

**THEODICY'S PROBLEM:  
A STATISTICAL LOOK AT  
THE HOLOCAUST OF THE CHILDREN,  
AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF NATURAL EVIL  
FOR THE FREE WILL AND  
BEST OF ALL WORLDS HYPOTHESES**

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**Abstract**

The full extent of the anguish and death suffered by immature humans is scientifically and statistically documented for the first time. Probably hundreds of billions of human conceptions and at least fifty billion children have died, the great majority from non-human causes, before reaching the age of mature consent. Adults who have heard the word of Christ number in the lower billions. If immature deceased humans are allowed into heaven, then the latter is inhabited predominantly by automatons. Because the Holocaust of the Children bars an enormous portion of humans from making a decision about their eternal fate while maximizing the suffering of children, the classic Christian “free will” and “best of all possible worlds” hypotheses are falsified.

**Introduction**

The *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Honderich 1995) observes that the theodicy problem of how a good and loving God can allow evil to afflict its creations “has always been the most powerful objection to traditional theism.” The problem periodically vexes the global population following an enormous natural disaster that destroys tremendous numbers of children, such as the tsunami of 2004, but the issue then

tends to fade back into the theological background. For reasons of space, and because most available dialogue on the subject is from a Christian-influenced perspective, this study is largely a critique of current theodistic arguments by those who advocate the modern Christian consensus (as detailed by Hick 1966) that maintains that there is one intelligent creator who is perfect in moral terms, and possesses all the power needed to prevent extensive suffering among his intelligent creations.<sup>1</sup> Many Christians also believe that God has special concern for the well-being of immature humans. The above basic characteristics are currently attributed to God by most of the approximately two billion followers of Christ (Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001).

To date, theodistic and atheodistic arguments typically concentrate on the question of moral evil and suffering caused by and commonly inflicted upon adults, and usually consist of nonquantitative arguments. In a rare attempt to address the statistical aspect of the theodicy problem, Jonathon Edwards in the 1700s perceptively calculated that the advent of industrial civilization would cause the global human population to expand dramatically by the beginning of the third millennium of Christ's birth, and inaccurately predicted that virtually all humans would be Christians by the onset of the twenty-first century (Marsden 2003).<sup>2</sup> Edwards concluded that the great majority of humanity would be redeemed as a consequence of population growth, statistically minimizing the theodicy problem. As this study will prove, Edwards could not have been more mistaken, yet many still share his optimistic view because they have not been informed about the true nature of population dynamics since the appearance of humans. Statistics matter, to the degree that it is not possible to wholly assess the moral nature of a ruler without quantitatively measuring the results of his management. That a modern statistical analysis of God's dominion over earth has not been conducted is a major failing of the theodicy/atheodicy debate that has prevented definitive conclusions.

The primary purpose of this analysis is to inform those interested in the theodicy problem about the demographic statistics that detail the full extent and causes of suffering and early death of immature humans caused by nonhuman agencies over history that are typically labeled natural evil.<sup>3</sup> These scientific findings are then used to test

whether it is possible for a supernatural ubercreator to be profoundly benevolent in the manner described by the modern Christian consensus. The “free will” and “best of all worlds” arguments are tested by examining the statistics of death and the afterlife both on earth, and in the alternative proposals regarding the ultimate destination of innocent souls.

This look at the theodicy problem is more science-oriented than is normal for the genre. As such it may strike the reader as not being within the norm for discussions on this subject, both in the approach taken toward the issue, as well as in the results, which may disturb the views of some. It is hoped that this fresh take on the subject will elicit further exploration and analysis of the most powerful problem with traditional monotheism.

### **Historical Statistical Demographic Analysis**

#### *Conceptions, Births and Prematurity Deaths*

The first comprehensive effort to numerically detail the dimensions of the problem is presented below with the caveat that all estimates are approximations, and with the subsequent caveat that precision is not required to arrive at firm conclusions, the basic scope of the problem is sufficiently definitive.

Contrary to the widespread impression that the over 6.5 billion humans currently living constitute a major portion of humanity since its first appearance, the number born to date is some 100 billion.<sup>4</sup> The number of conceptions since the appearance of humans is in the area of a few hundred billion, extrapolating from the below pre-term loss rates; this figure may be as high as or even exceed half a trillion, or it may be somewhat over half that number.

Even though it is widely recognized that young humans are exceptionally vulnerable, the enormous scale of the problem is not sufficiently appreciated. Many or most conceptions fail to make it to term because conception and pregnancy involve very complex biomachinery and risky processes that are highly susceptible to malfunction, including failure to implant, reabsorption and mergers,<sup>5</sup> miscarriages, and stillbirths that often result from genetic defects, as well as death of the pregnant mother (Beller and Zlatnik 1994; Demeny and McNicoll 2003; Harris 2006; Nepomnaschy et al. 2006).

The general health of women in terms of nutrition, chronic stress, and other factors probably influence pregnancy success rates, so the 50-percent-plus failure rates apparently characteristic of modern first world women are probably lower than historical standards.<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this study a noninduced pregnancy failure rate of three quarters over history is used, suggesting ~300 hundred billion natural prenatal deaths to date.

