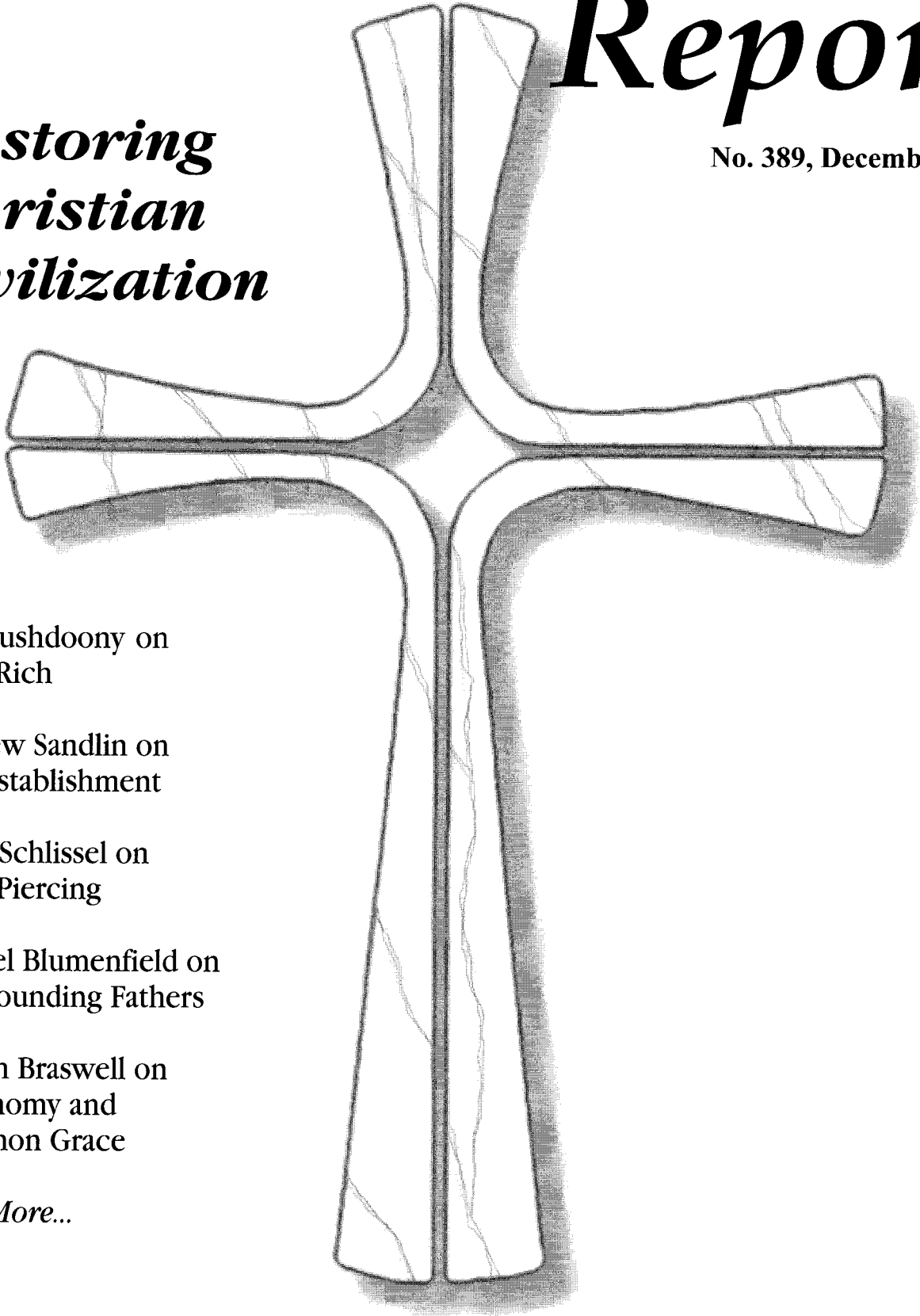


CHALCEDON *Report*

*Restoring
Christian
Civilization*

No. 389, December 1997



R. J. Rushdoony on
Born Rich

Andrew Sandlin on
The Establishment

Steve Schlissel on
Body Piercing

Samuel Blumenfield on
The Founding Fathers

Joseph Braswell on
Theonomy and
Common Grace

Plus More...

*Man is a creature that in the long run has got to believe in order
to know, and to know in order to do.*

-Allen Tate

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

Contents:

Chalcedon Scholars:

Rev. R. J. Rushdoony is president of Chalcedon and a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical Law to society.

Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony is vice president of Chalcedon and director and a teacher at Chalcedon Christian School.

Rev. Andrew Sandlin is editor-in-chief of the *Chalcedon Report* and the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* and president of the National Reform Association.

Rev. Brian M. Abshire is the Pastor of Lakeside Church, offices at 7259 N. Iroquois, Glendale, Wisconsin 53217 and a Chalcedon board member. Telephone/FAX (414) 247-8719 or e-mail: briana@execpc.com.

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD	2
<i>Born Rich</i>	
by Rev. R. J. Rushdoony	
EDITORIAL	3
<i>The Establishment</i>	
<i>Books and Things 5</i>	
by Rev. Andrew Sandlin	
BIBLICAL STUDY	6
<i>Subjection (Part II)</i> , by Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony	
COUNTER-CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY	8
<i>Paganism and Social Progress in Africa:</i>	
<i>Some Preliminary Considerations</i>	
by Rev. Brian M. Abshire	
METHODS ARE PRIMARY	12
<i>Occupational Moral Idiots</i>	
by Ellsworth McIntyre	
<i>Urban Nations Update: I Will, I Do</i>	
by Steve M. Schlissel.	
<i>Theonomy, Theocracy, and Common Grace</i>	
by Joseph P. Braswell	
<i>Man and His Environment</i>	
by Harmony McPherson	
<i>Committed to What?</i> , by Byron Snapp	
<i>The Challenge of Missions: A Message</i>	
by Peter Hammond	
<i>The Founding Father on Religion and Morality</i>	
by Samuel L. Blumenfeld	
<i>If It's Hebrew, Must It Be Holy? (Or Judaism-Lite)</i>	
by Monte Wilson	
<i>Do We Need The Government's Permission For Everything?</i>	
by Sheldon Richman	
POSITION PAPER NO. 219	
<i>The Restoration of Education</i> , by R. J. Rushdoony	
RANDOM NOTES, 74	36
LETTER TO THE EDITOR	37
MY BACK PAGES	37
<i>Tattoo You?</i> , by Steve M. Schlissel	

EDITORIAL BOARD:

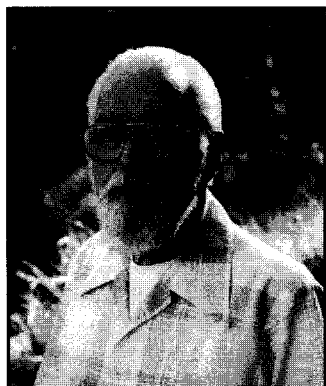
Dr. R. J. Rushdoony, President and Publisher
Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony, Vice-President
Rev. Andrew Sandlin, Editor
Walter Lindsay, Assistant Editor

EDITORIAL OFFICES:

Chalcedon, P.O. Box 158
Vallecito, CA 95251
Telephone Circulation (8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Pacific)
(209) 736-4365 or Fax (209) 736-0536
e-mail: chaloffi@goldrush.com
<http://www.chalcedon.edu>
Circulation: Rebecca Rouse
Printing: Calaveras Press

Born Rich

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony



It is a privilege and a form of wealth to be born into a rich culture, and most Americans, although they fail to recognize it, are born rich. My father and others with an extensive knowledge of various cultures often remarked that the poor in America were richer and freer than most of the world's peoples.

Now add to that the fact of being born into another culture, and yet living here in America, and one can see how wealthy an immigrant or foreign family can be, if they know and respect their heritage. I had the wealth of an ancient Christian Armenian culture and all the vast treasures of an American one.

My father was born in a remote village on a mountain next to Ararat. He lived where his family had lived for perhaps 2000 or so years. Having played as a boy in the churchyard where his father (of the married clergy) had been a priest of the Church of Armenia, my father had memorized the names of his ancestors for fifteen or more centuries back, from the gravestones and church records. My mother came from Van City, which was relatively modern and prosperous.

As a boy, I heard stories from survivors, including our family, of the massacres and the long death march. I heard of the martyrdom of many, including my paternal grandfather, first blinded, then a year or two later killed by the Turks. My maternal grandfather was killed while on a pilgrimage to a favorite monastery church.

My father knew the ancient liturgy as the very beautiful songs of medieval monks. They still echo in my memory with their intense faith.

I was thus born rich though materially poor. My father loved California. Having spent time in Europe in his student days, he knew and thought highly of it, especially Switzerland; but he held that Americans failed to appreciate the often greater beauty of their own country.

Up until my college years, I was immersed in the Armenian community. With time, I lost my ability to read and write Armenian, but the cultural impact remained. I was a child of two worlds and two cultures.

This enabled me to see, as I grew older, how both American and Armenian cultures had steadily left their moorings and had drifted from a strong Biblical and theonomic faith to a vague evangelicalism. I was brought up with unchanging reverence to believe that the Bible is the very word of God.

I can vividly remember each Christmas my father's reading the nativity accounts. I recall him helping us decorate the Christmas tree and telling us that it signified Jesus Christ, the tree of life, ever-green, ever-alive. The ornaments were fruits, or simulated fruit ornaments, to set forth Revelation 22:2. I can recall coming home from kindergarten with my first tale of a Santa Claus, amazed and excited. My laughing father cleaned the chimney, but my cousin Edward, two years older than I, told me it was a silly American story. I always disliked Santa Claus after that.

In Armenia, there was no neutral ground between Islam and Christianity, and I came to realize that there is no neutral ground anywhere. But, to my dismay, the country was drifting into a belief in neutral ground, with all racial groups in that drift. As a student at the university, then in seminary and in the ministry, I came to realize that this belief in neutrality was becoming a kind of new religion, especially among scientists and among churchmen who advocated a rationalistic apologetics. It is difficult for me to express the deep revulsion I felt towards this, then and now. It gave me an intense appreciation of Cornelius Van Til when I encountered his thinking. My horror for neutralism has only deepened with time.

Almost from the day I learned how to read, I began to read the Bible. I loved its majesty, beauty and certainty. In my later university years, I would read as much as an hour, out loud, saturating myself with the glory of God speaking to man. Over the years, when speaking at various churches, I try when possible to read Scripture myself in the service, rather than having another do it. It is a privilege I cherish.

I have been doubly blessed in being an heir of two Christian cultures. Truly, I was born rich.

Chalcedon Report, published monthly by Chalcedon, a tax-exempt Christian foundation, is sent to all who request it. All editorial correspondence should be sent to the editor-in-chief, Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251 or faxed to 209-736-0536. Laser-print hard copy and electronic disk submissions firmly encouraged. The editors are not responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts. All submissions subject to editorial revision. Opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of Chalcedon. Chalcedon depends on the contributions of its readers, and all gifts to Chalcedon are tax-deductible. ©1997 Chalcedon. All rights reserved. Permission to reprint granted on written request only.

The Establishment

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

United States' Religious Establishment



Every Christmas a great hue and cry arises from militant secularists, seconded by half-educated revisionist liberals, over any attempt to introduce a form of Christianity, even Christian symbols, into the public sphere, "public" being defined, erroneously, as *state-financed and -controlled life*. Feverishly citing "violation of the separation of church and

state," and the "First Amendment," these secularists essay to excise every last presence of historic Christianity beyond the home or church, or more realistically, beyond anybody's two ears. In contradiction to secularist charges, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution says nothing of the separation of church and state (the expression first appearing in a *letter* by Jefferson), and the meaning of the Amendment's "establishment clause" is so readily deduced from historical investigation that only recent Supreme Court justices and ACLU attorneys could misinterpret it.

From their experience with Mother England, the Founders knew first hand the dilemmas and tyranny a church-state union tended to produce. They pointedly opted, therefore, against allowing *Congress* to establish a *national church*, the officially recognized preference of one church or sect to another, or the monopolization of one religion expressed in and secured by civil law:

What the men of 1789 feared, and what they wanted to prevent, was the setting up of any of the many religions in America in a privileged position, to the disadvantage of all others. It was to be a ban on the establishment of any one religion, not the complete separation of the state and all religion, as we are asked today to admit.¹

The Constitution nowhere prohibited the use of federal funds for religious purposes, and they were frequently so designated.² Nor did the First Amendment forbid state-established churches, the last of which (Congregational in Massachusetts) existed until 1833. Indeed, the First Amendment was included, among other reasons, to *preserve* state churches:³ the states did not want the federal government tampering with religion as practiced by the states,⁴ which is exactly what a federal religious establishment would likely do. Moreover, the First Amendment did not forbid even a federal church; it only forbade *Congress* from passing laws "respecting an establishment of religion"; Congress was forbidden to establish or disestablish an official church.⁵ No doubt, the First

Amendment was designed to forbid the sectarian squabbles and ecclesiastical tyranny that usually followed an officially recognized and supported national church. This is the import of the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

Very early in the country's history, dedicated Christians—especially the Scottish Covenanters—decried the lack of any mention of Christ in the federal Constitution,⁶ and in the 1860s several of its ministers founded the National Reform Association (of which this editor is the latest president) to press for a Christian Amendment acknowledging the Lordship of Christ over the nation, and interpreted the War Between the States as a divine judgment for what it considered the nation's official agnosticism.⁷ The NRA vision did not include ecclesiastical establishment, but *religious* recognition, and would not have violated the First Amendment. A civil law-order comprising Biblical civil law reflects a Christian political order whether or not Christianity is officially recognized; and, though recognition of Christ's Lordship in national and state documents is always preferable, the chief *establishment* is the Faith, established in the lives and actions of citizens, not an officially established church or religion.

