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## Guarding our hearts

*"Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life"—Proverbs 4:23.*

**W**e are often told, and with good reason, that we should be careful what we do with our free time—what books we read, what films we watch and what company we keep. Another way we must guard our hearts is to ensure that we think rightly. This is not easy, and can be done only by ensuring that the foundations on which we build our thinking are right. The tragic consequences of failing to do this can be seen throughout history, one of the clearest examples being the genocide of Jews by Nazi Germany in the last century.

### Lessons from the Holocaust

The popular understanding of the Holocaust is that it was the brainchild of Adolf Hitler and a few of his close supporters, and that the racist thinking amongst the German ruling elite was a brief aberration that arose during the 1930s. Nothing could be further from the truth.

While many are familiar with the Nazi's belief in a master race, and how this fuelled their desire to rid their country of people they understood to be inferior, few are aware of the extent to which this mindset was shaped by Darwin's theory of evolution. The Harvard University historian of science Professor Stephen J. Gould wrote, *"Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1850, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory."* Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in nineteenth century Germany.

One of Darwin's greatest supporters in Germany was Ernst Haeckel, a Professor of Zoology at the University of Jena. According to Ian Taylor, Haeckel *"became Darwin's chief European apostle proclaiming the gospel of evolution with evangelistic fervour, not only to the university intelligentsia but to the common man by popular books and to the working classes by lectures in rented halls"*.<sup>2</sup> He also became one of Germany's popularisers of racism, nationalism, and imperialism,<sup>3</sup> and convinced many of the validity of Social Darwinism—the belief that 'survival of the fittest' applies as much to humans and nations as it does to animals in the jungle.

### Evil fruit of evolutionised thinking

The determination to obtain land for the growing German population long preceded Hitler's plan to annex Eastern Europe. The theory of *lebensraum* (living space) was first developed in the 1890s by the German Professor Friedrich Ratzel in his very influential book, *Politische Geographie* (Political Geography). Just as more successful animals migrated and displaced less successful animals, he believed, it was natural, in the 'struggle for space' for stronger human races to displace weaker ones.<sup>4</sup> Nowhere was this principle applied more rigorously than in German West Africa. In the early part of the nineteenth century, German soldiers systematically slaughtered the indigenous African peoples, even driving whole groups into the desert where they would die from heat and thirst.<sup>5</sup> This led the America President Woodrow Wilson to remark that Germany's imperial interest had not been the development of these African people, but "their extermination".<sup>6</sup> Many of the senior soldiers and 'racial scientists' who were at the forefront of German policy in Africa went on to play leading roles in the rise of the Nazi party, and Hitler's *Mein Kampf* ('My Struggle') was full of references to the principles of Social Darwinism.

### Exposing falsehood, embracing truth

Listening to politicians today, one might be forgiven for thinking that we have learnt these lessons of the past. The impression is given that 'enlightened' western democracies could never make mistakes like this. How foolish. As Darwinian teaching is increasingly thrust upon us as the only true explanation for our existence, the thinking of people in our society is being built on the same foundation that brought about Nazism and the Holocaust. Equally dangerous is the growing cult of scientism, at the heart of which is the belief that everything we see around us, and everything we are, arose from mindless, undirected natural processes. Such a view leads to life without meaning and purpose, and one where only 'self' matters and where only 'might is right'.

I pray that by reading this issue of *Creation* magazine, you will be strengthened to stand against such a nihilistic

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world-view, and that you and your family will be enabled to **guard your hearts** by basing your thinking upon God's word and God's truth. One pastor wrote to us,

*"[Your ministry] laid to rest virtually all the false worldviews which had been indoctrinated into me since school. The major stumbling block for me as a young believer was removed and so were my justifications for fulfilling my sinful desires. ... I have lost count how many times my sinful desire has pulled me towards destructive behaviours and tried to justify to my mind that we are all from monkeys anyway, so who cares? ... your work is doing very much good in the lives of disciples all round the world."*

May this be true for all of us too.

Yours sincerely,

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1. Gould, S.J., *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, Belknap-Harvard Press, 1977, pp. 127-128.
2. Ian Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, TFE Publishing, Toronto, 1984, p. 184, who cites Peter Klemm.
3. Grigg, R., Ernst Haeckel: Evangelist for evolution and apostle of deceit, *Creation* 18(2):33-36, March 1996.
4. Olusoga, D. and Erichsen, C.W., *The Kaiser's holocaust*, Faber and Faber, London, 2010, pp. 108-111.
5. Ref. 4, pp. 138-148.
6. Ref. 4, p. 275.