Even after a century of improvements in agricultural production, as well as medical advances based on the germ theory of disease, including early vaccines and especially sanitation, juvenile mortality rates in England and the United States were over 25 percent circa 1900—in the latter over 13 percent of infants died, as did 20 percent of children under the age of 5 (Demeny and McNicoll 2003). Prior to 1800, at least half the children born had died before maturity; in preindustrial societies with sufficiently reliable demographic record-keeping (Europe in the 1700s, India in the late 1800s), infant mortality rates were almost a quarter of those born, and half or more of the children overall died (Acsadi and Nemeskeri 1970; Bhat 1989; Boserup 1981; Demeny and McNicoll 2003, Gupta 1971; Haub 1995/2004). Juvenile mortality is likely to have been still worse in even less advanced societies. Note that the historical level of juvenile death does not appear to have been influenced by the majority religious opinion; Christian children died off as rapidly as those of other faiths. In the twentieth century, the hard work of adults utilizing scientific methods and technology suppressed childhood mortality, to the point that it is rare in the first world, except for the most impoverished communities. In the prosperous democracies of the first world, higher levels of Christian belief are correlated with higher levels of juvenile mortality.<sup>7</sup> In the second and third worlds, childhood death rates remain high, sometimes approaching historical levels in areas experiencing high levels of strife. Since humans appeared, the number of infants and older children who died before maturity probably exceeds 50 billion, or at least half the total born (Paul 2008).

Combining deceased, unborn, infants, and children, the estimated total prematurity loss of conceived humans is in the area of 350 billion. The number who have lived to maturity probably approaches only 50 billion. If these numbers are broadly correct, the combined prenatal

and childhood prematurity deaths exceeds those who have become at least young adults by approximately 7 to 1. In the last century and a half, the number of unborn and children saved from an early death by adults using modern technologies is a few billion.

### *The Agents of Destruction*

In order to assess the scale of prematurity deaths due to natural evil, the extent to which human activities have killed the immature needs to be estimated. After induced abortion became legal in the United States, the number of such procedures rose from ~1 million before legalization to 1.5 million each year in the 1980s, and has since subsided to 1.3 million a year.<sup>8</sup> Currently there are a little over 4 million births a year in the United States. From the latter figure, we can calculate the number of yearly conceptions at 8 million plus. In that case, every year, terminations due to natural evil amount to 4 million or more, swamping deliberate abortions by about threefold. Abortion tended to be a private and probably fairly common affair among women until it became illegal in many nations starting in the 1800s, and the level of abortions in nations in which the procedure is legally severely restricted approach or exceed the levels where it is openly available (Sedgh, Henshaw, Singh, Åhman, and Shah 2007). Even so, it is unlikely that abortion rates were more markedly higher in the past than they are currently, and they may have been significantly less due to its lesser convenience, safety, and efficacy. Because spontaneous abortion rates were probably higher, the ratio of natural to artificial prenatal death rates has probably been substantially elevated over the modern level over most of history. Of the few hundred billion prenatal deaths the great majority can be attributed to natural evil.

Concerning war, in absolute terms, the 1900s were the most lethal in history. Some 50 million died in WW II; the total number of people killed by war, genocide, forced famines, and the like for the century is probably 150 million plus (Gellately 2007). Many millions of those were children. This compares to the 10 billion born in the same century, and the approximately 1 billion children who died from other causes. Therefore, the loss rate of children due to moral evil in the 1900s is a small fraction of the losses due to nonhuman causes. Reliable data on the historical rate of infanticide is not available, but the individual propensity for reproduction and the societal need to

compensate for the normally high juvenile loss rate suggest that it has not been a major fraction of childhood death.<sup>9</sup> Although tens of millions of children have suffered death at the hands of adults over time, they are a very small proportion of the total loss of infants and children. Even Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Pol Pot combined did not destroy more than a few million youths.

Combining induced abortions, infanticide, murder, and war related deaths, the number of immature humans killed by adults is probably ten or twenty billion, the large majority due to induced abortions (most before it was outlawed). Therefore, all but a modest fraction of a few hundred billion humans have died before attaining maturity due to naturally evil causes not due to human moral evil.

The next concerns are the related matters of the basic causes of prematurity death that result from nonhuman causes, and especially the level of suffering it involves.

The large preponderance of losses of the unborn occurred soon after conception; about half of conceptions have not implanted, and most spontaneous abortions occur in the first weeks.<sup>10</sup> Even minimal consciousness does not occur until later when neurons become sufficiently numerous and well connected, so most deaths in the reproductive tract occur without the deceased ever being aware of its existence, or experiencing any level of suffering. The level of suffering that can be experienced by the fetus as it matures is less understood. Pain receptors and the neural centers of the brain develop gradually. On the other hand, hormonal drugs may suppress high levels of consciousness awareness, in part to prevent the growing fetus from becoming too active and injuring the mother. The degree of suffering felt by later term unborn who are terminally ill or traumatized is therefore uncertain, but is probably less than that experienced by infants. The issue of suffering among the tens of billions of children who have died becomes increasingly serious as children mature and their conscious ability to experience pain and fear, particularly of death, rises to full normal human levels.