Establishment of some sort, however, official or unofficial, explicit or implicit, occurs naturally when attempts to press religious claims beyond the "private" sphere meet with success—and the fact is, in one form or another, they always do. Over the past few decades in the United States, a godless secular religion has subverted a residue of historic Christianity surviving from the nation's earliest years as the national religion. Its success is due not to the ecclesiastical disestablishment enshrined in the First Amendment but the *Christian* disestablishment in the lives of the populace: the waning of an intense, intelligent, dogged and comprehensive Christian vision creates a vacuum that an intense, intelligent, dogged and comprehensive *anti-Christian* vision can almost effortlessly fill. As Christians have retreated into their well-sequestered ecclesiastical bastions, secularists have monopolized almost all areas of society: media, education, economy, the arts, the churches, the state, and so forth. Just as godless radicals toppled a feeble, corrupt *ancien regime* in France during the 1780s and replaced it with an even more corrupt social order, so godless radicals toppled a feeble, corrupt secular conservatism in the United States during the 1960s and replaced it with an even more corrupt social order. This second revolution was less bloody than the first, but no less decisive. In both cases the expressed object of the radicals' assault was "The Establishment." The 60s revolutionaries, however, did not eliminate The Establishment any more than Marxists in 1917 eliminated the state—they merely traded a more evil establishment and state for what they replaced. Today, the 60s radicals constitute the *new* establishment, in church, state, science, medicine, economy, art and almost all areas of life.

Government schools, for instance, while a bad idea in the first place, nonetheless were once designed to inculcate a measure of Christian principle.⁸ Today, they are hotbeds of a rival religion: godless, statist secularism, committed to an acidic social engineering, reshaping man into the image of Satan. Even a bland, sentimental liberalism has been consumed by a

ravenous secular Beast that will be satiated only when it has obliterated every last vestige of historic Christianity.

The arts, likewise, are both a source and reflection of a society's beliefs. The arts in the United States have, in general, degenerated from naturalism and realism in the last century into a hedonistic nihilism and even blasphemy in the modern era. Most modern music, painting, theater, dance and architecture have all, to one degree or another, succumbed to neo-paganism and escalated toward a venal and cynical nihilism.

Politics is no less shaped by the 60s revolutionaries. The First Lady's "politics of meaning" expresses the 60s Generation's loss of faith in both the God of Scripture and even the tepid residue of conservatism they despised in their parents' generation. Now they have abandoned the high but misguided ideas of liberalism for "postmodernism": the claims of raw socio-politico-economic power calculated to crush any note of dissent. Any who dare question the secular, egalitarian, socialistic, relativistic and perverse agenda of the postmodernists is worthy only of contempt, and shouted down, rather than reasoned with.

The church has not been exempt from the ravages of the new Establishment religion. Today even the liberal Protestant denominations—and not one major Protestant denomination is *not* liberal (if we exclude the Southern Baptist Convention, often not classified as Protestant)—are moving from liberalism to outright secularism (and thus into the waiting arms of paganism), instanced by the ordination of women and homosexuals, the appearance of "inclusive language legionaries" and "gender neutral 'Bibles,'" the rise of goddess and earth religions, and the revival of dehumanizing "ecstasies" like laughing revivals accompanied by mule-braying, dog-barking, and lion-roaring. Church growth occurs only in highly existential and man-centered churches, like the Arminian Pentecostal and evangelical. Even Roman Catholicism incrementally capitulates to the modern secular temper, especially in acceptance of higher Biblical criticism and Darwinian evolutionism. While vibrant orthodoxy has been disestablished, deviant religion has been reestablished.

In these and other spheres, secularism has elbowed its way into the role of a religious establishment, the governing impulse and principle of modern life, both private and public.

The Establishment Calling

Biblical Christianity arrays itself unwaveringly against this new religious establishment. Its goal is not "peaceful coexistence" with secularism, not merely because two irreconcilable religions cannot survive in society for a protracted period, but chiefly because the claims of Christ will not permit rivals. The task of Christians is the incremental but intense disinheritance and destruction of evil in all areas of life, as Van Til declares:

Christ has assigned to his followers the task of breaking down the works of darkness everywhere. These works must be broken down *absolutely*. The soldiers of Christ must give no quarter to the enemies of Christ. And as they are on their daily search-and-destroy mission, this mission must begin with the daily cleansing of their own hearts.⁹

Satan established his order in the Garden of Eden. The calling of Christians is the re-establishment, under the power of the Holy Spirit, of a godly order governed by the inscripturated law of God in all spheres. This is what the Christian life on earth is all about.

Every distribution of a gospel tract, every Bible-believing church that invites the unconverted or supports a missions program, every vote for a Christian or Christian-influenced candidate, every act of Christian charity beyond the walls of the institutional church, every Christian TV or radio program—**every one**, despite protests to the contrary, is an **attempt at Christian establishment**. Innocent-sounding protests about "no intent to impose religious values on society" are the sop that naive, epistemologically un-self-conscious Christians toss to allay the suspicions of rabid, epistemologically self-conscious secularists intent to impose religious values on society. All Christian activity in evangelism, politics, charity, media, education, and the arts is **implicit establishmentarianism**: it works for some sort of establishment of the Christian Faith in the wider society.

This is why dispensationalism and other inherently defeatist views are self-contradictory and psychologically frustrating schemes. Any Christian vision that practices world evangelism while simultaneously predicting increasing and inevitable impotence is procedurally schizophrenic. *To assert that the task of the church is world evangelism but not the establishment of the Faith is to talk nonsense.*

Establishment and establishmentarianism are, in Rushdoony's terms, inescapable concepts. Christ's disciples and Satan's are working concurrently to establish their respective religions in the earth.

Christianity Reestablished

Chalcedon and most other orthodox Christian reformers do not undertake to establish a national or state church (and thus do not deny the validity of the separation of church and state, properly understood); rather, we endorse and practice **Christian establishmentarianism**: the prevalence of historic, Biblical Christianity in all areas of modern life. We advocate a *disestablished church* but an *established Faith*.

All consistent Christians are thus intently disestablishmentarian and establishmentarian: **To press the claims of Christ in all spheres is necessarily and simultaneously to disestablish Satan's kingdom and establish Christ's kingdom.**

And it is the establishment of Christ's kingdom which is destined to prevail.

¹ Joseph H. Brady, *Confusion Twice Confounded: The First Amendment and the Supreme Court* (South Orange, NJ, 1955, 2nd ed.), 10. See also M. Stanton Evans, *The Theme is Freedom* (Washington, D. C., 1994), 271-288.

² Brady, *op. cit.*, 26.

³ *ibid.*, 14-16.

⁴ It is difficult for a populace for whom a centralized federal government has become almost a new religious establishment to appreciate the notion of state sovereignty as understood and practiced in the late eighteenth century. Because the federal government was not perceived as central to the nation and lives of

its citizens, and because the states maintained their own ecclesiastical or other religious establishments, the latter were wary of any official national recognition of church or religion. See Rousas John Rushdoony, *This Independent Republic* (Fairfax, VA [1964], 1978), vii-ix; and Archie Jones, "The Myth of Political Polytheism [a review of Gary North's *Political Polytheism*]," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. 14, No. 1 [Fall, 1996], 271 f.

⁵ Brady, *op. cit.*, 92.

⁶ James R. Willson, *Prince Messiah's Claims to Dominion* (Albany, 1832).

⁷ For an attempt at a balanced view of this issue, see Andrew Sandlin, "The Federal Constitution: Product of a Christian Ethos," *Christian Statesman*, Vol. 128, No. 6 [November-December, 1995], 22-27.

⁸ John Stoos, "Political Correctness and the Doctrine of Hell," *Chalcedon Report*, November, 1996, 19-20.

⁹ Cornelius Van Til, "Appendix 2" [Lecture for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship, March, 1969], in William White, Jr., *Van Til: Defender of the Faith* (Nashville, 1979), 202, emphasis in original.

Books and Things 5

By Andrew Sandlin

1. Samuel Blumenfeld's newest book, *The Whole Language/OBE Fraud*, reveals the shocking story of how America is being dumbed down by its own educational system. The book is more valuable than the other books in recent years that have exposed the educational tyranny of such socialistic schemes as OBE and Goals 2000. Blumenfeld traces the sordid (and Soviet!) history of the schemes, which are nothing more than a single web in a broader lair of anti-Christian statist socialism. It is a stinging indictment of the bankrupt American public educational system, a book which both Christian and secular educators should read with care. It is printed by and available from The Paradigm Company, P. O. Box 45161, Boise, Idaho 83711 (208-332-4440), for \$19.95.

2. The Committee for Biblical Principles In Government, P. O. Box 6031, Aloha, Oregon 97007, 503-357-9844, order line 1-800-775-4422, has issued an entire battery of booklets with accompanying study guides setting forth in simple but powerful terms a fervently Biblical view of civil government (see the feature article in the November *Chalcedon Report*). One of the latest titles is *The Challenge of Godly Justice*, with an accompanying leader guide. Please write this organization for a catalogue of their materials. It has significantly influenced civil government in the state of Oregon (and other states). For example, in a recent letter to me, one of these organization's directors, Frances Rath, stated, "I just had a call from representative Charlie Howard's office at the state capitol in Austin, Texas. He placed an order for 22 copies of *The Challenge of Godly Government*. His Legislative Assistant will be leading a group of other staffers in an intern class."

3. Were it not for R. J. Rushdoony, I would not have come across Ethelbert Stauffer's *Christ and the Caesars* (London, 1955). The book is hardly ever mentioned these days, and quite

difficult to locate. If you can locate a copy, sell your shirt and buy it. It is one of the most powerful statements on the genuine character of the struggle between early Christianity and the Roman Empire ever written. Of special interest is Stauffer's examination of Roman numismatics—the significance of coin-striking. Coins in that era (and even somewhat in our own!) were a principal means of political propaganda, the emperors depicting themselves in gallant, victorious poses or amid symbols of virility and success, with the design of striking reverence and support in their citizens, and awe and trepidation in their enemies. Stauffer devotes an entire chapter to Jesus' miracle in the recovery of the lost coin, and to the meaning of his statement that Christians must render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. His wholly Christian explanation avoids the pitfalls of revolutionary anarchism on the one hand, and servile obedience on the other. Christians do not attempt to destroy the socio-political order, but to redeem it by the gospel of the grace of God and Jesus Christ. Christians are not political revolutionaries, but religious "revolutionaries." Stauffer reminds us that the conflict of the early Christians was not between church and state, for the Christians were the best citizens of all, but between emperor worship and Christ-worship. His accounts of confrontations between a number of the early believers and the Roman rulers is more than moving—it is strikingly inspiring and invigorating. This much neglected-book is one of the best I've read. A book about the same era is William Kip's *The Catacombs of Rome*, subtitled *As Illustrating the Church of The First Three Centuries* (New York, 1890). This work is both a description of the Roman catacombs (with fascinating illustrations) as well as a revelation of the meaning of Christianity as expressed by the structure of imagery within the catacombs. We learn of the abject poverty but simple faith of the early believers, of the origin of the fish symbol, of the early Christians' opposition to cremation, of their occupation with the resurrection rather than the crucifixion and many more important facts. Like Stauffer's *Christ and the Caesars*, Kip's *The Catacombs of Rome* is not merely descriptive; it is profoundly inspiring. I suspect this book may be technically classified as rare. I picked up my copy, the 1896 edition, at a good used book store. I suspect it may be in a number of good university or religious libraries.

4. A number of books over the last thirty years have lamented the incremental loss of literacy and thus loss of resultant deft verbal communication created by modern mass technological society; but Tom Shachtman's *The Inarticulate Society* (New York, 1995) develops this thesis in a most winsome and cogent way. The author demonstrates "the shift away from the use of the full, literate-based language and toward a culture of secondary orality that derives its literacy from television, music, telephone conversations, and the like." The result is that "speech forms, the vocabulary, and some of the thought processes of this secondarily oral culture are more reminiscent of cultures without a written language than they are of cultures that possess vocabularies in the hundreds of thousands of words. In secondarily oral cultures people become unable to sing the songs of complex argument because they no longer know the words and are reduced to humming simple melodies" (p. 235). He explains the causes of

this malady and offers suggestions as to how to combat it. "Rap [music] in fact, may be the first flowering of a secondarily oral culture," Shachtman suggests, and notes that as such a culture dissolves its intelligent articulateness, it adopts increasingly emotional communication techniques and responses reminiscent of underdeveloped pagan cultures.

5. In our family worship we are reading W. G. Van de Hulst's *William of Orange: The Silent Prince*, published by Inheritance Publications, P. O. Box 154, Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada T0G 1R0, 403-674-3949. We have reviewed and promoted their works many times before; however, I cannot recommend their children's publications strongly enough. These works—many of them biographies of our Reformed forebears—are ideal for teaching our children crucial elements of our heritage. I don't want to give the impression that Inheritance Publications generates only children's books; their other works are outstanding also, but my family has derived the greatest benefit from their children's books. Please contact them for a catalogue and information about ordering. You won't be disappointed.

6. William O. Einwechter's *English Bible Translations: By What Standard?* summarizes and updates the ground-breaking work of Edward F. Hills in presenting a defense for the Catholic Received Text and our Protestant King James Version. The book is available for \$10.50 (postage paid) from Preston/Speed Publications, RR #4, Box 705, Mill Hall, PA 17751. I penned the foreword, and highly recommend this important work by one of Christian reconstruction's leading new thinkers and writers. While I am at it, I should mention again his outstanding earlier work *Ethics and God's Law: An Introduction to Theonomy*. It too is a work worthy of careful investigation.

