

# CHALCEDON *Report*

No. 375, October 1996

**R. J. Rushdoony**

*on the Right to Rape and Murder*

**Brian Abshire**

*on Promise Keepers*

**John B. King**

*on the Jesus Seminar*

**Christine Schirrmacher**

*on Human Rights in  
Islamic Countries*

**Peter Hammond**

*on the Evils of the United Nations*

**John Lofton**

*on Plain Speaking*

**Audio Reconstruction: The  
Ministry of George  
Calhoun and Mt. Olive  
Tape Library**

**page 9**



# The Creed of Christian Reconstruction

Rev. Andrew Sandlin  
[May be Freely Reproduced]

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Calvinist**. He holds to historic, orthodox, catholic Christianity and the great Reformed confessions. He believes God, not man, is the center of the universe—and beyond; God, not man, controls whatever comes to pass; God, not man, must be pleased and obeyed. He believes God saves sinners—He does not help them save themselves. A Christian Reconstructionist believes the Faith should apply to all of life, not just the “spiritual” side. It applies to art, education, technology, and politics no less than to church, prayer, evangelism, and Bible study.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Theonomist**. Theonomy means “God’s law.” A Christian Reconstructionist believes God’s law is found in the Bible. It has not been abolished as a standard of righteousness. It no longer accuses the Christian, since Christ bore its penalty on the cross for him. But the law is a statement of God’s righteous character. It cannot change any more than God can change. God’s law is used for three main purposes: First, to drive the sinner to trust in Christ alone, the only perfect law-keeper. Second, to provide a standard of obedience for the Christian, by which he may judge his progress in sanctification. And third, to maintain order in society, restraining and arresting civil evil.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Presuppositionalist**. He does not try to “prove” that God exists or that the Bible is true. He holds to the Faith because the Bible says so, not because he can “prove” it. He does not try to convince the unconverted that the gospel is true. They already know it is true when they hear it. They need repentance, not evidence. Of course, the Christian Reconstructionist believes there is evidence for the Faith—in fact there is nothing *but* evidence for the Faith. The problem for the unconverted, though, is not a lack of evidence, but a lack of submission. The Christian Reconstructionist begins and ends with the Bible. He does not defend “natural theology,” and other inventions designed to find some agreement with covenant-breaking, apostate mankind.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Postmillennialist**. He believes Christ will return to earth only after the Holy Spirit has empowered the church to advance Christ’s kingdom in time and history. He has faith that God’s purposes to bring all nations—though not every individual—in subjection to Christ cannot fail. The Christian Reconstructionist is not utopian. He does not believe the kingdom will advance quickly or painlessly. He knows that we enter the kingdom through much tribulation. He knows Christians are in the fight for the “long haul.” He believes the church may yet be in her infancy. But he believes the Faith will triumph. Under the power of the Spirit of God, it cannot *but* triumph.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Dominionist**. He takes seriously the Bible’s commands to the godly to take dominion in the earth. This is the goal of the gospel and the Great Commission. The Christian Reconstructionist believes the earth and all its fulness is the Lord’s—that every area dominated by sin must be “reconstructed” in terms of the Bible. This includes, first, the individual; second, the family; third, the church; and fourth, the wider society, including the state. The Christian Reconstructionist therefore believes fervently in Christian civilization. He firmly believes in the separation of church and state, but not the separation of the state—or anything else—from God. He is not a revolutionary; he does not believe in the militant, forced overthrow of human government. He has infinitely more powerful weapons than guns and bombs—he has the invincible Spirit of God, the infallible word of God, and the incomparable gospel of God, none of which can fail.

He presses the crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ in every sphere, expecting eventual triumph.



# CHALCEDON Report

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

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### November Preview:

In November's *Chalcedon Report*: The Failure of the Political Establishment

### Contents:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD</b> .....  | 2 |
| <i>The Right to Rape and Murder?</i><br>by Rev. R. J. Rushdoony  |   |
| <b>EDITORIAL</b> .....   | 2 |
| <i>Calculated Despair</i> , by Rev. Andrew Sandlin   |   |
| <b>BIBLICAL STUDY</b> .....  | 4 |
| <i>Victory in Christ, not Ceremonies</i><br>by Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony  |   |
| <b>OUR MAN IN WASHINGTON</b> .....   | 5 |
| <i>Christians Must Speak God's Word Plainly, Unashamedly</i><br>by John Lofton   |   |
| <i>Missions in the Book of Daniel</i><br>by Rev. Thomas Schirrmacher .....   |   |
| 7  |   |
| <i>Audio Reconstruction: A Beautiful Ministry</i><br>by Byron Snapp .....  |   |
| 9  |   |
| <i>Promises, Promises! A Review of David Hagopian and Douglas Wilson's New Book, Beyond Promises: A Biblical Challenge to Promise Keepers</i> , by Rev. Brian M. Abshire ..... |   |
| 11   |   |
| <i>Human Rights and the Persecution of Christians in Islam</i><br>by Dr. Christine Schirrmacher .....  |   |
| 13   |   |
| <i>Urban Nations Update: Welcome to My World</i><br>by Steve M. Schlissel .....  |   |
| 15   |   |
| <i>Jihad and Slavery In Sudan — Africa's Forgotten War</i><br>Story Furnished by Frontline Fellowship .....  |   |
| 17   |   |
| <i>Why Is The United Nations Anti-Christian?</i><br>by Peter Hammond .....   |   |
| 17   |   |
| <i>Teaching Daughters to Blaspheme God</i> , by Ovid Need .....  |   |
| 20   |   |
| <i>The Sign of The Son of Man</i> , by Joseph P. Braswell .....  |   |
| 22   |   |
| <i>Demythologizing Marcus Borg of the "Jesus Seminar"</i><br>by John B. King, Jr. ....   |   |
| 24   |   |
| <i>Van Til and Postmodernism</i> , by Larry Ball .....   |   |
| 30   |   |
| <b>POSITION PAPER NO. 205</b>  |   |
| <i>The Spirit of Heresy</i> , by R. J. Rushdoony .....   |   |
| 33   |   |
| <b>RANDOM NOTES, 63</b> .....  |   |
| 34   |   |
| <b>SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> .....   |   |
| 35   |   |

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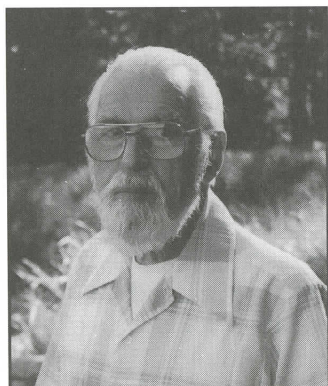
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# The Right to Rape and Murder?

By R. J. Rushdoony



**F**or some generations now, there has been a major movement to separate law and morality. The two were long seen as essentially alike, derived from the triune God and inseparable. Law and morality were alike given by God and expressions of His nature.

The first major departure from this came with the Marquis de Sade, who

expressed openly what his generation believed, namely, that supernatural law, *i.e.*, all law derived from God, was evil because it was against nature. Only what expressed man's fallen and natural being was valid law. Hence, for Sade the only crime was Christianity; abortion, murder, rape, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, theft, all such moral offenses, were really natural acts and had to be permitted.

The direction of our courts today is Sadean. We have seen abortion and homosexuality made legal, euthanasia in process of becoming so, and groups now promoting man-boy love, bestiality, and other perversions. (I was told of one person that said, "What is wrong with bestiality if it is my dog?")

Major religious groups, against the plain words of Scripture, now oppose capital punishment. We are told by many that morality is purely a matter of personal values, not of universally valid laws. Victims of crimes are sometimes treated with less respect than the criminals.

Why the surprise? We have denied God as our Law-giver. Emile Durkheim's thesis that the criminal might be an evolutionary pioneer, exploring a new way of "moral" behavior, has entered deeply into our culture.

Meanwhile, we treat God and His law gingerly, and with an evolutionary point of view. Supposedly the Bible represents some lower level of morality! And we are bewildered that our youth, products of anti-Christian schooling and popular culture, are more and more simply the new barbarians in the streets, dismantling civilization at every turn. We forget that our state schools and our courts of law did the pioneering work, and our youth are simply following their direction.

Before Hitler there came legal positivism in Germany which reduced law to the will of the state and morality to myth. The first victim of tyranny (rule without God) is morality, and our present legal trend is towards the radical

separation of Biblical law and morality from the laws of the modern state. Freedom has never existed apart from a Biblical faith, and, in waging a war against Biblical law and morality, the modern state and its courts are working to abolish freedom.

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In the 1960s, in Palo Alto, California, I heard a state school teacher insist that, in the modern world, freedom is obsolete because a scientific society cannot exist with the random freedom of individuals. She was more honest than most, who use the language of liberty to work against it.

The antinomianism of the churches feeds this destruction of law and morality. Having rejected God's law, they have only state law. In the stead of morality, they offer pious gush. 1 Peter 4:17 tells us that "judgment must begin at the house of God." Have these antinomian churches no fear of God?

If we fail to be faithful, God will raise up other peoples to carry on His triumphant conquest of the nations. If we are ashamed of our Lord and of the Scriptures, God will be ashamed of us. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" (*Josh. 24:15*).

## EDITORIAL

# Calculated Despair

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

**T**he modern era, jaded by two world wars, battles of extermination, totalitarian regimes, nihilistic philosophy, and Death of God theologies, is an era of despair. Robert Herrera, in a treatment of the despairing views of Kafka, Unamuno, and Rosenzweig, observes:

Contemporary man is only aware of a vague malaise, an unsettledness he attempts to silence by means of





trivial pursuits and the gravity of everyday life. Politics becomes social activism; religion, maudlin sentiment; philosophy, deconstructionism.<sup>1</sup>

Herrera traces the course of the abolition of God:

[I]f, in fact, God is dead, both names and agonic life shatter on the rocks of the absurd. If God lives, he is

surely absent — absent in the tradition of the Psalms and the Psalms of Solomon. He has withdrawn, and the vacuum produced by his withdrawal is a sounding silence. The world has returned to Gadara. Legions of devils swarm into new and loathsome habitats.<sup>2</sup>

Secular, autonomous man invites devils because the only alternative to serving God is serving himself or Satan, and in serving himself he serves Satan (*Gen. 3; Rom. 6:15-18*). Because man is created to serve God only, any worship of Satan creates a naturally irreconcilable conflict in the core of man's being — ungodly man is necessarily fragmented man, and fragmented man is necessarily despairing man.

Despair as an infallible mark of this age is instanced indelibly in its art, especially its music. Handel's and Bach's bars of joy yield to the Rolling Stones' and Ozzie Osborne's odes of despair. No less do painting, movies, and theater — when sincere and fully self-conscious — highlight the lowlight of the age, the despair of the drowning man not merely without hope, but without hope of hope.

The despair is the effect of a calculated decision — those rebelling against God and his inscripturated revelation can expect nothing more nor less than this despair. As the bird not designed to swim and the fish not designed to fly expire when shorn from their divine design, so man, designed to love and obey God, can do no other successfully. The suicide of Judas is the microcosm of the suicide of a rebellious world — to betray Christ is to betray man and his calling.

The message of the Bible is the message of hope for both time and eternity — not merely eternity, where evil will be obliterated, but in time also, where it will be vanquished. Since man's sin and its effects occurred on the plane of human history, so Christ's righteousness and its effects must occur on the plane of history. God has not postponed visible

victory until eternity, the day of judgment, or even the Second Advent. The sin of the First Adam which plunged the race into iniquity will be vanquished by the righteousness of the Second Adam which restores the elect to obedience (*Rom. 5:12-21*). *The Second Adam, not the First Adam, will prevail.*

Godly man is restored to his legitimate calling as God's vicegerent in the earth (*Gen. 1:27-28*). It is a task fueled by the joy of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22, 23*) and the knowledge of the eternal significance of the task (*1 Cor. 15:58*). Dominion Man practices godly charity, godly childrearing, godly politics, godly evangelism, godly art, godly education, godly business — godliness in all he does (*1 Cor. 10:31*). His life is one of total meaning.

Will there not be conflicts? There will be. There are no victories without battles. Our brethren today in the Sudan fighting for their very existence, combating the murder, rape, plundering, slavery, and torture of their covenant community (while most of the Western world sits idly by troubled by fluctuations in the leading economic indicators) are not comforted by the glib American maxim, "Trust Jesus and he'll take care of all your troubles." When one's children are sold into slavery, wife is raped, and friends are peeled alive, he is not exactly interested in Church Growth methodology, laughing revivals, and Promise Keepers. He knows that victory requires battles, and that the stakes are high.

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But Christians are no masochists. We do not glory in suffering. We work for triumph. As Chilton notes of the great sixteenth-century Scotch reformer, "[John] Knox did not want martyrdom; he wanted victory."<sup>3</sup>

We press forward with no despair, only assurance—

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assurance that the Triune God speaking infallibly in Holy Scripture will bring all his enemies to their knees in time and history.

We are privileged to participate in his triumph.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Herrera, "They Are Legion: The Tragedy of Twentieth-Century Man," *Modern Age*, Vol. 38, No. 3 [Summer, 1996], 220.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 323.

<sup>3</sup> David Chilton, "John Knox," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. V, No. 2 [Winter, 1978-79], 197, quoting Jasper Ridley, *John Knox* (New York, 1968), 83.

### "A Day to Remember": Entire Conference

The April 27, 1996 San Jose Conference of Christian Reconstruction and the 80th Birthday celebration in honor of Dr. Rousas John Rushdoony is now available on six cassette tapes.

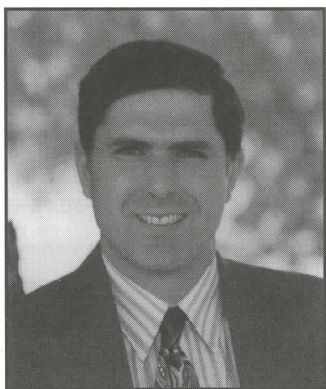
Speakers are Dr. Rushdoony, Herb Titus, Andrew Sandlin, and Howard Phillips. Included also is the presentation to Dr. Rushdoony of the book *A Comprehensive Faith*.

The six tapes (presented in a storage case) are \$45.00 (California residents to include sales tax send \$48.26). Shipping included. Send check or money order to Christian Tape Productions, P.O. Box 1804, Murphys, CA 95247.

### BIBLICAL STUDY

## Victory in Christ, not Ceremonies

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony



*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled*

*principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:13-15)*

Paul is showing how a proper understanding of the person and atonement of Jesus Christ must cause believers to accept the complete sufficiency of His salvation. To add to Christ's work is to detract from its efficiency. The issue here was circumcision, in and of itself a godly sign of the covenant. But man's sin has a way of taking that which is good and using it for evil. Symbols and signs were and are only valid if they point to the truth and the glory of God. If they become twisted by unbelief, traditions, or misuse, they cease to teach the truth of God and can even mislead. This is what had happened to the rite of circumcision. It represented more tradition than teaching, more racial pride than covenantalism, and more work than devotion. This false view of circumcision was itself evil, but when it was added to the work of Jesus Christ it represented a perversion of true salvation by Christ's atonement and hence a hindrance to the truth. Paul therefore sets the record straight that such ceremonies cannot be added as a requirement of salvation.

The Colossian believers were dead in their sins and uncircumcised before they were forgiven. Sins are outward evidence of the corruption of nature that results in death. Their uncircumcised state was evidence of their estrangement from God's covenanted promises. They were, as Paul told the Ephesians, "... alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the promises" (*Eph. 2:11*).

In this state of inward and outward alienation, God "quickened" (regenerated) and forgave them all their sins. Their uncircumcised state did not prevent their justification or regeneration. This was to remind them that they were not to view circumcision as conferring anything which they had been freely given. Circumcision pointed men to the covenant promise of salvation. That salvation was by the atonement of Jesus Christ. This salvation was conferred by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. To the extent that a part of that faith was placed in circumcision, or anything else, it would be a false faith and a false view of salvation. Free reconciliation by Christ's atonement is at odds with being bound to any rite.

The ceremonies were like a handwriting of obligation or a contract for debt. The obligation remains as long as the document remains. In more modern terms, the signs of the old covenant were like a mortgage. The mortgage contract remains in the hands of the lender as long as the debt exists. When paid, the mortgage document is then handed over to the former debtor, representing his freedom from further obligation. The custom of "burning the mortgage" was the borrower's celebration of his new freedom from obligation.

Paul says Jesus Christ has blotted out the handwriting of obligation. Christ has, in effect, burned our mortgage. More precisely, Christ has paid our debt with his blood and destroyed it forever as an indictment against us. Those who claim anything else is necessary to salvation deny the efficacy of Christ's work. If Jesus Christ has freed us from bondage to sin, and He regenerated and justified the Colossians without circumcision, then neither that



requirement nor any other can be made a necessary prerequisite to the accomplished redemption.

Ceremonies taught truths and offered means of obeying the Savior God's command. But the truths could and did become lost on faithless people as obedience became tradition which became a work. New signs of the covenant were instituted which more specifically pointed to the work of Jesus Christ. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant promises, but baptism included a representative washing and illustrated the centrality of Christ's atonement to our understanding of God's covenant promises. The Passover taught of God's gracious salvation, but the Lord's Supper emphasized that it was Christ's sacrificed body and shed blood that saves. There was nothing wrong with circumcision or the Passover, just as there was nothing wrong with the seventh-day Sabbath. Baptism and the Lord's Supper point more directly to Christ, as does gathering on the first day of the week. All of these can and have been misused. The most grievous misuse is adding them to the gospel of salvation. Christ fastened all our debts to the cross. No obligation can be added to the gospel of salvation.

Christ not only accomplished our redemption on the cross; He openly makes a show of His triumph (v. 15). To add human requirements to the free gospel of salvation is to say Christ's victory was incomplete and His show of triumph false.

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*Christ has paid our debt  
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Circumcision and the Passover pointed in shrouded images to salvation in Jesus Christ. Baptism and the Lord's Supper do so more clearly. The promise is not better than its fulfillment, and anticipation is not to be preferred to reality. It is superstitious to cling to old rites when Christ gives us new, more meaningful ones. It is, however, blasphemous to claim as false teachers had, that the old rites are necessary to salvation. No one, no "principality" or "power" can take the complete victory of Jesus Christ away by adding requirements to faith. For the church to allow such to be taught was a terrible thing.

