

# Chalcedon report

**A Monthly Report Dealing with the Relationship of Christian Faith to the World**

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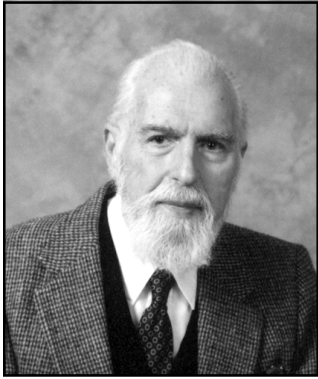
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# Baptism into His Justice

By R. J. Rushdoony

**T**his text is about baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit was a sign of the Messianic age (*Is. 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; Joel 2:28f.*), and so too was the baptism of both Jews and Gentiles. Baptism means in part purification; hence the use of water. We are all born into Adam's world and the heritage of sin and death; the world of Adam is a continuing re-run of man's fall. It is not surprising that a cyclical view of history is so common in paganism. An endless cycle of sin and death marks history outside of Jesus Christ.

The meaning of baptism is that this cycle is broken by the power of God in Jesus Christ. Sin and death are replaced with righteousness, or justice, and life. History moves forward to establish the kingdom of God among men and over men. Baptism is thus a sign of victory. It sets forth our faith that the repetitive pattern of sin and death has been broken by Jesus Christ. It summons us to become a part of a new creation, members of God's kingdom, and heirs in Christ. To be baptized, and to baptize our children, is thus a sign of faith and life.

God promises a new heart, *i.e.*, a new human nature. This means new life in the new human race of Jesus Christ.

*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:25-28)*

The new heart and the new spirit have "added" to them God's Spirit. The result is that the Holy Spirit *causes* us to walk in God's statutes and to keep His judgments (*v. 27*). God's law, His justice, begins to govern the affairs of man and his world. This leads to a marvelous goal, whether in the Old Testament era or now, we dwell in the good earth God gives us in peace and safety (*v. 28*).

Thus, we are baptized, or purified; we are made God's covenant people; we are given a new heart and spirit; we are empowered by God to further His kingdom, and this is all God's work and not ours.

Baptism is thus a kingdom sacrament and therefore must be seen by the administering church in relation to God and His kingdom rather than to the institution.

It means a cleansing from our sin and our idolatries so that we are prepared for His service.

Our children are given in baptism to be God's children, to be used by Him in His kingdom and to His glory. We are baptized into serving Him according to His commandments. We are thus baptized into His justice as our way of life.

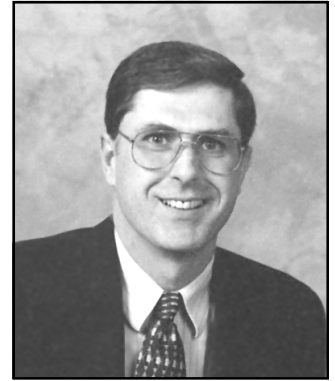
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Cover design by Chris Ortiz / The Creation Group. Call (919)570-8142.

Inside design by Tamma Evans / The Typesetter. Call (972)724-2847 or email: [typesetter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:typesetter@sbcglobal.net)

# Thinking Like Victors

By Mark R. Rushdoony



If anyone had human reason to be a gloomy pessimist it was the Apostle Paul. Paul spoke in the midst of a battle, a struggle that eventually cost him his life. He had been falsely accused and jailed to pacify an angry crowd. (Order, not justice, dictated Roman legal practices.) Paul's own accusers could not agree on the charges, though it was clear they wanted rid of him. Five years later, Paul remained a prisoner, having been transferred to Rome after he requested an appeal. In the first chapter of his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul had spoken of how his imprisonment had furthered the preaching of the gospel. Paul was certain that, regardless of his own current situation, or even whether he lived or died, Christ would be magnified (1:20). Paul's attitude was in striking contrast to that of many Christians, particularly those in the West today, who see only discouragement and defeat for the cause of Christ. Paul kept his focus on the big picture by faith, not on his immediate sensory perceptions.

By any human criteria, Paul was a failure. He had no organization, no regular income, and his own leadership was challenged by some of his few scattered converts. By any rational, human measurement, Paul was a loser on a long, downward slide that commenced with his conversion. He went from being a trusted, influential leader of a large, prestigious religion legalized by the most powerful government that history had ever known, to an itinerant preacher of an illegal religion. Paul, from prison, now had to ask people to believe in a Messiah who had been publicly executed. In the end, Paul himself was beheaded by the state, apparently because they deemed him and his religion a nuisance best eradicated.

Paul had it far tougher than most modern believers, yet he always spoke in terms of joy and victory — not his victory necessarily, but that of the gospel of Christ. Paul believed that to live was Christ, and

*Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me. (Phil. 2:17-18)*

to die gain (1:21), that His gospel came first, and that it was a gift to suffer for it (1:29).

## The Big Picture

It is easy to misplace priorities because we fail to see the big picture, or perhaps more commonly, we hold to the big picture as an idea, and not as a motivating vision. Paul saw that big picture. On the road to Damascus, Paul saw a victorious, resurrected Jesus Christ come down from heaven to commission him as an apostle. Paul thought of Jesus Christ as reigning victoriously, and, hence, of His gospel as a message of victory. Paul could thus say “work out your own salvation” — that is, carry through the meaning of your salvation to its logical end. Paul had already three times referred to “the day of Christ” in this brief letter (1:6, 10; 2:16). When Paul thought of Jesus Christ, his mental image was of His victorious return as Judge of the living and the dead. This mental image allowed Paul to see through persecution and personal suffering. Paul knew he served a resurrected, victorious Christ, so he thought and spoke like a joyous victor, even in bondage. Paul was focused on the big picture.

If we compare Paul's struggles, and our own, to a modern battle, we can appreciate what it means to have been given the assurance of victory. Thousands of Allied soldiers stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day in 1945. None of them knew the outcome of that battle or the war. Some died in the landing ships before reaching shore, never having fired a shot. Some of them knew their wounds were mortal and that their death was certain. Some survived that battle, but not the war. Others survived the war and went home victors. Some saw no victory, not even a hint of one; others celebrated both V-E Day and V-J Day.

All those soldiers served in the victorious cause. After the victory we can look back and say they were

all soldiers in the victorious army, even those who died before they could see the victory.

## The Victorious Christ

Paul had seen the victorious Christ, and that image was always a very real one to him. Nothing ever shook that vision from his view. And, as Paul encouraged the believers to carry through the meaning of their salvation to its logical end, Paul saw the inevitable conclusion of Christ's resurrection from death as His return to so raise us (3:20-21). Moreover, Paul, even from prison, saw himself as part of that inevitable victory. Paul considered God's promise of victory as a certain victory, and he saw himself as having a part in it. Paul could thus speak of the negative in terms of ultimate joy. He could persevere because he knew he was on the side of victory, and thus measure his ministry in terms of faithfulness rather than results.

Soldiers in battle have no guarantee of victory. They do not know if their sacrifices will be part of a winning cause, and so they must face death with the knowledge that theirs may be a "lost cause." This is not true of the Christian, however. Through the inspired words of Paul and John and others we have a promise of victory everlasting. We have been given a gift. We have been told how our battle will end, how all battles will end. Christ shall be victorious. If we stand for Him, we stand in the victorious celebration even now. Though modern entertainment uses the name of God as a punch line encouraged, very often, by "canned" laughter, we can now see the Lamb of God as John pictured Him for us in Revelation, on the throne of the New Jerusalem throughout all eternity.

What Paul says, in effect, in Philippians 2 is "If I be offered like a sacrifice," *i.e.*, if I lay down my life for Christ, for the gospel, "for your faith," it will be a cause for me to rejoice and for you to rejoice with me. Why would Paul rejoice? Paul believed that to live was Christ and to die was gain. If he lived he served the victorious Christ. If he died he went to paradise, and he did so in service to his Lord. Paul had already told the Philippians that his imprisonment was furthering the gospel. Now, for the second time, he says his death, if it comes to that, is gain.

Paul says that if he dies, he wants the church to rejoice with him. Paul would die as a faithful soldier, though. Despite an imprisonment that had, by this time, stretched to five years, Paul had instructed the church, orchestrated the movement of ministers, laymen, and resources to the furtherance of the gospel, and forced the church to take an

uncompromising stand against Judaizing, the first major heresy of the church.

Paul continued to be optimistic from prison. He was not optimistic about his own prospects or efforts, but about the certainty of Christ and the eternal victory of His kingdom. Paul remonstrated that the church was not to indulge its fears and insecurities if he died, but rather was to rejoice with him, that he had finished his course with joy and that he had not "labored in vain" (2:16).

God has not given us repeated pictures of His total victory so that we can be gloomy pessimists about the cause of the gospel. Rather, we are called to serve the victorious Christ and to see Him as the eternal Victor whether we by faith see that future victory or any personal victories in this life. We must, even in the "midst of a crooked and perverse nation," keep our eyes on "the big picture" and "shine as lights in the world" (2:16).

Look around, take stock of where you are and where the gospel of Jesus Christ today stands. Is your situation worse than Paul's? Does the gospel face worse prospects than it did just prior to the first major persecution of Nero? Paul could say that he had a stake in Christ's victory; it is time for us Christians to be like him and think like victors.

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# Tools for Promoting Literacy

By Ronald Kirk



Once, men looked up to Christians because they wielded wisdom, understanding, and accomplishment. With their Christ-centered foundation, they spoke with meaning and relevance to a dying world. Christians were often the most accomplished musicians, scientists, statesmen, and writers of their day, many leaving a distinguished mark on history. Christians were the head and not the tail. Sound intellectual development rose in part from rigorous literary training. For many, the Bible was life's textbook, and this accounted for much success. Today these things are not commonly so. Recovering the basic tools of literacy will help reverse that damage and lead to a new frontier of Christian achievement.

I find it somewhat ironic that I am writing this article. I grew up in a home with little literary inclination, though with a powerful work ethic. While always a voracious learner, I have also struggled with verbal expression. I acquired the ability to read in spite of "Dick and Jane." Although supposedly well educated with a degree from the University of California at Berkeley in a professional discipline, from my early moments as an aspiring Christian educator, I had to strive to re-build my own elementary education. I believe that God appointed me to this work as an encouragement to others who also struggle to learn or to teach. Modern education often discourages the desire for personal accomplishment. We come to believe we cannot learn. Bad psychology and poor methods permanently arrest our faculties. These things ought not to be. A remedy is at hand. The best encouragement I can offer is that if *I* can learn and attain modest ability, anyone can. I can also share the grounds of my success in teaching and learning.

## The Rudiments of Literacy

All sound learning builds upon the Biblical tripod of education: *example*, *content*, and *discipline*. These three elements clearly appear in the way Christ taught His disciples. Most contemporary teaching

methods emphasize either *content* (the cognitive view) or *example* (the environmental view), although the *affective* view (how one feels) has also gained prominence. In recent decades, discipline — practice under an appropriate level of government — has largely fallen into disrepute. Nonetheless, the three elements together comprise a rightly balanced approach to learning.

