

**Overview of the Chief Argument in Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion***

*Chapters 1-3:  
The Methodology Explored*

	<u>Sociology</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Anthropology</u>
<b>Even though . . .</b>	Arose out of the French Enlightenment with mistaken views of Progress and Reason in which the utopia of reason displaces all previous metaphysical beliefs	Arose out of the German Enlightenment's commitment to <i>kultur</i> (i.e. racial context-dependence) and the <i>Zeitgeist</i> (i.e. the historical movement of ideas)	Arose out of (British) evolutionary developmentalism with its ultimate commitment to survival of the fittest and reduction of human ideas to survival mechanisms
<b>Need not . . .</b>	Commit to a vision of surpassing religion, but take it seriously as a key to understanding human actions	Commit to either the relativism of no universal judgments or the relativism of cyclical patterns of cultural growth and death	Commit to a set of developmental models without any attention to close field observation and the individual history of each ethnicity
<b>Can offer . . .</b>	Attention to the social categories of place, work, and family or environment, function, and organism	Broad patterns across cultures by paying attention to both geographic and material conditions, as well as to ideological systems (e.g. religion) of thought and culture that cross cultural boundaries	Discoveries of common patterns of human life across ethnographies, especially in regard to similar moral codes and testaments to the transcendent
<b>And yes . . .</b>	One can have some measure of a soft scientific observation of human societies and their proclivities	One can observe some measure of contextual differences, as well as typical patterns	One can notice similar creative responses by cultures to their conditions and changes, and these responses are inevitably religious in nature
<b>Therefore, be warned . . .</b>	The various attempts at a "Promethean altitude" or some form of Vitalism are bound to end in evolutionary pessimism.	An Idealism of history that ignores material and cultural factors cannot do justice to the two movements of history within any culture: one material; the other spiritual.	A culture without its <i>cultus</i> and without its agricultural base cannot survive forever but through "failure of nerve" will wither or implode from within.