7. I read with great interest Andrew Louth's *The Origins of the Christian Mythical Tradition From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, 1981). It is truly a definitive work on the subject. The root of the retreat of the modern church over the past 150 years can be found in the patristic church's assimilation of Greek philosophy, as Louth's work so cogently demonstrates. I lent the work to Colonel Doner, who is finalizing an incisive, hard-hitting critique of the ravages of mysticism, dualism, and retreatism of modern evangelicalism; and he told me that the invaluable information from Louth's work persuaded him to revamp one of his crucial chapters in his forthcoming book. The very first page of this book sets the tone: "Plato sees the world in which we live—a world of change and conjecture and opinion—as a world in which knowledge is impossible. For knowledge must be certain, and the object of knowledge must therefore, he says, be immutable, eternal. And nothing in this world satisfies those requirements. The recovery of true knowledge of Truth and Beauty, of what alone is Real, is the object of philosophy. Such knowledge in its perfection is impossible in this life, so philosophy is a preparation for the dying and being dead . . ." This is precisely where Platonic philosophy leads—death and despair, and why assimilation of Greco-Roman philosophy is destructive of historic, Biblical Christianity. Louth notes how early credal orthodoxy, far from reflecting Greek philosophical presuppositions, was actually in large part a repudiation of those presuppositions. This puts to lie the frequent liberal (and fundamentalist) canard that we should dispense with Christian orthodoxy since it is essentially Greek and not Biblical. Louth's work is a standard in its field.

BIBLICAL STUDY

Subjection (Part II)

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

*Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.
But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority
over the man, but to be in silence.
For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being
deceived was in the transgression.
Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if
they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.
1 Timothy 2:11-15*



Rebels against God deny their responsibilities as defined by their Creator. They may seek to exercise authority not allowed them or they may abandon their legitimate duties. Our sin natures cause us to lose our bearings as to our rightful duties before both God and man. Redeemed man thus recognizes that he must look to God's Revelation for an

authoritative description of proper roles.

Paul instructed Timothy here in three small matters regarding women in public worship—they were not to teach, but were to be silent in subjection, and not to usurp authority over men. These requirements are not in any way unusual or out of place. Women were to learn from public worship led by men while having a spirit of acknowledged subjection to that authority. Specifically, women were not to be teachers. Here Paul refers to the office of teaching in the church, not to their role as mothers where they were to teach in the home (*Titus* 2:3-5; *Prov.* 1:8; *31:1ff*). They were to ask their questions at home. Lest there be any question of women's role, Paul specifically stated that they were not to usurp authority over the man. The woman is not to actively desire or work towards the leadership role; and, if abdicated, she must desire its restoration rather than eagerly assume its mantle.

What Paul requires is not as difficult for many women to accept as the reasons why. Many assume that Eve and, ultimately, women in general are required to bear the lion's share of the guilt for the first sin. This is not the case, however. Adam and Eve were both just as guilty and culpable. Their curses, however, took different forms because they had different responsibilities even before their sin.

The first reason given by Paul for the limitations on the woman's roles was the created order. By created order we are not taking about the numerical order of creation, for animals were created before Adam. When Paul says Adam was created first he refers to the position and authority given him. Adam worked to fulfill his dominion mandate (*Gen.* 1:19-20) before

Eve was created (1:21-24) to be his "help meet." The term "help meet" refers to a mirror image. Eve was created to perfectly reflect Adam's needs. These needs were not merely personal but also refer to his calling. Eve was made from Adam and for him (1 Cor. 11:8-9). Together, they were truly a perfect pair. There was no hostility or jealousy as to which role each ought to fulfill. It is worth noting that in his humiliation Christ emphasized his role of obedience to the heavenly Father. All of creation is subject to God's order and appointment, though Adam and Eve's original order was without sin and hence Adam's authority would have been of an unimaginably kind and benign character.

Of course, Adam sinned also. But his curse (Gen. 1:17-19) centered on the new frustration he would find in his work of tending the earth. Nowhere is the basic dominion mandate for Adam or Eve's role as help meet negated; they were only frustrated by the curse around and the sin within them. Sinful authority is always onerous to some extent. Even the best kings of the Hebrews showed this. But human authority in many spheres is necessary and, in fact, mandated by Scripture. The basic created order was not forfeited at the Fall, only corrupted.

The woman is not to actively desire or work towards the leadership role; and, if abdicated, she must desire its restoration rather than eagerly assume its mantle.

In addition to the created order, Paul gives a second reason why the woman must not usurp authority in the church. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression," Paul said. Eve was the first to grasp at sin. That sin, remember, was more than mere disobedience, evil as that is. Eve desired to "be as gods, knowing [determining] good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). It was only after this thought was placed in her head that Eve saw the desirability of the fruit and decided to eat it (3:6).

Eve's assumption of authority over both her husband and God preceded her eating the fruit and then sharing it with Adam. This assumption of authority with the goal of being equal to God and its evil consequence made it fitting that her curse would be to depend on the authority of her husband. Now, however, the sinful Adam was no perfect husband. Sin made her subjection a sometimes onerous task. Her assumption of authority which turned her husband away from God made it fitting she be placed under that man's now sinful authority.

Some focus on the sin of men in disdain of the authority of men. This, however, is to repeat the sin of Eve and to elevate

oneself to the position of judging both God's created order and his justice in cursing Eve.

The fact that Eve was placed under the rule of her husband (Gen. 3:16) in no way lessens Adam's sin. Eve may have been the first to believe Satan's lie but Adam chose willingly to listen to his wife rather than obey God (3:17). Moreover, God referred to Adam as believing the lie that he would "become as one of us, to know good and evil" (3:22). All Christian theology is based on the sin and guilt of both parents of mankind. Paul's comments specifically regarded women and subjection, so they only served to illustrate that Eve's part in the first sin was very real.

But God's grace does not seek to keep us humbled. His grace can save us no matter what our sin or guilt may have been. God conquers and erases guilt; he does not use it as a weapon against his own—male or female.

The hope of women is to be saved by God's grace. Part of the curse on Eve was the pain of childbirth. But Paul notes that even in the punishment itself is her means of blessing. Childbearing does not refer to any nobility in pregnancy but to the incarnation of Christ and his salvation. Was Mary angry at God because she would suffer the pains of childbirth in Bethlehem or did she praise God that he used her as an instrument in his salvation?

Paul says they will be saved "if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." They refers to the husband and wife who submit to God by faith in Jesus Christ in charity (love) and holiness (separation to God) with sobriety (self-restraint). To challenge God's order or his justice in cursing Eve is to show a lack of faith and the desire to know (determine) good and evil on our own. This is to repeat the original sin. Rather than showing we know better than God, refusing to subject ourselves to godly authority only demonstrates a return to the original sin and God's justice in condemning it and cursing our first parents and their offspring.

Zambia Conference Messages in Audiocassette Album

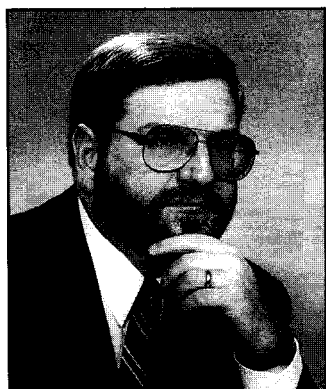
Audio tapes of the messages delivered at the Chalcedon Conference on Christian Culture held in Zambia last June are now available, set in an attractive album. The cost is \$35.00 per album, plus postage and handling: domestic \$3.75 per set, foreign \$5.00 per set. California residents please add 7.25% sales tax.

Make checks payable to Chalcedon. For credit card orders (Visa and Mastercard), phone 209-736-4365 or fax 209-736-0536 (for fax, please include name as it appears on credit card, credit card number, and signature).

Paganism and Social Progress in Africa: Some Preliminary Considerations

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire

Introduction



The dominant world-view for the past 100 years in the West has been evolutionary materialism. Though discussed in different ways, the fundamental assumption of the academic world since 1880 has been that the universe consists only of what we can detect with our senses. The material universe evolved out of primeval chaos through the com-

bination of time and random chance. Evolutionary theory spread through Western universities with a vengeance, driving out the older Christian consensus, and applied to every area of knowledge: physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, etc.

History and anthropology have been especially affected by the evolutionary materialism. Most modern textbooks assume that modern humans and their institutions developed out of the efforts of primitive ape-like creatures in their quest for survival. The family, state, church, etc., supposedly all had their origins in basic survival mechanisms adopted by our sloped-headed primeval ancestors.

It was once thought that "primitive" cultures were those that had not yet evolved and developed the more "advanced" survival strategies of other cultures. Social progress was then defined as going from the simple hunter-gatherer strategies of early hominids to the complex, industrial, interdependent social structures of modern life. Both these assumptions no longer hold quite the dominance they once had. The environmental movement now glorifies the savage because he lived more in harmony with nature. If that harmony means a nasty, brutish and short life, well, at least he won't cut down so many trees as his modern counterpart.

Religions likewise are thought to have developed from simple superstition into the complex system of beliefs of modern religions. Early man, awed by a universe over which he had little or no control, developed psychological survival strategies to deal with the unknown. For example, when man first recognized lightning in the sky and heard thunder, his natural response was fear. An ever-more complex brain that allowed him increasing control over his environment led him

to attempt to control the unknown. He then postulated that there must be some great sky being who had to be propitiated lest it destroy the tribe. This eventually generalized into a belief of spirit beings possessing rocks, trees, rivers and animals. As time went on, these beliefs were systematized into the classic pagan religions such as Greek, Roman, Celtic or Norse mythology. Seventy-five years ago, monotheism was seen as the logical evolution of paganism, with a subsequent "higher" morality. Religion had evolved out of primitive superstition into the Big Three, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, with of course Christianity being the most developed.

Now that science had closed the door on the supernatural, one could adopt Christian morality without the pre-scientific superstitions that tied it to its pagan past. The moral superiority of the Enlightenment lasted until the machine guns and poison gas of World War I slaughtered an entire generation of young men on the battlefields of Europe. Something other than just a cold materialism was needed to reinforce public morality.

The reign of materialism lasted less than a century. That stubborn old reptile brain to the rear of the cerebral cortex insisted on acting out of instinct rather than reason. And today, religious understanding continues to exert a tremendous influence over even the intelligentsia. Whether Jungian psychology, Huxley's drug-induced Brave New World, or the rantings of Eastern Existential Monists, materialism could not hold its own against religious impulses. In modern America, in universities and laboratories, rationalism is now rapidly being reinforced by New Age humanism, a synthesis of evolutionary materialism and Eastern pantheism.

The Biblical View

The Biblical view of history and anthropology, of course, is utterly different and irrevocably opposed to the evolutionary hypothesis (itself merely a modern version of the old pagan myths of chaos). Rather than upward evolution, there is downward devolution. The Bible records man's beginning with a complex understanding of the nature of God and his creation. Cities appear almost simultaneously with man (*Gen. 4:17*). Rather than millennia of hunter-gatherer tribes wandering around, being frightened by lightning, we read about farming and animal husbandry—as well as complex religious beliefs—present in the very first generation of the human race (*cf. Gen. 4:1ff*). Advanced technology and metallurgy appear almost as soon as there are enough men to invent them (*Gen. 4:16ff*).

Man began with monotheism but as he became epistemologically self-conscious in his rebellion, devolved into more "primitive" pagan practices (*Gen. 6:1ff*). After the Great Flood (*Gen. 10:1ff*), the human race began fulfilling the dominion mandate on the plain of Shinar. They were fruitful, they multiplied, but they refused to fill the earth. They understood that power comes from a unity of purpose. They insisted on staying at Babel and building a city which would concentrate their power. God confounded their attempt by confusing the languages, forcing them to immigrate. Because they could not communicate, they could not work together. The large population quickly had to deal with limited resources and competing claims.

Archeology and anthropology have demonstrated historically a vast series of immigrations 10,000 years ago (though we may rightly question the time scale). As different language groups spread out from Babel in various directions, there would have been inevitable competition for the best land and resources. Stronger, smarter or more aggressive tribes would either stake a claim to a certain piece of land, or drive off the previous settlers. Pre-Columbian history is perhaps the last major example of this vast millennium-long immigration. One tribe replaced another, with the losers moving further on to new lands. Eventually, they crossed the land bridge between Asia and America. Tribes repeatedly crossed from Siberia into Alaska, continuing to push the peoples who came before them. Finally, the migration came full circle with the English, Scottish and Spanish colonizing the Americas in modern times, pushing the earlier tribes into the least desirable portions of the continent.

Two thousand years ago, the English were naked savages, living in mud huts, painting their buttocks blue and eating one another. It was Christianity that made the difference, not skin pigment or eye color.

Generally speaking, it can be argued that the people who were at the forefront of these migrations were the most "primitive," i.e., lacking certain skills that would have allowed them to successfully resist invasion and conquest. And again, generally speaking, the more "primitive" a culture, the more pagan its religious practices. There is a connection between paganism and social progress, both the ability of a culture to maximize its use of its environment, as well as its ability to survive hostile neighbors.

Paganism Defined

Though the details may differ from culture to culture, the essence of paganism is that the material world is controlled by supernatural forces and entities besides the Triune God of the Bible. These forces arose out of original, primeval chaos; hence, the fundamental nature of the universe is chaotic. There is no real, absolute God. Though there may be a chief spirit, he (she or it) is subject to the laws of universe and chaos. Therefore there is no ultimate meaning or purpose. Success, prosperity, etc., comes by propitiating or controlling supernatural forces through the medium of the shaman, i.e., witch doctor who is

thought to have some skill in dealing with those forces. Fatalism is the ultimate reality: whatever happens, happens.