As to *example*, the ordinary use of elevated language in the home or school greatly serves the cause of literacy. Children will acquire their basic vocabulary, the needed foundation of literacy, from the use of language in the home. I have found that the home that loves literature and learning, in practice and together as a family, produces the greatest inclination to learning in the children. Regular family reading aloud makes a significant impact on the heart and mind of the child. Because of his natural commanding influence, the father's shared literary interest is particularly important.

As to *content*, we recognize that language is first oral; the root of *language* means *tongue*. Based on agreement over the meaning of articulate sounds, we communicate thought, mind to mind. Written language substitutes characters for the sounds of speech. Clearly, then, the sounds of speech and their representative letters comprise the most fundamental elements of literacy. Seventy or so basic phonograms (letters or combinations of letters) and about forty phonemes (basic phonic sounds) comprise the building blocks for the whole of the English language. A system that concentrates on these basic sounds and their letter representations is more efficient than one that exercises with a multiplicity of possible consonant and vowel combinations, as in the common early phonetic systems.<sup>1</sup> Certain essential rules uniformly govern the assembly of the individual phonograms into words. These few rules guide the writing and reading of most English words. Such rules as guide syllabication and adding suffixes simplify learning a complex language like ours. Moreover, systematic learning ordinarily and

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very quickly helps build a *sense* of spelling for those patterns too numerous to learn under formal rules. The basic phonetic elements, a concise set of governing rules, and specific practice in spelling words provide an efficient and portable method adaptable to individual needs. The content of literature used to teach reading ought to correspond to the high standard of content appropriate to all Christian consumption. I have long used and recommend the original *McGuffey's Readers*.<sup>2</sup>

As to *discipline*, directed practice carves ability into the native faculties. We apply ourselves to both the principle and the particular. We know that sin confounds the faculties so that only consistent *correct* practice may unscramble them. The command, "Do this and live!" guides our faith. Few are good at any endeavor at first. Specific and precise exercise establishes the various neural pathways we recognize as *development* in knowledge, skills, and character. To learn, the student must overcome the natural reticence to undertake anything difficult. Difficulty yields to accomplishment in due season. We must believe that God Himself enables our ability. We practice the subject by faith in proper sequence, from the rudiments to the more demanding and advanced. Learning is not linear, and demanding accomplishment from one not ready is cruel. However, anyone *can try*. Anyone can improve. Accepting a period of investment without immediate fruit produces faith, patience, and the character for overcoming difficulty. Within weeks, upon an intensive investment in the mastery of the phonograms, almost any child can learn to read. No one I have taught has failed to read, including children and adults labeled dyslexic. Teachers of those who are physically or mentally handicapped can often find alternative means or use conventional means at a slower pace. Being a slower learner should not exclude a willing student from opportunity. A monolithic classroom pace necessarily restrains the more able and overwhelms the slower learner. In all cases, overcoming difficulty by faith remains the essential principle of learning. Dyslexic children recover. Children with speech impediments improve. Bright children soar, commonly spelling and reading at the fourth through seventh grade level by the end of their primary years (the time when the early literacy skills are begun, usually kindergarten and first grade).

In teaching literacy, I recommend balancing the student's various communication faculties — seeing, listening, speaking, and writing in every combination. While many children favor visual or auditory learning, they should exercise the weaker faculty as

well as the stronger one. Learning to write on notebook paper from a blackboard exercises the eye in distance and near reading. This practice also trains a necessary spatial skill. Discerning top, bottom, left side, right side, and middle may be new to the young learner. Good posture serves to support the scholarly and most intellectual pursuits of modern man, as well as health. Good ergonomics help keep adults from injury. Forming the habit of good posture will similarly serve the child into old age. The teacher should self-consciously and particularly instruct, exemplify, and guide the practice of every skill needed for learning.

## The Essential Learning Principle

God's truth finds expression in the simplest and most elegant forms, though ultimate expression is ever so complex and demanding. The simple statement "Love God and love your neighbor" supports the whole of the law and prophets and finds its full expression only in the seemingly infinite details of life's living. Although the actual constituents of physical motion are very complex, Isaac Newton's idealized formula regarding force and movement —  $F=MA$  — provides a very useful instrument for predicting motion. Every individual is composed of parts, themselves discrete wholes of some kind, such as the organs and cells of a body. In turn, every whole forms a part of some greater whole. The inherent relationship of the whole to its constituting parts provides the philosophical ground for forming summarizing, abstract concepts of all kinds. For convenience and utility, most knowledge can thus be reduced abstractly to simple, general statements collected from the complex parts that comprise the whole. For example, a school classroom is made of individual students. A fraction of the classroom may be taken without damaging the students (students love this graphic illustration). God's gift of abstraction provides the faculty needed to subdue and organize the individual topics of every complex subject for Christian dominion. This essential *organizational* principle is the essential *learning* principle.

The principle of related wholes and parts thus anchors the literacy paradigm. Rote learning of the basic phonograms and their sounds first establishes the basis for forming words, and then sentences, paragraphs and larger units of human thought. The student quickly applies the phonograms to the spelling and reading of words. These are sequenced, in the beginning, from easy to more difficult. Students should, at first, learn and practice words on a phonetic basis. Later, the phonetically composed words appear as readable wholes. Still later, the

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student should read larger phrases and even sentences as discrete wholes. Such a skill comprises the basis for faster reading comprehension.

First attempts to separate a word into its recognizable phonograms present a formidable obstacle to discerning the word. Learning basic individual words in spelling lists assists the new learner in this endeavor. However, the young reading student will nonetheless often encounter words within his spoken vocabulary that are not yet readable by him. The student then seeks to discern phonograms that produce a recognizable word. Since a given letter combination can form different phonograms in different words, the reader must be a word detective. For example, *er* may often form a single basic phoneme (phonetic sound) as in *other*, or may sound separately as in *era* or *error*. Once the student has recognized his troublesome word, he ought to practice reading it phonetically several times, so that he may recognize it next time as a whole word. Because reading for whole thoughts is his goal, after decoding a difficult word, the student should re-read his sentence from the beginning. For a new reader, this can be a very tedious process. However, the procedure is necessary both for the particular reading skill and for the capacity for faith in any given effort. The teacher ought not to short-circuit the process, prematurely supplying a sought phonogram or word. The teacher better serves the student by guiding his *search* as needed, whenever possible.

The student may encounter a word beyond his vocabulary. At first, the young student may require his teacher to supply a definition. Later the student should learn to use the dictionary to discern a word's contextual meaning. Rigorous teaching of the English roots, suffixes, and prefixes greatly aids mastery of the language. These are skills learned from assiduous application and are usually acquired over an extended period.

The sentence is the first whole unit of human thought. Unless one can read and understand the sentence as a whole, communication of the intended thought remains incomplete. Again, a student may have to read and re-read a sentence many times to master it. However, as important as the sentence is, it is only the beginning of understanding. The paragraph represents the extended treatment of a single idea. In order to read a paragraph, as with sentence and word decoding, the student must understand its parts. More advanced elementary students determine a paragraph's essential idea from the discernment of an overall single subject and predicate. We ask: What is the paragraph about? What does the paragraph essentially say about the subject?

If a student cannot understand a paragraph, he must parse or dissect the sentences. If he cannot understand a sentence, he must discern the words' meanings in context. If he cannot identify or does not know the meaning of a word, he must discover it. He then works to build understanding of the greater whole. If an element of reading is more difficult to understand, it is likely to be more *important*. Out of innate laziness — an aspect of the sin nature — many students tend to skip over difficult things. For true learning, the opposite should be true. Due to the vagaries of thought and language, the most important ideas are often expressed only with difficulty. Understanding is an economic principle, a matter of investment. Here too, students must learn to walk by faith and patience.

The whole and parts principle applies to extended expressions of a whole, single idea, such as chapters, books, and systems. Alas, "Of the writing (and reading) of books, there is no end, and it is wearying to the soul." Nonetheless, this system is accessible. A home school mom once told me that she gained more understanding from this simple paradigm than she learned in two years of graduate study as a reading major.

With application to the minute details of learning, with the establishment of humble faith and character in the pursuit of learning, and with the regular application of the principle of the whole and parts, while incorporating the best content, sound literacy should result. Such a general accomplishment in the young and old and among those of greater and lesser native ability will go far toward restoring the ability of Christians to acquire Biblical wisdom, and once more to be the head and not the tail, to the glory of God.

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<sup>1</sup> See Romalda Spalding, *Writing Road to Reading* (New York: Morrow, 1990). However, the consonant-vowel approach, such as Noah Webster's or Alexander McGuffey's spelling systems, or Samuel Blumenfeld's *Alpha-Phonics* (Boise: The Paradigm Company, 1991), may offer an easier means to *combine* the phonetic sounds. Including exercises with consonant and vowel combinations may be helpful for students who experience difficulty learning this skill.

<sup>2</sup> *The Original McGuffey's Eclectic Series*, by William H. McGuffey, is published by Mott Media.

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# Salvation — Personal or Corporate?

By Cornelis P. Venema

**I**n Reformed and Presbyterian circles in recent years, there has been a laudable rediscovery of the importance of the covenant of grace and the church in the communication of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Whereas many evangelical Christians place the primary emphasis upon having a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ," Reformed Christians recognize that fellowship with Christ ordinarily occurs through the fellowship of the church and its administration of the means of grace, the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and holy communion. The church is the divinely-appointed "society," to use Calvin's expression, within which believers and their children are born again spiritually and nurtured in the Christian life. Rather than emphasizing as of first importance that individual sinners "make a decision for Jesus," Reformed Christianity begins with the initiative of Christ in gathering and preserving His church by His Spirit and Word.

So far as the children of believers are concerned, the Reformed faith regards them as "Christians" or members of Christ by virtue of the covenant promise, which is signified and sealed to them in the sacrament of baptism. Such children are not regarded as "worldlings," outside of the fellowship of Christ until they choose to believe and repent. Rather, they are regarded as members of the Christian church who are to be taught to live and act accordingly. Christian parents do not wait for their children to reach "the age of accountability" before they teach them to confess that their "only comfort in life and in death" is that they belong to their faithful Savior, Jesus Christ (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1). Relying upon the covenant promise,

*Everything in the work of redemption is personal, individual, and prepared for each person. Everything has its own address and name and title. It is not a retail store where things are sold and, therefore, everyone can take according to his own choosing. It is a palace where gifts are distributed and the gift is designated, therefore, for each one for whom it is intended.*

(Abraham Kuyper, Particular Grace, 87.)

they instruct their children in the Word of God and confidently anticipate that the Lord will confirm His promise in the lives of these children as they grow up and mature in Christ.