Microbial diseases are easily the leading cause of death among children. Malaria has probably killed more youngsters than any other single cause, perhaps 20 billion (Finkel 2007). Other top infectious diseases include smallpox, typhoid, plague, scarlet fever, yellow fever,

cholera, influenza, rubella, tetanus, and rabies. The situation is so acute that a microbial war is being waged upon immature humans (Barnes 2005; Demeny and McNicoll 2003). Because their immune systems are immature, infants and children are exceptionally susceptible to being infected and killed; only the elderly are comparably defenseless. In general, diseases kill their victims—who usually remain conscious during much of the symptomatic period and death process—over an extended period of time ranging from days to years, and with extreme levels of discomfort ranging up to the highest levels of agony. Fear of death often adds to the mental distress. For 99.9 percent of history, adults have lacked the basic knowledge base to take steps—some relatively uncomplicated, such as sanitation, including water sterilization—to protect their offspring. Serious birth defects, some physical deformities, others less obvious, such as cystic fibrosis, afflict about one in sixteen children; they are often so severe that they lead to early death.<sup>11</sup> Over all, childhood diseases have undoubtedly killed tens of billions.

The next most lethal nonhuman cause of prematurity death is famine and chronic malnutrition, which are contributing factors to disease. Severe food shortages are largely the result of climatic conditions, plant and animal diseases, vermin infestations, inadequate food production technologies, and food storage and transportation problems that involve nonhuman factors that are very difficult to cope with, and have been gradually alleviated only in recent centuries. Death by lack of adequate nutrition is an extended event that takes weeks to years, depending upon the severity of food deprivation, and inflicts upon the largely conscious sufferers a high level of physical and mental anguish. A few billion children have probably died due to acute or gradual starvation either directly or indirectly.

Relative to disease and malnutrition, physical trauma kills a relatively small portion of children, but in absolute terms, the toll is still probably in the region of a billion. Death by trauma is exacerbated by a dysfunctional bodily response in which shock causes lethal organ failure following injuries that are otherwise survivable. The ability of adults to effectively treat serious wounds has been limited until very recently. Most traumatic deaths are due to everyday accidents and fires. Violent natural disasters periodically cut down children, sometimes in

large numbers in a single event, but the total numbers are relatively modest. For example, it is estimated that earthquakes have killed less than 10 million humans over the last thousand years, well over a third of whom have been children.<sup>12</sup> Floods are probably responsible for most losses. The degree of suffering resulting from trauma can range from essentially none, in the case of immediate death, to as extreme as is possible.

In addition to the suffering associated with death, most children who have survived to adulthood have experienced a serious and often severe level of anguish due to one or more bouts of serious illness, birth defects, malnutrition, trauma, mental illness, etc. A significant minority have been seriously and permanently physically or mentally disabled by these factors. Therefore the humans who have passed through childhood without being killed, disabled, or traumatized by events beyond the control of the adults at a given time have been a small minority. Among those who have survived childhood, a large portion died while in their prime; the state of affairs in which only a small percentage of adults fail to reach old age is a recent event limited to the more developed countries.

#### *Maximal Suffering and Destruction*

The situation could not have been much worse than it actually is. If prenatal and juvenile mortality and disability were significantly higher than they actually are, then the population would not be able to grow, and would be at high risk of crashing, leading to human extinction. The level of natural evil has been about as severe as is practically possible.

#### *The Holocaust of the Children*

Because the level of youth suffering and death has been close to the practical maximum, young humans have enjoyed no dependable refuge; even the reproductive tract of women is far from being a safe haven for human life. The planetary environment is also extremely dangerous. Of the hundreds of billions of human conceptions the large majority died before birth, over half the one hundred billion born have died as children, a portion of the survivors were severely harmed, and among children the great majority suffered high and even extreme levels of discomfort, pain, and fear that qualifies as torture.



This dysfunctional system can be objectively described as merciless or ruthless.<sup>13</sup> Despite being the worst disaster in human history, it has been so neglected that it has never even been named. During the Jewish Holocaust of seven years, about 1.5 million children were slaughtered.<sup>14</sup> With the number of young humans who have died totaling in the high billions over 10,000 generations, it stands as the great Holocaust of the Children.

### *The Failure of Prayer*

Petitioning a supernatural creator intelligence (SCI) in the hopes of soliciting its aid in order to alleviate suffering and illness is a highly popular practice in most, but not all, societies. The efficacy of this hypothesis is testable by observing the actual results. That the level of anguish and premature death has been as high as maximally possible over history indicates that prayer has been largely or entirely ineffectual. Nor is there historical evidence that the prayer of Christians has reduced the degree of adversity suffered by the children in regions with Christian majorities compared to those dwelling in non-Christian populations where prayers have been directed to alternative deities. Instead only practical earthly methods invented and practiced by humans have reduced youth mortality to a small fraction of the level when prayer was the most common treatment available. It is now possible to cure a child of a massive bacterial infection without any resort to supernaturalism, and many viral infections can be prevented or managed. Requesting help from a God is immeasurably less reliable. This conclusion is reinforced by the negative outcome from an international epidemiological survey, and clinical trials of remote prayer in a medical context.<sup>15</sup>

### *Summary of Statistical Results*

If a creator exists, then it has chosen to fashion a habitat that has maximized the level of suffering and death among young humans that are due to factors beyond the control of humans over most of their history. As a consequence, only a small fraction of conceptions have reached the age of majority. The number of unborn and children who have died due to natural causes is literally thousands of times larger than those killed by the actions of human dictators. There is no convincing evidence that a creator has favored any particular population,

Christian or otherwise, over others during human history in terms of their natural levels of mortality. Requesting aid from the creator has not been effective despite the tremendous scale of the attempt.