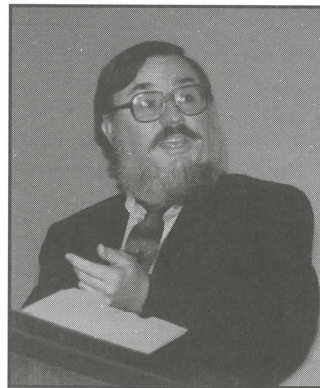
Covenant theology provides a healthy perspective on this

issue. If Scripture is seen as a whole, it can be appreciated as all pointing to Jesus Christ. One can see the beauty and holiness in ceremonies properly regarded but not be superstitiously attached to them beyond their appointed time and usefulness. Judaism became a prisoner to a false view of the old, while dispensationalists are prisoners to a perverse contempt for the old. The old rites, remember, were not the problem in Colosse. The problem was the heresy which tried to add them as a requirement to the free gospel of salvation — misused as such they were a perversion of the gospel.

## OUR MAN IN WASHINGTON

# Christians Must Speak God's Word Plainly, Unashamedly

*By John Lofton*



I believe in plain-spoken, Biblical language because I see God commanding this. For example, in Romans 10:17, St. Paul tells us: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Thus, if Christians are not preaching God's Word — but, instead, are babbling incessantly about "values" and "traditions" and being

(ugh!) "people of faith" — then God's Word is not being preached. Faith will not come. People will not be saved.

Commenting on this passage, starting at verse 12, Matthew Henry says, in part:

The beginning, progress, and strength of faith, are by hearing. The Word of God is therefore called the Word of faith: it begets and nourishes faith. God gives faith, but it is by the Word as the instrument. Hearing (that hearing which works faith) is by the Word of God. It is not hearing the enticing words of man's wisdom, but hearing the Word of God, that will befriend faith, and hearing It as the Word of God. See 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

In 1 Cor. 15:33, God says: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Regarding this passage, beginning at verse 20, Henry observes, again in part:



The apostle closes his argument with a caution, exhortation, and reproof. 1. A caution against the dangerous conversation of bad men, men of loose lives and principles: Be not deceived, says he; evil communications corrupt good manners.... Note, bad company and conversation are likely to make bad men. Those who would keep their innocence must keep good company. Error and vice are infectious: and, if we would avoid the contagion, we must keep clear of those who have taken it. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Proverbs 13:20.

For Christians to speak their own words — within the context in which I am writing here — and not God's Word, is evil communication.

### The Further Testimony of Matthew Henry

In Matthew 5:37, God says: "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Says Henry: (5.) That therefore in all our communications we must content ourselves with, Yea, yea, and nay, nay, v. 37. In ordinary discourse, if we affirm a thing, let us only say, Yea, it is so; and, if need be, to evidence our assurance of a thing, we may double it, and say, Yea, yea, indeed it is so: Verily, verily, was our Saviour's yea, yea. So if we deny a thing, let suffice to say, No; or if it be requisite, to repeat the denial, and say, No, no; and if our fidelity be known, that will suffice to gain us credit; and if it be questioned, to back what we say with swearing and cursing, is but to render it more suspicious. They who can swallow a profane oath, will not strain at a lie. . . .

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*If Christians are not preaching God's Word — but, instead, are babbling incessantly about "values" and "traditions" and being (ugh!) "people of faith" — then God's Word is not being preached.*

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"The reason is observable; For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil, though it do not amount to the iniquity of an oath. It comes *ek tou Diabolou*; so an ancient copy has it: it comes from the Devil, the evil one; it comes from the corruption of men's nature, from passion and vehemence; from a reigning vanity in the mind, and a contempt of sacred things: it comes from that deceitfulness which is in men. All men are liars; therefore men use these

protestations, because they are distrustful one of another, and think they cannot be believed without them. Note, Christians should, for the credit of their religion, avoid not only that which is in itself evil, but that which cometh of evil, and has the appearance of it. That may be suspected as a bad thing, which comes from a bad cause."

In Matthew 10:27, God commands: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." Matthew Henry says that this means: "(7.) what I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light (v. 27); whatever hazards you run, go on with your work, publishing and proclaiming the everlasting gospel to all the world; that is your business, mind that. The design of the enemies is not merely to destroy you, but to suppress that, and, therefore, whatever be the consequence, publish that. What I tell you, that speak ye.

"Note, that which the apostles have delivered to us is the same that they received from Jesus Christ, Heb. 2:3. They spoke what He told them—that, all that, and nothing but that. Those ambassadors received their instructions in private, in darkness, in the ear, in corners, in parables. Many things Christ spake openly, and nothing in secret varying from what he preached in public, John 18:20. But the particular instructions which He gave His disciples after His resurrection, concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, were whispered in the ear, Acts 1:3, for then He never showed Himself openly. But they must deliver their embassy publicly, in the light, and upon the house-tops; for the doctrine of the gospel is what all are concerned in, Proverbs 1:20-21; 8:2-3; therefore he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The first indication of the reception of the Gentiles into the church, was upon a house-top, Acts 10:9. Note, there is no part of Christ's gospel that needs, upon any account, to be concealed; the whole counsel of God must be revealed, Acts 20:27. In never so mixed a multitude let it be plainly and fully delivered."

And in Acts 26:26, St. Paul says:

For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

Says Matthew Henry, in part: "[St. Paul] appeals to Agrippa concerning what he spoke (v. 26): For the king knows of these things, concerning Christ, and his death and resurrection, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, which had their accomplishment therein. He therefore spoke freely before him, who knew these were no fancies, but matters of fact, knew something of them, and therefore would be willing to know more: For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; no, not that which he had related concerning his own conversion, and the commission he had received to preach the gospel. Agrippa could not but have heard of it, having been so long conversant among the Jews. This thing was not done in a corner; all the country rang of it; and any of the Jews



present might have witnessed for him that they had heard it many a time from others, and therefore it was unreasonable to censure him as a distracted man for relating it, much more for speaking of the death and resurrection of Christ, which was so universally spoken of. Peter tells Cornelius and his friends (*Acts 10:37*), That word you know which was published throughout all Judea concerning Christ; and therefore Agrippa could not be ignorant of it, and it was a shame for Festus that he was so."

### The Testimony of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy

In a book by Harold Stahmer, titled *Speak That I May See Thee! The Religious Significance of Language* (Macmillan, 1968), there is a chapter about Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, a man whose work has had an important impact on the thinking of Dr. Rushdoony. Born in 1888 in Berlin, ERH is described as one who became a Christian at 16 years of age and one who "gnawed continually on the bone of language," being appropriately hailed throughout Europe as *Der Sprachdenker* — "the Speech Thinker."

As Stahmer tells it, for ERH and those who were associated with a group he was, in known as "The Patmos Circle" (1915-1923), the problem of their age was, as it had been for St. John in his time, a speech problem. And "this problem was characterized by an absence of real personal encounter, together with a lack of a common language able to bridge the cultural and academic compartmentalization which prevailed not only in academic circles but at every level of European and, especially, German culture."

But, ERH was, as a Christian, dead set against this. Says Stahmer: "He was determined that any commitment he should make would not result in departmentalization — in an isolation of his energies in any single area, whether politics, religion, or scholarship. The time was behind him when he could view life categorically in terms of recognized divisions and compartments. In the trenches he had experienced the breakdown of the civilization that included these three intellectual pillars."

Stahmer quotes ERH as observing, in an assertion as relevant today as when he first uttered it, perhaps more so: "The professors seemed as wanting as the princes, the ministers of the Word as secluded as their laity, the makers of political constitutions and of party platforms as unaware of the judgment of God upon our world as blind masses." Stahmer says — and, again, this sounds as current as reading today's newspapers or watching TV "news" — that for ERH the complete breakdown of the German language between 1933 and 1939 was, in the words, of ERH, "one of the speediest and most radical events of all times in the field of mind and speech." Reflecting on this breakdown, ERH remained more convinced than ever that "... the science of this lifeblood of society [*i.e.*, language] should ... be exalted to the rank of social research." Stahmer says that ERH presents speech "as the means whereby men become conscious of their variety and at the same time aware that it is speech which provides the clue and means to healing

the rifts between men and creating a viable, healthy society." And he favored submitting to the approach of St. John, with such an approach providing a means of overcoming (and do we need this today! — J.L.) "the difficulties created by those who insist upon rigid, often absolute distinctions between sacred and secular concerns."

For those who inflexibly separated sacred/secular concerns, Stahmer says ERH believed the answer to this problem re: the question about the place and nature of God was a simple one. The answer was within a Johannine setting. He quotes ERH as saying: "The power who puts questions into our mouths and makes us answer them is our God. The living God thus revealed by Jesus must be forever distinguished from the merely conceptual God of philosophers. Most atheists deny God because they look for Him in the wrong way. He is not an object, but a person, and He is not a concept but a Name. To approach Him as an object of theoretical discussion is to defeat the quest from the start. Nobody can look at God as an object. God looks at us and has looked at us before we open our eyes or mouths. He is the power which makes us speak. He puts words on our lips."

"Speak That I May See Thee!"

What a wonderful title.

What do people hear and see when you speak? Do they hear and see a Christian, speaking the Word of God? I hope so. Because God is also listening and watching. And He tells us that when we stand before Him, we will give an account for "every idle word" (*Mt. 12:36*).

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*John Lofton is presently speaking on: "The Spiritual War We Are In and How God Commands Us to Fight It: Why Christians Are So Numerous Yet, Alas, So Powerless in America Today." To negotiate directly with John regarding a speaking date, you can fax him at (301)953-3423, or write him at 313 Montgomery St. Laurel, MD 20707. His e-mail address is JLoft@AOL.com.*

## Missions in the Book of Daniel

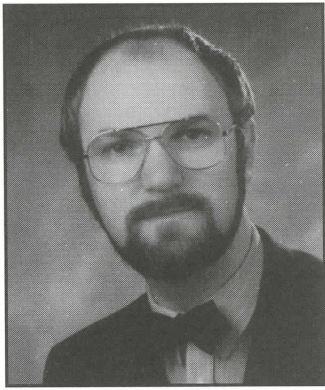
*By Rev. Thomas Schirrmacher*

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### Daniel as Missionary to the Heathen

The prophet Daniel is of double significance for missions to all nations. On the one hand, his book takes place among the heathen and reports that they have heard of the God of Israel on an international scale. On the other hand, he announces prophetically how God will deal with them and that His kingdom will one day include the whole world through the atoning death of His Son.





Daniel and his three friends are at the Babylonian Court (*Dan. 1*) and, in spite of Chaldean education, keep the commands of Israel's God (*Dan. 1:8-17*), apparently with God's blessing (*Dan. 1:15-20*), so that Daniel becomes the third most powerful man in the government of three successive world empires (*Dan. 1:21, 2:48-*

*49, 5:29, 6:3-29*).

God reveals himself in a dream to the pagan ruler Nebuchadnezzar — even though the dream could be interpreted only by the Jewish missionary Daniel (*Dan. 2*; compare the dream in *Dan. 4:7-24*). The courageous testimony of Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace leads the King to an initial, wonderful confession of the God of Israel to all the world (*Dan. 3:28-30*) "because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (*Dan. 3:29*). Even more wonderful is Nebuchadnezzar's letter (*Dan. 4:1-37*) to all "people, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth" (*Dan. 4:1*). In this letter, the most powerful man of his time confesses how God had humiliated him. He begins and ends the document with magnificent confessions and descriptions of the living God (*Dan. 4:1 2. 34-36*). "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation" (*Dan. 4:1* and *34*): "All his works are truth and his ways judgment" (*Dan. 4:37*).

In the same way, God reveals himself to Nebuchadnezzar's heir, Belshazzar (*Dan. 5*) through a writing on the wall, and to the Mede, Darius, through Daniel's courageous testimony in the lions' den. Darius also proclaims God's power to the whole world in an official, international circular (*Dan. 6:25-28*). He commands that "in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel . . . for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his . . . dominion shall be even unto the end" (*Dan. 6:26*). Like Nebuchadnezzar, he emphasizes that Daniel's God "delivereth and rescueth" (*Dan. 6:27*). (The final chapters of Daniel include the prophet's own dreams during the reigns of Beshazzar, Darius and Cyrus).

During Daniel's lifetime, therefore, the great world empires had heard at least twice from the highest rulers, that the God of Israel is the most powerful God, the Creator and the only real Saviour! Daniel was one of the most significant and successful missionaries of history!

### God's Worldwide Kingdom is Coming

We have assumed that the prophet Daniel was significant for missions to all nations for two reasons: 1. because the contents of his book take place among pagans and reports

that heathen have heard of the God of Israel on an international scale, and 2. because Daniel prophetically announces how God will deal with the heathen nations, and that His kingdom will encompass the whole world through the atoning death of the Son of Man. We will now consider the second point.

The future of the world's great empires and the coming of the Son of Man to save mankind are primarily described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 and in the prophet's visions in chapters 7 to 12. Although heathen nations play an important role in other prophecies in the book (*Dan. 8*), we will discuss here only the prophecies which deal with the relationship between the kingdoms of the world and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Most Bible-believing theologians agree that the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (*Dan. 2*) and in Daniel's vision of the four beasts (*Dan. 7*) represents a succession of great world kingdoms: the Babylonians (gold, lion), the Medes and the Persians (silver, bear), the Greeks (copper, panther) and the Romans (iron, terrible beast). Both visions show that God will replace these human kingdoms in the period of Roman rule by his own eternal Kingdom — which has been realized in the New Testament church. The theme that God is the actual Sovereign of the world, and that His Kingdom, not those of human rulers, will last eternally, permeates the whole book of Daniel.

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*Daniel was one of the  
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Nebuchadnezzar's dream ends when the figure is destroyed by a stone, which grows into a "great mountain and filled the whole earth" (*Dan. 2:35* and *45*). Daniel explains, "In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (*Dan. 2:44*). The Age of World Empires will therefore end with the Romans, the Kingdom of God will be established during the period of Roman rule and grow, until it fills the whole earth. This kingdom will not be assumed by any other nation, either by those mentioned in the text or by the Jews — as the statement, "shall not be left to another people" is interpreted by many. Jesus — beginning with the disciples and the church — had indeed established His Kingdom during the Roman period, and in many parables had already announced that



the Kingdom would grow until it filled the earth (for example, *Mt. 13:24-35*).

Daniel interprets the end of the kingdoms represented by the beasts in the same way (*Dan. 7:9-14*; interpretation, *Dan. 7:26-27*). God decides from His throne to end the empires (*Dan. 7:9-12*). This occurs when the Son of Man, Jesus' own name for Himself, ascends to Heaven and there receives "dominion and glory, and a kingdom" from God, so that "all people, nations and languages, should serve him" (*Dan. 7:14*). This kingdom will be eternal (*Dan. 7:14*). "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (*Dan. 7:27*).

The prophecy of the establishment of an eternal kingdom including all peoples (*Daniel 9:24-27*) is significant, although its interpretation is disputed. In my opinion, this concerns the time between the reconstruction of Jerusalem (vs. 24, 25) and the crucifixion of Jesus ("to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy and to anoint the most Holy," vs. 24, "shall Messiah be cut off," vs. 26, the cessation of the sacrifices, vs. 9:27). The period of time between the events is set at 490 years (70 year-weeks of 7 years per week), which fits arithmetically, in any case. Not until the elimination of Messiah does a prince destroy the holy city (vs. 26), which initiates the "end" (vs. 26) of the Age of the Jews. This occurred in 70 B.C., when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman Emperor. (Vs. 27 repeats vs. 26 chronologically; "he" in vs. 27 would therefore be the Messiah, the "Abomination of desolation," the destruction of the Temple; see *Mt. 24:15*).

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<sup>1</sup> Dispensationalists see Pentecost only as a "prefulfillment" of Joel 2 and do not expect the complete fulfillment until the Millennium. This interpretation is primarily directed against the Charismatics, who expect the fulfillment of the latter rain of Joel 2 in the form of a universal outburst of charismatic activity in the last days. In my opinion, neither interpretation adequately explains the fact that Peter is preaching an immediate fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in the Pentecostal occurrence. He includes the miraculous signs of Joel 2:28-32 in his description of Pentecost—signs which, in the Old Testament always indicated overwhelming spiritual, mental and political upheavals, such as in my opinion, sufficiently accompanied the end of the Old Covenant. No stars must literally fall from Heaven, which would destroy the earth in any case, so that there could be no more history on this earth.

## Audio Reconstruction: A Beautiful Ministry

By Byron Snapp



The thousands of tapes are beautiful—not in the sense of their being colorful or outwardly different from a normal tape. Each is beautiful in the sense of which Isaiah spoke in 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

The tapes are the major ministry of Mt. Olive Tape Library in Mt. Olive, Mississippi. The library is the realized dream of its director, George Calhoun. The idea originated as George looked for solid material to equip him in his weekly preparation to teach a Sunday School class. Hungry to know more of God's word and to teach others accordingly, he needed more than the weak outlines provided in many Sunday School teachers' manuals.

By insistence of a friend, he attended some Reformed conferences in the late 60s which featured sound teaching. As conference messages were made available by tapes, George realized what a tremendous opportunity had presented itself. This teaching he had heard could be reviewed at home by listening to the tapes.

Having a servant's heart, George thought of others who could also benefit from the conference but were unable to attend. He began to loan out the tapes. His personal inventory increased as he annually bought more conference and sermon tapes.

God had prepared him for this ministry years earlier. While in the Marines he had studied mechanics and systems. He was readily able to begin properly to organize the increasing number of Reformed messages he was receiving.

Available tapes were first listed on one- and two-page publications and distributed among interested students at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. The tapes were advantageous to those students as they wrestled to gain a Biblical perspective on numerous issues. These small lists gained wider circulation, literally around the world.

Their circulation necessitated the establishing of the library as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. The library requires much work. Incoming tapes must be checked for Biblical faithfulness. A master copy must be made. Another copy is made to duplicate tapes for library



users. Orders must be filled, mail answered, and equipment maintained. For years the Lord has enabled George and a small staff, under the oversight of a board, to maintain this ministry that has literally had a worldwide impact.

