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**Chronicles**  
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## On 'Natural Technology'

Congratulations on your unique and insightful August environment issue. My only concern is with the article by Frederick Turner. I found his "God is a fetus" natural techno-theology every bit as disturbing as some of your writers have found George Gilder's microchip messianism. I was warned by a good friend once that if intellectual conservatism were to survive into the next century it would have to cross the line from philosophy into theology. He was not optimistic that it would bear much healthy resemblance to Judeo-Christianity. I fear that Mr. Turner is attempting to blaze the treacherous trail.

As an Eastern Orthodox Christian I can agree with some of his criticisms of the Western Christian world view. The Orthodox are much more pre-modern in their perceptions. They have not tended to dig as wide a gulf between themselves and God, and between themselves and nature, as has the West since the Scholastic period. They also have not succumbed to the temptation to scrap the whole Christian world view altogether and attempt to replace it with an axiomatic neo-pagan alternative.

I allow that Mr. Turner is a much more careful thinker than the crystal carriers and channelers infesting our West Coast. But his views do not sound any less utopian. I prefer my theology based on revelation and prayer: on a living God who has made Himself known, rather than on a philosophically malleable concept, regardless of the conservative, liberal, or environmentalist views of those shaping it.

—Stephen T. Early  
Bronx, NY

## Mr. Turner Replies:

Though it may sound odd to say so, I feel a good deal of sympathy with Stephen Early's objections. My own religious view inclines toward conservatism in the ritual, moral teaching, mysti-

cal meditative techniques, and fundamental storytelling that constitute the core of a religion. Eastern Orthodox Christianity is a glorious example of the continued vitality of religious practice and experience.

However, religion can also have an element of intellectual play, which, like bold and shocking religious art, is often found when religion is expressed within the context of a high civilization. Consider Augustine, Abelard, Luther, Blake. Paul himself was a theological revolutionary, as was John the Evangelist, synthesizing Greek philosophy with Judeo-Christian religious experience. Western Renaissance Christianity, as we see it in Raphael and Milton for instance, richly combines pagan and Christian elements in its Christian humanism. Theology is one of the noblest theaters of the human imagination, and the attempts by church bureaucracies to assert authority over theological speculation only attest to the irrepressibility of this expression of the holy spirit.

Until the suppression of its intellectual institutions by the Turkish Empire, Eastern Christianity rejoiced in a remarkable tradition of philosophical speculation upon the nature of the divine; one of the hidden losses to the world was the failure of Russia to create a great Orthodox university. Perhaps one day there will be an Orthodox Aquinas who will synthesize the best of the current intellectual and scientific learning, as the Western Thomas did, with the religious tradition. We see in such writers as Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Pasternak, and, in Greece, Kazantzakis (all of whom were quite capable of saying theologically shocking things), a foretaste of such a synthesis.

Theological speculation is indeed no substitute for the personal experience of the divine. But it need not stand in the way of revelation and prayer either, any more than a lively speculative knowledge of human psychology, evolution, and neurophysiology need stand in the way of one's personal loves, friendships, and commitments with human beings.

**WILLIAM J. BRENNAN, Jr.**, has retired from the Supreme Court. In three decades on the nation's highest court Brennan did more, perhaps, than any other American politician except for Lyndon Johnson to promote the agenda of the liberal left: the antiwhite racism of the "Jim Snow" system, radical feminism, the reduction of the authority of the police to combat crime, the liberation of obscenity, and the confinement of religion to a constitutional ghetto. The means for accomplishing these ends? The massive expansion of federal power in general, and of the power of the federal courts in particular, at the expense of the lawmaking authority of Congress and the state legislatures.