This underlying worldview has distinct, cultural manifestations. The law of God governs creation, despite men's rebellion. We cannot help but live within the framework that God himself established, since the law reveals his character and nature. The very image of God is imprinted on the universe. Cultures that operate in accordance with his law therefore will thrive. Cultures that are in rebellion will suffer.

A pagan religion, from a Christian perspective, is an epistemologically self-consistent expression of man's rebellion to God. Romans 1:18ff is the classic description. Ignoring the evidence in creation of the invisible attributes and eternal power of the one true God, pagans are those who willfully worship anything and everything else. Their world is one therefore given over to and controlled by demonic forces. Inevitably because creation is governed by a sovereign God, their cultures will be cursed. People are primitive, not because they are undeveloped, but because they are pagans!

Racists never seem to get this in focus. The problem is not race, but religion. The only cultural difference, for example, between white Europeans and black Africans is 1500 years of Christian history. Two thousand years ago, the English were naked savages, living in mud huts, painting their buttocks blue and eating one another. It was Christianity that made the difference, not skin pigment or eye color.

Thus, essentially, paganism can be equated with demonism. The more consistent a man becomes in his rebellion to God and worship of self, the more closely he will worship and serve demonic forces. The pagan throughout the world is haunted by fear of the supernatural. Every moment of his life he is hounded by what these forces may do to him and what he must do to protect himself from them. This worship of demons elicits God's curse because it is a consistent, willful and flagrant violation of his law, the encapsulation of his moral character. That curse results in the social impoverishment, anti-survival, socially counter-active mechanisms etc., which keep them "primitive."

Paganism and Modern Africa

The problems facing modern Africa are a good example of the effects of paganism on social progress because Africa is one of the most consistently pagan areas left on earth. Africa has a thin veneer of Western materialism covering millennia of pagan philosophy. The endemic poverty, sickness, tribal warfare, etc., can be directly attributed to the pagan worldview that continues to operate. Demonized cultures reflect contra-survival strategies in two main ways.

Work

In a Christian culture, work is good since God worked in the creation. Work is therefore a communicable attribute of God. God worked not only in making the world *ex nihilo*, but also in shaping and refining his creation during the six days. Adam and Eve were given work to do in the garden, before the curse. The curse does not destroy the need for work; it just makes it harder. Dominion comes, not through idle

speculation, or manipulating spiritual forces, but in working hard. Hence any culture that recognizes this aspect of God's unchanging nature will thrive and prosper more than ones that do not see this relationship. Societies that value work will be diligent, conscientious and will make the best available use of limited resources.

However, for the pagan, work plays a very small part in his concept of the universe. Reality for him is governed by unseen, and for the most part, largely uncontrollable spiritual forces. Hence, there is no real connection between a man's work and material prosperity. Things happen because there are spiritual forces outside his control, with their own agenda. A man does his best to get by and get the demons off his back. He can't really expect anything more than that.

Success and prosperity therefore derive from propitiating the spirits, not by work. If his crops do not grow, it is not because he hasn't cared for his fields, but because a demon has cursed him. For example, in Zulu culture, paganism has direct influence on horticulture. It is believed that if crops grow too well, then the spirits might be offended. Therefore, it is common for farmers to wade through their corn fields, armed with a walking stick, and smash down a significant part of their crops so that the demons will not become jealous and curse them. In the same way, when the land becomes exhausted from over-farming, magic potions are bought from the local witch doctor to propitiate the spirits. The only natural fertilizer comes from their cattle herds. But this is deemed holy and is carefully collected and used for paving the floors of their huts. It is never put back into the land.

Across Africa, though individual practices may differ, the same attitude towards work prevails. Since there is no religious connection between work and prosperity, one works as little as possible. This is imminently reasonable considering that the earth is under a curse, and man will eat bread by the sweat of his brow. Hard, diligent labor is difficult. If work is de-emphasized, then there will be no surplus, and therefore one cannot save for emergencies or investment in other cultural activities.

When the pagan sees the affluence of the Westerner, his attitude is often envious; *i.e.*, the famous Cargo Cults of the South Seas. During the Pacific war, pagan islanders were overwhelmed by seeing the vast amount of material goods that the soldiers possessed. They developed an entire religion around propitiating the great sky gods who flew such wonders into the islands. The islanders could not understand why the Americans should enjoy such wealth while they themselves were so poor. It soon came to be thought that the Westerners were selfishly stealing the goods before their own gods could deliver them to the islands. The pagans never made the connection between their religious beliefs and their poverty. Therefore, the affluence of some meant that they must be taking it from others. Paganism always leads to envy.

Hence paganism inevitably develops a victimistic orientation and mentality: "You caused my poverty by your affluence. If I don't have what you have, you must have done something bad." The normal reaction is theft ("After all, I'm only getting back what is rightfully mine"), warfare ("I'll pay

you back for what you did") or more demonism ("I'll get the witch doctor to curse you"). Problems are always caused by someone or something else, and therefore there is no sense of personal responsibility. And, of course, there is no incentive to take responsibility and do anything practical that might change one's situation. The men tend to work little, and devote their time to brawling, waging war, hunting and drunkenness, precisely because they do not see the cause and effect between their actions and their situations.

Since some amount of work has to be done for simple survival, work is usually pushed off by the powerful to those less powerful. African women do most of the horticulture. In previous centuries, slavery was widespread. It is not politically correct these days to point out that a vast number of Africans sold into Western slavery were sold by other blacks (either by being taken captive in war, or by their own chief). But slavery and paganism go hand in hand. If a man is enslaved by false religion, it is no great leap to be enslaved by other men. Even when slavery may be outlawed, the attitude of a slave is someone who wants to escape responsibility. This attitude continues to exist today. One minister of an African government said quite plainly, "We Africans do not want to create businesses. We are much more comfortable letting the white man develop a business and provide us jobs." Starting a business was just too much like hard work. Therefore, let someone else take the risks, and the profits.

The pagan theology of work has direct effects on the utilization of resources. During times of plenty, resources are consumed in a orgy of gluttony. When there is scarcity, starvation, disease and death are the norm. Pagan Africa is locked into a vicious cycle of poverty because it does not understand why things go bad economically. No amount of foreign aid can ever resolve the problem. These nations are not "under-developed"; they are pagan. Foreign investment is simply subsidizing a culture that will invariably return to its most ghastly practices once the subsidies end.

Time

The Christian sense of time is that there is a beginning and an end. A sovereign God rules over time, working out his perfect plan according to his will. Therefore there can and must be progress, because God is in control. We are not doomed to endlessly repeat the mistakes of the past. Our future is not uncertain. There is a reason and a purpose for all that happens and, therefore, there is real meaning and significance to our efforts.

Paganism does not have a linear view of time but rather cyclical. There is no beginning or end, life just goes on and on and on. Things might get better, or they might get worse. Who knows? Consequently, things just happen, and time and history have no real meaning. Thus there is no real sense of progress as the Christianized West understands it. How can there be? Progress implies a destination.

Therefore a future orientation is almost always missing in "primitive cultures," and pagans do not live for anything except the moment. When the environment is conducive, life is simple

and uncomplicated. South Sea Islanders lived what seemed an idyllic existence when first discovered by Western sailing ships.

However, the lack of future orientation causes them to be victims of their environment rather than masters over it. If the environment changes, they are unable to cope. A drop in temperature, a new disease, or bad weather can all destroy such a culture, almost overnight.

Cultures without a long-term focus cannot master the basic tools of prosperity because they do not think in terms of long-term goals. The want of the moment outweighs the needs of the future. For example, seed corn, developed to improve the yield of the average, small African garden, is often eaten immediately because it tastes better than the local brands. Farmers then plant the old corn with the same, sub-standard yields! In the same way, land is over-grazed by too many cattle. Cattle are a sign of wealth and it is the number, rather than the quality, that is important. Thus there is no incentive to use selective breeding to improve the herd, increase meat production, and therefore make better use of limited resources. The over-grazing causes massive erosion when the rains arrive. The rains wash away the topsoil, turning fertile land into desert. A long-term focus could reduce enormously the size of the cattle herds, while producing more raw materials and protecting the land. But pagans don't think this way, and they starve.

Massive foreign investment into pagan nations never succeeds in benefiting the people because they lack a long-term focus and waste the investment. Pagan nations want the trappings of an industrialized, developed West without putting the time or effort needed to keep that system going. Power plants, freeways, office buildings, etc., are constructed without the technological infrastructure necessary to support them. I well remember queuing up in one major African city to get into the one working elevator. The other three didn't work because no one knew how to repair them!

The lack of a sense of time means things happen when they happen, if not today, then tomorrow. This has definite effects on the ability of an industrial society to function. Pagans miss appointments, show up late, put off till tomorrow what must be done today. Concepts such as preventive maintenance are esoteric mysteries beyond the imagination.

Flying into one African capital, I noticed a fleet of Soviet-made MI-24 Hind attack helicopters lined up on the back side of the airport. The MI-24 is one of the best ground support helicopters in the world. It is literally a flying tank. When I asked a local Air Force officer what he thought of the Hind, he shrugged and said, "They are wonderful when they fly." It seems that the entire country's chopper force was grounded because the maintenance technicians had not changed the oil and fluids regularly. This led to excessive wear and tear on expensive spares, which they could no longer afford. They had state-of-the-art equipment, specifically designed for simplicity and export to undeveloped nations. Yet the pagan concept of time had destroyed the investment.

Conclusions and Applications

While there is much more that could be said, the basic

principle here is that pagan nations continually exist on the border of disaster as a result of their basic religious presuppositions. Africa will continue to experience its cycles of famine, disease, poverty and warfare until this pagan orientation has been destroyed by the gospel. Satan's counterfeit kingdom can grow only by mimicking God's; hence, cultures in history which succeed must imitate Biblical morality. But eventually they must fall because they cannot sustain it.

The entire Western world is headed back into barbarism as men reject God and retreat to pagan principles. Paganism is making a victorious comeback in science, education and social theory. This ought not to be surprising, since materialistic humanism worshipped man. And it is not a great leap to go from the worship of man to the worship of demons and all that entails.

The only hope for Africa, as well as the West, is a great reformation and revival. Africa is not well served by pietistic missionary activity that seeks to save souls, but does not deal with the greater issues of Christ's Lordship over every area of life. The Rwandan massacre was committed with the tacit approval of various Christian churches. A pietized Christianity is no barrier to racial and tribal animosity. Liberia was settled by freed American Christian slaves and suffered constant internal strife. Zambia was heavily evangelized but voted itself into a 26-year Marxist dictatorship. Cultures will prosper only as they repent of their sins, acknowledge Christ as Lord and obey his law. Americans in particular need to look hard at the social and cultural affects of paganism in Africa.

Their past may well be our future.

VAN TIL CD-ROM FOR \$155

John Lofton is offering the Cornelius Van Til CD-ROM for \$155 (plus \$3 to mail) which, to his knowledge, is the lowest price available. If interested, e-mail him to confirm, and send check or money order to:

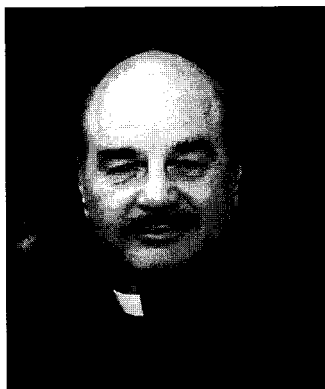
John Lofton, 313 Montgomery Street, Laurel, MD 20707. JLoft@aol.com.

Occupational Moral Idiots

By Ellsworth McIntyre

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:14



R. J. Rushdoony in his new book, a commentary entitled *Romans and Galatians*, speaks of pastors as “prone to occupational moral idiocy.” The quote from the Gospel of Mark is an illustration of just how prone we preachers are to this disease. The disciples, the Lord’s most loyal followers, hand-picked by him to the ministry and trained under his divine instruction, had just

provoked him to anger by hindering little children from coming to their Savior: therefore, we preachers may have a serious blind spot where child evangelism is concerned. This blindness has suckered modern-day preachers into joining hands with humanists to oppose Christian day care and in some cases even Christian education for non-churched children. The King’s angry warning is necessary for you and me because we need to be in fear of his displeasure.

The churchman/humanist has two chief tactics: First, he demands that the Christian educator discriminate against children in order to possibly boost adult attendance at Sunday services. The churchman says, I should block the door of the elementary and high school and admit only children from “churched” families. One Reformed pastor put it to me this way, “If any ministry does not bring families into the church, it’s a questionable activity.”

Brothers—“So-Called”

The Bible, however, advises differently from the churchman. The Bible says, “Whosoever will may come,” and whosoever will not be obedient, “separate yourselves” from disobedient brothers “so-called” (see 2 Thes. 3:6). “So-called” brothers use church membership instead of obedience to God’s law as a screening device. Maybe that is why their churches are cursed with the stench of death. There is a name for this do-it-yourself, homemade “separatist” doctrine used by the churchmen. It’s called “natural privilege” (See Rushdoony’s *Romans and Galatians*, Chapter 39). Grace Community chooses to admit and expel according to the Bible, instead of natural privilege.

Punish the Baby?

Many churchmen also say, “Don’t admit any children,

churched or unchurched, below first grade and never offer day care lest you weaken the home.” I respond, any family discriminated against by Grace Community will go elsewhere, most likely to an ungodly, humanist institution. It’s too late to preach sermons on the benefit of full-time motherhood to families already choosing day care, just as it’s too late to preach “Thou shalt not commit adultery” to a single mother in need of day care.