I do not know of a greater example of the exercise of dominion over cassette tapes. George discovered the validity of cassette tapes at a time when the Lord was allowing a resurgence of Reformed teaching through the pulpit and conference ministry in the United States. George has traveled thousands of miles to conferences to do actual taping so that Biblical teaching could be shared with a wider audience. Numerous people have also sent him tapes.

George's wife Gracie is affectionately known as "Mrs. Mt. Olive Tape Library." She is a faithful prayer warrior and an avid reader of Reformed literature. She has been a Biblical helpmate in the midst of George's many travels on behalf of the library. She cooked many meals for seminary students who were in Mt. Olive helping George organize the tapes and get the library established. Visitors to the library often find themselves invited to Gracie's table for continued fellowship with George and Gracie over a hot meal.

Although interest in Reformed theology is growing at the grass roots, a multitude of Christians have no local church in which Biblical instruction can be heard. Many such people have regularly found the Mt. Olive inventory to be a spiritual gold mine. Within the Library's resources, listeners have found expositions of numerous books of Scripture, topical studies, an in-depth study of *Pilgrim's Progress*, as well as numerous tapes that concentrate on developing a Christian worldview.

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*Listening to tapes is an ideal way to redeem the time during the daily commute to and from work or school.*

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Some seminaries have incorporated many of these tapes into their various courses. Thus future pastors are receiving training that will ultimately, by God's grace, be passed on to the flocks they pastor.

Students at other seminaries have found the tapes to be a source of solid Biblical teaching to make up for what they are not receiving in the classroom. In addition to the material listed above, interested students can find excellent material on the validity of God's law for today,

apologetics, Biblical counseling and sound Biblical exposition.

Listening to tapes is an ideal way to redeem the time during the daily commute to and from work or school. I know of at least one chaplain who eagerly uses these tapes in his ministry to sailors during their sea duty. God's word is not bound. Tapes are ordered and received by prisoners throughout the U.S. God alone knows the extent of the tape ministry within as well as outside prison walls. Through George's efforts Reformed tape libraries have been established in prisons and churches in and outside the United States.

Visitors from America and overseas regularly find their way to this small southern Mississippi town due to the impact of the Tape Library in their lives. If George is there, he is most happy to give them a tour of the library building which also includes a small bookstore containing quality material.

The library's proximity to Reformed Theological Seminary allowed George to personally meet some excellent Reformed scholars in their visits to the Seminary in the early 70s. It was there that George met Dr. Van Til and Dr. Rushdoony. He realized their teaching was much needed by the current and future generations. Their tapes were readily incorporated into the library.

The library can be easily utilized. Although almost thirty years have passed since its beginning, tapes may still be rented for twenty-five cents each. Twelve tapes may be rented at a time. The renter can keep the tapes for thirty days, and then mail them back. Individual tapes can be purchased at a cost of \$2.50. Tapes may be shared with others by means of a group Bible study or through personal contact.

The Library can be contacted at the following address: P.O. Box 422, Mt. Olive, MS. 39119.

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# Promises, Promises!

*A Review of David Hagopian  
and Douglas Wilson's new book,*

## *Beyond Promises: A Biblical Challenge to Promise Keepers*

*By Brian M. Abshire*



Several years ago, an old friend with whom I had lost contact, called to see how things were going. As we got caught up on kids and jobs, how fat we were get-

ting and how much hair we were losing, my friend asked me if I had become involved with Promise Keepers. He then gave an impassioned commercial for the benefits of this wonderful organization for Christian men, teaching them how to be a "real man," fulfill their duties towards their wives and children, etc. I finally interrupted him saying, "Hey, Bob, all that sounds great, but I am already involved in just that kind of ministry; it's called a Reformed church." It struck me that this great new movement with Christian superstars and big rallies was just another example of broad evangelical hype on something that always has been fundamental to historic Reformed orthodoxy.

Well, I was wrong. There is far more to Promise Keepers than I realized. David Hagopian and Doug Wilson's new book, *Beyond Promises*, provides an inestimable service to the Christian community by analyzing the underlying theology and practices of an undisputedly powerful evangelical movement. Twenty-two regional conferences in 1996 expect almost 1.5 million men participating. More than 70,000 pastors showed up at the Georgia Dome for a full-fledged stadium-styled conference. 1997 hopes to see another million-man march in Washington.

Written in an irenic spirit, *Beyond Promises* does a marvelous job of critiquing this movement, giving full credit where due, without taking the cheap shots some of us would find irresistible. The authors fully acknowledge that Promise Keepers has identified a fundamental problem with American culture in general, and the evangelical church in particular; *Christian men are wimps*. This spirit of trying to work with Promise Keepers, rather than just criticize them, runs throughout the book.

### The Humanist Trash Can

However, their gentle manner makes their critique all that more effective. And critique it they do. For although Promise Keepers has correctly identified the problem, without a fully consistent Biblical world view to offer as an alternative, their solutions are little better than the left-over scraps of the Men's Movement, baptized with an occasional Bible verse and liberally sprinkled with psycho-babble. Once again, Evangelical Christianity has proven there is no fad so silly, that the church will not scrounge the Humanist trash heap for a few forgotten crumbs.

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*"Hey, Bob, all that sounds great, but I am already involved in just that kind of ministry; it's called a Reformed church."*

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*Beyond Promises* is broken down into four parts: What Promise Keepers does right, some causes for concern, a Biblical analysis of the actual promises made, and a concluding chapter offering some constructive challenges. The authors also weave a Biblical alternative throughout the book. Some weaving is better than others and I personally found their theology of the law a bit confused. However, for the most part, *Beyond Promises* actually provides what Promise Keepers themselves lack, a consistent, Biblical alternative to cultural models.

*Beyond Promises* credits Promise Keepers for identifying the crises in masculine confidence, pointing out male abdication of its role and calling, the feminization of the church, etc. Furthermore, Promise Keepers is to be commended for striving to create a real spiritual hunger in men for a closer relationship with Christ and seeking to help men to stand up and be counted. Not the least of the praises given is that Promise Keepers has earned the hatred and fear of the feminists. (Hey, they gotta be doing something right, right?) Wilson and Hagopian sum up the good points of Promise Keepers by saying, "In many ways, the movement is well full of promise!"

### A Feminizing Masculinity

But, sadly, the promise is often unfulfilled. Starting in the second section, the authors expose the underlying theology of Promise Keepers, and what they find is sometimes not good. In the "Gospel of Guyhood," Wilson and Hagopian state that "the gospel proclaimed by some Promise Keepers spokesmen is, with a few notable exceptions, nothing short of moralism, pure and simple, "To be saved, we must do."



How could it be otherwise? American evangelicalism long ago sold its Reformed heritage for Arminian pottage. It should not surprise us that a movement with such a mass appeal must meet the lowest common theological denominator.

This results in consistently mixed messages. While Promise Keepers desires ardently to help men be men, in the chapter entitled "The Tea Party Mentality" the authors reveal that inadvertently, Promise Keepers actually tries to make men, more like women. It lacks a consistent Biblical understanding of the roles and relationship between men and women, and therefore recommend that men become more sensitive, sharing, caring individuals; in other words, they want men to relate to other men, as women relate to other women. Though Promise Keeper authors and speakers extol the family, they sometimes end up undermining the Biblical concepts of headship and submission on which a Biblical family is based. In fact, Promise Keepers seems to downplay any authority except their own. To critique Promise Keepers in some people's eyes, is to critique God.

### **"Mentoring"**

*Beyond Promises* also identifies the fundamental flaw in a Promise Keepers key concept: the notion of "mentoring." Men need to be mentored by other men, according to Promise Keepers, men who will teach them, train them, stand alongside them, support them and hold them accountable. Who could argue with this? But it is not the need that is the problem, but the solution. God has already provided such men for "mentoring"; they are called "elders." Of course, as Rushdoony has repeatedly stated, "most elders think their job is sitting in judgment on the pastor, rather than governing the church." Promise Keepers is certainly right in finding the problem; it's just that they don't have a Biblical solution. Interesting that Promise Keepers chooses terminology from the business world, "mentoring" rather than the Biblical term "discipleship."

### **Mixed Signals**

The authors do give Promise Keepers full credit for drawing a clear line in the sand. "In no small measure, Promise Keepers has had the positive impact which it has had because of this emphasis on integrity and purity, straight up." In the area of sexual purity, Promise Keepers faces the situation head on and calls men to Biblical morality. However, the problem is that Promise Keepers does not always speak with a clear voice. Some say one thing, others say another. For example, Promise Keeper spokesman Robert Hicks wants young men to celebrate sins as "rites of passage." Or, in a Promise Keeper book, *Strategies for a Successful Marriage* co-authored by a divorced man, divorce is seen as an unhappy event, something painful, unfortunate, but never discussed in moral, covenantal terms: there is no mention of sin, compromise, moral failure, broken vows, etc.

Furthermore, in this same book on marriage (dealing with promise #4) *Beyond Promises* says that an assumption is made that the feminine expectations for marriage are accurate, and that the masculine ones are not. Hence the husband must learn to conform his behavior to his wife's expectations. Men are exhorted to discover their wives' expectations and then commit themselves to doing everything within their power to meet them. But shouldn't a man ask first, Are those expectations Biblical? Marriage exists first to glorify God. Meeting perceived needs can only occur if God is glorified, if husband and wife understand their specific Biblical roles, duties, and responsibilities.

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*They want men to relate  
to other men, as women  
relate to other women.*

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*Beyond Promises* rightly states that God gives each man a dominion calling and that, a wife's calling is to help her husband. "While a man must honor, love, and cherish the one given to him to help in his ordained task, he must not begin to think that he was created for her. He was created to do something else under God, and she was created as ideally suited to help him do it." Promise Keepers does not always seem to understand this.

### **Parents Who Don't Parent**

The same kind of mixed message also comes through regarding parenting. While the authors cite favorably James Dobson's clear Biblical instruction regarding discipline in *Seven Promises of A Promise Keeper*, they then note that the very next chapter takes away with the left hand what the right hand just gave. They analyze a family confrontation where a college student has done something which he knew would make his father angry, doing so simply because of peer pressure in the school. In other words, the opinion of his peers is more important to him than the opinion of his parents. The father is commended for not "blowing his stack," but the son is never confronted with his disrespect and contempt for his parents. This is hardly Biblical parenting. One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is to teach them to respect and honor their parents; it is the first commandment with a promise! Of course, Dad should not have blown up, but "the father grievously failed when he refused to address a profound problem that his son clearly had—an inability to resist ungodly pressure, even when the price of capitulation is hurting the family." But the author in question just doesn't get it and therefore sends a confused message.



## Undermining the Church

Though Promise Keepers' stated intention is to "complement what the church is already doing," the reality may be far different. Hagopian and Wilson state that "some of what it has taught may subtly undermine the local church in very serious ways." They note that while downplaying the sacraments (which the authors commend), Promise Keepers has initiated a whole new series of rituals; e.g., the "closing night coronation" or the "blessing of pastors." They also have adopted the now defunct "encounter-group" mentality as the basis for a small-group program. In effect, like certain other parachurch organizations, they recruit men out of the local church, motivate them with seminars, conferences, etc., which minimize crucial doctrinal issues and send those men back into the local church on "fishing" expeditions.

There is of course much more to be said about Promise Keepers, but read the book. In fact, *Beyond Promises* should be required reading for anyone concerned about the impact of the Promise Keeper's movement. It is a fair, even-handed critique, easy to read, with solutions rather than just endless criticism. Hagopian and Wilson are both committed to raising the standard of Biblical masculinity in the church. They have done a fine job. Buy an extra copy and start loaning it out:

***Beyond Promises:***  
***A Biblical Challenge to Promise Keepers,***  
Canon Press, P.O. Box 8741, Moscow ID 83843  
about \$15.00

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## Human Rights and the Persecution of Christians in Islam

***Dr. Christine Schirrmacher***

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When Christians are persecuted for their faith in Moslem countries, or when Moslems converted to Christianity are threatened with the death penalty, the Western press accuses the state of human rights violations. At the same time, most Islamic states have ratified declarations such as

the United Nations 1948 General Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>1</sup> How can they justify this contradiction?

### The Great Contradiction

In the last decades, various Islamic organizations have themselves formulated declarations of human rights. They have one basic difference to those of Western statements, however, in that they give priority to the Koran and to the Sharīa (Islamic law). Therefore, human rights can be guaranteed in these countries only under the conditions imposed by these two authorities and their regulations. Article 24 of the 1990 Cairo Declaration of Human Rights, for example, states that, "All rights and freedoms mentioned in this statement are subject to the Islamic Sharīa," and Article 25 adds, "The Islamic Sharīa is the only source for the interpretation or explanation of each individual article of this statement." This emphasizes the "historic role of the Islamic Umma,"<sup>2</sup> which was created by God as the best nation, which has brought humanity a universal and well-balanced civilization, in which harmony between life here on earth and the hereafter exists, and in which knowledge accompanies faith."<sup>3</sup>

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Islamic revelation.*

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What is the significance of the priority of the Koran and the Sharīa? It means, that in the Islamic states, human rights exist only within the limits of the religious values of Islamic revelation. They are guaranteed, however, within the framework determined by the Koran and Islamic law. The secularized Westerner, molded by the Enlightenment and accustomed to separation of church and state, has difficulties understanding that a country's political and social goals are determined by the standards of religion.

### Civil Rights for Moslems and Non-Moslems

From the very beginning, Islam knew no separation of religion and state, or of politics and religion, while, in the Old Testament, a clear division of authority between the king and the high priest did exist. In Islam, Mohammed had unified both aspects in his own person, being simultaneously religious and political leader of the first Islamic community. His immediate successors, the Caliphs, also



carried out both offices.

In the Islamic states, Islam is the state religion, to which all citizens are assumed to belong, and which is considered to be the "stabilizing principle. The State is bearer of a religious idea and is, therefore, itself a religious institution. It is responsible for the worship of God, for religious training and for the spreading of the faith."<sup>4</sup> For this reason, the law must distinguish between the civil rights of Moslems, who, proving their loyalty to the state by their adherence to its religion, can fully enjoy legal protection, and the rights of non-Moslems, whose "unbelief" makes them traitors who cannot therefore automatically expect the state's protection. In these countries, Moslems always have more rights than non-Moslems. A non-Moslem can usually not inherit from a Moslem, for example.

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*It is forbidden for non-Moslems to insult or disparage Islam, the Koran or the prophet Mohammed, which automatically occurs in Christian evangelization, according to Moslem opinion.*

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To be a Moslem means to be a citizen imbued with all legal rights, whereas to become an unbeliever is to commit high treason, for Islam is an "essential element of the basic order of the State."<sup>5</sup> When a Moslem repudiates his faith, he rebels against that order and endangers the security and the "stability of the society to which he belongs."<sup>6</sup> Martin Forstner concludes, "Only he who believes in God and the divinely revealed Koran, and who obeys the Sharīa, is able to become a competent citizen, whereas the ungodly are enemies of society. The repeated duty to confess the faith by fulfilling the five daily prayers, by fasting during Ramadan. . . is the medium by which the citizen's morale is conveyed, so that the Islamic State links full civil rights to the confession of the true faith."<sup>7</sup>

Because of this "watchman" function of the state over its citizens' religion, human rights cannot be given priority over Islamic law when a Moslem gives up his faith, in spite of human rights declarations. When a Moslem commits high treason—according to the Moslem point of view—religious law must be obeyed, and that requires the punishment of the renegade. On the other hand, a non-Moslem can enjoy only those rights given him by the Koran and the Sharīa.

## **To what extent does the non-Moslem have rights under an Islamic state?**

Although many Islamic countries include freedom of religion in their constitutions, non-Moslems almost always have great difficulties in exercising their faith. Moslems who have become Christians may even lose their lives. How can Islamic countries claim to guarantee freedom of religion? In spite of the fact that freedom of religion is part of the law in most Islamic countries, their constitutions declare Islam to be the state religion. A few other faiths, such as Judaism and Christianity, are allowed a certain right to exist, so that their members are not required to convert to Islam, even if they live in an predominantly Islamic area, but they are never equal to Moslems before the law. They remain "second-class citizens" with reduced legal rights and are subject to the Islamic State, which defines the limits of their religious freedoms very strictly (which includes the building of churches or matters of dress, for example). In most cases the Jewish or Christian faith must be lived quietly, for "a Moslem citizen cannot be expected to endure and continually resist the missionary activity of other religions."<sup>8</sup> Non-Moslem faiths are only tolerated, and are supervised. They may exist only under the conditions imposed by the law, otherwise not at all.

It is forbidden for non-Moslems to insult or disparage Islam, the Koran or the prophet Mohammed, which automatically occurs in Christian evangelization, according to Moslem opinion. Moroccan law, for example, requires a prison sentence of six months to three years, as well as a fine of 200 to 500 dirham, for proselytizing a Moslem to another religion.<sup>9</sup> Repudiation of Islam is still considered to be a crime worthy of death, whereas the Moslem has the right to proselytize others.

## **Conclusion**

Islamic human rights declarations of all kinds continually insist on the authority of the Islamic faith, and can therefore guarantee civil rights only which respect Islam and its principles. This automatically restricts the rights of non-Moslems, so that under Islamic law, only the Moslem can enjoy all rights, for only he is considered to be a loyal citizen. Non-Moslems have reduced rights, but are allowed to exist. The Moslem who repudiates his faith loses all his rights, for he is considered a traitor to his country and to the state and may be subject to the death sentence either under the legal system or by his neighbors. This is emphasized in the "Draft for an Islamic Declaration of Human Rights," which was composed by the Islamic Conference in Jidda in 1979. This statement forbids the Moslem ever to change his faith. Not to condemn the renegade to death would be an offense against the Sharīa, and can thus not be guaranteed, not even within the framework of a human-rights declaration.

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<sup>1</sup> Saudi Arabia is an exception, since it did not ratify the Declaration.

<sup>2</sup> "Umma" (Arabic) is the community, the congregation. It



indicates the universal fellowship of all Moslems.

