August 18, 12:00pm-1:00pm, "ending Extreme Punishment or Youth in Texas," Bill Bush (Texas A & M University—San Antonio), and Lindsay Linder (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition). Register at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdTsBwDSkp5v9ERYcljNfjVXUPxVx0KIEdfv9JT-lyuNOfi9w/viewform>

Wednesday August 19, 7:00pm CT, newly released film *John Lewis: Good Trouble*. RSVP at: <https://secure.everyaction.com/pZBoH-JQA0KLE7K1eoYoNA2?emci=e7cbe10c-27db-ea11-8b03-00155d0394bb&emdi=496cfa2d-55db-ea11-8b03-00155d0394bb&ceid=82813>

Tuesday August 25, 12:00pm-1:00pm, “Mental Illness and the death Penalty,” Kimberley Harrison (clinical psychologist, Austin). Register at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdTsBwDSkp5v9ERYcljNfjVXUPxVx0KIEdfv9JT-lyuNOfi9w/viewform>

Thursday August 27, 1:30pm-2:30pm, “The Protecting Places of Worship Forum,” hosted by American Jewish Committee, Community of Conscience, Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, and Rice University Boniuk Institute. Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/protecting-places-of-worship-virtual-forum-tickets-113054591326>

Tuesday September 1, 6:00pm CT, “White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity,” Robert P. Jones (CEO, Public Religion Research Institute). Register at: https://faithinaction.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3f3NJFRaS5GqjnHOE3enhw?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=16921f70-4995-4fce-8561-857e3b7061dc

Saturday September 5, 2:00pm, Pax Christi San Antonio online meeting. For the Zoom link, contact Yvonne Dilling: yvonedilling@gmail.com. Agenda: discussion of one of the Melaneyes Media videos, available at :

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/melaneyes-media-17744127474>:

Sunday August 16, 7:00pm, video, *The Lynching of Black America*.

Thursday August 20, 7:00pm, video, *Black History, San Antonio*.

Sunday August 23, 7:00pm, video, *The Case for Reparations*.

Thursday September 10, 12:30pm-1:30pm, webinar “Social Responsibility of Religious Communities: Asian Traditions,” Robert Hunt (Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University) and friends. \$15; register at https://secure.touchnet.net/C21403_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=1930&SINGLESTORE=true

Friday September 11, 8:00am, online presentation “Black People in America’s Minority Religions,” Mansa Bilal King (Morehouse College). Information: Hayley

Helmstreet, jhj2@rice.edu. Register at:

https://events.rice.edu/#!/view/event/date/20200911/event_id/110233

Friday September 17, 7:00pm, “Homemade Citizenship: All but Inviting Injury,” Koritha Mitchell (Ohio State University). Lecture on the African American experience hosted by Trinity University. Register at: https://trinity.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FoYRDwbAS3q0wkTsx7V6Cw

Sunday September 27, 9:30am, “Darwin, Race, Slavery, and the Tree of Life,” Bruce Yeager. Online, TBA: contact mmcgm63@gmail.com. Posted by St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston.

In El Paso

Wednesday August 26 and **Friday August 28**, noon hour, death penalty vigils in front of the new federal courthouse at the corner of Magoffin and Campbell.

In San Antonio

Thursday September 10 is the date for The Big Give this year. See <https://www.thebiggivesa.org/>

Saturdays September 12, October 17, and November 21, 10:30am-11:30am, Sol series, “Faith and Race—An Ongoing Conversation,” Bishop Trevor Alexander (Church of God in Christ, University of the Incarnate Word), Rev. Dries Coetzee (University Presbyterian Church), and Dr. Joshie Piper (University of the Incarnate Word). \$10 for all three sessions before September &, \$15 after. Register at: <https://upcsa.org/sol-center-registration/>

Notices

Video Series

Sunday August 16, 7:00pm, video, *The Lynching of Black America*.

Thursday August 20, 7:00pm, video, *Black History, San Antonio*.

Sunday August 23, 7:00pm, video, *The Case for Reparations*.