## Corporatism

However, the covenantal and corporate nature of the gospel's administration can easily be distorted into another error as egregious as that of evangelical individualism. If a key problem with evangelicalism is its *individualism*, a potential problem within contemporary Reformed Christianity is *corporatism*. By "corporatism" I mean the idea that any emphasis upon the personal appropriation of God's grace in Christ is unnecessary. Because God's grace is communicated to believers through the church and her means of grace, our personal response to the gospel diminishes in importance. This idea can take various forms. For example, some Reformed people are sympathetic to the claim of N. T. Wright that "if you have the corporate, you get the individual thrown in." This language seems to suggest that it is enough simply to know that a person is a member of the church through baptism. Soteriology is wholly subordinated to and exhausted by ecclesiology. To press the question whether a baptized member of the church responds properly to the sacrament in the way of faith and repentance is a secondary matter at best, perhaps a misguided individualism at worst. So long as we know a person's identity through the sacrament of baptism, we need not emphasize too much the necessary, personal response that baptism requires. The sacrament of baptism becomes, in this approach, a kind of "saving ordinance" that assures a person's election and favor with God, irrespective of his appropriation of the gospel through faith. In a similar way, there



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are those who decry the emphasis of classical Reformed theology upon an *ordo salutis*, the way in which the grace of Christ becomes ours through the work of the Spirit of Christ in rebirth, conversion, and the like. So long as we see the big picture of the *historia salutis*, the history of the Triune God's saving work culminating in the Person and work of Christ, we have everything that is important. Too much focus upon the individual believer's appropriation of God's grace, particularly as this has been understood in the traditional categories of the *ordo salutis*, leads to subjectivism and an overly introspective view of the Christian life.

Though this is a rather simplistic description of the problem, I would like to propose that it is a striking illustration of what might be called a *false dilemma*, an unnecessary juxtaposition of things genuinely in harmony. Biblical and Reformed Christianity does not need to choose between the corporate and the personal, between *historia salutis* and *ordo salutis*. To borrow Biblical language from another context, we do not need to "separate what God has joined together." The real challenge to Biblical Christianity in our day is not an emphasis upon the believer's *personal* response to the gospel, but an emphasis upon Christian faith and life as a *private* or *merely individual* matter. However, in the confession and practice of Reformed churches historically, it has been rightly understood that the corporate and the personal are intimately conjoined, though remaining distinct. This can easily be illustrated by Biblical and historical examples.

If we consider the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, as this is attested to us in the New Testament gospels, it is hard to suppress the obvious truth that He regarded the personal appropriation of His message as of critical importance, whatever the nature of a person's corporate identification with the covenant people of God. A few random citations from the Gospel of Matthew, which could be multiplied dozens of times over, will suffice to show this to be the case.

*For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven* (Mt. 5:20).

*And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites* (Mt. 6:5).

*Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven* (Mt. 7:21).

*[T]he sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness* (Mt. 8:12).

*But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven* (Mt. 10:32).

*(Speaking of the Pharisees) Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up* (Mt. 15:13).

*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me* (Mt. 16:24).

*Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it* (Mt. 21:43).

The apostle Paul likewise, though he is sometimes commandeered today as though he had little, if any, interest in the personal questions of an *ordo salutis*, seems to be quite emphatic about the need to respond personally to the gospel. Consider only three texts, which could also be multiplied many times over.

*For it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel* (Rom. 9:6).

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Gal. 2:20).

*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all* (1 Tim. 1:15).

## The Covenant Community

As these passages clearly suggest, the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is communicated through preaching and sacraments, does not dispense with but accentuates the need for a Spirit-authored response in the way of personal faith and repentance. However true it may be that God's grace is communicated covenantally, and therefore corporately, the covenant is not merely a corporate matter. The covenant community is composed of persons, and among those persons there are some who break covenant through unbelief and impenitence, and

there are others who keep covenant. It is impossible, therefore, to speak only of the corporate community and its objective means of grace, when we speak of the communication of the gospel.

The historical confession and practice of the Reformed churches also confirm that this is the case. One of the more familiar catechisms of the Reformed tradition is the Heidelberg Catechism. This Catechism serves (among other functions) to instruct children in the Faith who are members of the covenant community or church. What is striking about this catechism, however, is that it is pervasively *covenantal* (without using the term very often) and *personal* at the same time. There is not the slightest hint in the language of this catechism that the corporate inclusion of believers and their children renders superfluous a personal response to the gospel of Christ. Within the setting of the corporate people of God, this catechism teaches believers (as is customary in the classic symbols of the Christian tradition) *to speak in the first personal singular while joining with the whole company of the faithful*. Furthermore, in its treatment of the sacraments, this catechism insists that these means of grace are simultaneously the most corporate and personal acts imaginable. In Christian baptism, believers and their children are *personally addressed* (by name!). By means of baptism God condescends to give us a visible token or sign and pledge of our incorporation into Christ. Far from diminishing our personal responsibility, the sacrament accentuates it. Likewise, when believers are nourished at the table of the Lord, they do so only as they come with the “mouth” of faith, remembering, proclaiming and discerning the body and blood of Christ given for

them. This sacrament signifies and seals that “His [Christ’s] body was offered and broken on the cross for *me*, and His blood shed for *me*” (Lord’s Day 28, emphasis mine).

What I am suggesting, therefore, is that we ought not to play off the corporate and the personal, *historia* and *ordo salutis*. All sorts of mischief follow upon a failure to keep together these two sides of the one reality of the Triune God’s saving work: the sacraments are separated from the Word of God and the required response of faith; the church or covenant community in its historical expression is simply identified with the company of the elect; the distinction between the church as God infallibly knows it (the so-called “invisible church,” or better, the “invisibility” of the church) and as it concretely exists as a mixed company of true believers and hypocrites is compromised; and an illegitimate presumptuousness grows regarding the salvation of all who are marked out covenantally as Christians. Reformed Christianity, though neither pietistic nor individualistic in its best expressions, never denies that God’s grace in Christ requires the intensely personal (albeit common among God’s people) confession: “That I am not my own, but belong, body and soul, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who has fully satisfied for all my sins . . .”

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# Burn the Boats!

*By Ian Hodge*



**A**s I write this article, Australia is mourning the loss of over one hundred victims in a terrorist bombing in Bali, Indonesia. Whether these attacks are linked to 9/11 and the Al Qaeda organization is still to be determined. But Australians now feel vulnerable.

Then, just this morning, the newspaper arrived with the front-page report of a student who started a shooting spree in one of Australia's leading universities. Two dead, five seriously injured, and people are asking, "What's wrong with the world?" Again, Australians not only are feeling vulnerable, but truly are vulnerable, for they do not possess the legal authority to protect themselves with firearms of any kind. It is too early to tell if the Malaysian shooter is linked to terrorist organizations. But another random shooting is not what people needed — unless it was designed to awaken them from their complacency.

For many Australians, the events of 9/11, though dramatic, were not personal. It was not Australia that was attacked. While Australians died in the Twin Towers, the attack was not on Australian soil. Bali, however, brings things closer to home. And with Australians making up the majority of the over 180 deaths in the bombing, the message has come home: it is no longer safe in the world.

Meanwhile, back in America, we find judges in Alabama and Ohio (among others) being prosecuted by the ACLU for having the audacity to hang the Ten Commandments in their courtrooms. Religion, it seems, is to be excised out of the courts of the land.

Yet this pales in comparison to the snipers in the Washington, D.C. area who were responsible for ten deaths in the first three weeks of their rampage. What lunacy possessed the snipers to take such a shallow view of the life of others, demanding that they, god-like, were able to render families fatherless, motherless, or sonless! And the people in the direct line of fire wonder why they have been selected as the target for random death. If some Americans did not feel vulnerable after 9/11, they certainly are vulnerable now with snipers in their midst. If people

no longer felt safe in the world, they at least felt safe at home. The D.C. snipers, however, have changed that view rather quickly. People are no longer safe anywhere.

## Churches, Churches, Churches

Yet, as an Australian who visits the United States from time to time, the symbols that are available in America tell of a country that is uniquely Christian. Driving around the towns and cities of the U.S.A., the myriad of churches that one sees on corner after corner is a reminder that this is (or was) a Christian culture. If those same buildings had the dome of a mosque on the roof and not a cross, it would indicate that this was a Muslim culture, not a Christian one. To be sure, the message preached in many of these churches may not be orthodox Christianity. But the symbol of the cross on those church buildings is the symbol of which religion is — or at least has been — predominant in the culture.

In Australia, we have no such symbols. It is possible to drive through suburb after suburb in our major cities and see just one or two churches. The symbols of Australian culture are not the myriad of churches. There are few churches, and this symbolizes that our culture is essentially humanistic.

The fact that a nation has so many church buildings while judges are prosecuted for hanging the Ten Commandments in their courtrooms indicates that the buildings are too often a shell. There is no vibrant Christianity inside, for if there were, the judges would not be in trouble. And people would welcome the fact that the Ten Commandments are hung in the courtrooms, not just as a symbol, but as the basis of all good law and justice.

For at least 900 years, humanism has worked against Christian culture. When humanism emerged in the twelfth century, the attack on Christianity should have been a warning to those at the time and subsequently. Today's liberal churches that have departed from historic Christianity are evidence of that fact, and while the external symbol remains on

the church buildings, the internal signs are ones of death and decay. The events of 9/11, the bombing in Bali, and the recurrent senseless shootings around the Western nations of the world, are only evidence of the rampant humanism in the churches and their failure to address issues in a Biblical fashion.

At the end of the day, we have to say that the problems of the world today are the outcome of actions by Christians in the past and present. Or, in some cases, it is their failure to act in a Christian manner that has led to the problem.

### The Devil's "Fine" Ideas

The devil has been quite successful in getting Christians to accept a few key ideas. First, when there is a problem, pray about it, but don't do anything else. Second, if there is anything to be done apart from prayer, it ought to be done by the government at taxpayers' expense. Third, when all else fails, remind people that this is a non-Christian world and that we cannot expect the world to be made better by preaching the gospel.

A major part of the problem here is not that Christians don't want to act. It's just that they don't know how to act. Our Christian worldview is too often a shell — an empty shell. It is a slogan that, in the words of the late Francis Schaeffer, lacks content. It is this inability to give meaningful and lasting content to our slogans and symbols that is destroying the Christian heritage of the West.

By and large, Christian attempts at evangelism are not overly productive. The commitment to the notion that everyone must define for himself what is right and wrong, a view that is entrenched in Protestantism under the guise of the private interpretation of the Bible, cannot solve our modern day dilemmas. When figures can arise, and on the basis of a self-proclaimed revelation from God, the angel Gabriel, or the Virgin Mary, start a new version of the Faith, we ought to know we are in trouble — deep trouble.

### Is It Worth Fighting For?

It seems that in the Providence of God we are going to have to learn a lesson from our forefathers: if we want a Christian culture, we're going to have to fight for it. The shooter in the Australian university was stopped by two lecturers who risked life and limb to halt the carnage. The snipers in Washington were eventually stopped by someone who risked his life to stop the atrocities.

And we, on our part, are going to have to learn the hard way, it seems, that if Christianity is worth believing, it is worth fighting for. The judges being prosecuted in the courts have learned this lesson. What will it take for each of us to be convinced that the drift away from Christian culture has gone too far, and that from this point forward there is no longer any retreat? In the battle for Malta in the sixteenth century, when Islam hurled its mightiest force at a small band of Christian defenders, the leadership in Malta burned the boats. No retreat, they said. It's win or die. And the Turks went home unsuccessful in their attempts to gain a Mediterranean passage to Western Europe.

Maybe it's time we, too, burned our boats and settled down for the spiritual battle that manifests itself in the physical world, remembering, that with God on our side, eventual victory is certain. Even if success is not granted to us in our lifetime, we will have fulfilled our duty and held our post to the end.