<sup>3</sup> The Cairo Declaration of Human Rights was published, for example, in *Gewissen und Freiheit*, Nr. 36 (1991), 93-98. See also Osman El Hajje, "Die islamischen Länder und die internationalen Menschenrechtsdokumente," *Gewissen und Freiheit*, 36 (1991), 74-79, and the critical analysis by Martin Forstner, "Das Menschenrecht der Religionsfreiheit und des Religionwechsels als Problem der islamischen Staaten," *Kanon, Kirche und Staat im christlichen Osten. Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für das Recht der Ostkirchen* (Wien, 1991), 105-186. See also the publication of the "General Islamic Human Rights Declaration" of the Islamic Council for Europe in Paris, September 19, 1981 in Cibedo (Documentation) Nr. 15/16, (Frankfurt, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> O. Spiess and E. Pritsch. "Klassisches Islamisches Recht. 1. Wesen des Islamischen Rechts," *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, E. J. Brill (Leiden, 1964), 220.

<sup>5</sup> Forstner. *op. cit.*, 116.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 116, 138.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 114.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

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*Christine Schirrmacher is a published scholar in Islamic studies.*

## Urban Nations Update: Welcome to My World

*By Steve M. Schlissel*

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I trust you'll allow me the therapy afforded by an article which is not about our ministry *per se*, but about the context in which the ministry occurs. Thank you. First I'll give you the geographic, then the graphic contexts. America. Its 70 square miles are home to two and a half million people.

### Description

The streets of southern Brooklyn (not to be confused with the neighborhood called South Brooklyn, which is north of here), my stomping grounds, are easy to navigate. Unlike our eastern neighbor, Queens, our streets are laid out more or less grid-like, and are (for the most part) predictably named. Learn the exceptions and you've learned the rules. Ocean Parkway is E. 5th Street, Coney Island Avenue is E. 10th Street, Ocean Avenue is E. 20th Street, and so on.

At the westernmost tip of the southern tier is the municipally-created slum called Coney Island (which Coney Island Avenue does not intersect, by the way), capped by a private, fenced-in, out-of-place, middle-class, peninsula community called Seagate. In Coney, the avenues are seaworthy: Neptune, Mermaid and Surf.

Moving east the language heard on the streets is

everything but English, yet the streets themselves are easily navigated by native or immigrant. Brighton Beach Avenue runs through the length of the neighborhood from which it takes its name (and after which Neil Simon titled his memoirs). Half of it lies in the dark shadows of the elevated D train. Brighton Beach Avenue is intersected along its mile stretch by tiny streets in numerical order, each prefaced by "Brighton": Brighton 1st, Brighton 2nd, etc.

East of Brighton is upscale Manhattan Beach, where the streets are all British-sounding (except the main drag, Oriental Boulevard), and all in alphabetical order: Amherst, Beaumont, Coleridge, Dover, Exeter, and so on down to Pembroke. There are no stores and no apartment buildings. Instead, million-dollar homes lead you to believe you are definitely in suburbia.

Sheepshead Bay is an Atlantic Ocean inlet named after a fish long gone from the local murky waters. It is also, by extension, the name of the neighborhood just above the bay. Sheepshead Bay, the inlet, divides la-di-da Manhattan Beach from Sheepshead Bay, the multicultural neighborhood to its north. Sheepshead Bay is where the main action is for Urban Nations.

Though it's easy to navigate southern Brooklyn's streets, it isn't as easy to understand what happens on them. To be fair, and all things considered, ours is a decent neighborhood. The houses are generally well-kept, the streets are somewhat clean (by New York standards), and the graffiti is not as bad as in some other areas. There are few violent crimes (though it doesn't take many to unsettle you).

But violence isn't the only concern. Wanna know what makes it tough to live here? I'll tell you— in a moment.

I know the streets of Brooklyn. They are mine, or should I say "were." I was born and raised on them. But something has happened. There've been some big-time changes. I suppose there's always been enough lawlessness and provocation here in New York to make a theonomist out of any sane soul. But at one time you had to keep your sin hidden; now, it has spilled out onto the streets in the daylight and it seems there's no getting it back into the dark, its natural element.

### Debauchery

There is something profoundly disturbing about public debauchery, especially unrepented, unchecked and apparently unstoppable public debauchery. At Avenue Z and East 14th Street, Sheepshead Bay Road cuts in on a southeast course, continuing to E. 16th Street, where it turns south (right). The offices of Urban Nations, Messiah's Congregation and Meantime (our ministry helping women who were sexually abused as children) are located above Citibank right at the junction where Sheepshead Bay Road makes that turn.

In search of catharsis, let me tell you what we encounter daily. Exit the office and turn left. Forty yards ahead you'll see the D train el. Before you get there you'll pass several stores, among them two separate newspaper



stands which feature racks of disgusting pornography of every description, including transvestite and homosexual specialties.

In front of a closed-up shoe store, several drunks take up most of the sidewalk, a couple of them half-nude. As long as their booze is concealed by a bag, however, they remain unmolested by the police, though they themselves molest and strike terror into the hearts of kids, older people and other passersby.

Under the el, across the street, several more drunks congregate, and there are more around the corner, still more on Jerome Avenue, and another group on Voorhies. Sheepshead Bay must be featured in Wino Magazine as the new Mecca.

Law-abiders here are compelled to give way to, and subsidize, these sleazy denizens of the streets, the new protected class, previously known as bums, now called "homeless." This new, mendacious, victim-title has resulted in the biggest quality-of-life change in New York City in my lifetime. You cannot escape the state-supported (literally) stinking, abusive bums on the streets. They used to be confined to the Bowery and other infamous areas, where their status as scummy rejects made ministry to them possible, often fruitful. Now, thanks to the ACLU, they are distributed everywhere, a species better protected than spotted owls, and contemptuous of any help which approaches them as responsible creatures. "Welfare only, please."

The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

One of the "regulars" around here, a menacing, psychotic-variety bum, often hangs out smack-dab in front of our office entrance. On one occasion he chased a Meantime staff member and her client up E. 16th Street, terrorizing them. The police did nothing.

When we exploited a political connection to try to get action, we were later informed of what had been done to address the problem of the bums on Sheepshead Bay Road: a social worker was sent down to make them aware of the benefits to which they were entitled! I kid you not. They offered them money and programs!

If you exit our office and cross the street, you'll run into a line of young people waiting to mutilate their bodies in the body-piercing shop upstairs. If you exit the office and go to the right, just outside another porno-supported news stand, you will find the local drug dealers. These guys are older, in their 50s and 60s. They are so uncouth in their transactions that you would need to have a serious vision problem not to see what's going down. Everybody knows it.

. . . Just as everybody knows where the (illegal) gambling houses are. It is open and known to all where the illegal activity is, that it is protected, and that it is futile to try to do anything about it. It's just the way it is. And we live with it, dealing with it by adding another sigh in heaven's direction, asking for protection for us and our children (which sigh He hears, praise His Name).

But what gets us the most, what proves very nearly unbearable for us is this: in the midst of this squalor, the pornography, the piercing, the drugs, the open drunkenness, the urinating bums—in the midst of this we find the most ubiquitous, diligent, uncompromising, merciless branch of law enforcement in New York: the agents of the Parking Violations Bureau, which includes uniformed policemen.

Like locusts on Egypt, the ticket issuers are all over motorists in Sheepshead Bay. The lowest penalty, for an expired meter, is \$45. And you'll be hard pressed to meet a New Yorker who hasn't interrupted the agent who is in the process of writing a ticket, only to be told, "It's too late— I started writing."

There is no mercy, Lo-Ruhama (*Hosea 1:6*), for parking ordinance violators. Could it be because the Parking Violations Bureau nets the city \$350 million dollars a year in revenue? Hmmm.

The message in New York City is abundantly clear to those of us who have lived here all our lives: you can mutilate your body, you can pee in the street, you can fall down in a drunken stupor and block the sidewalk, you can accost passersby and beg for booze money, you can deal pornography with impunity, you can deal drugs with immunity, you can operate police-protected gambling halls— but don't, don't, whatever you do, DON'T park amiss. They need the money to subsidize the bums, in and out of office.

Ahh. Now I feel better. Thank you for the session. Now I can get back to doing God's ministry. Maybe next time I'll tell you about the provocation of welfare fraud. In the meantime, please send support and letters of encouragement to:

**URBAN NATIONS**  
2662 East 24th Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11235  
(718) 332-4444  
[UrbaNation@aol.com](mailto:UrbaNation@aol.com)

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*Steve M. Schlissel, a native New Yorker, has served as the pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn since 1979. Steve is the author of the popular booklet, Television or Dominion, and co-author of Hal Lindsey and the Restoration of the Jews, both published by Still Waters Revival Books. A featured columnist in the Canadian newspaper, Christian Renewal, Steve has had writings appearing in numerous journals and periodicals around the world. Steve currently serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations and as the Administrative Director of Meantime, a ministry to women who were sexually abused as children. He is much sought-after as a conference speaker and ministry consultant. Steve lives with his wife of 21 years, Jeannie, in Brooklyn. They have one daughter in college and continue to homeschool her four younger siblings.*



# Jihad and Slavery In Sudan — Africa's Forgotten War

*(Story Furnished by Frontline Fellowship)*

The longest war of this century is still in progress and is intensifying — in the largest country in Africa, Sudan. Since 1955 the Muslim Arab North has been attacking the Christian Black South. The death toll so far is about two million.

In his U.S. tour, firsthand Peter Hammond lifts the virtual news blackout on this colossal conflict. Over the last year Peter has documented the scorched-earth tactics, the systematic terror-bombing of civilian targets, and the resurgence of the slave trade in Sudan. He has just completed a book, *Faith Under Fire in Sudan* which exposes the atrocities of the militant Islamicist government of Sudan and presents many inspiring testimonies of Christian courage.

The human-rights violations have been most severe in the **Nuba Mountains**. Most of the villages and churches have been destroyed, hundreds of Christians crucified, and over one million people have been forced into concentration camps. Christian soldiers, who are literally fighting for their lives, point out that the Christians in Sudan have stood firm as a **bulwark against the expansion of militant Islam into Central Africa for fourteen centuries**.

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*Most of the villages and churches have been destroyed, hundreds of Christians crucified, and over one million people have been forced into concentration camps.*

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Peter presents the inspiring story of the oldest community of Christians in Africa. Despite suffering some of the worst persecution in the world today, many churches in Sudan are experiencing real revival and spectacular growth.

Frontline Fellowship missionaries have succeeded in

repeatedly breaching the UN blockade and have delivered over 3,000 Bibles to the suffering Christians in Southern Sudan. They have also had over 500 Arabic Bibles smuggled behind enemy lines into the Nuba Mountains of Central Sudan. Frontline Fellowship is assisting the persecuted churches with literature and leadership training programs and serving as Christian chaplains to the military forces resisting the Islamic invasion. Frontline is also establishing the first hospital for war-wounded inside the liberated zone of Equatoria. At present the wounded need to be transported to neighboring Kenya. Many limbs and lives have been lost unnecessarily due to the distances and delays involved in transporting the wounded across such vast distances.

Peter Hammond will also be able to report on the genocide in **Rwanda** (including the shocking role of gun control, the UN, the WCC and the media); the ongoing need to smuggle Bibles and medicines past the shoot-on-sight patrols, minefields, swamps and crocodile-infested rivers into Southern **Angola**; and the ongoing conflict in **Kwazulu** and the Christian Reformation in **Zambia**.

For more information contact Frontline Fellowship, P.O. Box 74, Newlands 7725, South Africa or Tel: (011-27-21) 689-4480 or Fax: (011-27-21) 685-5884.

## Why Is the United Nations Anti-Christian?

*By Peter Hammond*

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[Editor's Note: Portions of this article were printed earlier, but they bear repeating]

The missionaries of Frontline Fellowship understand that discomfort, diseases, delays and dangers are part of our job description. Evangelizing as we do in war zones and assisting persecuted churches we expect opposition — from Communist forces, Islamic governments and witchdoctors. However, we have often found the United Nations Organization to be an even greater enemy of the gospel.

### Blockading Southern Angola

For our missionaries to deliver humanitarian relief aid to people in Southern Angola we need to evade shoot-on-sight patrols and cross crocodile-infested rivers — in violation of international law! What is even more scandalous is that while Western governments have been selling weapons of mass destruction (such as napalm fuel-air bombs) to the Marxist MPLA government, they have imposed total economic sanctions on the Christians in the south of Angola. Over the past four years, not even medical aid has been



allowed to the Unita-controlled south.

On numerous occasions our Frontline Fellowship mission teams have managed to evade the military patrols and roadblocks, breach the blockade, by-pass the minefields and cross the rivers and swamps in order to deliver the desperately needed shipments of medicines, Bibles and relief aid. All the hospitals and clinics we have supplied in Cuando Cubango province have shown us empty dispensaries. They each reported that our mission was the only source of medicines and equipment that they had received over the past four years.

Many thousands of precious people have died needlessly — just because of the international United Nations sanctions placed upon their part of the country. More quinine would have spared thousands from malaria. More antibiotics would have saved the lives of thousands who have died of infection. Our mission has smuggled in eleven truck loads of Bibles, relief aid and medicine. The cost has been one vehicle written off, one team arrested and imprisoned and one of our missionaries, Anthony Duncan, killed in the service of Christ. On one field outreach to Angola, Namibian military patrols shot at and wounded others crossing the border. How many more innocent people are going to suffer and die before the UN lifts this senseless blockade?

We need to love our neighbors — including the many widows and orphans in Angola. The terrain and climate are harsh and the infrastructure has been so destroyed that it is hard enough for any relief workers and missionaries to operate in this war-devastated region without the murderous UN blockade.

*Their feet are swift to shed blood, ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Rom. 3:15-18)*

## Banning Bibles in Sudan

Many Sudanese Christians complain to us about the UN bias against Christians. The ban on Bibles being transported into Sudan was the most offensive, but they also mentioned many occasions when church-related relief flights were cancelled. *"As Christians, we are lower than third-class citizens in the eyes of the UN"*: Christian organizations such as New Sudan Council of Churches and ACROSS have even been banned by the UN/OLS from having any relief flights for a month — simply for attempting to take Bibles into Sudan!

The UN also banned all New Sudan Council of Churches relief flights because one of their ministers attempted to take on board a box of communion wafers for the Eucharist/Lord's Supper celebrations for churches in Sudan! Yet that same flight took in beer and wine for UN officials! Other missionaries complained of UN interference forbidding them to take in crosses, Sunday School pictures, and other religious materials. One missionary couple reported how UN officials had forbidden the showing of the Jesus film in

Nuer at Ulang. The SPLA (*Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army*) Commander insisted on the Jesus film being screened to his people — despite the protests of the UN. The same couple remarked at how inconsistent the UN's position on religion was. In Cambodia, the UN had erected a Buddhist Temple for the refugees (because *"that is their religion"*). Yet in Southern Sudan they discriminate against the Christian faith of the population. As one pastor put it: "It's not that the UN is against religion; they're just against Christianity."

Several of our missionaries, including myself, have had numerous flights arbitrarily cancelled by the UN. Our Deputy Director even had a flight ban slapped on him for challenging a UN official concerning their anti-Christian bias!

It is also a shocking fact that the **Nuba Mountains** — which have been the site of the worst atrocities and home to the most desperately needy people in Sudan — have been completely excluded from the Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) relief program. Frontline missionaries have actually been threatened by UN officials that any non-UN-authorized flights would be shot down by the Government of Sudan (GOS) helicopter gunships and jet fighters stationed at Juba.

Officers in the SPLA also had their own critical observations: *"Under the guise of feeding the starving and suffering Sudanese civilians, the UN is actually sustaining the Muslim garrison towns."* As another put it: *"There is a great imbalance. Many more UN planes — and bigger aircraft — fly to the Muslim garrison towns each day than to SPLA held towns. This is how they are maintaining 100,000 Arab troops in the South — the UN is feeding them!"* (He also pointed out that the reported flight schedules were deceptive, since flights to Christian towns were routinely cancelled.)

A civilian observer put it even more bluntly: *"The UN is providing the Government of Sudan with an efficient air force. The UN is effectively serving as the logistical support arm of the GOS troops in the South. In this way they are actually prolonging this war."*

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*"It's not that the UN is against religion; they're just against Christianity."*

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Several pastors and NGOs confirmed that the GOS troops in Juba and Wau, for example, had complete control of all relief aid being flown in by the OLS. They maintained that refugees fleeing from these towns report mass starvation while the GOS troops requisition the relief aid. Those civilians who wanted any part of the food aid were forced to convert to Islam. We received



multiple testimonies of the abuse of relief aid in Muslim-controlled areas. **Food aid has routinely been abused as a weapon for enforced Islamization and Arabization.** Not only are recipients forced to beg for the food *"in the name of Allah"* and recite the Islamic creed, but they are required to change their Christian names to Arabic names!

Those nations and organizations which are funding aspects of the UN's Operation Lifeline Sudan should institute a thorough investigation into these accusations of corruption, waste, anti-Christian bias, mismanagement of resources and the abuse of relief aid by Government of Sudan forces:

*The way of peace they do not know, there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace. (Is. 59:8)*

### **The Holocaust in Rwanda**

The people of Rwanda still find it very hard to accept that over 2,500 UN troops stood by and failed to take any action to intervene and prevent the slaughter of tens of thousands of unarmed Tutsi before their very eyes. Even those thousands of refugees who had sought protection from the UN were abandoned. At the strongly fortified UN base at *Ecole Technique Officielle* (ETO) in Kigali, the Belgian troops tried to deceive the refugees by assembling them for a meal in the dining room and then evacuated the base while the refugees were eating. Literally two minutes after the Belgians had driven out of their base the Hutu Presidential Guards poured into the buildings annihilating the defenseless Tutsi refugees. As they arrived in Belgium, some soldiers slashed their blue berets in disgust.