### Theological and Atheological Analysis

#### *The Failure to Pay Proper Attention to the Children*

Major modern theodistic works, such as Adams 1999, Hick 1966, John Paul II 1984, Lewis 1957, Plantinga 1974 and 1999, Swinburne 1998, and van Inwagen 2006 do not adequately treat the theological consequences of the Holocaust of the Children. Aimed primarily at the problem of moral evil, some of these works direct considerably more text to that aspect of natural evil that concerns the suffering of animals than that of young *Homo sapiens*, which often receives no direct consideration. Hick (1966) and Swinburne (1998) include subchapters on animal suffering, which is also listed in their indexes; a similar level of interest in children is not incorporated. Similar attributes apply to other efforts.<sup>16</sup> Because these arguments do not examine either the details or the enormous scale of the consequences that emerge from the holocaust, theodicy cannot be accurately credited as having successfully solved the problem. Nor has the opposition successfully used the extreme loss and suffering of youth to overturn theodicy, because atheodistic texts—whether the seminal Madden and Hare 1968 or the more recent Dawkins 2006, Ehrman 2008, Harris 2006, Rowe 2006, or Tooley 2007—have not paid sufficient attention to the matter either; Twain 1962 is a historically notable exception. It is because neither theodistic or atheodistic arguments have properly incorporated the full scope of the Holocaust of the Children that this analysis is the first to use the issue to test the contending world views.

#### *The Main Theodistic Arguments*

Because worldly suffering is undeniable, Christian theodicy theory acknowledges that the proposed powerful supernatural creator intelligence (PSCI) is practicing a form of the perfect ends justifies the imperfect means required to achieve them. The primary Christian explanations for why the PSCI allows suffering and prematurity death are the closely linked “free will hypothesis” (FWH) and the “best of all possible world hypothesis” (BPWH).<sup>17</sup> Hick (1966) explains that

“the world is not intended to be a paradise, but rather the scene of a history in which human personality may be formed toward the pattern of Christ. Men are not to be thought of on the analogy of animal pets, whose life is to be made as agreeable as possible, but rather on the analogy of human children who are to grow to adulthood in an environment whose primary and overriding purpose is not immediate pleasure but the realization of the most valuable potentialities of human personality” (Hick 1966, 294); note that Hick automatically assumes that children become adults. Swinburne (1998) further explains that an imperfect world allows the conversion of imperfect mortal humans into perfect immortal souls suitable for residing with the perfect PSCI in heaven by making “possible reactions of courage . . . of compassion, sympathy, penitence, forgiveness, reform” and so forth (Swinburne 1998, 151). The final result is so good and perfect that it is acceptable and necessary that natural evil exists, because the absence of the latter cannot sufficiently challenge defective humans to the degree they need to become perfect. Such perfection cannot be achieved if humans are in some manner manipulated toward that state because the result would be mere robots,<sup>18</sup> an argument summarized by Polkinghorne’s (1998) argument that “suffering of the world is such that we might be tempted to think that less freedom would be a worthwhile cost to pay for less pain. But do we really wish we had been automata?” (Polkinghorne 1998, 14). Haught (2000) agrees, contending that the “only kind of universe compatible with a God who loves, and who therefore wills the independence of the creation, is one in which contingency is an essential ingredient. And . . . this contingency can only entail that . . . there will exist the possibility of suffering and eventual perishing” (Haught 2000, 56).

In summary modern theodicy proposes that to be prepared for heaven initially imperfect humans must undergo sufficient experience and testing to render them perfect subjects of the realm of the PSCI, and that the decision to undergo the process of perfection must be made freely in order to avoid the residents of heaven being automations. In order to determine whether these arguments can survive the test provided by the Holocaust of the Children we will start with the conditions currently prevailing in the most successful human societies.

*The Example of the First World*

Currently about 600 million members of the middle and upper class dwell in the first world democracies of Western Europe, North America, Anglo Australasia, and Japan enjoying the most comfortable lives in human history (Paul 2005; 2008). In these nations modern sciences and technologies developed without supernatural assistance have reduced childhood suffering and death so far that obvious problems ensue for the BPWH.

If it is assumed that the historical level of natural evil and general discomfort is necessary to sufficiently challenge humans to become perfect immortals, then the exceptionally safe and comfortable conditions associated with modern consumer industrial civilization is a violation of the will of the PSCI. Starting in the late 1700s, a number of theists opposed various advances in medicine, such as early vaccines and anesthetics. These developments were decried as “playing God” because their use implies that the natural death rate of children is unacceptable, contradicting the need for humans to experience the suffering of the natural world created by the PSCI. Only a few Christian sects still reject the comforts and safety offered by advanced civilization. The broad modern Christian consensus shared by the great majority of Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant theologians, clerics, and laity gladly accepts most aspects of modern comforts and medical technology, to the degree that the suppression of juvenile discomfort and death is seen as fulfilling the will of the PSCI, and a deliberate return to historical norms is considered absurd and immoral. Most Christians further agree that people living in the United States, France, and Japan are being sufficiently tested and challenged in their journey toward paradise. If so then extreme prematurity mortality is not necessary to sufficiently challenge humans to achieve ultimate perfection. It follows that the cost/benefit ratio of the system created by the PSCI for perfecting humans is as poor as is practically possible for over 99 percent of the people who have existed, and than in recent decades humans have radically improved the cost/benefit balance to produce the same level of end results at far less outlay in childhood suffering and death.