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# “Resolutions” and The Overhauling of Straight America

By John E. Stoos



**H**eated debate broke out in West Virginia recently when the West Virginian Family Foundation accused a new school program of being “a veiled promotional tool for homosexuality.” The school project organizers insisted that “they do not have a hidden agenda,” despite the fact that the training manual recommends that teachers wear a “LesBiGay positive” button or a T-shirt with a “Straight, But Not Narrow” slogan. They insisted that it was simply an anti-bullying program to convince kids that “bullying is wrong.” For Christians, I think it should be clear whose agenda has been moving forward in America when school officials focus on bullying being immoral but the sin of homosexuality is “an acceptable alternative lifestyle.”

In California schools, a new film is making the rounds designed to help children accept homosexual “families.” Here is how Debra Chasnott, director and producer of *That’s a Family* defended the film in the October 9, 2002 ABC News report: “It reflects family diversity. It acknowledges the diversity in families as opposed to promoting certain lifestyles. It’s important to make that distinction. Somehow that manages to get twisted and turned around and people think we are promoting a gay agenda.”

## The Homosexual Agenda

Should unsuspecting parents take Debra at her word or be concerned that there really is some sort of homosexual agenda, hidden or otherwise, at work here? I would suggest that not only is there a homosexual agenda, but there is hardly any effort to keep the agenda hidden and a lot of resolve on the part of the homosexuals to see it accomplished!

In November of 1987, Marshall Kirk and Erastes Pill published a major “call to action” for the homosexual community in *Guide Magazine*. The article was not so subtly entitled “The Overhauling of

*Ideally, we would have straights register differences in sexual preference the way they register different tastes for ice cream or sports games: she likes strawberry and I like vanilla; he follows baseball and I follow football. No big deal.*

Guide Magazine, October 1987

Straight America” and clearly laid out what they thought the “gay agenda” needed to be in the coming years.

Authors Kirk and Pill laid out the agenda right at the start of their essay, “At least in the beginning, we are seeking public desensitization and nothing more. We do not need and cannot expect a full ‘appreciation’ or ‘understanding’ of homosexuality from the average

American. You can forget about trying to persuade the masses that homosexuality is a good thing. But if only you can get them to think that it is just another thing, with a shrug of their shoulders, then your battle for legal and social rights is virtually won.”

The authors went on to outline the six “agenda points” that must be done for this type of campaign to succeed: As you review them, ask yourself whether the homosexuals have made any progress on this agenda in the past fifteen years. Reflect upon how dedicated, disciplined, and on message they have been in promoting something that even they admit cannot be discussed in public.

Here are the “six agenda points” suggested for the homosexuals with selected comments by the authors:

- Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and as often as possible.

*The principle behind this advice is simple: almost any behavior begins to look normal if you are exposed to enough of it at close quarters and among your acquaintances.*

*Open and frank talk makes the subject seem less furtive, alien, and sinful, more above-board.*

*And when we say talk about homosexuality, we mean just that. In the early stages of any campaign to reach straight America, the masses should not be shocked and repelled by premature exposure to homosexual behavior itself.*

- Portray gays as victims, not as aggressive challengers.  
*In any campaign to win over the public, gays must be cast as victims in need of protection so that straights will be inclined by reflex to assume the role of protector.*

*(It almost goes without saying that groups on the farthest margin of acceptability such as NAMBLA, [Ed. note — North American Man-Boy Love Association] must play no part at all in such a campaign: suspected child-molesters will never look like victims.)*

- Give protectors a just cause.

*A media campaign that casts gays as society's victims and encourages straights to be their protectors must make it easier for those to respond to assert and explain their new protectiveness.*

*Our campaign should not demand direct support for homosexual practices, should instead take anti-discrimination as its theme.*

- Make gays look good.

*In order to make a Gay Victim sympathetic to straights you have to portray him as Everyman. But an additional theme of the campaign should be more aggressive and upbeat: to offset the increasingly bad press that these times have brought to homosexual men and women, the campaign should paint gays as superior pillars of society.*

- Make the victimizers look bad.

*At a later stage of the media campaign for gay rights — long after other gay ads have become commonplace — it will be time to get tough with remaining opponents. To be blunt, they must be vilified... we intend to make the antigays look so nasty that average Americans will want to dissociate themselves from such types.*

- Solicit funds: The buck stops here.

*Any massive campaign of this kind would require unprecedented expenditures for months or even years — an unprecedented fundraising drive.*

The article is still available at [www.parentsrightsusa.com](http://www.parentsrightsusa.com) and you can read the complete plans that authors Kirk and Pill laid out for this massive campaign. They concluded with this sober warning for the homosexuals in 1987:

*And, let us repeat, time may be running out. The AIDS epidemic is sparking anger and fear in the heartland of straight America. As the virus leaks out of homosexual circles and into the rest of society, we need have no illusions about who is receiving the*

*blame. The ten years ahead may decide for the next forty whether gays claim their liberty and equality or are driven back, once again, as America's caste of detested untouchables. It's more than a quip: speak now or forever hold your peace.*

The homosexuals and their supporters have stayed on message and followed this agenda in almost every area of American society over the past fifteen years, including the school programs discussed above. Despite vocal protests, these programs in the schools are doing exactly what the homosexuals wanted in their agenda!

## No Retreat, No Surrender

The bottom line question for Christians is this: If these sinners who desperately need the great gift of salvation in Jesus Christ can do so much in the power of the flesh to defend practices that the general public finds repulsive, then what should we as Christians be doing to advance the kingdom of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit? Should we be showing the same type of dedication and discipline as we consider what it means to pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?

As we approach the season of resolutions, it would be good if more Christians would ponder some that go a little deeper than cutting down on the number of trips to the ice cream parlors or doing a better job of keeping their tempers on the highways. Perhaps it is time for Christians to consider how we would practically put together a plan for "The Overhauling of Sinful America!" The critical question is whether we as Christians are prepared to show the same resolve and discipline and do the kind of hard work that the homosexuals have done over the past fifteen years promoting their ungodly agenda. Lord willing, in the power of the Holy Spirit we can!

For starters, our Lord and Savior left us with one perfectly good resolution that Christians can use year after year: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

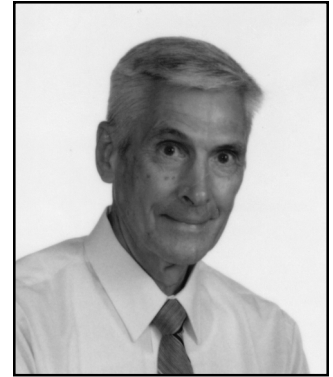
Have a Happy New Year, and I hope to see you on the battlefield!

*John E. Stoos is a political consultant living in Sacramento California with his wife Linda. They have six children and soon fifteen grandchildren. John is also host of the radio talk show, Dialog on KFIA, AM710 in Sacramento, which airs weekdays from 5-7 pm. You can reach him at (916) 451-5660 or [stoos@pacbell.net](mailto:stoos@pacbell.net).*

# America's Central Banks (Part 1)

*An Evaluation of How They and The Federal Reserve Bank Have Performed*

*By Tom Rose*



**T**n my earlier article (June/July, 2002, *Chalcedon Report*) on the Federal Reserve, we looked at the motivating forces that led to its founding in 1913, the year that I call “the black, black year of the Republic.” In my summary and evaluation I pointed out that the Federal Reserve:

*...was conceived in a spirit of deception and came into being through secret collusion of highly-placed anti-free-market oligopolists whose only allegiance was to themselves, to the institutions they controlled, and to the international banking cartel whose ideas the oligopoly finally succeeded in planting here in America.*

## 1913 — The Black, Black Year of the Republic

In order to evaluate the actual performance of the Federal Reserve Bank, we must understand its context. In 1913, the year it was established, the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendments were ratified. These three seemingly unconnected, yet crucially important, political acts were successfully “sold” to the American public by power-seeking men entrenched in politics, banking, and international finance. The combination of these acts practically guaranteed the eventual growth of a highly centralized and manipulative fascistic power at the national level,<sup>1</sup> which we see in America today.

The Sixteenth Amendment (which was never properly ratified and was unconstitutionally imposed upon the American public) opened the door to the *direct* taxation of American citizens by our central government. The personal income tax opened the way for political tyrants and their hired bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., to gorge themselves continually on unlimited tax dollars. Citizens would be intimidated easily by the constant threat of income tax audits by federal agents. These abuses of citizens didn't happen all at once. They occurred slowly as each new generation grew up, unaware that they were losing the greater liberty and degree of privacy that had been enjoyed by their parents and grandpar-

ents. Each year every citizen would be forced to “undress” financially before covetous IRS agents.

The Seventeenth Amendment emasculated the States of their formerly strong influence in the Congress as politically sovereign entities. With the Seventeenth Amendment, State legislatures lost the power to appoint Senators — they were now elected by a popular vote just like members of the House. No longer would the States be able to serve as effective buffers against potential political tyranny at the national level. No longer would the Senate have the crucially important job of protecting the independence and political power of the States, which were the creators of the federal government. Henceforth, the election of Senators would fall prey to the same demagogic promises and pre-election rhetoric as found in the election of Representatives. And the States would gradually but effectively be turned into impotent political subdivisions dependent on financial bribes from Washington, D.C. The whole organic fabric of the American Constitution was radically changed by the Seventeenth Amendment.

The Federal Reserve Act created a privately owned central bank able to create an unlimited supply of unearned purchasing media that can be forced onto citizens by a “legal tender” fiat. In effect, in 1913 the Federal Reserve was legally empowered to counterfeit as much new money as central bankers in the Federal Reserve and federal politicians might jointly conspire to issue. This, in turn, has created inflationary booms that are inevitably followed by deflationary depressions.

The combined effect of the three political acts of 1913 served effectively to change the very essence of our American Republic: Gone was the original republican system of government with its carefully limited and divided powers! Now present is a strong and aggressive unitary government with an almost unlimited power to tax and spend which few citizens can resist!<sup>2</sup> What individual alone can successfully resist the coercive power of the IRS? How many individuals are freedom-oriented enough to say



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“NO!” to free government handouts, and to consistently refuse their “dainties” (*Ps. 141: 4, 8-10; Pr. 23:1-3, 6-8*)?

This combination of three political acts of 1913 gradually changed the world-and-life view of Americans and their relationship to civil rulers and made citizens pawns who could be easily manipulated by the distribution of government “dainties.”

### **Early Central Banks in Europe**

An historical survey of the formation of central banks in Europe shows that they generally came into being as private banking institutions that provided civil rulers with sorely needed funds as a result of overspending and because the civil treasury lacked funds to conduct expensive wars. Financially pressed rulers would solicit funds from prosperous merchants and bankers who had access to funds through their international business ties. Gradually the moneylenders developed an international network for transmitting timely information and monetary credit across political borders. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the House of Morgan in these United States and the House of Rothschild in England solidified working arrangements that have continued until the present time.

### **The [First] Bank of the United States**

The first official central bank in America was named the Bank of the United States. It was chartered in 1791 for a period of 20 years. Alexander Hamilton, a Federalist who served as Secretary of the Treasury, pushed for its charter. Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, and Edmund Randolph, Attorney General, both Anti-Federalists, opposed the charter, claiming that it was unconstitutional. But President Washington was swayed by Hamilton’s argument, so he signed the bill.