These videos can be accessed at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/melaneyes-media-17744127474>

Online Resource for families or small groups:

If you're needing

some social interaction with depth,
more than just listening to zoom webinars,
longing for the social time that used to happen before and after Mass,
consider using the *Maryknoll Weekly Reflection Guides*. Gather as family or small
group and use these guides in Facetime, Skype, Zoom etc. This an easy online
structure with prayer, an introductory theme, a link to the Sunday Readings and
some reflection questions to guide group conversation. Using the SeeJudgeAct
methodology, you will be led as a group to consider where, in light of the shared
reflection, the Spirit is calling you this week. The Global Solidarity charism of the
Maryknoll family will feed you spiritually for these challenging times. Find the
Guides in both Spanish and English at:
<https://www.maryknoll.us/home/resources/mission-spirituality/ordinary-time-2020>

Second Reading (Romans 11:33-35)

After a section in which Paul suggested that his own people in Judea were “imprisoned” in disobedience so that God may then be merciful to them, Paul exclaims “Oh the depth of God’s richness, wisdom, and knowledge; how unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!” Here he touches on one of the imponderables of human experience: evil, a broad category indeed. There is physical evil, such as sickness; biographical evil such as the loss of a loved one; and there are evil deeds that people perpetrate on one another. How do we explain these? Why does God permit them? The answer is that there is no answer that we can understand: “Oh the depth of God’s richness, wisdom, and knowledge; how unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways!”

Paul follows this up with two citations from the Hebrew Bible that touch on the same problem: Isaiah 40:13, and seemingly Job 41:3.

Third Reading (Matthew 16:13-20)

In this reading, Matthew develops his narrative once more by expanding what he had found in the earlier *Gospel of Mark*. Jesus is traveling with his disciples into the district of Caesarea Philippi and asks them who people were

saying he was. The answers were John the Baptizer, Elijah, and one of the prophets. All of these were remarkable identities that involved a return from the dead. Mark had Peter answer, "You are the Messiah." Here Matthew adds much more: "And replying Simon Peter said, 'You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.'"

In a previous chapter, Matthew has Jesus walk on the Sea of Galilee, enabling Peter to join him on the water and calming the wind. At that point, the disciples say, "Truly you are a son of God" (Mt 14:33). The added words Matthew assigns to Peter's response, "the son of the living God," allude back to that previous narrative.

Matthew has Jesus reply, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah..." Matthew generally avoids Aramaic expressions and translates them into Greek, but here he makes a point of using the Aramaic form of the name of the disciple. This too is an allusion; in Matthew 16:4 he had the Pharisee and Sadducee authorities demand a sign from Jesus and Jesus reply, "An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, and no sign will be given it but the sign of Jonah." The legend of Jonah had Jonah angering God by refusing to preach in the pagan city of Nineveh; when he fled by sea rather than do that God stirred up a violent storm that only calmed when the terrified sailors threw Jonah overboard: "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:17).

Peter, or Simon Bar Jonah, had fears and doubts about culturally different churches and culturally different people in general. At one point Saint Paul openly criticized him for that (see Galatians 2:11-13). In the *Acts of the Apostles* Luke describes Peter as gradually learning to accept culturally different people (Acts 10:34).

After Peter comes to really recognize the son of the living God, after he emerges from the fish-belly-like darkness of non-recognition, only then do we hear: "and I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church...."

Which is it? Is it the Baptizer redivivus, Elijah redivivus, a prophet redivivus, or Nineveh all over again?

Poem

We Poets, We Scientists

Sisters, brothers, cousins and kin,
born to a family of searchers.

We poets
seek words for the ineffable,
always knowing
words don't even get close.

We scientists
persist in question upon question,
finding they take us to
evermore questions.

Inheriting instincts of pursuit,
we hold certainty of one thing only:
 We do not know.
 We cannot say.

Yet, we keep on keeping on,
telling ourselves:
 Nevertheless.

Tom Keene and Muse
March 1, 2018

Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science

We are a group of internationally known scientists, from a variety of scientific fields (biology, neuroscience, psychology, medicine, psychiatry), who participated in an international summit on post-materialist science, spirituality and society. The summit was co-organized by Gary E. Schwartz, PhD and Mario Beauregard, PhD, the University of Arizona, and Lisa Miller, PhD, Columbia University. This summit was held at Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona, on February 7-9, 2014. Our purpose was to discuss the impact of the materialist ideology on science and the emergence of a post-materialist paradigm for science, spirituality, and society. We have come to the following conclusions:

- 1.** The modern scientific worldview is predominantly predicated on assumptions that are closely associated with classical physics. Materialism—the idea that matter is the only reality—is one of these assumptions. A related assumption is reductionism, the notion that complex things can be understood by reducing them to the interactions of their parts, or to simpler or more fundamental things such as tiny material particles.
- 2.** During the 19th century, these assumptions narrowed, turned into dogmas, and coalesced into an ideological belief system that came to be known as "scientific materialism." This belief system implies that the mind is nothing but the physical activity of the brain, and that our thoughts cannot have any effect upon our brains and bodies, our actions, and the physical world.
- 3.** The ideology of scientific materialism became dominant in academia during the 20th century. So dominant that a majority of scientists started to believe that it was based on established empirical evidence, and represented the only rational view of the world.
- 4.** Scientific methods based upon materialistic philosophy have been highly successful in not only increasing our understanding of nature but also in bringing greater control and freedom through advances in technology.

