

# Ecclesiastes and Message of Abundant Life

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## Part 1. Overview: Christian Faith vs Science

### “The Two Tasks”:

by Charles Malik<sup>4</sup>, Prof. of Hist., at Am. U in Beirut, Former Presid. of United Nations.  
Main Address at the dedication Ceremony of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Ill. 1980.

**Responsible Christians face two tasks: saving soul, & saving mind**

- To University: I want the most rigorous intellectual training.  
Equally, I want the salvation of the soul, I want the fear of the Lord.
- The greatest danger besetting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of **anti-intellectualism**.
- The great universities control the mind of the world.

**Therefore, evangelism must first be intellectualized itself to be able to speak to the university to be able to evangelize the university**

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## My View: Christian Faith and Science can coexist

- I am a physics professor retired from UT after over 40 years' service. I am also a Christian who takes the Bible seriously.
- All along I believe my faith and science can harmoniously coexist. This is reflected in my past lectures including the present talk. There are a total of 5 lectures.
- Today's talk is to review on highlights of past talks given, to elaborate on new points and to summarize the fundamentals in Christian faith and practical applications.
- Some issues raised in Malik's talk will be addressed.

**A disclaimer:** Unless otherwise mentioned, all the contents of the lectures presented are given from my own perspectives.

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**Freeman Dyson**, prominent physicist & the 2000 Templeton Prize recipient. Suggested to imagine in human mind there are two windows. Thru one, one sees the world of science, and thru the other one sees the world of religions. Both science & religions can harmoniously coexist, compliment to each other, if they respect each other's autonomy. Conflict occurs when one claims a monopoly on the truth.

I have been looking at two categories of human knowledge.

- **Physical knowledge(PK)**: The knowledge which enables us to understand the physical world.
- **Spiritual knowledge (SK)**: We will refer to SK as the collection of knowledge of religions, moral-compasses, worldviews, theologies, philosophies, human spirits: love, compassions, joy..., negative spirit e.g. 911 ...

Due to my own limitations, I have only considered a small sector of SK, i.e. the fundamentals of Christian faith and applications based on the Bible.

### The Bible - A moral compass to believers.

II Tim 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God. And profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequately equipped for every good work".

The verse gives us three important points

- Believers should take the Bible seriously, since it is inspired by God.
- It intended to serve as a moral compass. It provides guidelines and instructions for the believers.
- It provides believers adequate information, and has the potential of leading to every good work.

(John 4:24) "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". This suggests that it is the "spiritual moral compass" which could serve as a guide and instruct the believers in their life.

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### The coherent spiritual messages in the Bible

- Malik warns: "The greatest danger besetting American evangelical Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism."
- We focus on the Spiritual message(SK) of the Bible. Since SK is independent of PK, it eliminates the criticism of anti-science, or anti-intellectualism.
- Furthermore one sees that the spiritual messages of the Bible share a coherent truth of the Bible. For instance as we will see in the last part of my talk (slides 9-12, ) the spiritual message of Easter story is profound. The coherent cross-references in the Bible work together to substantiate the "truth".
- There is an impressive law behind the Easter story, **the Principle of the Cross (PC), which is the law behind the birth and the growth of the new life.** This is analogous to "F=ma", the equation of motion in physics.

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### Part 2 Moral Compass in OT: Spiritual Wisdoms.

#### The Wisdom of Old Testament.

○ The Hebrew Scripture to the Jews is the same as the Old Testament(OT) to Christians. Within Judaic-Christian faith, there is one God. The same divinity is referred to by different names.

○ A relatively well known concept is the "**Two Faces of God**" (see Schulweis, 1994) This is well known to many Jews and has been accepted by many Christians.

- One face is **Elohim** (God of Nature). Elohim governs the world based on the Law of Nature. It is independent of man. **Elohim calls for principle of acceptance**, i.e. to accept the natural event as it is PK
- **The other is Adonai** (The Lord of compassion) **Adonai calls for the principle of transformation.** Adonai, inspires man to take the event from as it is to the level as it ought to be. SK

#### Is vs Ought:

To live in the world of "is" without the world of "ought" is to live in a universe **without dreams, sacredness, or possibility.**

To live in the world of "ought" without the world of "is" means to live in a world of **fantasy and pretense.**

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#### Commandments in the OT. Ecclesiastes: (12:13)

**Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.** (**Fear God** — inward worship of God, reverence, and love, and trust, and a devotedness of heart to serve and please him)

**When bad things happened**(Calamities, Accidents, Cancers, Deformed Babies ...)

**Elohim** counsels us to accept it as "an act of God"

**Adonai** urges us to take a hard look, find potential power of transformation, e.g.

- **by exercising our divinely given intelligence,**
- **by facing it with courage, faith and hope,**
- **by accepting the community support including social media ...**

#### Personal relationships with Adonai:

Biblical stories on the personal relations of the Patriarchs with God e.g. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph – prayer, meditation, dialogue

**Psalm 23 Adonai (the Lord) The Lord protects, guides and cares**

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing...

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### Part 3: Moral Compass of New Testament: “Life”

Jesus’s message of “life” -- “abundant life”, “eternal life”.

- John 5:39, 40: “Jesus to Jews You diligently study the Scriptures, because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to **come to me to have life.**” So, it is not enough simply study the Bible, need “**come to me**” to have life.
- John 10:10: “I come that you may have **life** and have it more abundantly”.
- Jesus told Nicodemus that: unless one is born-again, one cannot enter the kingdom of God. John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Notice the repeated use the word “Life”. John 3:16 together with the Easter story, have captured the central theme in Christian faith.