One of the survivors of the massacre at the UN ETO base, Jean-Paul expressed his bitter disillusionment with the UN: *"We wonder what on earth UNAMIR was doing in Rwanda. They could not even lift a finger to intervene and prevent the death of tens of thousands of innocent people who were being killed under their very noses. We were there, they were there, and they could see what was happening in Rwanda. But the UN protects no-one. They had been sent to Kigali to assure the security of Kigali. What about the people of Kigali? How can they protect the security of Kigali when they are doing nothing to protect its people? The most shameful cover-up was to say that people were being killed because there was a war between government forces and the RPF and to say that the two sides could not agree on the terms of a cease fire. We saw this as a pretext to justify the withdrawal. That's all. People were dying in large-scale massacres in places like Butare, Cyangugu and Kibuye, which had seen no battles whatsoever. And UNAMIR knew this perfectly well."*

*If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength! Rescue those being led away to death;*

*hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say! "But we knew nothing about this," does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?*

(Prov. 24:10 12)

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*Rev. Peter Hammond is a missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Often travelling by off-road motorbike. Peter has travelled hundred of thousands of kilometers to deliver Bibles to persecuted churches throughout Africa and Eastern Europe. Since 1982 he has recruited Christians from a wide variety of backgrounds and trained them as missionary scouts to minister in war-torn and neglected areas, particularly in Angola and Mozambique and more recently Sudan.*

*Peter has personally carried out over 85 missions behind enemy lines and conducted over 1,000 outreaches among soldiers, guerrillas and resistance fighters in 21 countries. In the course of his missionary activities Peter has been ambushed, come under mortar fire, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned.*

*Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship and the Director of United Christian Action (a network of 20 Bible-based groups working for revival and reformation in Southern Africa). He is an international speaker, presenting about 400 lectures or sermons each year throughout Africa, Eastern Europe and America. As a writer he has authored numerous publications. In particular, he has written "The Mozambique Report," "The Christian at War," "Faith in Action," "Finding Freedom from the Pornography Plague," "Security and Survival in Unstable Times," "Biblical Principles for Southern Africa," the "Biblical Worldview Seminar Manual," "Discipleship Training Course Manual," "The Christian Voice of Southern Africa," "Holocaust in Rwanda," and "Faith Under Fire in Sudan." He is the editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and UCANEWS.*

*Peter is married to Lenora and they have been blessed with three children — Andrea, Daniela and Christopher.*

*He will be on a U.S. speaking tour August 23 - October. For more information contact Brian Abshire at 414-247-8719, or brian@mail.exepc.com.*

*Peter will be bringing dramatic new slide presentations on the genocide in Rwanda, Bible-smuggling past the UN blockade into Southern Angola, and on the flourishing churches in war-torn Sudan.*

*Checks for Frontline Fellowship can be sent through Chalcedon.*



# Teaching Daughters to Blaspheme God

By Ovid Need

[Being the father of two girls, 10 and 19, I have had to rethink several things. I have placed some of the areas of thought in past writings. This present article is another point that must be considered by Christians and fathers of young ladies. Of course, the following is presented for consideration assuming a consistent Christian home and with the understanding that all the Bible training in the world will do nothing but bring rebellion unless the young person is a new creation in Christ Jesus—"born again." Our older daughter finds it very disheartening that all but three girls she knows her age have either had to marry or have started living with boys. Rebellion against the parents' authority that causes a young person to take up an immoral life-style, either in or out of his parents' house, is an obvious sign of desperately needed genuine conversion.]

We live in a society that has been very effectively "secularized." The practical applications of God's Word have been almost totally removed and replaced by humanistic, man-centered thinking, e.g., psychology. The only hope for the future is to rethink every area of life in terms of the Word of God. This is particularly important when we consider that we must prepare a new generation of young people to face the difficult times ahead in what appears to be a developing pagan society. Are we going to raise a generation *that trusteth in man* or a generation *that trusteth in the Lord*? If Christians actually believe what they claim, they will act upon and according to the Word of God regardless of what surrounding society thinks, says or does:

*Jer. 17:5-11: Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.*

Every area of life and thought must be reexamined, starting with the families. Parents, fathers especially, must

realign their actions and attitudes toward their children with the Word of God and train them accordingly. I suppose my heart is toward the daughters in a family because we have only daughters.

## Training Anarchist Daughters

Unknown to most parents and pastors, they are likely training sincere, godly Christian young ladies to bring reproach upon the Word of God by urging them to depart from their fathers' homes before marriage. When we train up girls to be self-sufficient, we do it to our own destruction and to the destruction of society. Certainly, it may seem right to the deceitful, desperately wicked heart to urge and train girls to be self-sufficient, but the Word of God searches and tries the reins of the heart. The Lord will return upon all according to their own doings. Thus when Christian young people are trained contrary to the Word of God, we can fully expect society in general to blaspheme God.

The training of young women to bring reproach upon the Lord and to provide the enemy with the opportunity to blaspheme the Word of God probably started in earnest with World War II: Men went to the war and women went to the factories. One of our men said that his grandfather told him that he, the grandfather, said at the start of World War II when women went into the factories, "This is the end of America." How right he was.

God created man; then He created woman to be man's helpmeet, 1 Cor. 11, 1 Tim. 2. Therefore, the goal of both the church and family must be training Christian young ladies—and young men—to fit within God's creation plan and purpose. Notice Paul's instructions to Titus:

*Titus 2:1-5: But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that [they be] in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

As we know, the Books of Timothy and Titus are "Pastoral Epistles." Thus they are instructions to pastors concerning training God's people. Though speaking of young widows, Paul's instructions to Timothy should be noted:

*1 Tim. 5:14, 15: I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan.*

Patrick Fairbairn, writing in 1874, said concerning Titus 2:4, 5:

*That they school the young women to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children; ver. 5,*



*discreet, chaste, workers at home, good, submitting themselves to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed....*The word, though originally signifying to *make discreet or prudent*, came often to be used in the more general sense of schooling, or admonishing, with a view to the possession of certain things; and the reason, probably, why the apostle here used it, instead of some word expressive simply of teaching or instructing, was, that on account of the youth of the parties in question, he contemplated the necessity of a kind of authoritative disciplinary treatment from the older to the younger Christian females... In the epithets themselves, which mark the different characteristics that were to be the objects of the schooling, there is no proper difficulty; they are all such as especially became young women who were disposed to bring their Christianity to bear on the regulation of their conduct in daily life, and through this reflect honor on their Saviour... [After describing the characteristics of vv. 4 & 5, he concludes:] In a measure, however, this must be carried back over the whole description; for in any one respect a behaviour contrary to that recommended would more or less have the effect of bringing reproach on God's word.<sup>1</sup>

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*Fathers (and mothers) may use many reasons to excuse molding their daughters into women who can fit into the "working" world, but they will be hard pressed to justify their actions from the Word of God. Paul did not say that the Spirit's command in Titus 2 is only in effect until the twentieth century.*

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Thus training of young Christian ladies in *behavior contrary to that recommended* by Paul brings *reproach on God's word*. Paul's instructions to Titus, contrary to most modern Christian opinions and actions, were not voided by World War II. The training of Christian young ladies for life must fit within the general guidelines given by the Spirit, e.g., working with children; keepers at home and of the home, organization, etc.; how to be discreet, pure, good; and how to use common sense. All of Proverbs 31 easily fits

within the general guidelines established by the Spirit for a young lady's training.

Primarily, young ladies are to be taught proper submission to godly authority, not how to be self-sufficient. Sadly, because young men are not trained in the home to be godly, responsible men, women are being forced into self-sufficiency. Thus a young lady's father desperately needs to closely examine her prospective husband.

Therefore, training that does not fit within the Spirit's general guidelines leads daughters to blaspheme the Word of God. Paul clearly tells Titus how young ladies are to be trained.

Our point is this: godly, Christian parents, even with the encouragement of godly pastors, are pressuring young ladies to leave home and become self-sufficient, e.g., "It's time to go to college and learn a 'trade.'" Obviously, all young ladies who are pressured by their parents to go "on their own" will not go to the devil. But why tempt the Lord? God, in His creation purpose, did not create Eve to be self-sufficient and on her own. Has nature changed since Eve's creation?

There are several things that might cause daughters to feel pressured to leave their father's house, e.g.:

First, not letting them grow up at home. As they get older, parents may be inclined to continue treating them as twelve-year olds with the same restrictions and demands. As they get older, they must have more freedom. Either they will have freedom under the godly authority of their parents or they will find freedom on their own. Of course, freedom cannot be license to sin; single young people, especially young ladies, must always have boundaries in order to feel secure; that is the way the Lord made us: this is the way, walk ye in it. Thus when she is urged or even forced out on her own, she establishes her own boundaries and *the word of God is blasphemed*.

Second, she is told in words or attitudes that it is time to move out. A girl is not a boy. Young men should be trained to be on their own, responsible and self-sufficient under God, but a girl is not so equipped by God. Thus when daughters are told, "You are this age; it's time to move out," they are being forced into something they are not equipped by God to handle.

Certainly, there are godly single women who have remained so in order to serve the Lord. But their service fits within the guidelines established by the Spirit. We are here considering parents pressuring and training their daughters to be self-sufficient and independent of authority—"on their own." As mentioned above, our corrupt society in which men refuse to be men forces young ladies into "self-sufficient" situations. If they are forced into such situations from circumstances other than from their parents, that is a different matter; but they should still be well-prepared to know what to expect, to remain close to the Lord and to be responsive to proper authority. Fathers (and mothers) may use many reasons to excuse molding their daughters into women who can fit into the "working" world, but they will be hard pressed to justify their actions from the Word of God. Paul did not



say that the Spirit's command in Titus 2 is only in effect until the twentieth century.

We must also point out that it is better for a Christian young lady to be a "career woman" than it is for her to *unequally yoke* in a marriage with an unsaved, pagan man who has no desire to serve the Lord. Sin takes its toll in every area of society.

### Sound the alarm

Recently, the media proclaimed the glories of 500 women going on the Aircraft Carrier Eisenhower where 6,000 men are stationed (pregnancy, said the ship's captain, is no more of a problem than a broken leg; abortion?). Women are reaching unequalled levels of "equality" with men. Though Bible-believing Christians and pastors may be loudly proclaiming the shame of women taking on obviously un-Biblical, anti-Christian roles in society, the "Women's Lib" movement appears to be gaining great strength. But the problem starts in the "Christian" homes: they have trained and are training their own Christian daughters to bring reproach upon the Word of God.

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<sup>1</sup>*Pastoral Epistles*, Patrick Fairbairn, originally published by T&T Clark, 1874. Reprint by Klock & Klock, 1980, 273-274.

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## The Sign of the Son of Man

*By Joseph P. Braswell*

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### Three Questions

In Matthew 24 the disciples ask Jesus about things to come. Specifically, having heard Jesus' pronouncement of doom upon the Jerusalem temple (v. 2), they inquire as to when this event will occur and what will be the sign of the end of the age (v. 3). Their question seems to assume that these events are to be contemporaneous, but Jesus' reply clearly separates them as distinct occurrences (Luke's version, in chapter 21 of his Gospel, makes this point even clearer and more emphatically). Their generation shall indeed see the fall of Jerusalem (v. 34) and the many signs preceding and accompanying that holocaust (vv. 4-8, 15-26), but the time of the end is known only to the Father (v. 36). When Jerusalem is destroyed, they are not to assume that this means the end is near. Indeed, if anything, conditions at the time of the Second Coming will be *normal* and *ordinary*, not tumultuous or especially disruptive of the routines and customs of daily life (vv. 38-

44). The only sign of the end, beyond those general signs of travail which more or less mark the entire age from beginning to end (vv. 6-8), is the successful preaching of the gospel to all the world (v. 14). Many erroneously assume that the Olivet Discourse refers almost exclusively to the end-times, to events that for us yet lie in the future (futurism). Others believe that it refers wholly to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, to events that were long ago fulfilled (preterism). Over against any attempt to make all either past or future, we must understand Christ's discourse to answer the *three* questions asked of him. Whether the inquisitive disciples understood these to be truly distinct questions, or no (and it seems clear that they believed all three questions to refer to the same set of events, connected events occurring together within a brief time-frame), it remains true that the set of questions may in fact refer to distinct events, events neither causally connected nor contemporaneous. Two or three altogether distinct events may be involved, despite the assumptions of the inquirers, and these events may be separated by millennia. We know that the Second Coming and the end of the age belong together, but the destruction of the Temple ("these things" in v. 3, referring to the antecedent assertion by Jesus in vv. 1-2) occurred in A.D. 70, and we do not need to project yet another Temple and its razing into the future in a case of what Jay Adams calls "eschatological diplopia."<sup>1</sup> This is a judgment upon this generation of Jesus' contemporaries (*Mt. 23:29-36*), the sign of unbelieving Israel's reprobation.

### Preteristic Mistakes

However, it is equally wrong to force Jesus' coming and the end of the age into an *exclusively* preterist framework so that all reference here to the coming of the Son of Man is taken to refer, not to the Second Advent, but merely to a coming in judgment against Jerusalem during the Jewish Wars of 66-70, and the end of the age is understood as the end of the Old-Covenant order (the last days of Israel). The end of the age ought to be understood here with the same meaning as in 28:20 — the termination of the interadvental period, marked by the future, personal and visible return of Christ in bodily form at the end of history. Christ speaks of both proximate and remote events that he warns his disciples not to confuse.

The consistent preterists read v. 34 and mistakenly assume that *everything* said up to this point (the entire discourse through v. 33) — including, *e.g.*, v. 27 — must be comprehended in the fulfillment of "these things" which occurs within "this generation." Yet we need not read the discourse in such a manner. Obviously, all that has been said up to v. 14 is said as sort of a preliminary survey or overview of the entire interadvental age, providing in broad strokes (general patterns) a *panoramic* vision of what will occur before Christ returns in glory.<sup>2</sup> Beginning with v. 15 we recapitulate to a more detailed exposition of *specific* events within the time-frame, and here (vv. 15-26) the focus is clearly upon the answer to the disciples' *first* question



concerning the destruction of the Temple. V. 27 is *parenthetical*, an aside interrupting the flow of thought regarding the tribulation of those days. Since in the midst of the calamities accompanying the judgment upon Jerusalem, many false prophets and messianic pretenders will arise (Zealots leading the Jewish revolt against Rome), Christ, by way of contrast with these false messiahs assembling armies in the desert regions, pauses at this point to interject into the discourse what *his* coming will be like. Accordingly, this tangential clarification about the return of Christ does not fall within the temporal sequence of events that is the subject of this portion of the discourse and is not intended to be included as part of the narration of “these things” — a prophecy concerning Jerusalem’s imminent fate. (Again, Luke’s version of this discourse in Lk. 21:8ff is composed in such a way as to make the distinction between the judgment upon Jerusalem and the end-time even clearer.) The coming of Christ does not accompany the fall of Jerusalem or immediately follow it, and Christians must not be discouraged and lose faith by the mistaken notion that it was supposed to do so, as some may have erroneously inferred from Mark 13.

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*The sign of the Son of Man is the power — the success — of the gospel that proclaims his Kingdom. It is the sign of victory.*

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Thus, when Christ, in v. 29, *resumes* the narration of the holocaust that is to befall *this generation*, the “immediately after” passes over v. 27, referring to the tribulations of the ill-fated Jewish War that results in the Romans’ destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The apocalyptic imagery employed in v. 29 indeed refers, as the preterists rightly insist, to historical judgment upon Israel. It is the language of divine judgment and need not be construed as referring to the end-time, for it is language used by OT prophets to refer to judgments God rendered in history against enemies of the people of God (Edom, Egypt, Babylon) in former times.<sup>3</sup> By this language the destruction of Jerusalem is shown to be a *divine* act of judgment that treats apostate Israel as the enemy of God’s *New-Covenant* people. Jerusalem, as Revelation informs us, is now as Sodom and Egypt (*Rev. 11:8*), and her demise is not to be regarded by Christ’s disciples as a disaster or calamity (as the Synagogue saw it), but as a sign the Christ now reigns and visits judgment upon his enemies.

## What is the Sign?

It is after this exercise of judgment that the sign of the Son of Man in heaven is truly manifest.<sup>4</sup> This does not refer to a sign appearing in heaven (e.g., something like Constantine’s seeing a Cross in the sky), far less is it a visible appearing of the Son of Man himself, returning personally in glory. This is rather the sign that the Son of Man is enthroned in heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords, reigning in power at the right hand of God and exerting his will on earth (cf. *Mt. 26:64*). The tribes of *the land* — the people of Israel — mourn at this manifestation of the power and glory of the Son of Man, who has come (in *ascension*) in the clouds of heaven *unto the Ancient of Days* to receive the Kingdom. They who could not discern the signs of the times had perversely sought from Jesus a sign (*Mt. 12:39; 16:1-4; cf. 1 Cor. 1:22; Jn. 6:30*) and were given the sign of Jonah.

In the double tradition of this dominical saying concerning the sign of Jonah (clearer from Luke’s account — *Lk. 11:29-32*) the sign refers primarily to Gentiles repenting and thus being saved from impending judgment. Ninevah represents a Gentile people who turned to the LORD and became God-fearers in the time of Israel’s apostasy. Gentile response to the preaching of the Kingdom will thus bear witness against this generation, condemning Israel’s unbelief. The Gentilization of the Kingdom will be a sign of judgment to Israel, signifying Israel’s loss of the Kingdom-inheritance, her supersession by a “nation” bearing the fruits of repentance (cf. *Mt. 8:11-12; 22:43*).

In a move which might at first appear only to obscure the reference to Gentile response, Matthew redactively interjects into the exposition of the sign of Jonah, as a part of its meaning, a prediction of the Resurrection. This is done because it is, in Matthew’s view of redemptive-history, only after the Resurrection that the disciples are commissioned by the *Risen* Christ to go to the nations (*28:18-20*). During the earthly ministry they are restricted in ministry to the house of Israel (*10:56*). The Resurrection is thus viewed by Matthew as the sign of a pivotal redemptive-historical change that opens the Kingdom to the Gentiles. It is the *Son of Man* who was, like Jonah, three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and the Risen Christ — the one to whom all is given authority in heaven and earth — *is* the glorified Danielic Son of Man who has received from the Ancient of Days dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.