How about greed? Should I scold and discriminate against the family choosing day care for an extra paycheck, or should I offer help? Let’s ask the question correctly: Because a family has decided an extra paycheck is more important than a mother staying at home, should the church punish the baby? Doesn’t the baby need to be saved, if possible, from the consequences of the family’s failure? I think so. Therefore, any mother who shows up at Grace Community and wants our care is certain to get it without our demanding church membership as a qualification. If I accept someone whom I should not, I am confident that this fault can be more easily forgiven than forcing the baby into anti-Christian care. I want that baby for my King’s army. I don’t want the Lord Jesus Christ “much displeased” with me.

Those more loyal to their church than to Christ refuse to do anything that is not for selfish concern, glory or gain of their organization. Over my career, I have seen many churches reluctantly start Christian schools under duress. These schools born of “shot-gun marriages” typically lose money. Such schools are constantly under attack or neglect from the pulpit and in the business meetings of the church, until the school is hounded out of existence.

The Murder of the Christian School

The murder of the Christian school is carried out by two main demonic means: First, the school is sternly warned to conduct screening interviews with the parents before admitting the children. The interview, of course, must discourage some parents from placing their children under Christian hope. In other words, the child is punished, because the parents are given reason to resist instant conversion to the church’s point of view. I wonder—do you suppose, can you doubt?—Jesus is much displeased with this procedure? Wouldn’t it be more Biblical to take “whosoever will” and leave the conversion of the parents for another day?

The second method of school murder is by gross discrimination. It is nearly universal that Christian schools could easily operate at a profit if permitted to offer day care to mothers desperately in need of such help. Many church schools are forbidden to offer mercy to these women: “You should stay at home with your child,” is the chorus that the church joins humanists to sing. We preachers have failed to preach, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” We preachers have failed to condemn civil government for decriminalizing fornication; and as a result, the women victimized at least in part by our cowardice have showed up at our door asking for day care. Instead of bread, we hypocritically give them a stone. Outwardly we say, “I am sorry, lady, but we disapprove of mother’s working outside the home. It would be a bad example.

Besides, we don't want to weaken your home by making day care attractive. You see, we love you, and we are only acting in your best interest." Inwardly, the preacher thinks, "You people wouldn't come to church on Sunday anyway. Good riddance!" Is it any wonder that Jesus is much displeased? The opportunity to bring a child to Christ has been lost, or more accurately, a child has been condemned to humanist doctrine in the name of the church. Such is the handiwork of moral idiots.

Grace Community Day Care and School, on the other hand, operates without financial support from any church and 100% of all tithes and offerings at Nicene Covenant Church, the sponsor of Grace Community Schools, goes to other Christian ministries not able to financially support themselves by the free market. The model organization that Grace Community represents is a powerful expression of the command of our King to permit the little children to come to him. We have demonstrated that Christian schools when operating in tandem with a day care can be run at a substantial profit. If a school uses our operational manual, the church has no financial burden. Instead the school/day care can be a financial angel to the church. All that is required of churchmen is to get out of the way or "suffer or permit" (*Mk. 10:14*) schools and day-care operations like ours to do the work the King has called us to perform. Yet seldom does a month go by that I don't hear our ministry has been attacked by angry churchmen. Is it any wonder that Mark 10:14 reads ". . . Jesus . . . was much displeased . . ." ?

The Spirit of Judas Iscariot and Foolish Arguments

The arguments of these churchmen and their brother humanists are very old, very silly, very boring. All of these arguments can be and have been made against every Christian ministry I can think of. Their complaints sound similar to Judas Iscariot's (see *Jn. 12:4,5*) accusing God's children of sin. For example, couldn't fools say that orphanages encourage the morally weak to abandon children? For example, the father of modern-day humanism, Voltaire, turned over to a Christian orphanage the children he sired by his mistress. Couldn't fools say that orphanages encourage fornication and adultery by rushing to the assistance of erring sinners like Voltaire? Couldn't fools say that old people's homes encourage families to abandon their parents? Wouldn't the elderly be better off at home? How about hospitals? Couldn't fools say that hospitals encourage bad health practices by making those with weak character suffer less than their due? Wouldn't the sick be better off at home surrounded by their loved ones?

Of course, this spirit of Judas Iscariot is much more than foolishness. It is evil to bear false witness against the children of God (*Mt. 12:31-37*). How can an obedient Christian refuse aid to a child in need of care or a sick or old person in need of mercy? Isn't it true that any family that is weak enough to evade its responsibility or abandon its members is a family which cannot be valued above the Christian alternative? Those physically and morally sick need mercy, instruction and not a horrible judgment cast in their teeth by morally insane churchmen posing as their "moral betters." How interesting that those who give the above silly arguments are often the first to

cry, "Judge not, lest you be judged." There are times for judgment, and there are times for mercy. God help us to know the difference!

The time to show mercy is clearly taught by the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Lk. 10:30-37*). The Samaritan saw on his right hand a stranger in need and with all his might, the Samaritan gave aid and comfort. The Levite (read: "modern churchman") passed by on the other side. Why? Well, obviously that's a question God doesn't bother to answer. Why doesn't matter; the churchman refused to give aid and the churchman's excuse is not given by God. What excuse can possibly be made?

Children of God or Dog Food?

But if all of this is not convincing to the reader, consider this example. About two thousand years ago, the Roman authorities were worried. It was reported by minor bureaucrats to those in the marble palaces that the Christians, under cover of darkness, were snatching abandoned babies from the mouths of wild dogs. It was the normal and tolerated rhythm of affairs to abandon unwanted infants under the bridges of Rome. Packs of wild dogs ate the children and the "noble" families of Rome congratulated themselves on sparing a child a life in a family where the baby would be unwelcome and unloved. After all, wasn't death to be preferred to a life without love? Besides, why should a woman pay with a lifetime of reduced status for a moment of sexual indiscretion? Now, those "do-gooder" Christians had rescued these children and distributed them to devout families. It was rumored that these Christians actually believed that their God would bless them for rearing other people's children. Such ignorant superstition is harmless enough, thought Rome, but now something horrible had occurred. These castaway children had reached physical maturity and they looked on Rome with eyes that knew not pity. Somehow these "bastard" children believed that they were creations of God as the Christians taught them to "parrot." These ungrateful orphans didn't seem to appreciate or understand that Rome was only trying to save them from a "loveless and impoverished" life. This history lesson separates the sheep from the goats, or should I say, the saints from the moral monsters?

Across our land are modern-day Roman pagans joined by their churchmen accomplices. They condemn Christians for taking into their day cares and schools the children of the pagan. I have a vision. My vision will be a nightmare for my enemies. When the children whose tender souls escaped the yellow fangs of the cruel humanists come of age, they will be used by the Lord of Battles against my foes. The day may come when my humanist enemies will taste the wrath of God just as the Romans did.

Some Churchmen More Evil Than Voltaire

Incidentally, the generation of rescued babies did not overthrow Rome, but when Rome's well-deserved destruction came, you can be certain that the dog-food children found it difficult to understand why some churchmen wept. St. Augustine, for example, thought the fall of Rome was the fall

of all hope. Today's churchmen are far more mistaken than foolish Romans. Some of today's churchmen humanists are worse than fools; they are willfully blind. They would even hinder those who would bring children to Christ (see *Lk. 11:52*). This St. Augustine would never do. (Come to think of it, even Voltaire was not evil enough to oppose Christians helping children.)

Choose Sides—It's the Rats or the Children! One glorious day the children saved from the burning will see the hand of God, avenging their cruel treatment by the hands of humanists. Which side will you be on? Rescuing children from the dogs and rats of humanism is a calling fit to test the mettle of a Christian soldier. Why? Well, you see, a pack of disappointed dogs, rats, and other humanists will try to eat you if you come between them and their dinner. That's why! If you have what it takes, I can show you how to glorify God rescuing children and possibly make you a rich person on earth and a richer one in heaven.

Ellsworth McIntyre, one of America's leading Christian educators, is pastor of Nicene Covenant Church and founder of Grace Community Schools, and author of How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education. He is available for speaking engagements, often without charge. For further information contact him at 4405 Outer Drive, Naples, Florida 34112.

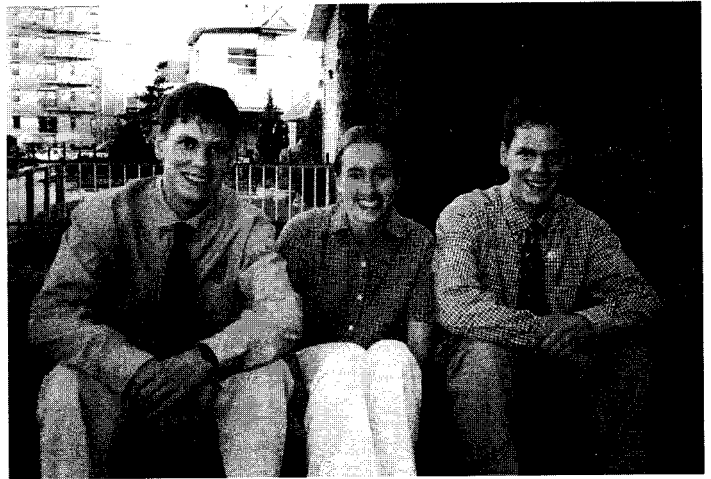
Chalcedon and Ross House Now Accept Visa and Mastercard Donations

For the convenience of our faithful supporters, Chalcedon now accepts Visa and Mastercard donations. Please include in a sealed letter (not e-mail) your donation amount, credit card number, expiration date, and signature. For ease and convenience, if you wish to have the office charge your account a certain amount every month, please indicate on your communication the monthly amount and day of the month you wish to have your account charged.

Please note: this policy is **not** designed to endorse long-term debt, but simply to provide ease of financial transaction, especially for our foreign donors.

Urban Nations Update: I Will, I Do

By Steve M. Schlissel



We just bid adieu to a wonderful set of volunteers who came to New York to serve the King: 17-year-old Mary Beth Akin, and 17-year-old twins, Chris and Matt Byrd (see accompanying photo).

The word *volunteer* comes from the Latin for "willing." A volunteer is a person who hears of a need that must be met, a duty that ought to be performed, an opportunity to serve, and says, "I will!" Volunteers who come to serve here get wide experience because their responsibilities include doing just about everything. If something comes up, and you're there, you're volunteered!

We've been involved with employing volunteers since our days in the Christian Reformed Church. The CRC runs one of the best volunteer programs going (and it started way before Democrats [of both parties] tried to co-opt the idea of volunteerism). Dubbed SWIM (Summer Workshop In Ministry), young people from around North America apply to do service in far-flung locations. A beautifully coordinated program, SWIM candidates are screened and prepared before venturing onto the field. The churches then benefit from the services of the young people and the young people benefit big-time from having hands-on experience in evangelism, mercy and service.

We so loved participating in SWIM that when we were separated from the CRC we thought about creating a mirror program called DROWN (Disciples Reclaiming Our World Now - *1 Cor. 3:21-23*). Though never formalized, we continue to recruit and employ volunteers as much as possible, even though space to house them is extremely limited. (You might pray about that, for space limitations forced us to turn down the help of several excellent candidates this year. We get a lot more offers of help than we can accommodate.)

This year's Kingdom Volunteers were dear to us before

their arrival. The Byrd boys are sons of Rev. and Mrs. Isaac Byrd. Isaac is a good friend, a faithful Reformed minister pressing Christ's every claim in South Jersey. We've known the Akins (from Carbondale, IL) for some years now. Mary Beth's Mom was lost to Leukemia shortly after we had met. A time later, her Dad, Mark, was graced by God with another life-partner, Jane. (Jane's first husband, a PCA minister, had died in a tragic accident.) Mark had seven children, Jane had four. They've since added one "of their own." It's a happening household.

The churches then benefit from the services of the young people and the young people benefit big-time from having hands-on experience in evangelism, mercy and service.

The Akins were one of the first homeschooling families we had known, and were we ever impressed with their brood! We were able to get closer to the family when Callie, Mary Beth's older sister, came twice to New York as a volunteer servant of the King. An interesting providence came about this year when Callie married Peter Lindstrom (son of Paul of Christian Liberty Academy fame), for Peter, too, had been a volunteer at Urban Nations.

Come to think of it, 'seems plenty of "I will's" are followed by "I do's" around here. SWIMer Carol DeVries married one of our congregants, Artie Shulman. They now live in Grand Rapids with their four covenant children. SWIMer Lori Bruins married our summer ministerial intern, James Graveling, now a faithful pastor at a Reformed church in North Jersey (they have two children). And Greetje Huisman came from the Netherlands to volunteer at Urban Nations, only to end up marrying congregant Patrick Edouard. They now live in Illinois with their son, Jeremy, while Patrick studies for his M. Div at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

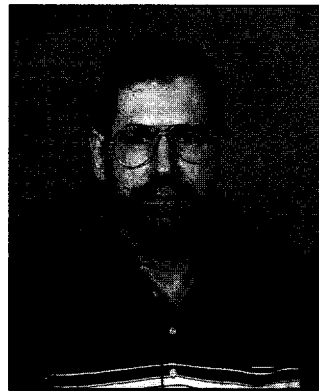
Hey! Isn't it just like God? When we're faithful in one area, He blesses us in another! "I will" becomes "I do."

You just never know which direction grace will come at you.