### Principle of the Cross(PC): Crucifixion & Resurrection.

The spiritual message behind John 3:16, Easter “story” (or “event”) and other related passages in NT have been sum up into “the Principle of the Cross”(PC). My discussion below is based on Tseng’s work. (see Elsa Tseng 2005, 2016 in the References on slide 15).

PC has three important steps:

1. By faith the believer acknowledges that the salvation plan of God was completed by Jesus. Specifically Jesus died for us on the cross. Then he was buried. And through the Holy Spirit Jesus is transformed to have the resurrected life, the New Life. This is the essence of Easter story. For a more precise version, see Philippians (2:8-11)
2. By faith the believer “unites” with Jesus, the “old self” was crucified and died with Jesus. In this way the old-self is dead.
3. By faith the believer “unites” with Jesus in his resurrection. The Holy Spirit enters into the believer’s heart. So the believer is now transformed and has a new life (see Romans 6:5 for the steps of 2 and 3).

### The Birth and Growth of the New Life\*

**The Birth of New Life:** John 3:16 +[PC]

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes him [by uniting with Jesus on the cross, the old-self is dead] shall not be perished but [by uniting with Jesus’s resurrection the Holy Spirit enters into the believer’s heart, the believer is transformed into a new self] will have the everlasting life.

**The Growth of New Life:**

Jesus’s ongoing calling: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9: 23-24)

**PC is being applied daily to enable the continuous growth of the new life.**

There will be **the the ongoing dying of the old-self** and **the ongoing renewal of the new life.**

\*Our discussions on the birth and the growth of the “Life” are based on my sister Elsa Tseng’s work. See (Tseng 2005, 2016) in the “References section” on slide 15.

### Reflection on PC: Points to ponder

★ **What is a “Daily cross”?** (see Hebrews 12: 1-13; 12:28).

Everything, that happens to us every day, which does not go our way, is our daily cross.

In each case, there is always a chance “the old-self” could emerge and we may be tempted to “sin. If this does occur, the old-self will be enhanced.

By faith, through the application of PC the new increment of the old self will join Jesus to be nailed on the cross. Subsequently, the process of uniting with Jesus’s resurrection, will lead to the ongoing renewal of the new life.

• **God is sovereign**

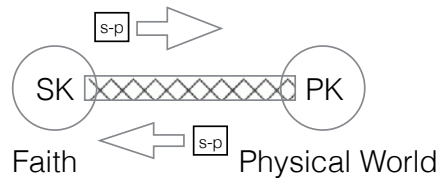
Romans 8:28: “In all things God works for the good of those who love him”; also, Luke 21: 18 says: without his permission, not even one hair will fall off.

• **Daily Cross is to build our character.** By faith, the believers see that everything happens to them, is allowed by God. In such a way, in our daily life, everything works together to build our righteous character.

## A Bridge between SK-PK & Traffic Flows

**Flow from Faith to Physical world** e.g. shows up when there are prayer support from communities for the patient, caregivers and the physicians may greatly effect the healing process.

**Flow from Physical world to Faith** e.g. occurs when the wonders of Nature inspires awesome spiritual outlook toward God of Nature.



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## Concluding Remarks:

- Throughout my talk, I have stressed the spiritual nature of Christian faith. I concur with Professor Dyson's observation, once we recognize the spiritual nature of our faith, the message presented can harmoniously co-exist with the physical knowledge.
- **Principle of the Cross(PC)**. It is a fundamental spiritual principle in Christian Faith and in the growth of spiritual life, or the abundant life.
- **PC** addresses the issue of human spirit and the Way of life. In this context, I have presented is an evangelical message which may be welcomed by the intellects and the university community.

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## References:

Francis S. Collins, The Language of God<sup>1</sup>, 2006  
Don Davis, The Critical Questions<sup>2</sup>  
Charles Malik<sup>3</sup>, The two tasks<sup>4</sup>1980.  
J. I. Packer, "Knowing God", 1993.  
George M. Ricker, "What you don't have to believe to be a Christian", 2002.  
Lee Strobel, "The Case for Christ", 1998.  
Elsa Tseng. The New Life<sup>5</sup>, 2005, 2016.

## Foonotes:

<sup>1</sup> Francis S. Collins See Chapter 10: Option4, "Biologos" (Science and Faith in Harmony). BioLogos (more commonly referred to as Theistic Evolution, TE, is the dominant position of serious biologists and serious believers. It is the view espoused by many Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Christians, including Pope John Paul II. Similar views would be accepted by Maimonides of 12<sup>th</sup> century Jewish philosopher) and St Augustine if they were presented the scientific evidence for evolution.

<sup>2</sup> Donald G. Davis, Review on 3 seminal, popular, apologetic books on theological ideas.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Malik, Professor of History, at American University in Beirut, Lebanon, Former President of United Nations.

<sup>4</sup> **The two tasks:** It was the Main talk delivered at the dedication ceremony of the Billy Graham Center, 1980.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.echousa.org>. (2016) The content is based on her book published in 2005 (in Chinese) entitled: "New-life Course 26 Lessons"

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## Selected recommendations:

- **Recommended book:** Francis S. Collins, The Language of God. See Chapter 10: Option4, "Biologos" (Science and Faith in Harmony). BioLogos (more commonly referred to as Theistic Evolution, TE, is the dominant position of serious biologists and serious believers. It is the view espoused by many Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Christians, including Pope John Paul II. Similar views would be accepted by Maimonides of 12<sup>th</sup> century Jewish philosopher) and St Augustine if they were presented the scientific evidence for evolution.
- **Recommended review** on 3 seminal, popular, apologetic books on theological ideas, by Donald G. Davis Jr: A review Following are four areas suggest beyond materialistic and naturalistic perspectives.
  - 1) The prevalence of a moral sense
  - 2) The longing for transcendence
  - 3) The yearning for relationship
  - 4) Awe of design and the complexity of life

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