Moreover, the Resurrection is crucial to understanding the sign of Jonah as a witness against the Pharisees. It is this sign of the Resurrection which the Pharisees (the synagogues of Rabbinic Judaism) blaspheme (a blasphemy of the Spirit) as they label Jesus a sorcerer and deceiver who led Israel astray by casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub (*Mt. 12:24*). The Pharisees (and their post-Jamnian heirs) blaspheme against the Spirit as they claim that the Resurrection is a hoax perpetrated by the disciples’ theft of Jesus’ body (*Mt. 28:11-15*). By slandering the church, the Pharisees and the later Synagogue refuse to



acknowledge the significance of the Gentiles' entry into the Messianic *ekklesia* that heralds the eschaton as the sign of the last days when the nations would flock to Zion and join themselves to Israel's God. The Synagogue of the Jews blasphemes against the work of the Spirit — the church as the community assembled and commissioned by the Risen Christ — by their Benediction Against Heretics, gainsaying that which the church confesses and proclaims and attributing its fruit to Satan (*Mt. 10:25*). The gospel of the Kingdom preached to all the world is a witness preceding the end and is, with judgment upon Jerusalem, part of the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, a demonstration that Jesus is risen and is applying his eschatological resurrection-power. Stated another way, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and all the signs of the times, were part of this sign of Jonah the prophet according to Matthew's interpretation. The sign of the Son of Man, of his receiving his Kingdom from the Father, is the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world (referring back to v. 14). The Kingdom has been taken away from Israel and is now given to others, fulfilling the sign of Jonah to this generation. The *efficacy* of the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom to the nations, the fruit of this endeavor (marked by its result in *repentance* by the receptive nations), manifests that Jesus has risen, is indeed Lord and Christ, and has been given the nations as his messianic inheritance, for all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve the Son of Man. His manifest dominion — the triumph of grace — is the sign of the end.

### The Disinheritance of the Faithless Jews

The sign of the Son of Man, the sign that he reigns in heaven over all the earth, is thus the disinheritance of the unbelieving nation and the giving of the Kingdom to the Gentiles, and this was clearly manifest by the events of A.D. 70 and the redirected mission-trajectory of the church that follows this outpouring of the filled cup of wrath upon an evil and adulterous generation which sought such signs. Yet the sign of the Son of Man is especially the sign of his coming (v. 3). This is not simply the beginning of Gentile-mission as the main thrust of the church's activity (a decisive break with Judaism and the Synagogue) whereby the makeup of the church becomes predominantly (almost exclusively) Gentile.<sup>5</sup> It bespeaks a saturation of the globe, penetrating and permeating every corner with the gospel. It refers to a *discipling of the nations*. The Son sends his messengers forth to *gather* his elect from one end of heaven to the other, bringing great multitudes from the east and the west — from the four winds — to sit at his table in the Kingdom. Only after the gospel has gone out to all the world and has borne fruit can the end come. The sign of the Son of Man is the power — the success — of the gospel that proclaims his Kingdom. It is the sign of *victory*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Time is at Hand* (n.p., 1970), 17-40. Adams' term is actually "premillennial diplopia," but the point of his criticism is applicable to any form of futuristic tribulationism.

<sup>2</sup> See John Murray, "The Interadvental Period and the Advent:

Matthew 24 and 25," *Collected Writings of John Murray: Systematic Theology* (Carlysle, PA, 1977), 2.388.

<sup>3</sup> See further David Chilton, *The Great Tribulation* (Fort Worth, TX, 1987), 18-20.

<sup>4</sup> Up to v. 29 William R. Kimball's exposition, in his *What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1983) is generally excellent, providing a balance between the excesses of consistent preterists (like Chilton) and futurists. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. ("Theonomy and Eschatology: Reflections on Postmillennialism," in William S. Barker and W. Robert Godfrey, eds., *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* [Grand Rapids, MI, 1991], 197-224) justly criticizes Chilton's approach as focusing too much upon the fulfillment of virtually *everything* in A.D. 70 to the virtual neglect of the Second Coming. However, Gaffin chooses to follow Murray's exegesis (see n. 2 above), and Murray — like Kimball — does not, in my opinion, take seriously enough the force of "immediately after" in v. 29 (or, in Murray's case, the antecedent referent of "the tribulation of those days" in v. 29, referring back to vv. 15-22 — the time of Jerusalem's destruction by Rome). Murray, ignoring these contextual indicators, makes an illegitimate appeal to Lk 21:24, importing a non-Matthean detail into the Matthean sequence in order to extend the time-frame to the "times of the Gentiles" and so rob the "immediately" of its force as something coming right upon the heels (*shortly* after) the fall of Jerusalem. If we take v. 29 seriously, we have to assign this *sign* to the first century as something that has occurred or that was definitively commenced then and is still in the process of a *progressive* realization.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, Paul and others had begun Gentile-mission long before the fall of Jerusalem, maintaining that the obedience of the Gentiles was a sign to Israel. However, large quarters of the Christian Church remained devoted to a mission to Israel and the Diaspora Jews. Indeed, before the outcome of the Jewish Wars, the Jewish-Christians probably outnumbered Gentile-Christians. Only after A.D. 70 did the mainstream of Christianity throw itself fully into Gentile-mission and did the Gentiles become the overwhelming majority in the church. Christianity was manifested not as a mere sect of Judaism, and the church and Synagogue were definitively divorced from each other. God's judgment upon Jerusalem was the sign that Israel's former status as the people of God had been superseded by the church, whose claims concerning Jesus were demonstrably vindicated.

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## Demythologizing Marcus Borg of the "Jesus Seminar"

*By John B. King, Jr.*

### Introduction

While the fruits of orthodox scholarship go largely unnoticed, heretics seem to grab the headlines. Of late the Jesus Seminar has captured the limelight with its critical appraisal of the Gospels. Applying a methodology which



they deem scientific, they have discounted over 80% of Jesus' sayings as unauthentic.<sup>1</sup> While orthodox Christians rightly dismiss these scholars as naturalists, one participant, Marcus Borg, does not fit this mold. As the husband of an Episcopal priest, Borg claims to be a confessing Christian and professes a strong belief in the supernatural. Yet, while his supernaturalism enhances his profession with many, Borg's theology is far from Christian. Moreover, given the coupling of his supernaturalism with his ready access to the church, his potential for influence is greatly enhanced in comparison to naturalistic scholars.

As a result of this potential, it is necessary to critically examine some of his views in light of Scripture and Christian theology. In this regard a chronological approach will first be employed to show the development of Borg's theology within the context of his life struggles.<sup>2</sup> Once these views have been presented, they will then be analyzed in terms of their organic interconnection and their consistent opposition to Scripture. Due to the confrontational nature of this task, the present writer feels constrained to mention that Marcus Borg is a kind man who is quite sincere in his beliefs. Sadly, however, in those beliefs which are of eternal significance, he is sincerely wrong.

### Theological Development

Born the youngest of four children in a Scandinavian Lutheran home, Marcus Borg grew up during the 1940s in a small North Dakota town of 1600 people. As a young man, church was an important part of his family life, and he accepted the Christian Faith in a manner he describes as "precritical naivete." In his adolescent years, however, he began to doubt the existence of God and as a consequence was plunged into guilt, anxiety, and fear. Reflecting back on his experience, he now describes it as a collision of his precritical Christian faith with the naturalistic world view he had come to adopt. Yet, he describes himself as wanting desperately to believe, but as nevertheless being unable to do so.

After high school he entered Concordia College, a Lutheran school in Moorhead, Minnesota. During his college years, his doubts grew more intense with the fear and anxiety subsiding somewhat into a sense of mild perplexity. Relief finally came in a required religion course when a young religion professor introduced him to the works of both classical (Augustine, Aquinas, Anselm) and modern (Barth, Bultmann, Tillich) theologians. However, what brought about this relief, he says, was not the resolution of his doubts, but rather the provision of a framework within which to take doubt seriously. At the end of his undergraduate study, therefore, he describes his literal faith as totally shaken but as having no non-literal substitute with which to replace it.

He then entered graduate study, the initial phase of which he describes as a period of deconstruction. For his first year of study, he chose Union Theological Seminary due to its reputation for social activism as well as the stature of former professors, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr. It was here

that he was first exposed to the central claims of critical Gospel scholarship, evidently with considerable effect:

The effect was, for me, dramatic. I realized that the message of Jesus from my childhood—the popular image of Jesus as the divine savior who knew himself to be the Son of God and who offered up his life for the sins of the world—was not historically true. Moreover, I learned that scholars had been saying this for almost two hundred years. This mind-boggling realization was based on the understanding of the gospels that has developed during the last two centuries. I learned that the gospels were neither divine nor particularly historical. They were not, as I had thought, "divine products" inspired directly by God, whose contents therefore were to be "believed." And they were not "eye-witness accounts" written by people who knew Jesus and who sought to report what they had seen and heard. I was fascinated. In spite of the heavy work load assigned to Union students in those days, I did voluminous amounts of extra reading about the quest for the historical Jesus....

The news that "the Jesus of history" (as I learned to call him) was very different from the Jesus I had heard about growing up in church seemed important to me. It also seemed vaguely scandalous, and something I shouldn't tell my mother about. But I was hooked.<sup>3</sup>

While at Union, Borg was exposed primarily to the claims of German Gospels scholarship, including form criticism.

After a year at Union, however, he went to study at Oxford among a group of professors who were slightly less skeptical regarding Scripture's historical claims. Yet, while beginning to take Jesus more seriously again, his approach, like that of his professors, was naturalistic. Dominated in his thinking by the modern world view, he became a closet atheist and began to analyze Jesus in exclusively natural terms. In particular, as a result of the political ferment in the 1960s, he studied Jesus from the perspective of a social reformer, a perspective which is still retained in his thinking. Obviously, at this stage in his life, he viewed Christianity as the product of its immediate environment, thinking that its supernatural claims were fabricated to meet particular needs of the early church.

After receiving his doctorate in 1972, Borg returned to teach at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, his *alma mater*. Soon events in his life would trigger a radical change in his thinking. In his early thirties he divorced and left his teaching position at Concordia, moving to Carleton College in 1976 and Oregon State University in 1979. He relates that the move to secular schools forced him to develop ways to speak of Jesus in a non-Christian setting. Significantly, about this time he began to have experiences of nature mysticism that changed his perspective of God:

In my early to mid' thirties, I had a number of experiences of what I now recognize as "nature mysticism".... In a sense, these experiences were nothing spectacular, at least not compared with those described by William James almost a century ago in



his classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Yet, the experiences fundamentally changed my understanding of God, Jesus, religion, and Christianity.... They were moments of transformed perception in which I saw the earth as "filled with the glory of God," shining with a radiant presence. They were also moments of connectedness in which I felt my linkage to what is. They seemed similar to Rudolf Otto's description of experiences of the "numinous," the awe-inspiring and wonder-evoking "holy," the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (the tremendous mystery which elicits trembling even as it also attracts us in a compelling way).... These experiences, besides being ecstatic, were for me "ah-ha" moments. They gave me a new understanding of the meaning of the word "God." I realized that "God" does not refer to a supernatural being "out there".... Rather I began to see the word "God" refers to "the sacred" at the center of existence, the "holy mystery" which is all around us and within us. God is the non-material ground and source and presence in which, to cite words attributed to Paul by the author of Acts, "we live and move and have our being" (*Acts 17:28*).<sup>4</sup>

Simultaneously with these mystical experiences, he was asked to teach a course on world religions at Carleton College, a subject for which he was not prepared. As a result of his prepratory reading for the course, he began to correlate his own experience with similar phenomena in other religions. Moreover, each religion was said to have its holy men who mediated "the sacred" to people in extraordinary ways, including healings. The combination of his own experiences and a cross-cultural study of world religions was to radically alter Borg's approach to Jesus:

The context of religious experience, studied within both an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural framework, has deeply affected my understanding of Jesus. I can now take seriously those texts which speak of the centrality of God (or "the Spirit") in Jesus' own life. If one grants the phenomenon of the "Spirit person" it is obvious that Jesus was one of these figures, for whom the experiential awareness of "Spirit" was foundational for his life. Though we cannot be precise about the nature of his experience, it seems to fall somewhere on the continuum from mystic to shaman, with elements of the Enlightenment experience as well.

This perception has become central for me. Jesus' experiential relationship to the Spirit seems to be the source of all that he was: his perspective as an "Enlightened One" who taught a subversive and alternate wisdom, his power as a healer, and his passion and courage as a social prophet and movement founder who challenged the purity system of his day with a social vision grounded in the compassion of God.... Like Socrates, he was a teacher of subversive wisdom who taught in his own way that the unexamined life is not worth living. Like the Buddha, he had an Enlightenment experience and taught the life of not-grasping and the life of compassion. Like a shaman, he was a healer. Like Gandhi, he protested against a purity system, deliberately siding with marginals and outcasts. And

thus he was also like classical prophets of Israel, concerned with the shape of society and criticizing the elites. He was a most remarkable man.<sup>5</sup>

Here it can be seen that in spite of his supernaturalism, Borg's estimate of the "pre-Easter" Jesus rises no higher than that of a Spirit-inspired prophet, healer, and social reformer.

With regard to the "post-Easter" Jesus, Borg's conclusions are equally disappointing. In setting himself off from naturalistic scholars, the mystical Borg strays far from the mark with his peculiar accommodation to supernaturalism and religious experience:

This distinction between two referents of the name "Jesus," common to this century's scholarship, is most often made using different language, namely, "The Jesus of history" and "The Jesus of faith." For the latter, I prefer "the post-Easter Jesus." Whether intended or not, the phrase "the Christ of faith" suggests to many people a hypothetical or "iffy" reality, one that can only be believed in (whereas, in contrast, "the Jesus of history" was "real"). I seek to avoid this inference by stressing that the post-Easter Jesus is the Jesus of Christian tradition *and experience*. He is an experiential reality, not just an article of faith.... [emphasis in the original]<sup>6</sup>

Significant questions remain, however, concerning the nature of this resurrection, the mode in which it is experienced, and the manner in which this experience is defined and passed on to posterity. Orthodox Christian theology sets forth a bodily resurrection of Christ (*Lk. 24:37-42; 1 Cor. 15:20-18*) and a continuing experience of Christ through agency of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus himself to indwell his church (*Ac. 2:32-36*). Moreover, the experience itself is defined through the illumination of the Holy Spirit (*Jn. 14:25, 26; 16:12-15*) and inscripturated through the Spirit for posterity (*2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pe. 1:21*). For Borg, however, the resurrection is merely spiritual with the experience being direct and numinous. Moreover, his theory supposes significant latitude for believers in definition:

The process begins with Easter. I see the central meaning of Easter to be, in one sense, very simple: The followers of Jesus continued to experience him after his death, but in a radically new way. They no longer knew him as a figure of flesh and blood, but as a spiritual reality. They no longer experienced him as limited by time and space, but could experience him anywhere.... I have no idea if Easter involved anything happening to the corpse of Jesus or an empty tomb. Crucial to this remark is the distinction between resuscitation and resurrection. Resuscitation intrinsically involves something happening to a corpse: A dead person comes back to life, resumes the life that she or he had before, and will die again. Whatever the resurrection of Jesus was, it wasn't that. Instead, resurrection means entry into another kind or mode of existence, one beyond life and death, beyond time and space. A resurrected person will not die again. Resurrection need not involve something happening to a corpse.<sup>7</sup>



In contrast to Scripture, then, Borg envisions Christ's resurrection as transcending time and space, and thereby giving Christians a direct experience of him. Moreover, given the temporal limitations of living Christians, this experience of a timeless Christ must by definition be somewhat numinous and ill-defined. Furthermore, since Christians are left to their own devices in their interpretation of this experience, Biblical accounts and creedal formulations must be seen as human attempts to historicize and/or otherwise objectify this experience. As a consequence, the objective reality of these formulations is suspect.

In Borg's opinion, the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and the post-resurrection accounts must be rejected as attempts objectify Christian experience. Yet, while these particulars may not be valid in an objective sense, the subjective reality they mediate is nevertheless real. As Borg explains it, "I do not think Emmaus happened, but I think Emmaus happens again and again."<sup>8</sup>

### Analysis

In evaluating Marcus Borg's theology, it should be noted up front that as a member of the Jesus Seminar, his primary focus is in the area of Christology. Given this focus, it is particularly with respect to Christ's person and work that Borg's heresy manifests itself. In fact, the divergence between his position and Christian orthodoxy is so great that Borg's Christology involves the elimination (either through denial or redefinition) of virtually the entire second Article of the Apostle's Creed.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and  
born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died,  
and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day He rose again.  
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right  
hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Since this Article has summarized catholic Christology for nearly two millennia, Borg's position places him beyond the bounds of Christianity. To evaluate his position, then, it is necessary to set forth this opposition in bold relief. To this end the discussion will begin at the source of the problem, the denial of Biblical authority.

### The Denial of Biblical Authority

In tracing the source of Borg's errors, it is evident that his false Christology derives from an autonomous approach to Scripture. Because Borg denies the infallibility of Scripture, his theological construction is hamstrung from the outset through a two-fold effect. To illumine this effect it is necessary to consider the relationship between God and Scripture.

Obviously, since Scripture is God's Word, God and Scripture are related both metaphysically and

epistemologically. On the metaphysical level, Scripture is grounded in the Trinitarian economy since the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit (*Jn. 14:16,17,25,26; 16:7*) to inspire it (*2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:21*). As a consequence, the denial of Biblical infallibility impugns the Trinitarian economy as well as the sovereignty of God in communication. Moreover, on the epistemological level, the denial of Biblical infallibility obscures the knowledge of God since doctrines like the Trinity, the Incarnation, and redemption are known only from Scripture. Therefore, when one severs the cord between God and Scripture, Scripture is severed from its metaphysical base even while theology is stripped of its epistemological base. Thus, in the absence of an epistemological benchmark, theology wanders aimlessly.

Having rejected Scripture as his norm, Borg views all religions as alike in kind so that the uniqueness of Christianity is ruled out *a priori*. Obviously, since his autonomous approach militates against the authority of Scripture, the uniqueness of Christ is denied as well. To maintain the uniqueness of Christ, one must approach him theonomously (through Scripture) rather than autonomously (through unaided reason or mystical experience). The issue here is presuppositional.