In addition to the constitutional question, the Anti-Federalists opposed the bill to charter the Bank because they feared that the existence of a central bank would create a powerful money monopoly that would endanger the rights and liberties of the people. Another fear of the Anti-Federalists was that stock ownership of the new Bank might fall into the hands of foreigners. This, indeed, did occur, as we shall see. The Bank’s capital was set at \$10 million (a large sum in those days). The federal government was to provide 20% of the starting capital, while private subscriptions were to provide 80%.

A sleight-of-hand procedure was used regarding the 20% funding contributed by the federal government. The new Bank, which we will call the [First] Bank of the United States, issued \$2 million shares of stock to the federal government. Then the Bank, which had the

power to create an unlimited amount of new purchasing media (as all central banks do), loaned \$2 million of its newly created banknotes to the federal government. In return the Bank accepted the shares of Bank stock that were issued to the government as collateral!

This collusive procedure of one entity (a civil government) swapping liabilities with another entity (a central bank), and each regarding the received liability an “asset” is the same clandestine means commonly used today by all central banks and civil governments throughout the world insidiously to finance government deficits through bank-creation of fiat money. Such credit-based “loans” generate fabulous interest income for the owners of central banks.

The bill to recharter the [First] Bank of the United States came up in 1811. By that time 70% of the Bank’s stock had come to be owned by banking interests in England.<sup>3</sup> Public reaction against the Bank was strong. James Madison, then President, agreed with Thomas Jefferson that the Constitution did not allow the government to establish a central bank, so he vetoed the recharter bill.

### **The [Second] Bank of the United States**

The subsequent increase in banknotes, along with government deficit financing to fund the War of 1812, led to an inflationary boom. As a result, practically all banks were forced to suspend specie payments (the redemption of banknotes for gold and silver) in 1814. This generated a reverse public reaction which led to the establishment of a *second* Bank of the United States.

The rise and fall of the [Second] Bank of the United States makes for a very interesting study of early American money and banking history, but it is too long and involved to go into here. Suffice it to say that the early years of the [Second] Bank’s history proved to be a rocky road because of mismanagement. Then a man with banking experience and sharp business acumen, Nicholas Biddle, came onto the scene. The Bank flourished under his hand as president, but he used the credit-based money-creating power of the Bank to influence many members of Congress. Biddle also used the powerful political influence of the Bank in an attempt to do in President Andrew Jackson’s effort to be re-elected President of the United States. But Biddle’s efforts to use the [Second] Bank for a personal vendetta against Andrew Jackson failed. Biddle then used the financial power of the Second Bank to create real financial havoc, through planned monetary deflation.

The [Second] Bank was then forced out of business, and our country continued to flourish without a central bank, though with some periodic boom/

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bust periods (caused by the inherent evils of fractional-reserve banking) until the establishment of the Federal Reserve System in 1913.

### How Well Did America's Early Central Banks Serve Our Country?

The [First] Bank of the United States operated on a conservative basis and did not unduly inflate the money supply. Therefore it actually served to keep state-chartered banks from over-issuing paper banknotes (an ever-present tendency of banks that operate in a regime of fractional-reserve banking).

As I mentioned above, one disturbing fact about the [First] Bank of the United States, is that 70% of its stock ownership eventually found its way into the hands of British bankers,<sup>4</sup> who were thus in a position of strong influence in America economically, financially, and politically. This foreign influence was not overtly noticeable and, because of its hidden nature, was even more dangerous. Remember, the War of 1812 was about ready to break out, and the 70% foreign ownership located in Britain naturally favored the British cause.

The [Second] Bank of the United States was a different story. It was reluctantly agreed to by the Anti-Federalists and was strongly favored by the Federalists. The [Second] Bank was capitalized at \$35 million. Technically, it was efficiently managed by Nicholas Biddle, but he was a power monger who practically came to own many senators and representatives in Congress by lending them money at favorable interest rates (thus is the insidious power of credit-based central banking evidenced politically). Biddle used the money-creating power of the [Second] Bank to shower with favors those who supported him politically. And he used the Bank's money-control power to contract the money supply to hurt those who opposed him. Biddle's political allies in the Congress purposely requested recharter of the [Second] Bank during the 1832 presidential election in an attempt to defeat Andrew Jackson's reelection bid (the bank's charter was to expire in 1836). President Jackson picked up the challenge and was re-elected. He then vetoed the bill to recharter the Bank.

Beginning in 1833, Biddle purposely caused deflationary downturns in certain areas of the country as a vendetta against President Jackson. This provides a clear historical example of how dangerous a central bank<sup>5</sup> can become in the hands of individuals who consider their own personal interests more important than the general welfare of the people. The same problem exists with the large-bank interests that dominate central-bank policy in America

today, though it is evidenced in a different manner. The ever-present danger of powerful and influential self-interest groups is why the Founding Fathers of our country instituted a government of *limited and divided powers* that were *expressly delegated* and that left *all other powers* "to the States or to the people." This is in harmony with God's many admonitions in the Bible that we should not put our trust in men or in rulers, but only in God (*Ps. 40:3; 62:9; 118:8-9; 146:3; Is. 1:21-23; Pr. 23:1-8; 28:28; Jer. 17:5, 9*).

In his 1830 message to Congress, President Jackson had proposed a bank of limited scope, but only as a *branch* of the Treasury Department. Also, it would have no power to make loans or to issue banknotes. His reasons for suggesting this change are found in some notations by Jackson:

*It was unconstitutional because Congress has no power to create a corporation; because it withdrew capital from the control of the State; because it bought real estate without the consent of a State, which the Federal Government itself could not do. It was dangerous to liberty because through its officers, loans, and participation in politics, it could build up or pull down parties or men; because it created a monopoly of the money power; because much of the stock was owned by foreigners; because it would always support him who supported it; and because it weakened the State and strengthened the general government.<sup>6</sup>*

The tendency of stock ownership to become concentrated in British hands also occurred with the stock of the [Second] Bank of the United States. In his veto message of 1832 Jackson wrote:

*By documents submitted to Congress, at the present session, it appears, that on 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1832, of the twenty millions of private stock in the corporation, \$8,405,500 were held by foreigners, mostly of Great Britain.<sup>7</sup>*

Just a hint of the kind of international "cooperation" (collusion?) that central banks engage in occurred in 1832 when the Treasury notified the [Second] Bank of its intention to pay off six or seven million dollars worth of 3% Treasury loan certificates. So, the Bank sent its representative, Thomas Cadwaladar, to London. He secretly contracted with a banking house in England, the Barings, to purchase the Treasury loan certificates for the [Second] Bank, to hold them, and to make advances to the [Second] Bank on their security. Public agitation against the [Second] Bank was exacerbated in October, 1832, when these secret negotiations

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became public when the *New York Evening Post* published a circular that had been sent by the Barings to holders of the loan certificates.<sup>8</sup>

### Andrew Jackson's Report to Congress

Many modern economists lampoon Andrew Jackson's "war" against the [Second] Bank of the United States, claiming that the demise of the Bank opened the way for subsequent "wildcat" banking and monetary inflation. But they err in their criticism. The existence of the [First and Second] Banks of the United States led to such widespread use of paper banknotes that people complained of the scarcity of gold and silver specie and the resultant rise in prices. So some monetary inflation during the 20-year charters of both Banks had already occurred. Jackson's intent, as we will see below, was to return our country to a sound gold-and-silver-based monetary system for the benefit of the American working people, the very ones who suffer economic hardship most readily under a credit-based monetary and banking system.

In his December 5, 1836, Message to Congress, President Jackson expresses gratitude to "the Supreme Ruler of the Universe" (Christ). He points out the danger to the people when the government accumulates a large surplus, instead of returning excess monies to the people, because surpluses can be used by banks to extend loans which lead to "a spirit of wild speculation." Then he makes an excellent economic analysis of bank-induced monetary inflation that would please any knowledgeable student of money and banking today. Next Jackson points out that the effect of having a central bank is to allow it to become "a substitute for the Mint of the United States," thus depriving the people from the use of gold and silver in exchanges. He warns that on establishment of a central bank, gold would be "superseded by the paper of the bank as a general currency." And he correctly points out that this creates a tendency for gold to flow out of the country as the domestic currency depreciates in value, and that this would finally lead to going off of a gold-backed currency.<sup>9</sup> Jackson concludes on a hopeful note:

*The lessons taught by the Bank of the United States cannot be lost upon the American people. They will take care never again to place so tremendous a power in irresponsible hands...*<sup>10</sup>

But the American people, some 77 years later, *did* place so tremendous a power over our money and banking system and economy. They put even more power in the hands of strong banking interests in

1913 — a banking cartel which wielded great political influence in our federal government, and which led the American people astray. The generation of 1913 trusted more in the promise of a manipulative paper-monetary power wielded by mere mortal men, whom they mistakenly trusted, rather than in the proven economic security of a metallic monetary system which would guarantee their legal right to convert paper money upon demand into gold or silver coins. Americans today are generally unaware of the great economic security and peace of mind, as well as the blessed personal privacy, that comes from the daily use of a gold and silver currency.

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<sup>1</sup>For a clear discussion of fascism (a sophisticated form of socialism) see: Tom Rose, "The Isms," *Economics: The American Economy from a Christian Perspective* (Mercer, PA: American Enterprise Publications, 1985), 115-146.

<sup>2</sup>This was the strategy so blatantly used by Franklin D. Roosevelt during the 1930s. Harry L. Hopkins, a dedicated socialist and one of FDR's closest advisors, jubilantly exuberated, "We will spend and spend, tax and tax, and elect and elect!" Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Company, 1971), 876.

<sup>3</sup>Ross M. Robertson, *History of the American Economy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), 160.

<sup>4</sup>James W. Gilbert, *The History of Banking in America*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, 1837); reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1967), 8,10.

<sup>5</sup>Remember, the Federal Reserve Bank of today, in spite of its name, is a central bank.

<sup>6</sup>M. Grace Madeleine, *Monetary and Banking Theories of Jacksonian Democracy* (Philadelphia: Immaculata College, 1943), 50.

<sup>7</sup>Gilbert, 21.

<sup>8</sup>Madeleine, 54.

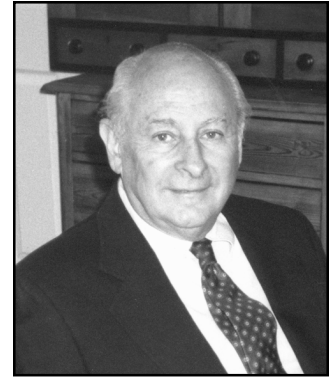
<sup>9</sup>Andrew Jackson, "Eighth Annual Message," in *The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966*, vol. 1, 1790-1860, ed. Fred L. Israel (New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1967), 445-446, 450-451, 455-458.

<sup>10</sup>*ibid.*, 461-462.

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# Doctor Faustus Revisited

*By Samuel L. Blumenfeld*



**B**iographers and scholars have characterized Christopher Marlowe, the great Elizabethan poet and playwright, as an atheist and blasphemer. But it is hard to believe that the man who wrote *Doctor Faustus* was an atheist. In fact, there is nothing in all of Marlowe's writings in which he professed to be an atheist. The accusation is based on hearsay, reports of conversations, and the belief that he belonged to Sir Walter Raleigh's famous intellectual circle known as the School of Night.