5. However, the nearly absolute dominance of materialism in the academic world has seriously constricted the sciences and hampered the development of the scientific study of mind and spirituality. Faith in this ideology, as an exclusive explanatory framework for reality, has compelled scientists to neglect the subjective dimension of human experience. This has led to a severely distorted and impoverished understanding of ourselves and our place in nature.

6. Science is first and foremost a non-dogmatic, open-minded method of acquiring knowledge about nature through the observation, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of phenomena. Its methodology is not synonymous with materialism and should not be committed to any particular beliefs, dogmas, or ideologies.

7. At the end of the nineteenth century, physicists discovered empirical phenomena that could not be explained by classical physics. This led to the development, during the 1920s and early 1930s, of a revolutionary new branch of physics called quantum mechanics (QM). QM has questioned the material foundations of the world by showing that atoms and subatomic particles are not really solid objects—they do not exist with certainty at definite spatial locations and definite times. Most importantly, QM explicitly introduced the mind into its basic conceptual structure since it was found that particles being observed and the observer—the physicist and the method used for observation—are linked. According to one interpretation of QM, this phenomenon implies that the consciousness of the observer is vital to the existence of the physical events being observed, and that mental events can affect the physical world. The results of recent experiments support this interpretation. These results suggest that the physical world is no longer the primary or sole component of reality, and that it cannot be fully understood without making reference to the mind.

8. Psychological studies have shown that conscious mental activity can causally influence behavior, and that the explanatory and predictive value of agentic factors (e.g. beliefs, goals, desires and expectations) is very high. Moreover, research in psychoneuroimmunology indicates that our thoughts and emotions can markedly affect the activity of the physiological systems (e.g., immune, endocrine, cardiovascular) connected to the brain. In other respects,

neuroimaging studies of emotional self-regulation, psychotherapy, and the placebo effect demonstrate that mental events significantly influence the activity of the brain.

9. Studies of the so-called "psi phenomena" indicate that we can sometimes receive meaningful information without the use of ordinary senses, and in ways that transcend the habitual space and time constraints. Furthermore, psi research demonstrates that we can mentally influence—at a distance—physical devices and living organisms (including other human beings). Psi research also shows that distant minds may behave in ways that are nonlocally correlated, i.e. the correlations between distant minds are hypothesized to be unmediated (they are not linked to any known energetic signal), unmitigated (they do not degrade with increasing distance), and immediate (they appear to be simultaneous). These events are so common that they cannot be viewed as anomalous nor as exceptions to natural laws, but as indications of the need for a broader explanatory framework that cannot be predicated exclusively on materialism.

10. Conscious mental activity can be experienced in clinical death during a cardiac arrest (this is what has been called a "near-death experience" [NDE]). Some near-death experiencers (NDErs) have reported veridical out-of-body perceptions (i.e. perceptions that can be proven to coincide with reality) that occurred during cardiac arrest. NDErs also report profound spiritual experiences during NDEs triggered by cardiac arrest. It is noteworthy that the electrical activity of the brain ceases within a few seconds following a cardiac arrest.

11. Controlled laboratory experiments have documented that skilled research mediums (people who claim that they can communicate with the minds of people who have physically died) can sometimes obtain highly accurate information about deceased individuals. This further supports the conclusion that mind can exist separate from the brain.

12. Some materialistically inclined scientists and philosophers refuse to acknowledge these phenomena because they are not consistent with their exclusive conception of the world. Rejection of post-materialist investigation of nature or refusal to publish strong science findings supporting a post-materialist

framework are antithetical to the true spirit of scientific inquiry, which is that empirical data must always be adequately dealt with. Data which do not fit favored theories and beliefs cannot be dismissed a priori. Such dismissal is the realm of ideology, not science.