### Incarnation

Since Christ's work is grounded in his person, the doctrine of the Incarnation is foundational to all aspects of Christology. Thus, the Incarnation is the logical point of departure for all subsequent discussion. Given this fact, it is necessary to consider the orthodox doctrine to provide an appropriate benchmark for the evaluation of Borg's views.

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With regard to Scripture, the Bible clearly attests the reality of the Incarnation. The Apostle John describes Christ as one in whom the eternal Word became flesh in order to reveal God to men (*Jn. 1:1-18*). Obviously, to so reveal God, Christ's divinity had to be retained in the Incarnation, and he is presented as being conscious of this fact in Scripture (*Jn. 17:1-5; Lk. 20:41-44*). At the same time, however,



Scripture acknowledges the full humanity of Christ through his suffering in both body and soul (*Mt. 27:45-50; Mt. 26:36-39*). Indeed, in the Lukan account Christ is seen to sweat blood in response to mental anguish over his coming ordeal (*Lk. 22:44*). Thus, in addition to Christ's divinity, Scripture attests his full humanity (both body and soul) as well.

Yet, while Scripture clearly attests the two natures of Christ, the manner of their interrelation was not immediately clear to the early church. The church wrestled with the issue, seeking to relate these natures in a manner consistent with the Biblical data. Finally, after centuries of struggle, the church fathers formulated the doctrine of the Incarnation at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) in a statement known as the Chalcedonian Creed:

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means annulled by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

The essence of this position is to say that in Christ there are two natures in one person, and that the relation of these two natures is to be in union without confusion. Thus, they cannot be wrenched apart from Christ's person nor blended together.

While such a formulation may seem abstract, it covers the Biblical data. Moreover, as will soon become apparent, it has significant implications for humanity. With respect to these implications, the doctrine of the Incarnation witnesses to the fact that God is both immanent and transcendent. As a result of His immanence, a bond is established between eternity and time. Yet, as a result of God's transcendence, eternity remains distinct from time and thus retains the priority. To separate Christ's two natures would break the bond between God and the cosmos, resulting in a world of flux. In such a world, salvation and meaning would be impossible. At the opposite extreme, the confusion of Christ's natures would collapse the distinctions between eternity and time, resulting in a world of pantheistic fate and yielding similar problems. (In reference to these two alternatives, the distinctiveness of Marcus Borg's approach

may be noted within the critical camp. Whereas the naturalists take the former path, Borg together with the Hegelians choose the latter [the mystical alternative]. Essentially, in his denial of the Incarnation, Borg limits the depth of Christ's divinity in order to universalize its extent). Yet, when the proper relationship is maintained in Christian orthodoxy, Christ's theanthropic person is preserved and with it his mediatorial role in salvation. Calvin writes:

Now it was of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator be both true God and true man.... Since our iniquities, like a cloud cast between us and him, had completely estranged us from the Kingdom of Heaven (*cf. Isa. 59:2*), no man, unless he belonged to God, could serve as the intermediary to restore peace. But who might reach to him? Any one of Adam's children?.... The situation would surely have been hopeless had the very majesty of God not descended to us, since it was not in our power to ascend to him. Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to become for us "Immanuel, that is, God with us" (*Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23*), and in such a way that his divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection grow together. Otherwise the nearness would not have been near enough, nor the affinity sufficiently firm, for us to hope that God might dwell with us. So great was the disagreement between our uncleanness and God's perfect purity!<sup>9</sup>

In other words, apart from the Incarnation there can be no Gospel.

Yet, contrary to Scripture, the catholic church, and the reformers, the conception of a theanthropic mediator is entirely missing in Borg's theology. Instead of a mediated relationship, he seems to favor a direct approach, as if a child of Adam (whose existence he surely can't accept) could reach out to God. After all, it was on the basis of direct mysticism that he sought out his version of Christ. On the other hand, he also speaks of the grace of God in baptism, so perhaps he attributes the active role to God. In either case, however, a direct, unmediated relationship is in view since the Incarnation is denied.

### Virgin Birth

Given Borg's denial of the Incarnation, it comes as no surprise that he also denies the Virgin Birth. He sees both doctrines as a logical unit growing out of the early church's attempt to objectify its "post-Easter" experience. As a result of this experience, Borg says, the title "Son of God," originally used as a relational metaphor to express the intimacy between Jesus and God, began to acquire biological and then ontological status. Given this fact, the Virgin Birth became necessary as Christians sought to project their experience back onto history. Rightly, Borg sees the necessary connection between the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth. However, in his Biblical criticism he wrongly rejects both.

In view of Scripture and theology, however, Borg's position must be seen as un-Christian. With respect to the



former, the Virgin Birth, like the Incarnation, is clearly revealed in Scripture (*Lk. 1:26-38; Mt. 1:18-25*). But from a dogmatic perspective, the issue is broader than a single datum of Scripture since the Virgin Birth stands in organic relation to the person and work of Christ. In particular, as the mode of the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth is most consonant with the singularity of Christ's person, providing a unique origin that attests his theanthropic personality from day one. Moreover, it provides a matching between Christ's human and eternal Sonship, causing Sonship to permeate his entire person. Additionally, it points to the divine initiative in the process of Christ's origin.

But beyond the provision of a spotless humanity, it is through its role in the Incarnation that the Virgin Birth guarantees Christ's sinlessness. In this regard, it must be understood that the previous development had reference to Christ's humanity alone. As a result of Christ's unique birth, he was born in a state of moral rectitude in regard to his humanity. And while it is a matter of the Biblical record that Christ did not sin (*2 Cor. 5:21*), an upright character considered in regard to his humanity alone would not suffice to keep him from sinning. After all, Adam was created morally upright (*Gen. 1:31*), and yet he fell (*Gen. 3*). What guaranteed Christ's sinlessness was the union of divinity with his spotless humanity in one person.

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*Borg's position is essentially a mystical version of the social gospel where in addition to providing a moral focus, Jesus becomes a glorified guru as well.*

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A result of the Incarnation through the Virgin Birth, Christ was not only sinless, but absolutely unable to sin. Yet, Marcus Borg rejects both the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth as fabrications of the early church. By implication, then, he must deny Christ's absolute sinlessness and impeccability as well. Thus, it can be seen that a rejection of Christ's unique person will imply a rejection also of his work.

### **Substitutionary Atonement**

Because Marcus Borg denies the basis of Christ's sinless perfection, namely the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth, he is also forced to deny Christ's substitutionary Atonement (*2 Cor. 5:21*). And of course, he sees this doctrine as part of an organic theological whole, stemming from the church's

attempt to objectify its experience. Once again, though wrong, Borg is consistent:

Christians who have become aware of the differences between Jesus as a figure of history and the Christian estimate of him often find some of the language used about Jesus in Christian worship to be problematic. To use the creeds as an example, saying them is often not easy for such Christians. To put the issue in bold form, if one thinks, as I do, that Jesus was not born of a virgin, did not think of himself as the Son of God, and did not see his own purpose as dying for the sins of the world, what do I understand myself to be doing when I recite the creeds?

For me, the key lies in the preceding analysis of language used for the post-Easter Jesus and the relationship of that language to early and on-going Christian experience. Among other things, it means that one should not take literally something that is metaphorical and that one should not understand a much later ontological claim as a historical statement about Jesus. Jesus would not have thought of himself as the only begotten son of God, and if one of his disciples had spoken of him with words of the Nicene Creed, one can only imagine him saying, "What?"<sup>10</sup>

Here, the denial of Christ's substitutionary atonement is seen to be part of a self-conscious, consistent, and total rejection of the orthodox Christology. Given this fact, it comes as no surprise that Borg's religious program is works-righteousness:

What would it mean to take the God of Jesus seriously? It seems to me, from what I have been able to see thus far as a historian who is also a Christian, to include the following: It means to see God as an experiential reality, not simply an article of belief. It means to live by an alternative wisdom, whose primary content is a relationship with the same Spirit Jesus knew. It means to actualize compassion in the world, both as an individual virtue and as the core value of the alternative social vision of Jesus. And it means to be part of a community of memory that celebrates, nourishes, and embodies the new way of being that we see in Jesus.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, Borg's position is essentially a mystical version of the social gospel where in addition to providing a moral focus, Jesus becomes a glorified guru as well. By thus eliminating the uniqueness of Christ's person, his experience is broadened to encompass all the faithful for whom Christ functions as a model in the process of ascent. Of course, Christ truly is a spiritual and moral example. The problem is that Borg limits him to these roles. Thus, it can be seen that a mystical social gospel is no gospel at all.

### **Bodily Resurrection**

Given this viewpoint, it is not surprising that Borg also rejects the bodily resurrection. In fact, this denial is the proximate source of the problem. Borg has so spiritualized the resurrection as to de-historicize Christ in the resurrected state. As a consequence, a radical dichotomy is introduced



between the pre-Easter and the post-Easter Jesus that severs the relation between the two. In Borg's view this dichotomy is natural.

Of course, Scripture affirms a bodily resurrection in the clearest terms (*1 Cor. 15:42-49*). In fact, the Apostle Paul claims that apart from the resurrection, Christian preaching is useless and Christian Faith is futile. Indeed, apart from the resurrection, people are still in their sins (*1 Cor. 15:14,17*). Behind these statements lies the organic connection between the person and work of Christ, namely, that the Word became flesh to save the world.

Given the connection between Christ's person and work, it is no wonder that Borg rejects the bodily resurrection. Essentially, Borg and Paul agree on the stakes. Paul says that the denial of Christ's bodily resurrection implies a similar denial of his atoning work as the Incarnate Son of God. Borg agrees, and then unflinchingly denies the totality of orthodox Christology. To use an optical analogy, it can be said that Borg's entire Christology (both person and work) has been refracted through the false prism of a spiritual resurrection.

## Conclusion

In spite of his supernaturalism, Marcus Borg's position must be seen as un-Christian. While his mysticism evidently led him back to the church, it has not led to a Christian understanding of Christ or the Gospel:

Finally, my personal journey has led back into the church. My decade-long self-exile ended about ten years ago. Since then I have become more and more involved in the life of the church in my own Christian journey. My exile ended because of my religious experiences, and because of my desire to be part of a tradition and community which celebrated and mediated the reality of the Spirit.

But it is an understanding of Christianity (and Jesus) quite different from the one I acquired as a child. When I was a child, I thought that being a Christian was about "believing," and belief was no problem. When I was an adolescent and young adult, I struggled with trying to believe, and finally was no longer able to do so. Now I see that it is not a question of belief, and there is much that I do not believe. I do not believe that Christianity is the only way of salvation, or that the Bible is the revealed will of God, or that Jesus was the unique Son of God. Rather, I now see that the Christian tradition—including its claim about Jesus—is not something to be believed, but something to be lived in. I see the Bible and the tradition as "icons," mediators of the sacred. The point is not to believe them, but to be in relationship to that which they mediate: God, the Spirit, the sacred. My own journey has thus been "beyond belief."<sup>12</sup>

As should be evident from the above quote and the previous development, Borg's position runs counter to the Apostle's Creed which has summarized the church's confession for two millennia.

When Borg's position is examined, the reason for its

failure is clear. First, having rejected Biblical authority, Borg approaches Christ in an autonomous (rather than theonomous) fashion through mysticism. Then as a result of this mystical approach, the entire person and work of Christ are refracted through an overly spiritualized resurrection. Having thereby eliminated the Gospel of a substitutionary atonement, Borg's theology reduces to a mystical version of the social gospel.

<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Roots of Gospels Criticism* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Marcus J. Borg, "The Journey Home," *The Fourth R* (Sonoma, CA), vol. VI, no. 4, 3-9.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 8, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Marcus J. Borg, "The Historian, the Christian, and Jesus," *Theology Today* (Ephrata, PA), vol. 52, no. 1, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, n.d.) II:xii:1.

<sup>10</sup> Borg, *op. cit.*, 15.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Marcus J. Borg, "The Journey Home," *The Fourth R* (Sonoma, CA, 1993), vol. VI, no. 4, 4.

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## Van Til and Postmodernism By Larry Ball

### The Great Paradigm Shift

Presently in secular America there is a paradigm shift taking place which is originating in intellectual circles, but is quickly capturing the mind of the average American. It is a shift from what has been historically called "modernism" to that which is presently called "post-modernism." It is a dramatic change in the way people think, and it is the outworking of what Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary described years ago as "man becoming epistemologically self-conscious." Simply put, man is biased in the way he knows things, and he needs to know that!

As Christians we should look upon this paradigm shift as an opportunity for evangelism. However, it is important to note, that only a presuppositional apologetic will be able to deal with this new way of thinking. Evidentialism as an apologetic method will be useless.

In this article I will attempt to explain the meaning of what



I have just said. What is modernism? What is post-modernism? What is a paradigm shift? What is presuppositional apologetics and why is it the only weapon that can be adequately used as a tool to expose the fallacies of post-modernism, so that Christ may be properly presented to those caught in its trap? I will attempt to answer these questions to some degree in the following comments.

Most of us who were raised in the public schools and sent off to state colleges and universities in the sixties were taught under a world and life view called modernism. Even though many of us attended church on Sundays, in the public schools and colleges we were adopting a way of thinking often times very much antithetical to what we were learning in church. We were schizophrenic, and didn't know it.

### **A Personal Testimony**

So it was with me, having been raised in a conservative Presbyterian church, yet studying mathematics and physics on the college level at a state engineering school. In church I learned about God and how important He was. In the classroom I learned that God was irrelevant. In church I learned that God created the world. In the classroom I was taught that the world as we know it is a closed system governed by natural laws which are neutral in regard to questions about God. In church I learned that God spoke through the Bible. In the classroom I learned that through our minds, without reference to God, we can come to agreement via the scientific method about facts as we discover natural laws. In the church I learned that the ten commandments defined right and wrong. In the classroom I learned that even in the area of ethics there were natural laws defining right and wrong, and all men who will only properly reason with their minds will come to the same conclusions about what is right and wrong. Any reference to God was unnecessary. This was modernism and this was me in the sixties!

Toward the end of my college career I began to lose faith in modernism and also I began to doubt the validity of Christianity. I had thought that the study of mathematics would answer the ultimate questions of life. The more I advanced in the study of mathematics, the more I began to see that mathematics was built upon unproved axioms which had to be accepted by faith. At its root, mathematics was just another faith system. This greatly discouraged me. As I sought counsel from Presbyterian ministers, I was unable to find one who could give me Biblical answers to the tension I had developed between religion and science. Since the leaders of the church seemed to be mimicking the answers that I was hearing in the classroom (baptized, of course, with some religious language), I became very suspicious of the church. One pastor gave me a book entitled, *I Believe In God And I Believe In Evolution*. I was so disappointed that I never even read the book. Finally, by God's providence I enrolled at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia where Dr. Cornelius Van Til was Professor of Apologetics.

Westminster Seminary was in its zenith in the sixties. John Murray, Jay Adams, Cornelius Van Til, E.J. Young, and other men of great caliber were all gathered at the same place to teach the Christian Faith. What a blessing for a young searching Christian like me! To say the least, I was overwhelmed. (As a little sidetrack to my article, I remember the first lecture, as a first-year student, I heard from Professor John Murray. I was asked afterwards what I thought of it. My response was, "I didn't understand a word he said." I was a slow learner and by the time I graduated three years later, I finally began to understand what Professor Murray was saying.)

The greatest blessing to me was the teaching of Dr. Cornelius Van Til. I was driven to Westminster partially because I was seeking a way to combine my dwindling faith in Christianity which I had learned in church and my dwindling faith in the scientific method which I had learned in college. Dr. Van Til clearly laid out the answers from what I consider the only Biblical apologetic faithful to the Scriptures, which has come to be called presuppositionalism.

### **Presuppositionalism**

The presuppositional method asserts that the beginning point of all knowledge is the fact that God exists. There is no neutrality in the world, and all systems are at root religious, even the scientific method. The scientific method, if pushed to be consistent, is based upon faith in the belief that the world came into existence by pure chance, and in reality it has no basis on which to boast of any trustworthy laws or truth. The only reason it has had any success is because it has borrowed capital from the Christian Faith, namely, the assumption that order does and ought to exist in the world. Dr. Van Til used to say that in principle all predication is impossible except upon the presupposition of the full Christian position. The Christian Faith gives a basis for laws and truth because a self-contained God created the world and therefore gave it meaning. All systems are based upon certain presuppositions which men assume. In other words, all men are biased in their search for truth.

All men know that God exists, but unbelievers suppress that truth in rebellion. There are no neutral, brute facts. All facts are "God-created facts." Any denial of this is rebellion against the true and living God. We must not let the world claim an area of neutrality where Christians and unbelievers seek together to investigate and reach some conclusion about the existence of God. To allow this area of neutrality, is to deny at the very outset the claims of God and to give the unbeliever stolen ground which he does not deserve. Proclamation of the gospel, and not an intellectual argumentation depending upon the acceptance of a common neutrality, is the Biblical method to approach the unbeliever. However, Dr. Van Til did teach that since all men are made in the image of God, a point of contact exists between the Christian and unbeliever, and that intellectual discussion was useful, at least insofar as it would show the



inconsistencies of the unbeliever in the hope that the Holy Spirit would change his heart as the claims of Christ were pressed upon him.

Needless to say, I left Westminster Seminary a changed person. I thought presuppositionalism was so clear and evident, that all Christians must surely agree. To my surprise I found great opposition among Christian and Reformed leaders to the apologetic method of presuppositionalism. Even today, it saddens me that Van Tilian presuppositionalism is seldom adopted by young men coming out of seminary. The place where it really is taking root in men's hearts is in local church congregations among Christians sitting under preachers who are committed presuppositionalists.

### **The Modernist Vision**

Modernism was a system that assumed a neutral world of neutral facts where Christians and unbelievers could come together without reference to God and reason through the scientific method to arrive at truth. Eventually, however, God became unnecessary and therefore irrelevant. A truce between God and the Devil always ends up in God being pushed out of the arena. Evidentialism is an apologetic method using the assumptions of modernism in seeking to prove the existence of God. According to consistent evidentialism, the problem with man is not ethical, but simply intellectual. If we reason together, assuming the neutrality of the facts, we can convince men that there is a God. Unbelievers are simply encouraged to look at the facts, without first assuming that they are "God-created facts." In this way evidentialism has been trying to convert modernists for years, by adopting the very presuppositions of modernism. They have not been very successful.