Urban Nations
2662 East 24th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11235
(718) 332-4444 UrbaNation@aol.com

Theonomy, Theocracy, and Common Grace

By Joseph P. Braswell



Let us take the traditional Reformed view of the law as expressed in the *Westminster Standards* as uncontroversial, assuming the teachings of the *Confession* and the *Larger Catechism* as true and accepted and making it our starting point. Such a stipulation draws a boundary for inclusion in, and exclusion from, the discussion-group, restricting those who are the intended

addressees of this essay to those who can begin with this assumption and thus meet for discussion on this common ground. The benefit of this limitation is simply the brevity of argument it affords by eliminating otherwise necessary steps in the argument. By speaking here only to Reformed brethren in this confessional tradition, we therefore need not concern ourselves with justifying by evidence and argument that which these standards assert. (Obviously, were we to expand the boundaries to be more inclusive, we would have to argue for the teachings of the *Westminster Standards*.) Accordingly, we shall here simply assume that the *Westminster Confession's* position on the law (chap. 19) is a *given*, that the traditional *three offices* of the law (and our especial concern here with the first and third uses of the law) is granted, and therefore that the moral law is accepted as an eternally and immutably binding standard of righteousness for all men—the justified and the unjustified alike (*WCF* 19:5).

If we may call this consensus—this common ground of agreement—an affirmation of *general theonomy*, we can begin from this stance as a starting point from which we can examine that which is usually regarded as the theonomic controversy. The controversy in question—a controversy over a thesis concerning the role of the state within the whole scheme of implementing theonomic ethics in the totality of life—is defined in such a way that a small (but hardly insignificant) part of theonomic ethics is treated as the whole, and "theonomy" is thus defined by one particular thesis that is not truly central (although certainly considered by some general theonomists—Rushdoony, Bahnsen, North, *et al.*—to be but the consistent outworkings and applications of the logical implications of the theonomic principle). In this essay we shall instead approach the particular controversial thesis about the theonomic obligation of the civil magistrate as simply a narrow area of disagreement among those whom we can dub *general theonomists* (and thus as those participating in an intramural debate).

As but one aspect of a much broader concern with

theonomic ethics and their application to all of life, theonomists in the Rushdoony/Bahnsen tradition insist that the state, consonant with the “first office” of the law (civic righteousness, the restraint of public manifestations of social evil), ought to enforce *portions* of the law of God suitable to application as civil law. This narrow thesis of what we might call *specific theonomy* (the distinctive form of theonomy promoted by Rushdoony/Bahnsen) is considered controversial by many of those who, confessing the faith of historic Presbyterianism, may be considered generally theonomic. Perhaps the most theologically significant objection from the general-theonomist camp involves the status of the state as a common-grace institution and the importance of distinguishing between the *holy* and the *common*, which prohibits us from trying to establish a *theocratic* state.

Theocracy

Before we examine more closely what common grace means and involves relative to this issue, let us clarify what is meant by the idea of a *theocracy*. A theocracy, as divine government, must be distinguished from human government. This distinction does not concern the *de facto* situation that human governments are generally idolatrous, Babel-like expressions of the City of Man (self-deified, absolutist, messianic) that are informed by a humanistic religion statist salvation. The issue here in contrasting divine government to human government is not theonomy versus autonomy; it involves a contrast of God’s government with even the *de jure* human government that realizes the ideal of the civil magistrate as a God-ordained minister who acts under God in the responsible administration of true justice. It thus specifies something distinct from the general sense that all authority is from God and is delegated by God to the magistrate. Thus, what is intended by denying that the state is not supposed to be theocratic is not a denial of the Biblical teaching that all civil governments (whether they recognize and acknowledge the fact or no) are instituted by God as his ordained ministers of the sword of justice, that the legitimacy of their office as agents of justice derives from God and his delegation of this authority, that the state is *under God* (not absolute, not autonomous) and the civil magistrate is responsible to God as a *steward* who must judge justly (*Rom. 13:1-7*), and that all true justice is to be informed by, and measured in terms of, the standard of the moral law.

In a theocracy God himself formally establishes a covenantal order, instituted by a specific act of special revelation, in which his Kingship is formally asserted by him and acknowledged by the community that is specifically, directly, immediately addressed as the covenant party (the vassal party-recipient of the Suzerainty treaty) as the legitimate and official authority-structure. God manifests his special immanence-presence, a form of covenantal immanence that is to be distinguished from the immanence of general providence. He dwells in a holiness-constituting glory-presence in the midst of *his* people as *their* God (a special covenantal relation).

The institution of a theocracy is by God’s initiative; it is unilaterally imposed from above (top-down). A community cannot merely decide by human consent to be theocratic

(grassroots or bottom-up theocracy); God creates the community of his special rule and constitutes them a theocratic people by specially covenanting with them. Theocracy involves more than a mere realization in a society of the general duty of all men to obey the law of God; it restores that right relation of man to God and thus reestablishes the covenantal *Kingdom of God*—a Kingdom not of this world—by *special grace*.

Common Grace

1. Nonautonomous Nature

One aspect of any genuine conception of theonomy that is surely germane to our discussion is the recognition of the antithesis between theonomy and autonomy, a diametrical opposition between two mutually exclusive views of ultimate authority. Because there is no alternative to theonomy except autonomy, genuine theonomy entails the Van Tilian rejection of a Nature/Grace dichotomy. That is, in discussing the common-grace institution of the state, we must, as theonomists, reject at the outset as utterly unbiblical the notion that there exists an area of ethical neutrality—a secular arena—to which the law of God does not apply. We cannot limit the jurisdiction of God’s authority (it is totalitarian, pan-comprehensive) or think that autonomy is anything but antitheistic—is *sinful rebellion*—wherever it rears its head. Those who hold to an autonomous sphere of human existence that is exempt from ordering by God’s Law, that is not subject to a theonomic ethic, are simply not consistent theonomists. What we have said thus far precludes them from the camp within which our present (intramural) discussion of the implications of theonomy takes place; we would have to argue with them for the complete lordship of Christ over the totality of life, making them aware of what theonomous life—life under the comprehensive lordship of Christ—involves, but that is not the present issue we are debating with our fellow-theonomists (*i.e.*, those dwelling with us in the camp of general theonomists).

2. No Revelational Dualism

Nevertheless, some in the camp of general-theonomists would appeal to *natural law* as the ordering-principle for common-grace institutions, and we must be sure that this is not Nature/Grace sneaking in the back way. We shall assume that, consonant with the dictates of the theonomic principle, those who speak of natural law in this manner actually intend to refer by this infelicitous terminology simply to general (or natural) revelation. God indeed reveals himself and his will through creation, and we must even speak of this natural revelation as being necessary, authoritative, perspicuous, and sufficient. This general revelation is pervasive and ubiquitous; every created fact is revelational, including the very being and consciousness of man himself. This clear and unavoidable witness to God and his will renders man responsible, for it gives him to understand what God demands and commands him to order his affairs accordingly. Man by general revelation indeed knows the moral law even without the Scriptures (*Rom. 1:32*), for it is imprinted upon the very fabric of his being; it is written in his heart (*Rom. 2:14*). This “law of nature” is the same moral law that was restated to Israel at Sinai in the Mosaic Covenant;

it was the law of the original, *Adamic Covenant of Creation* (the so-called *Covenant of Works*—*WCF* 19:1-2) and, as such, was indelibly impressed upon Adamic humanity and all the facts of the Adamic cosmos as part of the very nature—the very make-up—of created things.

Obviously, in the period of the Old Covenant, the heathen nations for the most part had only general revelation by which to order themselves, and this situation was sufficient to render them responsible for their lawless conduct. They too ought to have been societies ordered by the law of God; the civil magistrates of the Gentile nation-states ought to have legislated, enforced, and otherwise dispensed justice according to the law of God revealed to them by general revelation. The special revelation of the “oracles of God” were, for the most part, the exclusive property of Israel in the Old Testament period; the nations did not have the grace of having the law of God restated to them in that inscripturated form that was given by God to Israel, and it is therefore true that Israel had greater light, but the moral law possessed by both Israel and the Gentile nations through God’s revelation (either general or special) had the identical content. All men and all nations were held to this single standard; all were expected to obey the moral law, even if they did not have the Scriptures and even if, as a matter of fact, the darkness of their sinful hearts invariably distorted their perception and interpretation of God’s revelation.

If, however, man is obligated to the law of God for the ordering of his affairs and the law given in natural revelation is the same as its statement in the Scriptures, there is no reason why a civil magistrate in our time must restrict himself to general revelation in the fulfillment of his obligation to justice. There is no reason why he cannot take advantage of the availability of the widely disseminated Scriptures in informing his official decisions and actions. The fact that the Scriptures are now widely available and that there is greater access to this form of the revealed law of God is but greater common grace to our historical situation, and it is simply silly for us to contend that he must restrict his knowledge of the law to what he can discern from general revelation. Since he is responsible to the moral law in ruling wisely and justly, he is surely responsible to make the most of his opportunity, to use what common grace in our contemporary situation has provided to him in the form of inscripturated revelation of the law and so be better informed for a competent discharge of his ministry of justice. The only argument against the magistrate’s use of the Scriptures would have to be predicated on the assumption that general revelation and special revelation have a different content, reveal a different law, or else that the magistrate is not to execute justice in terms of the standard of righteousness that God has revealed but is to act autonomously. However, since such views are clearly unbiblical (and untheonomic), we can dismiss them. There is no justification for the notion that common-grace ethics are supposed to be different than the ethics that have been revealed to order the redeemed people of God. Granting that the ordinary state (in distinction from a theocratic kingdom) is a common-grace institution, common grace does not itself provide any normative principles, nor does it necessitate

exclusive recourse to general revelation. If common grace restrains the manifestation of sinfulness, it does so by restraining *lawlessness*, by imposing some measure of conformity to the law of God, ordering the City of Man so that it manifests a *civic righteousness* that is defined by the justice and general equity of the law of God in its first office. Disseminated moral instruction in the content of the inscripturated body of special revelation can aid the cultural and societal impact of the moral law in this common-grace function of informing the idea of justice that orders a given community and guides its leaders in the faithful execution of their office.

3. *Holy Versus Common*

The real issue in the distinction between the *holy* and the *common* that would make the State as a common-grace institution *nontheocratic* in nature is that Israel was a historical expression of the City of God (though we should speak of its form as typological of the City of God). To the extent that its polity was determined by its redemptive-historical significance as a revelation of the City in type, it is fulfilled in the New-Covenant community. That is, the cultic factors that condition its peculiar theocratic form of polity find their antitypical point of reference and application in the institutional expression of the City of God in this age and do not correspond to the City of Man (or to any common order that comprehends both cities), for those theocratic structures typify the order of special grace and the Covenant of Redemption, rather than the provisional common-grace order. Israel is fulfilled in the church, not the world. Since the state is not a theocratic institution, it cannot arrogate to itself the authority vested in the church to punish these transgressions of the covenant; the state is incompetent to deal with matters of cultic holiness, for, as a common-grace institution, it has no jurisdiction over the community of special grace and its covenantal ordering, nor can it treat the citizens of the City of Man who fall within its geo-political jurisdiction in terms of a special holiness that does not apply to those outside the bounds of the Covenant of Redemption. Israel, in its peculiar theocratic ordering, was both church and state, and was as such authorized to do things that a common-grace state cannot legitimately do.

The divine purpose for the state is to serve two important and closely related functions. First, it is intended to protect the City of God from the City of Man so that Christians might have the peace and freedom with which they may go about their work of blessing and discipling the nations and exercising godly dominion unhindered (*cf. 1 Tim. 2:2-4*). Second, it is intended to serve in the common-grace restraint upon those self-destructive impulses within the City of Man (*cf. 1 Tim. 1:9-10*) that would, if left unchecked, prematurely end history as the time of opportunity for repentance (*2 Pet. 2:9*), the time of the gospel’s dissemination as the means by which God’s righteousness-activity is revealed as the power of salvation which secures the obedience of faith among the nations (*Rom. 1:16-17; cf. 1:5; 16:26*). Its ministry of law is not intended to establish a right relation with God, but to enforce formally righteous relations among men, regulating how its citizens treat each other and conduct their social relations. Because its

citizenry is a mixed company, it is not to discriminate between the two cities in its affordance of protections. It should promote a civil religion of Christianity, officially declaring that it recognizes its stewardship under God (the divine right and responsibility it has) and that its principal basis of constitutional law is the law of God, but, beyond that, its civil religion is formal and ceremonial and does not extend to the regulation of belief and worship among the citizenry except insofar as certain practices may be socially harmful within the general providential order of consequence.

Theonomy, in its stress on the theonomic responsibilities of the state, must not confuse its task of seeking to make the state *theonomous* with the task of making it *theocratic*. Theonomy merely recognizes that all men ought to render obedience to God and be governed by his law and that the state is not exempt from the law's jurisdiction. Given the discontinuity noted in the previous paragraphs, what does the specific theonomist propose? Preeminently, since all men ought to acknowledge the true God as part of their moral duty, there is no reason why a given society, through the organ of the state and its formal legislation, cannot officially recognize this—or even formally recognize the Christian religion as revealed truth. The *de facto* barriers to this in America, due to contemporary constitutional interpretation about an alleged “wall of separation,” are simply irrelevant to the question of whether we ought (or at least are permitted) to promote true religion through this official recognition and stand confessionally as a nation *under God* via proclamation.

Divine *permission* for such an official proclamation and confession, in the absence of any explicit Biblical prohibition, could only be principally opposed by insisting that confessional pluralism is the *de jure* situation for the common-grace society, that the state ought to be neutral and tolerant and provide a context for pluralism to flourish. The idea is that permission is precluded by the ideal of a confessionally pluralistic society; it is difficult to imagine how one can possibly make a *Biblical* case for such a position and so defend it as a theonomist. Nevertheless, we shall leave aside the idea of *permission* altogether and examine the possibility that it is a *duty*.