The Holocaust of the Children that is superfluous toward achieving the ultimate good intended by the PSCI could have been dramati-

cally reduced without the direct, hands-on intervention of the creator. Practical advice from the latter concerning sanitation, sterilization, quarantine, mosquito control, and vaccines would have sufficed. The Bible includes extensive guidance supposedly provided by the PSCI on how his followers should behave and worship, including detailed instructions on various lifestyle items, so the PSCI could have used scripture to provide humanity with the information needed to sharply reduce disease and mortality. In addition, or alternately, the PSCI could have used his powers to directly protect children to a level that is at least as effective as has been achieved by advanced civilization without impairing the preparation of humans for the heavenly kingdom any more than is currently extant in the first world. Hick's (1966) analogy of humans as children who should not be overprotected defeats his own argument because children in well run societies do receive a high degree of protection. Although not all risk can or must be eliminated, adults have gone to such enormous lengths to reduce childhood suffering and risk that in many jurisdictions laws require that children being transported in automobiles ride in safety enhancing seats. As Twain (1962) remonstrated, there is no evidence that the supernatural father has taken similar prudent and loving steps to protect the children, or done anything at all to alleviate the dreadful impact of the natural world upon the immature, even parents' petitions to God going largely or entirely ignored. As far as can be told from the statistical evidence the PSCI has washed his hands of the fate of the immature, and has shown no particular concern over the matter.

Adams (1999) tenders that it is not possible for a perfect creator to produce a perfect world in the sense that it is always possible that there is something better, so a world that makes life worth living is adequate. But earthly circumstances are so maximally bad that the creator has not made a serious effort to produce a safe residence for its most vulnerable and innocent inhabitants. Instead the PSCI has provided humans with a treacherous habitat which is far too small—despite being set in the immense universe that the PSCI produced—to begin to accommodate more than a small fraction of the massive population potential of fecund *Homo sapiens*. Arguing that the PSCI did not intervene in the Holocaust of the Children in order to allow humans to express heroic love for the children by developing life saving methods

fails because humans have not been able to save the children until late in human history after immense numbers have been denied earthly comfort, life and free will, and because the natural loss rate among the preborn and outside the developed nations remains high.

The creator's ends do not justify the means because the latter are far more severe than necessary to achieve those ends, to the degree that earthly conditions could not be much worse. The PSCI's refusal to temper the brutality of nature upon the young is correspondingly callous if not cruel. It follows that the BPWH is falsified. This conclusion is incorrect only if the suppression of juvenile mortality and suffering actually does impair the perfection of human souls, but this premise is untenable—not only because it would force Christians to condemn and abandon advanced civilization in exchange for the more primitive socioeconomic conditions favored by some Muslim extremists.

### **The Reasons that the Death of Most Immature Humans Aborts Humanity's Free Will**

#### *The Need to Reach Adulthood*

A key premise of the FWH is that only those who are mature and mentally healthy enough can make the critical decisions concerning their moral practices on earth and their eternal fate, so those who perish too young or are severely mentally disabled cannot do so. All adults must enjoy adequate mental acuity over a sufficient period of time, as well as be thoroughly conversant as to the nature of their irrevocable choice, in order to make a wise and well-informed decision. Any person who dies before sufficient maturity is achieved and adequate knowledge gained does not enjoy religious free will.

#### *The Basic Numbers Problem*

The primary difficulty that the Holocaust of the Children creates for the FWH is so acute that the basic hypothesis can be quickly dispatched. Most Christians presume that an immortal soul is inserted at conception.<sup>19</sup> If so, then hundreds of billions have died before being able to decide whether or not to join the PSCI for eternity, far outnumbering the one in eight who reached the age of consent with adequate mental acuity. Still less have enjoyed an extended period of maturity over which to make the proper choice. If it is instead assumed that a

soul is inserted at or close to birth then it is probable that over half the hundred billion born have failed to reach the required maturity. If even one person is denied free will then the FWH is open to serious challenge, as is the perfection of God's plan. It is obviously not possible to accurately conclude that humanity as a whole possesses free will concerning their eternal fate when a very large portion or majority do not reach the age needed to acquire free will. It follows that because the maximal numbers of humans that can in practical demographic terms be denied free will have been so denied, and because the enormous number who have been denied constitute the great majority of conceptions, the FWH defense of the PSCI's perfect plan is falsified at its most fundamental and irrevocable level.

#### *More Problems with the Numbers*

The situation is even worse than the above numbers indicate. In addition to needing to reach maturity to make a decision about one's mortal fate, it is necessary to be sufficiently well informed to possess true free will on the matter. It was not possible to be a heaven-aspiring Christian for about 98 percent of the time since the evolution of the first humans, and half of all humans were born before Christ allegedly delivered the PSCI's vital message for making the crucial choice (Haub 1995/2004). Even then, large portions of the global population remained entirely unaware of the pertinent information until recent history. Aside from large regions of the eastern hemisphere, the Americas did not begin to be informed on a large scale until the 1500s, central Africa was contacted only in the 1800s. Since the time of Christ, probably only a third of competent adults have learned about Christianity with sufficient knowledge to make an informed selection. If so, of the hundreds of billions conceived and hundred billion born only about 10 billion competent adults, less than 3 percent of conceptions have both been exposed to the teachings of Christ and survived to maturity, and a large portion of the adults had only a few years to consider the matter before taken by premature death.<sup>20</sup> It follows that the FWH is further falsified.