13. It is important to realize that psi phenomena, NDEs in cardiac arrest, and replicable evidence from credible research mediums, appear anomalous only when seen through the lens of materialism.

14. Moreover, materialist theories fail to elucidate how brain could generate the mind, and they are unable to account for the empirical evidence alluded to in this manifesto. This failure tells us that it is now time to free ourselves from the shackles and blinders of the old materialist ideology, to enlarge our concept of the natural world, and to embrace a post-materialist paradigm.

15. According to the post-materialist paradigm:

a) Mind represents an aspect of reality as primordial as the physical world. Mind is fundamental in the universe, i.e. it cannot be derived from matter and reduced to anything more basic.

b) There is a deep interconnectedness between mind and the physical world.

c) Mind (will/intention) can influence the state of the physical world, and operate in a nonlocal (or extended) fashion, i.e. it is not confined to specific points in space, such as brains and bodies, nor to specific points in time, such as the present. Since the mind may nonlocally influence the physical world, the intentions, emotions, and desires of an experimenter may not be completely isolated from experimental outcomes, even in controlled and blinded experimental designs.

d) Minds are apparently unbounded, and may unite in ways suggesting a unitary, One Mind that includes all individual, single minds.

e) NDEs in cardiac arrest suggest that the brain acts as a transceiver of mental activity, i.e. the mind can work through the brain, but is not produced by it. NDEs

occurring in cardiac arrest, coupled with evidence from research mediums, further suggest the survival of consciousness, following bodily death, and the existence of other levels of reality that are non-physical.

f) Scientists should not be afraid to investigate spirituality and spiritual experiences since they represent a central aspect of human existence.

16. Post-materialist science does not reject the empirical observations and great value of scientific achievements realized up until now. It seeks to expand the human capacity to better understand the wonders of nature, and in the process rediscover the importance of mind and spirit as being part of the core fabric of the universe. Post-materialism is inclusive of matter, which is seen as a basic constituent of the universe.

17. The post-materialist paradigm has far-reaching implications. It fundamentally alters the vision we have of ourselves, giving us back our dignity and power, as humans and as scientists. This paradigm fosters positive values such as compassion, respect, and peace. By emphasizing a deep connection between ourselves and nature at large, the post-materialist paradigm also promotes environmental awareness and the preservation of our biosphere. In addition, it is not new, but only forgotten for four hundred years, that a lived transmaterial understanding may be the cornerstone of health and wellness, as it has been held and preserved in ancient mind-body-spirit practices, religious traditions, and contemplative approaches.

18. The shift from materialist science to post-materialist science may be of vital importance to the evolution of the human civilization. It may be even more pivotal than the transition from geo -centrism to heliocentrism.

* The Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science was prepared by Mario Beauregard, PhD (University of Arizona), Gary E. Schwartz, PhD (University of Arizona), and Lisa Miller, PhD (Columbia University), in collaboration with Larry Dossey, MD, Alexander Moreira-Almeida, MD, PhD, Marilyn Schlitz, PhD, Rupert Sheldrake, PhD, and Charles Tart, PhD.

** For further information, please contact Dr. Mario Beauregard, Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health, Department of Psychology, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA. Email: mariobeaugard@email.arizona.edu

*** We considered two ways of referring to the emerging paradigm presented in this Manifesto: the hyphenated version (post-materialism) and the non-hyphenated version (postmaterialism). The hyphenated form was selected for the sake of clarity for both scientists and lay people.

**** The Summary Report of the International Summit on Post-Materialist Science, Spirituality and Society can be accessed at <https://opensciences.org/files/pdfs/ISPMS-Summary-Report.pdf>

Links

Pax Christi International
<http://www.paxchristi.net/>

Pax Christi U.S.A.
<http://www.paxchristiusa.org>

Pax Christi Texas
<http://www.paxchristitexas.org>

Pax Christi Dallas
<http://www.Paxchristidallastx.org>

Pax Christi San Antonio
<http://www.paxchristisa.org>

Marianist Social Justice Collaborative
www.msjc.net

Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, International JPIC Committee
<http://saccvi.blogspot.com/>

San Antonio Peace Center
<http://www.sanantoniopace.center>

Texas Catholic Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.txccedp.org

Dialogue Institute of San Antonio
www.thedialoginstitute.org/san-antonio/

Climate Change
www.creation-care.com

NowCastSA
www.nowcastsa.com/

Migrant Center for Human Rights
<https://Migrantcenter.org>