We must insist that the magistrate ought to recognize that he is a minister of God whose authority derives from God. The magistrate ought to act self-consciously *under God* as one responsible before God, and he ought to administer *justice*, which can only be defined by the standard of God's law. The magistrate as a *person* is surely subject to the law of God and ought to discharge his duties faithfully and wisely according to theonomic ethics (and Christians must diligently seek to put godly men in office). However, a nation ought also to recognize that the very *office* of civil magistrate is an office of divine ministry (the ministry of true justice) and thus formally acknowledge that human government is subject to God. It is not simply the person holding the office who is duty-bound to obey the law of God; it is also the office itself that is under God and that therefore ought to be explicitly defined in terms of the function of discharging a God-delegated ministry of enforcing God's justice. The *de jure* human government is a *rule of law*, and it is the general equity—the righteousness—of God's

Law that is to be reflected in this ideal constitutional republic. The Constitution ought to state that government does not ultimately derive from the consent of the governed (“We the people”), but from the one true God. The consent of the governed functions as a *quod nos* reception of the rule of law (analogous to the church's role in formally recognizing the canon of Scripture), not the *in se* establishment of it (as though power derives absolutely from the *vox populi* by social contract). Thus, the Constitution ought to affirm that this popular consent is but the recognition and acknowledgment by the governed that the rule of law that they are affirming is and ought to be the rule of God's law (the law by which men are to be governed) and that the constitutional officers—as ministers of God—have only those express powers delegated to them by God and are duty-bound to exercise their powers and execute their offices as faithful stewards under God in the dispensing of that true justice that is relative to God. The Constitution ought to be self-consciously theonomic and it ought to make clear that the value-system underlying all *constitutional* laws will be derived from and expressive of the general equity of God's law. The attempt to be neutral at this point (promoting the idea of a *secular* order founded on natural-rational common ground) is simply the attempt to be *autonomous* and establish the religion of secular humanism.

A formal recognition that the Triune God revealed in the Bible is the one true God, that the Lord Jesus Christ is ruler of the kings of the earth (King of kings, Lord of lords), and that God's law is the only legitimate basis of all human legislation (applications of his law) does not entail a loss of freedom of religion and does not require the citizens individually to own Jesus as their personal Lord. It merely acknowledges that the only common ground created by common grace is the metaphysical common ground of God's Law-order, that the two cities can only meet and cooperate in terms of their mutual submission to God's law. Accordingly, pluralism would no longer be privileged and officially sanctioned as though it were an ideal and ultimately desirable situation. The laws of the land would not be formulated to respect a pluralistic consensus or compromise, some supposed common denominator of a plurality of value-systems (polytheism), or an alleged value-free neutrality that treats the plurality of traditions as having equal standing.

Theonomy insists that the proper function of the state is to promote the *common good* or *general welfare* and secure domestic tranquility and the common defense. Theonomy insists as well that it is *righteousness* that exalts a nation and that bears the fruit of peace, and any truly just order must be founded upon and regulated by the law of God, punishing those evildoers—transgressors of the moral law—who, if not restrained or prevented, would rend the social fabric and disrupt the peace and order of society. Unless those who appeal to common grace to oppose specific theonomy can demonstrate that common grace intends to promote, foster, and sanction confessional pluralism as a *de jure* state of affairs (which is to say that it stands principally opposed to a recognition of the *truth*—the fact that Christ is ruler of the kings of the earth), they have

no argument against this particular "controversial" thesis of specific theonomy.

¹ Of course, some may argue that general revelation provides only the two great commandments (love of God and neighbor) or the Ten Commandments, not the detailed legislation of the Mosaic Law. This may be true but it is beside the point. The form of the law of God in the Mosaic Law is a special-revelational restatement of the moral law that is graciously accommodated to the infirmity of man; it specifies in detail the meaning of the moral law, illustrating that meaning through case-law applications. In principle, insofar as the particular laws set forth in the Mosaic Code have general equity as concrete statements of what righteous conduct involves, the particular moral legislation could be worked out from the general principles of the two great commandments or the Decalogue as these are concretely situated in the same set of circumstances which the Mosaic Law addressed. The particulars are the explicated implications of the general. Accordingly, in principle, the concrete situating of the general principles relative to our set of circumstances for the development of specific applications should yield the same result as the "dynamic-equivalence" translation (recontextualization/reapplication) of the Mosaic judicials into forms relevant and applicable to our situation. The content of the case laws (relative to their particular situation, as conditioned in their form of statement by their specific range of applicability as laws adapted to Israel's situation) is implicitly contained in the meaning of the general principles (the summary-form of the moral law), and the former are but concrete extensions of the latter—pedagogically instructive illustrations of applied ethics that teach us (and can teach the magistrate as well) by example how one should engage in casuistry.

² If common grace is to foster cooperation between the City of Man (unregenerate humanity) and the City of God (redeemed humanity) in the public sphere for peace and order, it can only do so by bringing the City of Man into a measure of conformity to the law of God for civic righteousness. Obviously *anomie* leads to anarchy and social disintegration (as Augustine insisted, community exists only as a community of justice), but since Christians are duty-bound to keep the law of God, only that law could serve as common ground for cooperation. Christians could not cooperate in any endeavor that is contrary to the law; they cannot compromise their principles and divide their loyalty (a doubleminded halting between two positions in intellectual and ethical schizophrenia) in the pursuit of common good. Since there is no ethically neutral territory that can serve as common ground between the citizens of the two cities, they must meet on *this* ground and work together lawfully or they cannot cooperate at all, for all other ground is sinking sand. Participation together in common cultural tasks for the common good in history, which common grace makes possible, must occur in the context of the law, and any theory of common grace that fails to recognize this fact either lapses into Nature/Grace ideas of common ground (a sphere of autonomy and neutrality) or else violates the Christian duty to the law as rule of life.

³ The question that must be squarely faced at this point is whether the rule of law is to be according to laws that are merely human opinions about what is good and right (autonomy) or whether we should be ruled by God's perfect Law (theonomy).

Joseph Braswell has done undergraduate and graduate work in philosophy at the University of South Florida, but his real interest is in theology and Biblical studies. He has published several articles in various journals (including the Westminster Theological Journal, The Journal of Christian Reconstruction, and the Chalcedon Report). He currently resides in Palatka, Florida and is engaged in research and writing.

Man and His Environment

By Harmony McPherson



What is man's relationship to nature? Does he have an ethical responsibility to the world he lives in? Is he justified in controlling other forms of life? There are many answers given to these questions, reflecting a wide variety of worldviews. But in order to understand the environmentalism of today's popular culture, it may be helpful to examine some of the major

streams of thought that have built it.

Unlike other religions, Judaism and Christianity made a strong distinction between God and his creation. Nature was not divine (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 49). Both man and the world he lived in were created by God for his glory. This gave them both intrinsic value. But nature was not sacred, not something to be revered or worshiped (Passmore 10). It was man's duty to God to worship and obey him alone. Man's relationship to nature was, for the Jew or Christian, based on God's instruction to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (*Gen. 1:28*). In the Biblical view, not only was the Creator clearly distinguished from what he had made; man was distinct from the rest of creation as well (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 50). Man was under the authority of God, and, in turn, had been given authority over nature. The world's wealth was at his disposal, to be used for his ends.

Yet the Biblical Christian recognized that he was not free to abuse the earth. Just as the human race had value because it was made by God, the rest of creation was to be treated with dignity because of its origin (Tarnas 180). To consider an animal to be "low," or of little value, insulted its Maker (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 55). Cruelty toward animals was condemned.

The Christian also regarded the dominion mandate as a command to care for the earth on behalf of its rightful Owner, until, when his work was done, he would return it to God and give an account of his management. Under the authority of God, then, man was responsible to be a wise steward of his natural resources (Black 46).

When God created Adam, he placed him in the Garden of Eden, to tend and keep it. Man's first employment was to care for nature. But the Garden was perfect. When Adam and Eve sinned, God punished them by altering their environment: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you . . ." (*Gen. 1:17-18*). No longer did men live in

harmony with a perfect world; now they must struggle to produce food from the unyielding ground. The fallen world required improvement through man's efforts (Beisner 13; Worster 8).

Therefore, the Biblical Christian approached nature considering himself its rightful master, but concerned for its welfare and mindful of his responsibility to the Creator. He did not believe that nature was best left alone, but attempted to amend it through wise development.

Greek Philosophy

But the Biblical teaching was often corrupted as Western Christianity absorbed elements of Greek thought. A Neoplatonic influence was present from an early date. Plato's belief in the preeminence of the archetypal, eternal Forms over their particular physical manifestations appeared in the Christian context as a rejection of the created world in favor of the spiritual or heavenly realm. Nature was at best unimportant, if not evil and an impediment to the soul's pursuit of holiness (Tarnas 140). The result of these ideas was not only asceticism, but indifference toward nature and science, and in the extreme, abuse of animals (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 41). This Neoplatonic antiphysical stance also encouraged an exaggeration of the Christian sense of being "pilgrims and strangers" in the world. In this view, it mattered little how nature was treated, since it was expected that Christ would soon return to release his followers from this corrupt earthly prison and take them to their heavenly reward (Tarnas 140). This did not foster good stewardship or conservation. But these ideas did not reflect the Biblical teaching on nature.

It was no accident that modern science was born in the West, out of a surrounding consensus of Christianity. Christians believed that the universe had been created by a rational God, so they expected that they could understand the natural world through reason. For the Christian, the physical world was real, it was not a delusion, or an extension of God's essence, as Eastern religions claimed (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 48). But neither was it sacred; therefore, it could be investigated (Passmore 11).

Nature was also regarded as worthy of study. As we have seen, this was not the case for the Neoplatonists, and had Platonic ideas continued to dominate, modern science would never have emerged. But beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an important shift was made in western thought from Plato to Aristotle (Tarnas 176). While Plato had seen the basis of reality as lying in the transcendent Forms, and distrusted knowledge gained through the senses, Aristotle had rooted reality firmly in the material, and believed that sense perception is the only way for man to learn about the world (Tarnas 57-59). As Aristotle's works and ideas were rediscovered by the Western universities, medieval man found new interest in the order and beauty of nature. With Aristotle as their patron philosopher, Christians began to study nature, and also to enjoy it for its own sake. They believed that the expansion of their knowledge of the world would result in greater reverence for and knowledge of God (Tarnas 179).

Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was a principal proponent

of the new scientific study of nature. He was certain that man, by a rational exploration of the world, could discover truth on his own, apart from God's revelation (Tarnas 180). He had an incomplete concept of the Fall. He believed that while the will of man was fallen, his intellect was not (Schaeffer, *Escape* 11). Therefore he could find truth by himself. This autonomous view of man's reason was to have far-reaching consequences. Although the new scientific study of the world afforded to nature much more value than had the Neoplatonic position, the Aristotelian influence was not entirely benign. Both Aristotle and the Stoics believed that everything in nature was designed for the use of man. In his *Politics*, Aristotle argued that "plants are created for the sake of animals, and the animals for the sake of men, the tame for our use and provision, the wild, at least for the greater part, for our provision also, or for some other advantageous purpose, as furnishing us with clothes, and the like" (Passmore 14). This anthropocentrism eventually replaced, in the minds of many Christians, the Biblical teaching that God created everything for his own glory, and that therefore each creature had value on its own account, not merely by virtue of its usefulness to man. The Genesis mandate gave man the right to make use of nature, but it was the Greek influence that introduced the idea that nature exists only to serve his interests (Passmore 17). When Western man adopted this idea, he began to see himself as the absolute master of the world, with the right to use or abuse it in any way he chose. Gone was the sense of responsibility to God that had guided the Jews and Biblical Christians in their relationship to his creation. Man became a tyrant.

Bacon

The goal of early modern science was expressed by Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who said that although man at the Fall lost his dominion over nature, the sciences could in some part restore it (Schaeffer, *Escape* 31). "Let the human race recover that right over Nature," he wrote, "which belongs to it by divine bequest" (Passmore 19). So the scientific conquest was considered a religious duty (Schaeffer, *Escape* 31). But although the objective of bringing the world under man's mastery was based on the Genesis mandate, the effects of Aquinas' ideas were visible in Bacon's theories. Bacon believed that man's autonomous reason, through science, could bring about a utopian world in which man would once again be the true ruler over creation (Tarnas 273): "The end of our foundation is the knowledge of all causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible" (Passmore 19). Here again was Aristotle's pragmatism, unfettered by concepts of stewardship.

Descartes

René Descartes (1596-1650) shared Bacon's utilitarian view of science, but little of his Christian faith. He aspired to "a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the action of fire, water, the stars, heavens, and all the other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in

all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature" (Passmore 20). For Descartes, nature was merely a complex, impersonal machine, made and set in motion by God, but now running on its own according to its innate mechanical laws (Tarnas 278). An animal was entirely without awareness, purpose, or even the capacity for pain; for all practical purposes it was lifeless. This mechanistic world could be manipulated by man without scruples. Man was lord of nature by virtue of his rationality, which, contrary to the Bible, but in accordance with Aquinas, Descartes did not see as having been perverted by the Fall (Passmore 21).

The Modern Age

In Descartes, the anthropocentrism introduced by Aristotle came to its full expression in modern thought. No longer was God ultimate; man's autonomous reason reigned supreme. Through science, man hoped to reach an ideal state—a second Eden. This was the doctrine of the Industrial Revolution (Passmore 21). Man's harnessing of nature's laws was greatly improving his life in many areas, with no end in sight. Businessmen had no qualms about using their natural resources to the fullest in order to supply the burgeoning industry and expanding population of the West (Worster 40).

As the modern age progressed and science explained more and more natural phenomena, the supernatural and miraculous bases of Christianity seemed increasingly implausible to the modern mind. By the mid-nineteenth century, with Darwin's theory of evolution providing a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life, modern man no longer felt a need for God, nor did he wish to be bound by religion (Tarnas 304). Science was the faith of the age.