Marlowe was born in 1564 in Canterbury, the ecclesiastical capital of England with its magnificent cathedral. His father was a cobbler who belonged to the local guild. In 1579 the future playwright was awarded a scholarship to the King's School where he was given a classical education. The curriculum included Bible study, Latin oratory, classical rules of verse making, and an introduction to the literature of the ancient world. The headmaster at the school was John Gresshop, a graduate of Oxford, who owned a large private library that included a Latin Bible (Jerome's Vulgate), a Geneva Bible, a couple of Greek Testaments, another Latin Bible in the version of Sante Pagnino, and another rendered by Sabastian Castalio. His students learned Holy Scripture quite thoroughly.

In 1580, at the age of sixteen, Marlowe received one of Archbishop Parker's scholarships to Corpus Christi at Cambridge University, a stronghold of the Calvinist faith. Corpus Christi was a divinity school training up future clerics. Had the brilliant Marlowe entered the clergy on graduation he might have become a bishop or even archbishop. But he chose to become a poet and playwright.

During his stay at Cambridge, Sir Francis Walsingham, head of the Queen's spy network, also recruited Marlowe into Queen Elizabeth's secret service. It is believed that Marlowe remained a member of the service for the rest of his life.

Marlowe began writing his poems and plays while at Cambridge. His translation of Ovid's *Amores*, the plays *Dido: Queen of Carthage*, and Part One of *Tamburlaine* were no doubt written at the university.

Thus when he left Cambridge in 1587, after eight years of education to become a cleric, he went to London to make his literary fortune.

Although it is difficult to pin down the precise dates when each of Marlowe's plays were written, scholars believe that *Doctor Faustus* was written in 1592, a year before the poet was murdered. Calvin Hoffman, in his book *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare*, advanced the thesis that Marlowe was not actually murdered, but that his patron, Thomas Walsingham, to save the poet from the gallows, concocted a phony murder. His enemies had lodged serious accusations of atheism and blasphemy against him, and there was a strong possibility that he would have been convicted and hanged. Religious heretics were being executed. For example, the Puritan pamphleteer, John Penry, was hanged at about the same time that Marlowe was supposed to have been murdered.

## A Morality Play

*Doctor Faustus* is one of the great plays of the Elizabethan era. It tells the story of a university intellectual who sells his soul to the devil for magical power and earthly riches. Leo Kirschbaum in *The Plays of Christopher Marlowe* writes:

*Let us see the play in the terms of the basic Christian values it preaches, for it is, we must recognize, a morality play.... We must accept, for the occasion, that man's most precious possession is his immortal soul and that what he does on earth will determine whether he goes to Heaven or Hell.... The premises of basic Christianity are inherent in every line of Doctor Faustus. The doctrine of damnation pervades it.*

*In the play the Devil and Hell are omnipresent, potent, dangerous, and terrifying realities. But the protagonist makes a bargain with Evil, and for the sake of earthly learning, earthly power, earthly satisfaction goes down to horrible and everlasting perdition. As we shall observe, it is actually a poor*

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*bargain, for the gains of knowledge and power are largely offset by egocentric self-satisfaction. Marlowe portrays his “hero” as a wretched creature who, for lower values, gives up higher ones. Thus, the drama is a morality play in which Heaven combats with Hell for the soul of a Renaissance Everyman and, due to the latter’s psychological and moral weaknesses, loses....*

*If the modern mind, for example, sees Marlowe’s main character as the noble victim of a tyrannical Deity, it is simply being blind. On the contrary, God is exceedingly good in his gifts to the “hero,” until the latter becomes the victim of his own insatiable desires — and even then God is willing to forgive if the magician repents. But Faustus willfully refuses all aid — and so goes down to damnation.*

This is an exceptionally powerful play that should be revived and performed by Christian drama groups, particularly in Christian schools, colleges, and universities. It is an excellent introduction to Elizabethan drama, on a subject as relevant now as ever. Today, when the world offers so many temptations to young and old alike, it is good to be reminded of the price that must be paid for making worldly choices that separate us from God.

Faustus, wallowing in intellectual pride and self-importance, thinks that he can raise Mephistopheles by the use of his magical skills. So when Mephistopheles appears, Faustus says: “Did not my conjuring raise thee? Speak.”

*Meph. That was the cause, but yet per accidens:  
For when we hear one rack the name of God,  
Abjure the Scriptures and his Savior Christ,  
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul.  
Nor will we come unless he use such means  
Whereby he is in danger to be damn’d.  
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring  
Is stoutly to abjure all godliness  
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.*

We can imagine the reaction of the audience to those words. Despite the grim theme, there is also a great deal of humor in the play. Wagner, Faustus’ assistant, supplies much of the comic relief with Robin the Clown. Then there are the Seven Deadly Sins — Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery — who come before Faustus and explain themselves in hilarious ways. Then there are the tricks that Faustus performs on the Pope, using the great powers he has acquired. While the humor

adds to the enjoyment of the play, it in no way detracts from the play’s tragic conflict.

Commenting on Marlowe’s skill as a playwright, Kirschbaum writes:

*Marlowe’s powers of compressed dramatic irony can be tremendous. As soon as Faustus has signed [his pact with the Devil], he says “Consummatum est,” the last words of Christ on earth according to St. John. What an insight into the twisted mind of the magician! And what a blasphemy! Jesus died that Faustus’ soul might live; Faustus flings away this priceless gift for a mess of earthly pottage!*

Throughout the play, Faustus is torn between God and the Devil. He is pulled back and forth by the Good Angel and the Bad Angel. In a tortured moment of reflection, he says:

*Now, Faustus, must thou needs be damn’d, canst  
thou not be sav’d!  
What boots it then to think on God or Heaven?  
Away with such vain fancies, and despair —  
Despair in God and trust in Belzebub!  
Now go not backward. Faustus, be resolute!  
Why waver’st thou? O something soundeth in  
mine ear,  
“Abjure this magic, turn to God again....”  
Why, He loves thee not —  
The god thou serv’st is thine own appetite  
Wherein is fix’d the love of Belzebub!  
To him I’ll build an altar and a church  
And offer lukewarm blood of newborn babes!*

The allusion to abortion is quite clear. In his translation of Ovid’s *Amores*, Marlowe wrote this commentary on abortion in Elegia XIV:

*Who unborn infants first to slay invented,  
Deserved thereby with death to be tormented....  
Had ancient mothers this vile custom cherished,  
All human kind by their default had perished;...  
Had Venus spoiled her belly’s Trojan fruit,  
The earth of Caesars had been destitute....  
Myself, that better die with loving may,  
Had seen, my mother killing me, no day....  
Why with hid irons are your bowels torn?  
And why dire poison give you babes unborn?...  
Armenian tigers never did so ill,  
Nor dares the lioness her young whelps kill.  
But tender damsels do it, though with pain;  
Oft dies she that her paunch-wrapt child hath slain;*

— Continued on Page 28 —

# FOCUS on Dominion

## by Ford and Andrea Schwartz

**Friends of Chalcedon** is pleased to share information about a **contest** open to persons **16 – 19 years old**.

**Topic: How have you applied the Dominion Mandate in your life?**

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:28).

**Essay:** Entrants must submit an essay (750 – 1000 words) describing their particular application and execution of the Dominion Mandate. The essay must include specifics of something they have actually participated in and the details of their participation. No abstract ideas that have never been tested are eligible.

**Verification:** Each essay must be accompanied by two attestations that the Dominion Mandate application described has actually taken place and that the report of such is accurate and honest. A parent or pastor must be one of the attestations and contact information for them must be included.

<b>Awards:</b>	<b>First Place</b>	-- \$500
	<b>Second Place</b>	-- \$300
	<b>Honorable Mention</b>	-- \$200

**Judging:** A blind judging system will be used to determine the winners. The decision of the judges will be final.

**Deadline:** Submissions must be received before April 20, 2003.

**Entry and attestation forms can be found at [www.chalcedon.edu](http://www.chalcedon.edu)**

**Emmaus Christian Fellowship** is underwriting this contest as part of its continuing effort to equip Christians to defend the Faith. For more information about the contest or ways to support this ministry contact:

**Emmaus Christian Fellowship**  
4960 Almaden Expressway, #172  
San Jose, California 95118  
[ecf\\_sj@ix.netcom.com](mailto:ecf_sj@ix.netcom.com)



# Rail Ventures

By James Nickel

“Leave Longview, Texas, Friday, August 2 @ 10:30 AM on Amtrak’s *Texas Eagle*...” So began my diary entry at the start of my railroad journey to California to speak at the Third Annual Student West Coast Worldview Conference (August 5-10, 2002). The trip started in typical Amtrak fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Due to track repair, the *Texas Eagle* had been rerouted to Mineola, Texas. At 11:30 AM, I left Longview on a shuttle bus to catch that connection. I finally heard the anticipated “All Aboard!” and stepped up into a coach car of the *Texas Eagle* in Mineola at 2:00 PM. Thus began a fascinating and engaging four-day roundtrip journey to California.

## Who’s Reading What?

Before this trip, I had never traveled by train even though, from childhood, trains had always fascinated me. I can vividly remember watching the sleek, orange and yellow *Santa Fe* passenger train streak through the rich agricultural countryside of California in the late 1950s. When the invitation came to speak at the California conference, I pondered my travel options and said to myself, “You’ve got the time. Why not try the train and enjoy the scenery of the Southwest?”

I also thought that in those four days of roundtrip travel I could do lots of reading (my favorite pastime). So, when the time for departure came, I loaded about twelve books into my carry on baggage and crammed a few snacks and some toiletries into the little room remaining. I would never ponder the words of most of those books. Instead of me reading books on this trip, *my fellow-passengers read me.*

## Schmoozing and the Amtrak Experience

The Amtrak experience is a cross between camping out (with an air conditioner) and a resort (formal dining available). There are lots of “open spaces” on a train (compared to the confined quarters of a plane).

*If you always go where you have  
always gone and always do what  
you have always done, you will  
always be what you are now.*

Tristan Gylberd

To me, it seemed that the openness in space generated openness in conversation from the get-go. Waiting for the train at the Amtrak station in Longview, my wife Lila, who was seeing me off, began talking to an elderly lady, “Kate,” from Minden, Louisiana. Lila soon found that she had taught children Kate knew from

this town. Kate was traveling to Las Vegas to visit her daughter who had just given birth to her first child. I ended up watching out for Kate (since she was traveling alone) both going to and, amazingly, returning from the West Coast.

Another obligatory part of the Amtrak experience is eating meals in the formal dining car. Eating there was a leisurely experience and seating is a required four to a table. At each meal I found myself mixed with a new group and the “schmoozing” began with simple introductions and questions like, “Where are you from?” “Where are you going?”