#### *Problems with the Afterlife: Heaven, Hell, Limbo, and Extinction*

The PSCI's failure to ensure that all or almost all humans experience free choice entails numerous problems concerning the proposed after

life that further degrade the FWH. The ultimate fate of souls that cannot make an informed free will decision are that the immature soul is destroyed, dispatched to hell, or assigned to limbo because it is not suitable for heaven due to original sin and/or lack of sufficient earthly learning, or it is received in paradise despite its lack of earthly acquired qualifications.

Destroying or sending to hell many or most souls who have not yet committed mature sin qualifies as unfair, immoral and evil. Based on the premise that those who die too young to choose to be with Christ cannot be received in heaven but do not deserve, limbo was invented by the Catholic Church as a more benign alternative to destruction or hell. Recently abandoned by Rome (Pullella 2007), the limbo hypothesis does not qualify as moral because it unfairly denies blameless souls from having any opportunity or choice of being with their creator, or with relatives who did make it to paradise, for eternity. It qualifies as immoral because it arbitrarily and inconsistently subjects many billions of immature humans to intense suffering for little or no practical end purpose.

Turning to the paradise option, it is presumed herein that all souls who reside in heaven are perpetually happy, and love and worship the PSCI, and that no dissent occurs. If tens or hundreds of billions of souls arrive in heaven without choosing to do so, then many or the great majority of souls get free access to paradise, which is consequently populated by enormous numbers of the very type of mind controlled, robotic automata that advocates of divine free will go to lengths to decry as violating a major requirement of the creator. Of these souls the maximum portion possible have experienced intense suffering, even though none had the occasion to express their free will. Nor did a large portion of heavenly souls who were adults at death have sufficient earthly information about their ultimate choice. In the end only a small minority of a few billion residents of paradise are not automata. It follows that the FWH is further falsified.

The logic of the numbers when the Holocaust of the Children is combined with acceptance of all immature souls into heaven is dangerous to the theodicy defense. If countless billions are entering heaven with limited or no practical earthly experience, then the premise that submitting to the positive and negative aspects of dwelling



on the planet is important to making humans suitable for paradise cannot be true.

*The Discrimination of Suffering*

In Christian theodicy suffering not only gives adults the opportunity to perform positive deeds and learn life lessons as it alerts humans that they need to be rescued by the creator, the contrast is also seen as necessary for human souls to fully appreciate how wonderful divine happiness is.<sup>21</sup> But some fortunate adults never experience significant suffering, yet are entirely capable of making a mature free will choice about their after life, so suffering is not a necessary aid for humans to make a correct decision. Utilization of such a motivator is actually a reduction of true free choice, because the latter is degraded if it is in some way forced. And is a happy eighty-year-old who never suffered adversity in their entire life really less happy and with a lesser set of life lessons than the eighty-year-old person who has? Especially since both have equal access to paradise?

The last point brings us to why the pro-suffering argument is not applicable in a divine paradise where all inhabitants are perfectly happy. If the latter is true then past experience is irrelevant, and earthly suffering is egregious cruelty, especially when inflicted upon children. If instead the level of suffering experienced by a resident of paradise does help determine their ability to appreciate their happiness, it follows that there is a de-facto cast system in paradise in which those who experienced earthly anguish more fully grasp their good fortune. And souls who have not benefited from the lessons of suffering outnumber those who have. The final results are arbitrarily discriminatory, as well as a questionable expression of the end justifies the means. Nor has the perfect PSCI suffered from its lack of suffering, so the latter is not necessary to obtain optimal results.

In the end we return to the fundamental difficulties. The sheer immensity of the Holocaust of the Children renders attempts to justify it automatically inadequate. Are adult heroes worth 50 billion children tortured to death? And if countless billions of immature people suffer and die too young, then they never get to express their free will in the first place.

*A Disturbing Paradox, and the American Disaster*

If it is correct that all immature souls have automatic access to heaven, then it follows that all pregnancies should be terminated because that would guarantee that every blameless soul attains paradise, and with minimum distress. If a soul reaches maturity then it is at substantial risk of making a decision that excludes it from paradise, and this after considerable suffering. In that case saving children from an early death increases the risk that their souls will not be received in paradise. These absurdities illustrate the internally contradictory illogic of the hypothesis that all immature souls reach paradise due to the grace of a creator that desires that all humans reach paradise after choosing to go there. Likewise, missionary work is ill advised if souls who are unable to make an informed choice to be with the Christian creator before death are assured access to paradise.