### **The Post-Modern Vision**

Today, however, there is occurring a "paradigm shift" in intellectual circles, where modernism is being challenged by a new world and life view labeled post-modernism. What is a paradigm shift? It is a change in the way people view the world. The move from Creationism to Darwinism was a paradigm shift. The move in counseling from a foundation based upon theology to the pseudo-science of psychology was a paradigm shift. A change in a person's view of professional baseball from being as American as apple-pie, to a view that it is a sport for greedy baseball players to get rich at the expense of the sports fan, is a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift is a change in the way we view things which beforehand we accepted as fact.

Post-modernism is challenging the modernism which I was taught in the public schools. Post-modernism is based on the premise that everyone is biased. For example, post-modernists proclaim that American history as taught by modernists is not true. Traditional American history is the intentional attempt of one ethnic group in power (namely White Anglo Saxon Protestants—"WASPS") to impose its views upon other ethnic groups. The language of history

has no meaning (Deconstructionism) unless it is viewed as the instrument of power to bring the control of one group over another. Thus history needs to be re-written. History is not neutral. It depends on the bias of those in power who write the history texts. Courses in college like Western Civilization are Eurocentric in bias, and must be substituted (not simply supplemented) by other views such as Afrocentric history. At one point, post-modernism has become so ridiculous that some post-modern historians have suggested that native American (formerly known as Indian) political views had more influence on the United States Constitution than did either Christianity or the so-called European Enlightenment. The problem is that WASPS have been writing history for the purpose of maintaining their dominance over minority groups in America.

Likewise, according to the philosophy of post-modernism, science is not merely neutral, but it has been the attempt to impose the values of the ruling majority upon the minority. Unless one sees science in this light, then he does not understand the true nature of science.

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Thus, to some extent, post-modernism has exposed modernism as a faith system which rests upon certain biases in its search for truth. There is no neutrality, but only a power struggle of ethnic and religious groups in power to impose their mentality upon minority groups.

Post-modernism is capturing the modern mind, especially at the university level. My daughter is a Dormitory RA (Resident Assistant) at the University of Tennessee. During her required training for this position, her curriculum defined "isms" as that which refers to the definition of terms. The curriculum went on to say that an "ism" is "the oppression of an individual or group in the minority (according to race, sex, age, religion, ability, etc.) by the majority. "Heterosexism" was defined in the university curriculum as "the belief in the inherent superiority of one orientation over another, and thereby the right to dominate." Sound familiar? It is post-modernism capturing the university, all at the expense of the Tennessee taxpayers.

To the extent that post-modernism is challenging the neutrality of modernism, I rejoice. Post-modernism has exposed the lie that men operate on a neutral playing field and come to the knowledge of truth as they reason together.



However, it must be made clear, that post-modernism, although it raises the right questions about modernism, also has the wrong answers. It only seeks to replace one power structure with another. Is Afrocentism any better than Eurocentrism? Who is to say that one is better than another? Is homosexuality better than heterosexuality? Who is to be the judge? Is not the issue of modernism versus post-modernism ultimately a power struggle and to the victors belong the spoils? Even though post-modernism offers no more hope than modernism, at least it challenges the presuppositions of neutrality held so forcefully by the modernists. The problem is that it seeks to substitute one set of corrupt presuppositions for another.

As a presuppositionalist, I can rejoice that the underpinnings of modernism are being challenged. This is what presuppositionalists have been doing for years, but it seems few were listening. The challenge for us as Christians is to take advantage of this paradigm shift, and show that both systems, whether modernism or post-modernism, are based upon false and corrupt presuppositions.

At root, all systems of belief, all paradigms, all world and life views, are based on some religious presuppositions. We must challenge all of them with the presuppositions of the Christian Faith, which is the only real truth, because it is based on the true and living, self-contained God who reveals Himself to man. That is our starting point. We must proclaim to others that all other starting points are false and empty, and will only bring God's judgment on them. For those who repent of promoting false presuppositions in rebellion against God, there is forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ.

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*Larry Ball is pastor of Bridwell Heights Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee.*

## POSITION PAPER NO. 205

# The Spirit of Heresy

*By R. J. Rushdoony*

Concerns over heresy are unpopular in our time, and heresy trials are no longer a part of the life of the church. Very often, when charges of heresy and moral dereliction are raised, churches rally to suppress the charges as detrimental to the life of faith. It is commonly assumed that the Faith will flourish better if peace is maintained at almost any price.

In the process, of course, truth is sacrificed to a false peace and harmony. In practice, there is an intolerance often greater than any other time in church history, only this time it is leveled against the defenders of orthodoxy. In the name of peace and love, the orthodox are driven out.

Heresy is dissent from and antagonism to a fundamental doctrine of the Christian Faith. The word heresy comes from a Greek word meaning *choice*. The heretic is someone who chooses for himself what he will believe, so that neither Scripture, nor the councils of the early church, nor any authority other than his own will can determine the Faith for him. Heresy is not limited to defective knowledge. The Book of Acts gives us instances where the apostolic fellowship, faced with a new situation such as Gentile believers, had to study prayerfully and Biblically how to deal with the matter.

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*Our age is very severely limited by its intense addiction to personal choice. It makes no difference to many that their ideas are as ridiculous as asserting that two plus two equals five, or, that the moon is made of green cheese. Truth is not for them an objective reality but it is what they think or believe.*

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In the process of understanding the Faith, it was necessary to confront various problems. Certainly moral depravity, and a background saturated with it, has often warped the problem. Intellectually, men have often brought foreign baggage to the Faith, as witness the Greco-Roman ideas that at times clouded the minds of many church fathers. Certainly in our day the modern mind-set is not committed to understanding the faith clearly and effectively.

But, most of all, our age is very severely limited by its intense addiction to personal choice. It makes no difference to many that their ideas are as ridiculous as asserting that two plus two equals five, or, that the moon is made of green cheese. Truth is not for them an objective reality but it is what they think or believe. Their common attitude is, "*I don't care what anyone says, I think. . .*" Truth is not for them a reality beyond man but is rather their own opinion or conclusion.

Because of this perspective, heresy is very much a basic part of the modern world view. Hegel, with his view of the



development of spirit in history, the evolution of culture and man from one stage of being to another, was a major shaper of the modern mind-set. Hegel's perspective shaped much more than secular philosophies. His influence on Roman Catholic and Protestant thinkers has not been given the attention it needs. In Roman Catholic circles, Hegel's spirit or *geist* became in some instances the unseen force in a developing concept of tradition. In Protestant schools, Hegel provided justification for doctrinal reinterpretations in this new vein. As a result of Hegel, the demand for the location of Scriptural and patristic premises gave way to the spirit of the times. Hegelianism gave the church freedom to redefine itself again and again, and to call this redefinition progress.

Increasingly, at the heart of modern heresy there is a denial that such a thing as *orthodoxy* exists or has ever existed. In earlier years, Jude 3 was commonly cited: "ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." Now the idea of a given deposit of faith, enscriptured and authoritative, is treated as evidence of ignorance and anti-intellectualism. It is held commonly that established norms did not exist in the New Testament church, a view that would have amazed the apostles. The Pharisees had their orthodoxy, but supposedly the New Testament church did not. The Darwinian mythology requires that orthodoxy come only after a long evolution.

Heresy is choice, and the heretic decides for himself in terms of personal criteria what he will believe. The spirit of our time is radically dedicated to *choice* on purely personal terms. As taught in state schools, values clarification means not ascertaining what truth is, but deciding for oneself, in terms of purely personal taste, what values one chooses to live by. It is not a quest for truth but for a simply appealing "life-style."

This means that the spirit of heresy very much marks our age. This makes our task a greater one, because we go against the modern grain. It also makes our task an easier one, because this heretical viewpoint is radically bankrupt.

## Random Notes, 63

By R. J. Rushdoony

1. Something reminded me recently of a saying or proverb used by my mother when I was quite young. If anyone walked through the kitchen near dinner time, he or she might be drafted to the old wood stove, if not to get more wood, then to stir something. Her saying was, "Everything needs to be stirred or turned over on a stove except water." So you stirred, while she took care of something else.

2. In the latter Middle Ages in England, the Biblical view of property as belonging to the family, past, present, and

future was very strong. "An estate (and, therefore, a kingdom) was not so much the property of an individual as a sacred family trust to be handed down from generation to generation and, if possible, increased" (J. R. Landers: *The Limitations of English Monarchy in the Latter Middle Ages*, 6.1986).

Judges etc. who were men of little property were not popular with the people because they were commonly guilty of extortion (pp. 31f., 36).

3. Every year, *U.S. & World Report* has a rating of the top colleges, universities, law schools, etc. in the United States. Their criteria are mechanical and superficial. Too often, law schools, for example, that rank high are unfit places for intelligent and moral students. Guest speakers, invited by the school or its student body, are commonly jeered and their lectures disrupted by barbarian students, with never a dissent from the presiding professor. This tells us that neither students nor faculties have any regard for law, or are capable of civilized behavior.

4. An otherwise excellent book I read recently described America as an undefiled and pristine wilderness before the coming of the white man. This is silly, and it is nonsense. The Indians set fire to drive game towards them, but even this was nothing compared to the damage done by buffalo, for example. Many herds, 100,000 each, moved across the land destroying all the trees and vegetation before them. Had not the white man come, in time all forests from coast to coast would have been destroyed by the buffalo. In a "nature" film on coyotes in the Los Angeles city limits, the narrator said cities had taken over the coyote's habitat, and hence his presence in cities, eating cats and dogs, and even attacking children. This is not true. The coyote was a minor presence in the West before the coming of the white man; now he is in all 48 mainland states in great numbers. He is in the cities because, like most animals, he goes where the food is, something the cautious mountain lion is now also doing. The easy food is in the cities. Probably more wild animals are in the cities than we yet know about.

5. A rule my father established when we were young, and maintained as long as he and my mother lived, was that we, my brother, sister, and I, write home at least once a week, if only a postcard, whenever we were away, and when we married and lived elsewhere.

6. Here are some interesting items from *Yankee Ingenuity* by Harry Harris (1990). Herbert Hoover, the secretary of commerce, in 1922 predicted, "The American people will never stand for advertising on the air." But on August 28, 1922, the first commercial aired, and it was ten minutes long (p. 83)!

Fortune cookies were an American invention for Chinese restaurants. One of the early "classics" was, "Eat, eat, you need strength to worry." Another was, "Smile — people will wonder what you are up to" (p. 131).

Naval lieutenant Matthew Fontaine (1806-1872) was a maverick, challenging naval teachings and traditions. He was injured in a stagecoach accident, so the Navy happily put the *Virginian* in the depot for naval charts and



instruments. Midst the dust, Fontaine found thousands of logbooks. With his staff, he collected the data to record weather observations of various kinds. By 1851, he issued information on all the world's major seas. He also discovered the Northwest Passage by studying reports on the migration of whales. Fontaine's work became the basis of international charts. Dr. Wallace Humes Carothers made the first wholly man-made fiber, Nylon. But he never lived to profit by it. Depressed by his sister's death, and convinced that he was a failure, he committed suicide in 1937.

One more item: parking meters were first tried out in Oklahoma city, Oklahoma on July 16, 1935. The public reaction was so violent that the National Guard was called out to restore order. Another try was made in Mobile, Alabama, where ax-toting unreconstructed Southerners destroyed the meters.

7. You hear and read much about the bad old days when men ruled their wives for better or for worse. Did you know that in the 1800s when a woman committed a crime it was her husband who served time? In England, when a family went into debt, the man went to debtor's prison. (Warren Farrell: *The Myth of Male Power*, 92, 237.)

8. John Peter Rumrich, in *A Matter of Glory: A New Preface to Paradise Lost* (1987), commented on ancient Hebrew culture thus: "If we can detect any aristocracy in Israel, it is an aristocracy of the righteous—those who obey the law" (p. 37).

## Special Announcements

### Videotape of the Rushdoony 80th Birthday Conference San Jose, CA, April 27, 1996

Highlights of the speakers: Howard Phillips, Herb Titus, Andrew Sandlin, and Rush himself. Stories and anecdotes from Rush's old friends. Tributes and testimonials from the many who have been influenced and mentioned by Rushdoony. This tape is a special keepsake of a very memorable event and an excellent way of introducing new people to Rushdoony and to Christian Reconstruction in general.

Two-hour tape on VHS. Until August 15, \$25 U.S. per copy postpaid. After August 15, \$40. All profits go to Chalcedon.

Send name and address with check made out to: "Hugh Martin" to Hugh Martin & Co.,  
P.O. Box 1248, Sonoma, CA 95476.  
Questions: 707-939-0400.

### Important Announcement On Answering Mail and E-Mail

We at Chalcedon receive many more letters and e-mail messages than we can answer. In fact, it would probably require hiring a full-time staff member just to answer all our mail. Ours is not a large, sophisticated foundation. We try to respond to the most urgent mail. We hope our faithful supporters and readers understand.

### Christianity and Government Tapes

The "Christianity and Government" seminar tapes featuring R. J. Rushdoony, Howard Phillips, Andrew Sandlin, and Colonel Doner can now be purchased. The complete set is \$35.00; checks can be made payable to Tampa Covenant Church, 13320 Lake Magdalene Blvd., Tampa FL 33618; (813) 968-2979.

### Joseph R. McAuliffe Teaching Tapes

Joseph is teaching a weekly exegetical series on the Book of Hebrews and the Book of Proverbs. Tapes cost \$4.00 each and may be ordered by calling (813) 968-2979.

### Instead of college, why not your own business?

Why give the humanists your money for a worthless diploma? Grace Community Schools has openings for qualified Christian Reconstruction career aspirants. Learn how to grow your own day-care, pre-school, school, and/or church from scratch. Contact: Ellsworth McIntyre, % Grace Community Schools, 6075 Pelican Bay Blvd., Naples, FL 34108.

### If You Can Help

All of our Chalcedon vehicles are old (over 100,000 miles) and requiring increasing maintenance. If you have a good used vehicle you are willing to donate to Chalcedon, please contact Mark Rushdoony at the Chalcedon office. As with all gifts, these donations are tax-deductible.



**CD-ROMS: Calvin, Luther, Bunyan, Owen, Edwards, Owen, Spurgeon, Webster's 1828 "Dictionary," Bancroft's American History, Much More**

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**Blumenfeld to Speak in Western Pennsylvania**

Chalcedon scholar Samuel Blumenfeld will be addressing the annual fall meeting of the National Reform Association on Friday, November 8, at 7:00 p.m. in the Skyview Lounge at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

The *Chalcedon Report* editor is president of this august organization.

For more information, contact Bill Gould at 412-243-4471 or [wwgould@aol.com](mailto:wwgould@aol.com).

**Christian Reconstruction and the Arts**

In March of this year, I started an email/internet newsletter called Christian Reconstruction and the Arts. Here is a short description of it:

A newsletter Christian Reconstruction and the Arts has been started for artists who wish to advance the Kingdom of God through their works of art. Its purpose is to provide inspiration, resources, and networking opportunities for Christians in the Arts. Discussions topics may include (but will certainly not be limited to) the following: Architecture, Cinema, Dance, Graphic arts, Music, Photography, Sculpture, Theatre.

For more information, see the World Wide Web page <http://www.wp.com/bynumm/cra.html> or send an email request to [bynumm@icsi.net](mailto:bynumm@icsi.net). Those without email may call Matt Bynum at (210) 822-2854 to request that information be sent to them by postal mail.

**The Perestroika Deception**

You saw Dr. Rushdoony's review of this book in the "Book Notes" section of the Feb. 96, issue of the *Chalcedon Report*. He said, "this is an urgently important book. Our future is at stake." See how, "Under the semblance of peace, a planned convergence, political and economic," to world socialism is under way.

If you would like to get a copy of this book by Anatoliy Golitsyn, or his earlier book, *New Lies for Old*, sent \$20.00 plus \$2.50 postage and handling per book to:

**David J. Brewer  
915 Woodlawn Dr.,  
Lansdale, PA 19446**



One of the things we are proud of is the many varied activities of our staff. Some of them are publishing important newsletters, and we take this opportunity to tell you of them.

1. Samuel L. Blumenfeld publishes *The Blumenfeld Educational Letter*, P.O. Box 45161, Boise, Idaho 83711, \$36 a year, a monthly.
2. *The Lofton Letter* by John Lofton, P.O. Box 1142, Laurel, Maryland 20725, e-mail address: JLofton@AOL.com, \$100 a year, monthly (20 pages).
3. Ian Hodge of Australia's Foundation for the Advancement of Christian Studies is an affiliate, and he publishes *F.A.C.S. Report, Probe*, and *Christian Economics* monthly, on a donation basis: write to him at P.O. Box 547, Ferny Hills, QLD 4055, Australia, Tel/fax 07-851-1265.
4. For those of you who read French, Jean-Marc Berthoud publishes several periodicals. For sample copies, send a donation and write to Jean-Marc Berthoud, Trabendan 16, Lausanne, CH 1006, Switzerland.
5. For the Chalcedon tapes, write to Christian Tape Productions, P.O. Box 1804, Murphys, California 95247. The twice monthly Easy Chairs are \$4.50 each, and the weekly Bible studies (two lessons on each tape), are also \$4.50. For a sample of either, send \$5; California residents add 7¼% sales tax.
6. For those of you who read German, Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher (a professor of missions and ethics) and his wife Dr. Christine Schirrmacher (a scholar in Islamic studies) publish *Querschnitte* (obtainable from Culture and Science Publ., Friedrichstr. 38, D-53111 Bonn, Germany).
7. **Friends of Chalcedon** (4960 Almaden Expressway, #172, San Jose, CA 95118 [408] 997-9866) publishes two newsletters as part of its ministry. The *Kids for Life Newsletter* is a publication which consists of young people writing against abortion, euthanasia and any devaluation of life. It is available on request. Donations are welcomed. Also, about twice a year, as part of its **Emmaus Project**, there is an *Update* for the **Committees of Correspondence**, which endeavors to serve as a networking instrument for reconstructionists around the country. You may become part of the Committees of Correspondence by writing in and requesting such.