## Evangelistic “Code of Conduct”

At this point I want to define what I believe is the Bible’s “code of conduct” when it comes to interacting with unbelievers. Jesus illustrated how to interact in John 4. First, He asked questions. Then, He found eye-openers (cf. *Acts 26:18*). He let the people He was talking to open the door to eternal issues.<sup>2</sup> His questions generated further questions. He let people condemn themselves with their own words. We should also note that Jesus relished life in all of its everyday fullness (from wedding parties to banquets). Christians are the *only* people who should *truly* know how to laugh wholeheartedly and celebrate life in all its richness (even in the midst of trials; cf. *1 Pet. 1:6*). Our godly and genuine exuberance for living will help draw us into an unbeliever’s confidence.

We learn from Paul that our walk and speech toward outsiders are to be with wisdom and seasoned



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with salt respectively (*Col. 4:5-6; cf. 1 Pet. 2:1-3:16*). In contrast to this, note what a Campus ministry representative did on the grounds of Louisiana State University Shreveport in the spring of 2002. With a Bible in hand, he stood in front of the University Center and screamed to the students passing by, “The men in fraternities are drunks! The women in sororities are fornicators! People who smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or do drugs will not enter heaven. I am calling this campus to repentance!”<sup>3</sup> There is a place for street preaching but only *as God directs*. This man was not in God’s place; he was in a place of his own tomfoolery making.

I have never approached personal evangelism with an aggressive in-your-face style. I never attempt to insult my listener’s intelligence by gearing a conversation to my stated ends. I never move into someone’s space without an invitation. I rarely use gospel tracts.<sup>4</sup> If a conversation with an unbeliever turns to Christ, the only tract I give is my phone number.

In all our interactions, we should demonstrate common Christian courtesies like assisting the elderly and the young. As gentlemen we open doors for ladies and render any needed assistance. Sad to say, these graces are nearly extinct in today’s society.

### **Ambassador on Amtrak**

Our English word “ambassador” is derived from Medieval Latin. It means “mission” (*ambactia*) or “servant” (*ambactus*). In New Testament Greek, the word is connected to elder (*presbeuo*) and it reflects rank established by maturity. The Christian is above all a servant of Christ (in the kingdom of God, he that is a servant has the highest rank); he is *available* to do Christ’s mission at Christ’s beckoning call.

My goal for this Amtrak trip was to read, relax, and enjoy the scenery. This was my mind’s plan, but I’ve learned through the years that the Lord directs one’s steps (*Pr. 16:9*); *i.e.*, I should always be ready for a change in my plans. From the get-go I saw that my plans were being updated by a higher authority. It started with Kate, the grandmother and a borderline alcoholic Episcopalian. She just loved to talk and throughout the trip, as I checked up on her and, at times, escorted her to the dining car, we continued our conversations. She was fascinated by my work in mathematics and science and she told me that she was going to inform her son-in-law, a professor at University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV), of my book.

My first experience in the dining car was Friday evening. The train was traveling through the undulating Texas landscape south of Ft. Worth and the sun

was languidly setting in the west (it was a breathtaking sight). I found myself seated next to a family from Oklahoma traveling to California for a first time visit to San Francisco and Yosemite. Being a native Californian, I gave them some travel advice. Then, they asked me, “Where are you from?” and “Where are you going?” As I nibbled on my blackened catfish, I told them that I was speaking at a conference in California. “On what?” they queried. “Math and science,” I replied. This piqued their interest, “What specifically?” I replied, “One of my talks will be on the medieval origins of modern science.” They were non-plussed. Then they found out that I was a published author (that apparently impresses some people). The conversation now became primarily one-way. They asked questions and I answered. Some two hours later with the dining car nearly empty (and Amtrak employees shooing us out), they wanted to know how to order my book.

### **Why the Darkness?**

At 8:00 PM the next evening, the *Sunset Limited* left El Paso, a laid-back city named after a pass formed by the Rio Grande. Surrounded by the Portillo mountains and slowly enveloped by darkness, the train intruded upon a barren strip of land that had witnessed Pat Garrett shooting Billy the Kid in 1881 and Pancho Villa’s marauders provoking the U.S.-Mexico conflict in 1916. I escorted Kate to the dining car and we sat in front of “Charles” and “Andrew,” a black father and son from Fresno, California (near my hometown of Dinuba). Charles, at age 84, had been a star football running back for Fresno State College (my alma mater) in the 1940s. His father, a former slave, died in the late 1940s at age 108. Charles went to high school with the future United States Navy Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. He also knew Olympic decathlete and former California Congressman Bob Mathias, boxer Joe Louis, singer (“Ol’ Man River”)/actor/athlete Paul Robeson, and several Hollywood stars (including Bing Crosby). He was a walking history book.

Andrew told me that he was the director of a community minority co-op in Fresno. His aim was to provide economic opportunity for the minorities of this city. This time, as I enjoyed a scrumptious New York steak, I queried Andrew about the status of West Fresno (known to me as a black “slum” area in the 1960s). Andrew, who had seen me play basketball in the late 1960s (an amazing connection, isn’t it?), said that not much had changed in West Fresno. I asked, “What about the black churches in West Fresno?” Andrew replied, “I have regular contact with these churches; they are great and

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always have been.” I responded, “If the church is supposed to be the light of the world, and West Fresno is still in the dark, then how do you define a great church? What is wrong with this equation?” Andrew sat back in thought and his father interjected, “Are you a pastor?” Note, all this time Kate and several other passengers were intently listening in. The next morning, Sunday, I awoke as a blazing sunrise streamed over the Arizona desert. I opened my Bible and read the final chapters of Job. I then walked up to the observation car. Charles and Andrew were there and we continued our conversation from the previous evening (in the presence of many witnesses).

The week at the conference at the campus of Bethany College in Scotts Valley, California, was wonderful. I boarded a bus in San Jose on Monday, August 12, to take me to Stockton for a connection with Amtrak’s *San Joaquins*. From there I traveled to Fresno for a few days visit with my parents. After leaving San Jose, the bus made one stop to pick up an elderly lady. I watched as she said good-bye to what looked like her granddaughter and then boarded. As the bus slowly departed, I observed that the granddaughter was crying. I spoke to the lady who was sitting across the aisle, “Is that young woman your granddaughter?” “Yes,” came the reply. I continued, “Do you know she was crying after you said goodbye?” She turned away as tears welled in her own eyes. When the train left Stockton, this lady and I sat together and had a short conversation. It was short, because at the next stop (Modesto), “Steve” sat in front of us. Steve monopolized the conversation from there to Fresno (he loved talking about his hunting adventures in Canada, Alaska, and Africa). Here is one case where I asked a lot of questions, but the conversation stayed in Steve’s ballpark. This happens sometimes.

### **Making a Mathematical Connection**

In the early afternoon of Friday, August 16, after a tearful goodbye to my parents, I left Fresno for Bakersfield on the *San Joaquins*. I could board the train through any one of ten cars. I made my choice, then walked the aisles to find a seat (the train was fairly full). I sat next to a young man reading a paper. I greeted him, unloaded my baggage (now packed with about twenty books, instead of the original twelve). I pulled out *The Birkenhead Drill*, which I was anxious to read.<sup>5</sup> This is the story of the 1852 foundering of the British H. M. Troopship *Birkenhead*. More than 400 men chose to drown or be eaten alive by sharks than allow one woman or child to suffer. After reading a few pages, I relaxed

my eyes. “Ramon,” my seatmate, asked, “What is that book about?” I proceeded to explain. He wrote down the title on his notepaper. I then asked, “Where are you going?” “To Los Angeles to visit my girlfriend.” “Where are you from?” “Fresno.” “What are you doing in Fresno?” “Going to school.” “Where?” “Fresno State.” “Why, that’s my alma mater! What’s your major?” “Mathematics.” Can you believe this? Of all the railroad cars I could have chosen, I chose this car and sat next to this person! I said an internal prayer, “Okay, Lord, You are not going to let me get any respite on this trip! I hear Your beckoning call.”

As the train continued to trek through the San Joaquin Valley with its flat landscape of orchards, vineyards, and alfalfa fields, I put the book away and began to pepper Ramon with questions about his studies. I finally got to a discussion of Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorems. Ramon said that he read a passing comment about Gödel in one article, but none of his teachers had discussed Gödel’s conclusions. Then he stopped me, “Are you a professor? You certainly know more about math than most of my professors.” “No,” I replied, “I am not a professor, but I’m a student of mathematics and have been for over 30 years.” I then proceeded to explain to Ramon the Bible’s answer to the question, “Why does mathematics work?” Ramon’s eyes swooned upward in disgust. I asked, “Why are you reacting this way?” Ramon lectured me in return, “This God stuff, I don’t buy it. It’s too simplistic. Don’t you know that the Bible is full of contradictions?” My reply, “For example?” This time Ramon’s eyes swooned, not in upward disgust, but downward with the look of one who just got caught with his hands in the proverbial cookie jar. After waiting a few seconds for the silence to make impact, I queried, “You’ve never read the Bible, have you?” Ramon confessed, “No, but my teachers have told me that the Bible is unreliable.” My reply, “Are you trusting in the word of fallible man? Don’t you think you should read the Bible first-hand?”

Thus began a conversation that lasted all the way to Bakersfield (where we had to board separate buses for the final leg to Los Angeles). Ramon had a Roman Catholic background (and all of its ensuing baggage). Starting from mathematics, I ended up confronting Ramon with the nature of absolute truth,<sup>6</sup> the reality of sin, and the resolution of sin in the Cross of Christ. As the train reached Bakersfield, Ramon’s initial antagonism had relaxed into a quiet receptiveness. His last words to me, “You are the first person that has talked to me about God without trying to chop my head off while doing so.”

## Do You Need Some Help?

I arrived at Union Station in Los Angeles at 6:00 PM and reconnected with Kate (returning home from her visit to Las Vegas) a few minutes later. The *Sunset Limited* was scheduled to leave in four hours. Around 9:30 PM, we prepared to board. An Amtrak employee directed Kate and me to the “blue line.” We happened to be standing behind a very tired (and very pregnant) young lady. “Susan” was carrying an infant in her arms and her three-year-old daughter was bouncing off the walls (a result of being too tired and ingesting too much sugar). We began to chat; this was Susan’s first train trip and she was traveling to see her husband in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Noticing her excessive weariness, I asked, “Do you need some help boarding the train?” She nodded in the affirmative. I found an Amtrak “Red Cap” and told him that this lady needed some assistance. He nodded and simply walked away. Within minutes, we heard the “All Aboard!” call and the line began to move. I offered to help Susan, “Here, let me take your luggage.” Susan objected, “But you already are loaded with two pieces. I can do it!” I replied, “It will be okay. You take care of your children. The walk to the train will not be long.” I threw one piece of my luggage (with the twenty books) over my left shoulder and the other over my right. I grabbed Susan’s heavy piece with my right hand and we were off. The walk to the train turned out to be a long distance, but the extra load felt like feathers. I helped get Susan on board, walked her to her seat, and then began to explain the “ins and outs” of Amtrak travel. I made sure she was comfortable and warm and told her that I would check on her later. She and her daughter said, “Thank you so much.” As I left Susan’s car to board my car, an elderly lady, noticing how I assisted Susan, grabbed my arm and said, “I need some help. Are you an Amtrak employee?”