The discovery and proselytizing of the Americas by Eurochristians offers a large-scale illustration of the problem. Christians are tasked with the Great Commission to spread the word that their PSCI has not done on its own. Mere contact between disease loaded Europeans and biologically naïve Amerindians led to enormous death rates among the latter, up to and over 90 percent, about half of them children, due to the accidental transmission of a host of Old World disease organisms that Europeans did not realize they were carrying (Cook 1998, Mann 2005). The process of bringing Christianity to the people of the New World had the side effect of destroying the bulk of the aboriginal population by nonhuman causes. The missionary work associated with exploration and colonization increased the risk that aboriginals would die too young to ask Christ to save their souls, which increased their chances of arriving in paradise if the creator accepts all immature humans into heaven.

### Conclusion

The Holocaust of the Children is so large in scale and depth that it poses such insurmountable problems for the classic Christian free will and best of all worlds hypotheses that they are falsified. If the Christian creator of this vast universe exists, then he has allowed the immature to dwell in such an oddly tiny and brutal habitat that it is a death trap where the human reproductive tract is not a safe haven for

most of the preborn, and children are exposed to an array of diseases and other hazards that have killed half of them. It is patently impossible to correctly assert that the PSCI gives humans free will when a large or major portion of humans never becomes old enough to make mature decisions, nor is it possible to accurately assert that the PSCI has produced the best habitat when humans have proven more willing than the creator to protect almost all children from serious disease and death without apparently seriously degrading the ability of humans to become suitable inhabitants of paradise. The PSCI has not executed a prudent cost/benefit analysis of the type regularly conducted by humans in order to maximize positive results while minimizing negative effects. Because the PSCI is much more callous and negligent than its imperfect creations, the creator cannot be perfect. The problem is exacerbated by the very small portion of humans who have been sufficiently informed of the Christian message. If the enormous numbers of deceased immature souls are barred from heaven then the result is immoral. If they are allowed into heaven, then paradise is inhabited partly or largely by the automata that free will is supposed to prevent, and the hypothesis that an extended earthly life is necessary to be made suitable for paradise is false. The negative earthly and heavenly consequences of allowing masses of automata into heaven are considerable in terms of missionary work and an eternal caste system. Because the difficulties that stem from the Holocaust of the Children are so numerous and intractable, it follows that the Christian theory of a perfect God with a perfect plan is so overwhelmed by the real world that it is falsified. The same failure applies to any monotheistic theodicy that proposes that the creator is truly good, perfect and powerful, including the Islam over a billion follow (Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001).<sup>22</sup> Compatible with the extensive natural evil of the Holocaust of the Children are the existence of a single creator that is imperfect (Kushner 1983) or malevolent to some degree (Twain 1962), many of the polytheistic doctrines followed by about two billion, and the absence of any deities favored by hundreds of millions.

It is said that God is in the details, and that the nature of creation reveals the nature of the creator. This is a valid point, but the implications are not necessarily what Christians wish for them to be. The quantity as well as the quality of suffering and early death that has occurred

among the children counts. That, and basic decency, dictate that they be the focus of theodistic and atheodistic analysis. If we lived on a planet where childhood death and suffering were much less than it is, or absent, then the theodicy problem would be dramatically reduced or even eliminated. The reality that both theologians and atheologians need to address is that matters could hardly be worse than they have been. If the Holocaust of the Children does not refute the existence of a moral PSCI, then defenders of the concept must be asked what would a PSCI have to do in terms of afflicting young humans to prove its lack of morality? Ninety-nine percent extermination, or total? In order for future theodistic arguments to be credible they will need to explicitly and successfully deal with the full extent of the Holocaust of the Children.<sup>23</sup> This includes providing a convincing explanation for why a perfect and loving creator choose not to provide children with the level of safety achieved by his imperfect but loving creations, and instead allowed or pushed the level of immature suffering and death to the practical limits. Is such a solution likely? The modern Christian consensus followed by billions is so firmly overturned by human circumstances that it very probably is not possible to reconcile the Christian concept of a pacific creator with the state of the universe.

### Notes

1. These include Lewis 1957, Hick 1966, Swinburne 1998, Adams 1999, Behe 2007, Behe in Olasky 2007, Collins 2006, Glynn 1997, Hasker 2007, Haught 2000, van Inwagen 2006, John Paul II 1984, Keller 2008, Plantinga 1974 and 1999, Polkinghorne 1998, Schroeder 1997, and the multiple authors in Miller 2003.
2. The overly optimistic predictions during the nineteenth century of a global Christian conversion during the following century are discussed in Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001.
3. The count of humans involved in various aspects of the creator's project is considered an important measure by many Christians, as per Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson's (2001) encyclopedic tally of the population of believers and nonbelievers in every country, and estimate the number of Christian martyrs since the crucifixion.  
 Note that it is not the purpose of this analysis to contend or deny that the suffering and death of immature humans is a worse evil than the evil experienced by adults. The scale of the suffering and death of the immature is described and utilized to test key premises of modern Christian theodicy.
4. Haub 1995/2004 is widely considered the most authoritative estimate of the total cumulative population. Haub judges his figure of 105 billion to be conservative,

and other attempts produce similar results. Consider that two millennia ago the global population was a few hundred million. Because of the extremely high fertility rates at a time when average lifespans were only a quarter-century or less, the population essentially replaced itself every generation. There have been 200 generations since Christ as the population edged up, so many tens of billions have been born since, as well as before, then. Ten billion were born just in the last 100 years.