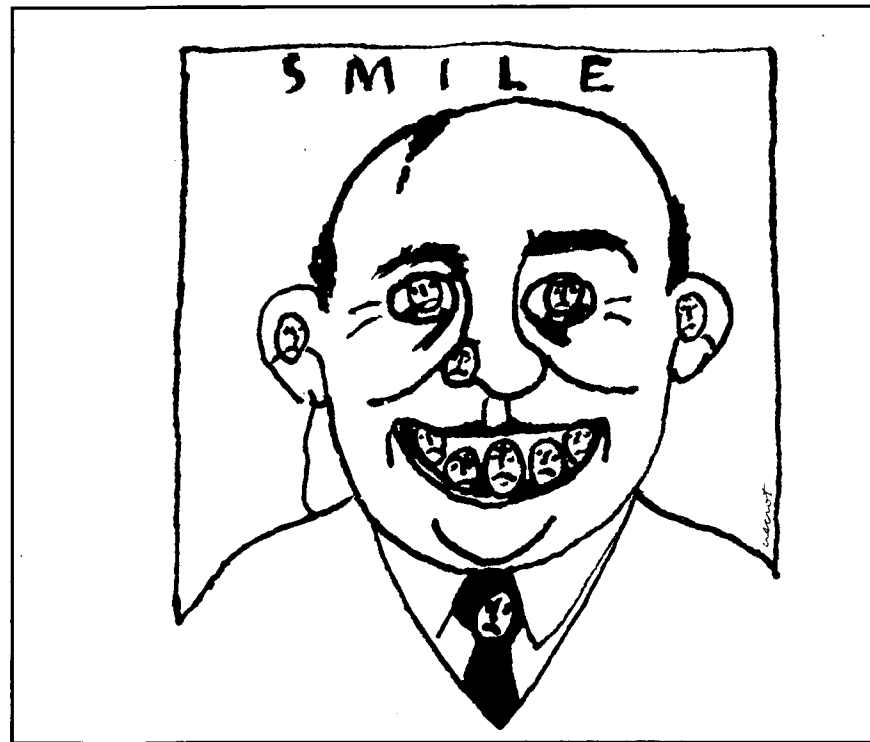
At least Johnson went to the trouble of persuading Congress to pass laws. Brennan, J. and the majorities he assembled in the heyday of the Warren (really the Brennan) Court simply grandfathered their nostrums on the Constitution. "He simply is one of the most important figures of the latter half of the 20th century," Stanford law professor Gerald Gunther gushed to *Newsweek*. Among the legacies of this world-historic liberal statesman: (the exclusionary rule, which forbids the use of evidence gathered during a warrantless search; relaxed rules governing press libels of public figures; and the strict "one-man, one-vote" standard for legislative redistricting. Thanks to these Warren Court decisions orchestrated by Brennan, criminals find it easier to walk free on technicalities, able people who do not want every detail of their lives reported by the press have abandoned government service to plain-vanilla nonentities and bold-faced deviants, and federal judges and government attorneys draw and redraw state and congressional districts with as much concern for local self-determination as the dynasts who partitioned Silesia. Among Brennan's final gifts to the American people are the latest opinion protecting desecrators of the flag, and another recent holding

that the federal government may engage in racial discrimination in awarding broadcast licenses, as long as it discriminates against white people.

"At the core of the process of government erected by the framers—unwieldy, imperfect, wearisome, sometimes maddening—lay a profound vision of justice, and [it is] the duty of the Court to make that vision a reality for the least of men," the presumably wieldy, perfect, and never wearisome Brennan wrote last year. "The genius of the Constitution rests not in any static meaning it might have had in a world that is dead and gone, but in the adaptability of its great principles to cope with current problems." If the explicit provisions of the Constitution conflict with its "vision of justice," its "great principles," as divined by a committee of lawyer-sibyls, then so much the worse for the Constitution. "The fatal constitutional infirmity of capital punishment is that it treats members of the human race as nonhuman, as objects to be toyed with

and discarded," says Brennan. But the Constitution expressly *allows* capital punishment, as its references to capital crimes and "jeopardy of life or limb" in the Fifth Amendment show. If we accept Brennan's theory, then the Constitution is—unconstitutional. This is not broad construction; it is not construction at all; it is oneiromancy.

"Justice delayed—till the Justice resigned," conservatives may observe with pleasant anticipation. Although the liberal triumvirate on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Kennedy, Biden, and Metzenbaum, may try to "bork" David Souter, Bush's nominee to replace Brennan on the Court, Souter has left no "paper trail," having said and written almost nothing controversial or significant between law school and the age of 50. Looking for the most unobjectionable nominee he could find, to prevent the confirmation hearing from turning, like those of Bork and Ginsberg, into an *auto-da-fé*, Bush has found Bartleby the Scrivener. The sailing still may not be smooth;



Andrzej Czeczot