The stories about my trip home could go on and on. I could recount my Sunday morning discussion with a black lady sitting across the aisle from me. We discussed the applicability of the Bible to the manifold realms of social welfare, family structure, and personal accountability (and getting hearty “Amen’s” from the neighboring eavesdroppers in the railroad car). Or, I could detail my charming intercultural encounter in the dining car with a couple from Germany on vacation (they were traveling on Amtrak for the first time). I was even able to speak to them in halting German, much to their delight.

## Arrival home

After a one-day delay in my estimated time of arrival in Shreveport, I finally reached my wife’s

*God used every detail of this trip to further transform me into His image “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).*

loving arms. I felt an internal sense of satisfaction and completeness about this trip. No, I had not read all the books I wanted to read; this was a trip for other eyes to scan me. I had selected a new mode of travel. I had not gone where I had always gone. I thought about the new people I met, the amazing coincidences I encountered, the multiplicity of opportunities for practical service ... God used every detail of this trip to further transform me into His image “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike the “golden days” of competitive train travel from the 1930s to 1950s (when almost everyone traveled by train), Amtrak (a federal subsidy) is notorious for running a little late, sometimes more than a little. This is because Amtrak trains run almost entirely on the tracks of freight railroads. I found out quickly that a train carrying freight always has priority over a train carrying people.

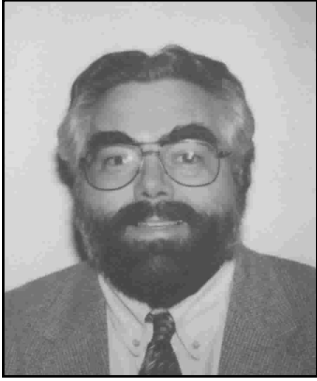
<sup>2</sup> We should see people as made in God’s image and deserving respect thereby (even though that image is marred by sin). People will respond to *authentic* empathy, interest, and compassion.

<sup>3</sup> Chris Alexander, “What the hell?” *The Almagest* 41:9 (April 18, 2002), 1, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Most gospel tracts are geared to a listening audience that is as extinct as a dodo. I’m all for gospel literature, but let us make sure that the literature we use presents the relevancy of the gospel to the “hot spots” or “eye-openers” of a post-modernistic culture. Before we write any gospel tracts, let’s “understand the times” first (1 Chr. 12:32). Eternal truths need to be proclaimed in a manner adapted to the particular needs and receptivity of the times.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas W. Phillips, *The Birkenhead Drill* (San Antonio: The Vision Forum, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> At one point, Ramon declared, “No one can really make a certain claim to absolute truth.” My response, “On what basis do you claim such certainty?” Ramon was careful not to make such assertive claims again.



# A Christian Philosophy of History: Historical Objectivity

*By Roger Schultz*

“Do you think that history is objective?” A colleague recently asked me that question, referring to an old debate among historians.<sup>1</sup> It is an important question for our postmodern age, and one that touches both on the nature of history and the nature of truth.

Some historians have stressed the objective and scientific nature of history. By sifting through the documentary evidence, they contend, the neutral historian can tell history “as it really happened.” Though the desire for an objective standard is commendable, this approach is both humanistic and naïve.<sup>2</sup>

## The Fallacy of Scientific History

Scientific history is naïve because it ignores the limitations of finite and fallen human historians. Everyone approaches the past with a certain perspective, with presuppositions based upon background, experience, and convictions. These presuppositions, whether correct or not, are the spectacles with which we view the past. No one functions as a neutral and disinterested observer.

Furthermore, there is no complete record of the past. Historical documents deal with only a tiny fraction of all the events, deeds, thoughts, and intentions of human history. Comprehensive and exhaustive knowledge is impossible for the time-bound historian.<sup>3</sup> (Indeed, in our information-laden age it is increasingly difficult for the historian to keep up with the information in just one field of specialization.)

Scientific history is also humanistic. Autonomous man, equipped with reason and a scientific methodology, and attempting to stand apart from God, is supposed to be able to survey the “brute facts” of history and reconstruct the past. Rushdoony offers this telling critique:

*Attempts have been made to find meaning at least in “the facts” of history. But ... there are not self-contained facts: every fact points beyond itself and is not capable of comprehension in terms of itself*

*only... [M]eaning always escapes man when he seeks it in the realm of creation rather than God. Because all things are made by God, nothing is understandable in terms of itself, but only in terms of God the Creator.<sup>4</sup>*

## Subjective History

Other historians have argued that history is largely subjective or relativistic.<sup>5</sup> Like beauty, history is in the eye of the beholder. Subjectivist approaches invariably lead toward political correctness and political activism.

History becomes a “morality play that parades as history,” as Rushdoony notes. “The humanistic historian thus has revived universalism on new terms: his abstractions are the realities, the universals, the true order of reality...” What is more, these historiographies are essentially religious, moving “in terms of a secular, Utopian and statist faith.” Rushdoony further emphasizes the statist ends of the politically-correct historian. “[M]an plays god and remakes history in terms of total planning and control. Rationalistic, anarchistic and ‘scientific’ historiographies are only the half-way houses to the enthronement of man the god-like planner.”<sup>6</sup>

## Objective History

Is it possible, then, that history is objective? I told my friend that that there is an objective history, and that it is described in Matthew 25. The Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, the nations will be gathered, and He will separate them to the left and to the right. When the books are opened on Judgment Day, there will be a perfectly objective standard for all human history. Until that day, we may pursue history objectively by following scriptural principles.

First, the Christian knows that there is truth and that God has established absolute standards. Certainly, our understanding has limits, our judgments are not perfect, and our knowledge of history is not exhaustive. But because God has revealed truth in His Word, we may be assured that true knowledge is possible.

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In 1989 I defended my Ph.D. dissertation in history. The dissertation focused on Harry Rimmer, a prominent early twentieth-century Presbyterian apologist who was a pioneering creationist. One of my professors, a Sixties-retread, was obviously disturbed by Rimmer's apologetic focus. During the middle of the dissertation defense, the professor jumped up from the table with a clenched fist and declared, "There are no absolutes!" This was, of course, a silly and inherently self-contradictory statement (though I didn't feel that it was my place, at the time, to point it out). Unfortunately, many historians operate under this assumption: there are no absolutes. Thus, everything is meaningless.

No relativist lives consistently with his philosophy. My professor emphatically believed that there were absolutes in the area of politics. He never missed an opportunity, for instance, to berate Ronald Reagan and the Christian Right for failing to meet his standards. The professor was a good teacher, and he always treated us fairly. But by his relativistic standards, he could just as easily have been a sadist.

A Christian worldview is foundational for a proper understanding of history. Rushdoony notes that "Truth is a Person, Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, and truth is His infallible and enscripturated word.... [A]part from Him, the universe quickly falls apart, in human thought, into a world of illusion or brute factuality, with every fact unrelated to all others. The denial of the Triune God is the denial ultimately of meaning, community, nature, family, life, culture, and of all things, and the collapse of man's existence into hell, total unrelatedness and meaninglessness."<sup>7</sup>

History is objective and can be objectively known because it is ordained by God. Biblical Christians do not believe that God sits back, watches the unfolding of human history, and then offers His particular interpretation of it. God does not put a divine "spin" on autonomous details of history. Rather, God is the author of history.

Human beings can thus know history truly, although we cannot know it exhaustively. Though finite mortals, we have the true and perfect standard of God. God saw His creation and pronounced it good. Jesus Christ came in the fullness of time (*Gal. 4:4*); all things were created for Him (*Col. 1:16*); in Him all things hold together (*Col. 1:17*); and Christ's redemptive work was the central point of history.

## Scriptural Methodology and Example

Scripture also gives us an objective methodology of history in the prologue of Luke (*Lk. 1:1-4*). Writing to Theophilus, Luke notes that many had

written about Jesus. Luke intended to check sources, interview eyewitnesses, and carefully investigate things from the beginning. His desire was to write a careful account and give the exact truth about the life of Christ.

Scripture gives excellent examples of historical objectivity. The account of David's life is no "court history" where the intent is to "puff" the king. We see the positive side of David, as well as his grave failures. Scripture gives a full picture of David, recording his thoughts and intentions, in addition to his words and deeds.

It is important to note that Biblical history is not hagiographical (referring to a glorified history of the "saints"). Biblical history is honest and candid, dealing with the good and the bad. Christians are sometimes too eager to baptize the past and give a rosy and pristinized reading of history. We must not succumb to that temptation. Christian historians must write history with the same directions that the carbuncled Cromwell gave his portrait painter: "Paint me warts and all!"

Finally, Christians can be confident that nothing of God's history is lost. Historians often bemoan the lack of or loss of historical material. When records of his remarkable career were destroyed, Rev. Dan Graham simply said, "God knows." Known to God are all of His works, and all of human history. Everything is recorded in the Lord's books (*Ps. 56:8, 139:16; Rev. 13:8, 17:8, 20:12*).

Let me close with an historian's dream of heaven. I do this reluctantly, knowing that we attribute to our heavenly existence the things we most enjoy here. (My friend Dr. Jack once described a surgeon's view of heaven: "bright lights... and cold steel!") Scripture teaches that God has the books, that every thought and deed will be revealed, that the nations and individuals will be judged, and that there will be perfect judgment. I like to think that on the Day of Judgment God will explain all things. All of Job's unanswered questions, for instance, will be resolved. All of the perplexing developments of history will be explained. God will show how and why He worked all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (*Rom. 8:28*). He will explain how He worked all things together for the praise of the glory of His grace (*Eph. 1:6*). It will be the greatest history lesson of all time, and it will be one we never tire of celebrating.

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<sup>1</sup> Those interested in the debate on “The Problem of Historical Objectivity” may check Ronald Nash, *Ideas of History* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1969), II:159-227.

<sup>2</sup> The best example of “scientific history” was the 19<sup>th</sup> century German historian Leopold van Ranke.

<sup>3</sup> My godly grandmother will turn 100 in two months. She has lived through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has had a full life. But there is only a small documentary record concerning her life; she has not left a “paper trail.” We have family photographs, a few letters and documents, and many memories. Grandma can remember much, but she will often say, “I had forgotten that.” We do not have access to the majority of the events of my grandmother’s life, and this side of heaven, there can be no full accounting for the history of Marion Schultz. We have even less information on the vast bulk of humanity stretching over millennia.

<sup>4</sup> Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 126-127.

<sup>5</sup> The best advocates of the subjectivist approach were highly influential in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as historians Carl Becker and Charles Beard.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 114, 132-133.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 72.

— Continued From Page 20 —

*She dies, and with loose hairs to grave is sent,  
And who'er see her, worthily lament.*

There is much to be learned from the great literature of the past. Elizabethan England dealt with the same spiritual problems we deal with today. The language may be different, but the conflicts are the same. It’s hard to believe that the man who wrote *Doctor Faustus* and *Elegia XIV* was an atheist. His mind had to be deeply saturated with Christian theology to be able to write that powerful play. Perhaps some day scholars will acknowledge that Marlowe was indeed a Christian writer whose poetic genius was used to portray the human reality in all its contradictions and tragedies.

*Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the author of eight books on education, including NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education, How to Tutor, Alpha-Phonics: A Primer for Beginning Readers, and Homeschooling: A Parents Guide to Teaching Children. All of these book are available on Amazon.com or by calling 208-322-4440. Mr. Blumenfeld can be reached at slblu@netway.com.*

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