5. The co-fusion of fraternal embryos results in genetic chimeras with two genetic systems (Nepomnaschy et al. 2006). Many are probably spontaneously terminated, but a few become outwardly normal persons.
6. Estimating current levels of pregnancy failure are complicated in part because a significant number of zygotes and new embryos are so defective that they leave no detectable sign of pregnancy, so total failure rates are probably underestimated. The results observed by Nepomnaschy et al. (2006) regarding rural second-world women suggest that prenatal losses rates are markedly higher when conditions are less optimal than found in advanced societies.
7. Adult mortality is also elevated in the more Christian democracies and regions of the U.S. (Paul 2005; 2008). Recent declines in lifespans in some regions of the U.S., generally within the Bible Belt, suggest that this is the only first-world nation that is beginning to lose ground in preserving lives (Ezzati, Friedman, Kulkarni, and Murray 2008). The more secular democracies are, therefore, closer to being “cultures of life” than are more religious societies; see also note 8.
8. [www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html). Sedgh et al. 2007. Abortion rates are higher in America, especially the Bible belt, than they are in less Christian Western nations (Paul 2005).
9. According to Boserup 1981, Demeny and McNicoll 2003, contrary to Haub 1995/2004.
10. As per note 6.
11. [www.marchofdimes.com/aboutus/15796\\_18678.asp](http://www.marchofdimes.com/aboutus/15796_18678.asp).
12. Natural disasters such as major earthquakes kill up to a few hundred thousand per event ([earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/world/historical.php](http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/world/historical.php)), but they are not sufficiently frequent to be a leading killer of children. Up to half the population consists of children when rates of reproduction and juvenile mortality are high.
13. For example, “merciless” means “lacking mercy,” “ruthless” means “lacking ruth.” Such attributes are objective statements, and are regularly and correctly assigned to blameless yet lethal items such as diseases, famines, storms, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, predators and the like which certainly lack mercy and ruth, and are also commonly labeled vicious, brutal, cruel, heartless and so forth.

Theist apologists often cite the beauty and wonder of creation as reasons to believe in a loving PSCI (Swinburne 1998 devotes a chapter to the subject), even though such attributes are matters of arbitrary opinion and subject to disagreement. For example, the common opinion of modern Westerners that alpine mountains and spectacular deserts are beautifully constructed examples of “God’s Country” is the product of the Romantic Movement begun in the late 1700s. Prior to that time depopulated lands were seen as barren, unproductive,

dangerous, God-forsaken regions wrecked by the events caused by the fall of man; this is why the Alps were rarely portrayed in a positive light by the Renaissance masters, and high mountains did not become an important independent genre until the 1800s (as explored in a 2004 northern Italian art exhibit reviewed in Morris 2004).

14. [www.annefrank.dk/Default.htm](http://www.annefrank.dk/Default.htm).

15. Benson et al. 2006, Blumenthal et al. 2007, Paul 2005 and 2008.

16. Behe 2007, Behe in Olasky 2007, Collins 2006, Glynn 1997, Hasker 2007, Haught 2000, Keller 2008, Polkinghorne 1998, Schroeder 1997, and the multiple authors in Miller 2003.

Polkinghorne (1998) reveals how he is among the many who have missed the main issue of natural evil against children when he states that the “well-known free will defense in relation to moral evil asserts that a world with the possibility of *sinful people* [emphasis added] is better than one with perfectly programmed machines” (Polkinghorne 1998, 14). So does Collins (2006), when he cites a tragic criminal act committed by an adult against his adult daughter. The bigger problem is posed not by sinners and their sins, but the very creation that a supernatural creator allegedly constructed and its impact on immature humans. Behe (2007) does correctly acknowledge the central importance of natural evil but fails to fully appreciate the depth of the issue when he rather casually remarks that “many children die, yet many others thrive. Some people languish, but others live full lives” (Behe 2007, 238).

17. Hasker (2007) claims that the FWH is so successful that there “is at present a widespread philosophical consensus, shared by atheists as well as theists, that this problem has been satisfactorily answered by Alvin Plantinga’s Free Will Defense” (Hasker 2007, 152). This speculation is contradicted by numerous dissenters such as Dawkins (2006), Ehrman (2008), Harris (2006), Honderich (1995), Smith (1991), Phillips (2004), Tooley (2007) and Rowe (2006), as well as this analyst.

18. Here, “robot” is used to describe conscious beings that are programmed rather than being free to make major decisions.

19. This is a key presumption of the Catholic Church that makes up half of Christianity (Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001), as well as many conservative sects that constitute another major portion.

20. The over 2 billion contemporary Christians (Barrett, Kurian, and Johnson 2001) are a large fraction of those that have ever learned about the Christian message because the faith is so recent, and has been geographically limited for much of its history.

21. The positive view of suffering is deeply entrenched in Catholic doctrine (John Paul II 1984), and the need for affliction is propounded by many theodists as per those cited in note 16.

22. It may be productive for a scholar familiar with Muslim doctrine to further consider the implications of the Holocaust of the Children for the Islamic tradition.

23. In his defense of the existence of a loving creator Keller (2008) resorts to a common tactic used when theodicy appears inadequate by asserting that humans

are mentally incapable of judging the morality of our creator through its deeds. If this morally accommodationist mystery defense were true, then any level of anguish and pain caused by the PSCI would be beyond rejection by its victims. Hick (1966) and Swinburne (1998) reject the mystery defense.

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