Baseless Optimism

The abandonment of belief in God had two profound effects on man's view of the world. The first was the disappearance of the last vestiges of a foundation on which to base moral treatment of nature. If there was no God, there was no way to judge one action to be right or good and another bad. Man was now in the place of God, and whatever he *could* do, he did (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 91). But in spite of the loss of moral base, this humanist belief was usually optimistic. Man's future was in his own hands, and he had the power to make the world what he would (Tarnas 319). This was the full extension of Bacon's faith.

Determinism

But this optimism could not last long. The second effect of the rejection of God was determinism. Until this time scientists had believed in the uniformity of natural causes in nature. They had even come to see nature as a machine. But they had always reserved two things outside the machine: God, its Creator, and man, God's image-bearer and deputy (Schaeffer, *Escape* 32). Now that God was gone, man had nowhere from which to derive his identity or special value. He could no longer view himself as separated from nature by his relationship to God; now he was just another animal, controlled by instinct—merely

the greatest form of life the evolutionary struggle had yet produced. He had no "higher purpose"; he was tied to this world (Tarnas 327). He became part of the machine.

The evolutionary model encouraged the pragmatic view of nature that had characterized the scientific age. If man was just another species striving to survive in an impersonal or even cruel world, he had no special responsibility to any of his fellow combatants. If survival of the fittest was the method by which nature worked, man was justified in doing whatever was necessary to continue his existence. Of course, this did not mean that he always exploited nature; much of the time it was in his best interest to let things run their natural course, or carefully manage them so they would serve him better. But the key principle was that man did everything for his own benefit. This was the logical conclusion of modern scientific beliefs (Tarnas 376).

Loss of Faith in Science

But the twentieth century brought a weakening of man's faith in science. Several factors contributed to this trend. The first was a challenge to Newtonian science. This came in the form of a number of new ideas in physics, chief among them Einstein's theories of relativity and the formulation of quantum mechanics. These ideas were contrary to the principles of classical modern science which had long been regarded as certain. Newton's Laws, which had defined man's understanding of the world for nearly two and a half centuries, were no longer applicable to all of nature (Tarnas 355). Kant had believed that man could not know the real world, but that all phenomena he observed were not only digested and organized by his mind's interpretive structures, but changed by his very act of studying them. This was now confirmed by new doubt of science's foundational belief in cause and effect, together with studies of an observer's effect on the phenomena observed (Tarnas 356). So the certainty of empirical knowledge, the major basis of science since Bacon, was called into question. As the classical concept of the world became outdated, people felt the loss of a coherent scientific cosmology. Contradictions within the new physics abounded, and added to this was the utter unintelligibility to the layperson of the quantum-relativity theories. Man felt increasingly alienated in a world that was intuitively inaccessible to him, as well as impersonal, unconscious, and purposeless (Tarnas 358).

Yet while it was viewed more tentatively than in earlier times, science continued to be valued for its practical applications, which proved the validity of its models and methods. It was only when the results of those applications were no longer judged as overwhelmingly positive that man was forced to withdraw his trust in science.

Criticism of Technology

By the mid-twentieth century, criticism of technology was widespread. It was dehumanizing man, people said, uprooting him from his proper relation to nature and placing him in an artificial environment. The world was characterized by impersonality, complexity, and a disorienting rapidity of change. And now man began to recognize the damaging effect that he,

from his scientific viewpoint, had on nature (Tarnas 362-363).

In the face of all this turmoil, generated in large part by the advance of modern science, people began to turn in great numbers to the Romantic worldview.

Romanticism

Romanticism was not new; it had grown out of the Renaissance together with the modern scientific outlook. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Romanticism's founder, was a philosopher who could not accept the mechanism of the scientific view. He would not give up the idea of total freedom for man that had preceded determinism. So he rejected the concept of nature as a machine (Schaeffer, *Escape* 34). He also had an optimistic idea of human nature. He believed in the natural goodness of man, and explained sin and evil as the result of the negative influence of urban civilization. If man was returned to his proper natural environment, apart from the artificialities of society, he would reveal his true, benevolent character. This led to the idea of the noble savage: the less a person has been tainted by civilization, the better he is, so peasants and children are held in high regard. And it is among savages that we must seek an example of the original, uncorrupted man (Herrero 5). It is easy to see the appeal of these ideas for twentieth-century man, disenchanted with the science that had for so long been the more dominant view of the two. The scientific or Enlightenment concept of the world held some things in common with Romanticism—they had both sprung from the same humanistic foundation—but in many ways they were mirror images (Tarnas 366). Rousseau and his followers were reacting against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which had led to the hated mechanism. Scientists had come to the conclusion through reason that man had no basis for freedom. But this the Romantics could not accept, so they rejected the reason and logic of science and placed the highest value on emotion and imagination instead (Tarnas 368). They felt that science was narrow-minded in accepting only information gained by empirical observation and emphasizing the exclusion of subjective interpretations of evidence based on preconceived beliefs. On the contrary, they said, truth can be discovered only by using the emotions together with reason. In this way the epistemological limits of reason alone could be transcended (Herrero 5). Yet the Romantics scorned the Enlightenment's search for monolithic, objective truth. It was impossible to find one correct way of looking at the world, one single truth (Tarnas 368). By using all his faculties—his emotions, imagination, will, and faith, as well as his reason, man could create truth. He must shape the indeterminate world and give it, and himself, meaning. Man was, or was becoming, God (Tarnas 370-371).

Romantic Biocentrism

But in spite of this idea, Romanticism, especially the modern type, has not been characterized by the same anthropocentrism as the scientific temperament. For the Romantic, the world is a unitary entity, a whole. Individual organisms are not like parts of a clock, that can be separated from each other and still retain their identity; nor can the whole, like a clock, be disassembled

and then reconstructed (Worster 82). Nature is a system, all parts of which are permeated by the same creative spirit. This divine world spirit manifests itself in the evolving forms of nature (Rushdoony 11). Not just man, but all of nature, is an expression of the divine. If Christianity was theocentric and the Enlightenment was anthropocentric, Romanticism was biocentric. All forms of life are valuable, and because they are divine, they are also worthy of veneration. This is simply Eastern pantheism adopted by the West. Man and nature are one; all that is, is of one essence (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 25). This is why Thoreau could regard a muskrat as his brother, and a skunk as "a lowly human being" (Worster 84). The goal of Romanticism is the union of the human spirit with the nature-organism to which it truly belongs. Romantics anthropomorphized the world, projecting man's feelings and reactions onto a tree, or a chicken (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 30). These things are equal to man; man has no special rights, no elevated place in the community of life (Worster 85).

Obviously, Romanticism entirely rejects the idea that man has a right to exploit natural resources for his benefit, or to alter his environment to suit his convenience. What is more, this philosophy is against scientific research, for nature is mysterious and sacred; not something to be coldly and empirically examined, but rather something to be revered (Rushdoony 11). Theoretically, all life forms have value equal to man's, and he should "step lightly" and avoid taking the lives of his fellow creatures. But in reality it is impossible for him to live this way. In order to survive, he must kill other life—plants and animals for food, trees for shelter, bacteria that threaten his health. And other animals do the same. So although Romanticism/pantheism promises to give value to nature, practically, in the real world, its system does not work (Schaeffer, *Pollution* 19). Not only does it remove man's justification for taking other life in order to protect his own, but it gives no answer for the fact that nature is not always benevolent. If nature is ultimate, then it is normative. This is the same conclusion that is reached from the scientific viewpoint. If there is no God to make laws and give us moral absolutes, then we must look to this world. So whatever we find in nature is right (Rushdoony 11; Schaeffer, *Pollution* 31). But nature is not always kind; sometimes it is cruel. What then? The evolutionary scientists came to the conclusion that if nature worked through the method of survival of the fittest, then it was right for man to look out only for his own interests in his struggle to survive. The Romantics, who do not accept this, must wrestle with the problem of why death and destruction are, apart from man, common in the natural community.

Today's environmentalism is primarily influenced by Romanticism and its associated pantheism. Popular culture enjoins us to love Mother Nature and feel ourselves one with the earth. Animals are regarded as man's equals, possessing rights similar to his, and worthy of respectful, even reverential, treatment. In fact, animals are thought of as in many ways man's betters, since they supposedly exist in their proper relationship to the environment and do not pollute the planet or exhaust its resources. The evolutionary progression is denied; the world would be better off without mankind.

But an element of scientific pragmatism is also common, especially among more conservative environmentalists and the average citizen. It is not wise to abuse the earth; this is the only one we have. Many people fear the prospect of a ravaged, toxic wasteland as their grandchildren's home. They believe that we must preserve the world in the form best suited to man's continued prosperity. This same pragmatism is responsible for the concern about the rapidly multiplying human population, and support for birth control, including abortion. Human life in itself is of little value to those of this persuasion; all that matters is for us and the people we care about to be comfortable. We should note that for those who do not believe in God, the future is a frightening thing. When we have no assurance that God will take care of his creation, including humans, then we must do the best we can to take care of ourselves and extend our existence for as long as possible.

Today's man commonly feels a certain responsibility to nature. As the most powerful being on earth, he feels he must protect the welfare of his world and all it contains. But apart from the certainties of Biblical truth, man's existence, and that of the universe, is meaningless. Only by returning to his Christian roots and once again accepting his responsibilities both to God and creation can man find answers to his environmental problems.

Beisner, E. Calvin. "Are God's Resources Finite?" *World* November 27, 1993: 10-13.

Black, John. *The Dominion of Man*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970.

Herrero, David Estrado. "Romanticism and Christianity," *Chalcedon Report*, April 1991: 2-10.

Passmore, John. *Man's Responsibility for Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974.

Rushdoony, Rousas John. "The Myth of Nature," *Chalcedon Report*, April, 1991: 11-12.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *Escape from Reason*. Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1968.

———. *Pollution and the Death of Man*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970.

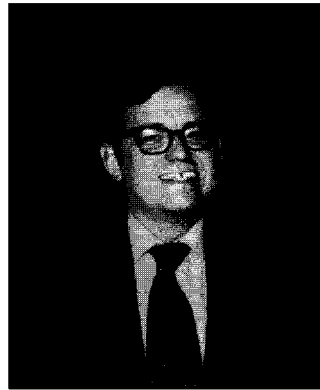
Tarnas, Richard. *The Passion of the Western Mind*. New York: Ballantine, 1993.

Worster, Donald. *Nature's Economy*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Harmony McPherson, 18 years old, lives in Rohnert Park, California. She home schooled through high school and is now a pre-veterinary biology student at Santa Rosa Junior College. She can be reached at harmonymac@juno.com.

Committed to What?

By Byron Snapp



In a recent conversation with a coach, we each lamented the lack of commitment that faces many organizations today. Many of my fellow pastors could provide a multitude of incidents (including empty seats in worship services) of members who have shirked their promise to be faithful in working for the Lord. I mention the church because it

is there that I want to direct our attention.

Early in Scripture we see a switch of basic commitment within man's heart. At creation, God commanded commitment to him alone. He had provided for every need. Under him, man were to have dominion over all earthly things. Adam and Eve were to live by his every word. Flowing out of their commitment to him was their commitment to one another. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (*Gen. 2:24*).

With the Fall, Adam and Eve heeded Satan's temptation to be committed to themselves and their desires. If they would but eat of the forbidden fruit, they would be like God. At least that is what Satan wanted them to believe. However, that eating led to blame shifting as Adam blamed Eve and ultimately God ("The woman whom you gave to be with me. . ." Genesis 3:12). Eve blamed the serpent. They denied their commitment to God and to each other.

Some years later Abel, himself committed to God, exemplified that commitment by worshiping God in a manner that pleased his Lord. His brother, Cain, showed his lack of commitment to God and to Abel by putting Abel to death. Scripture is full of examples of man's lack of commitment to anyone but himself.

By nature, man loves himself. Thus, man will often be committed to whatever advances his interests. He may be committed to his job because he finds self-fulfillment or is given a paycheck every two weeks. Family members may be committed to one another because other family members meet needs, or parents can live out their dreams in their children. Perhaps it is less expensive to live under one roof than go one's separate way. Commitment may exist for many other reasons. However, when those reasons begin to evaporate, the commitment often does also.

The same is true with man's word. In former days, a man's word was all that was needed to expect a promise to be fulfilled. This is no longer the case. Because man has too frequently gone back on his word, a large number of lawyers have found work securing signatures on documents in the presence of witnesses

verifying that said parties will do what they committed in word to doing.

Commitment is rapidly disappearing from our society because Christian ethics, for so many years interwoven into our culture, has come unwoven from societal life. Commitment begins with God's covenant with sinful man. God promises to be a God to his people (*Gen. 17:1ff*). Those who call upon him are to walk blameless before him. This is an impossible command for man to obey in himself. It is of interest to note that Abraham is given this command shortly after he sleeps with Hagar and she conceives a child (*Gen. 16:1ff*). Thus, Abraham was not blameless before God.

Earlier, when God gave Abraham a visible expression of his covenant promise, "a burning torch" (*Gen. 15:17*) took man's place and walked with God the Father between the dead animals. A Substitute, Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, would perfectly keep God's law and take on himself man's sin and God's wrath for that sin on the cross. What a picture of commitment!

The inspired Paul expressed this commitment as follows: "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (*Rom. 5:6-8*).

Those who repent of their sins and look in faith to Christ's finished work are committed to him. Christ described Christians in these words, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (*Jn. 10:27*). The Triune God is true to his word. We are to be obedient followers of his word.

It is hard for parents who break their promises to their children, and do not repent for so doing, to teach their children commitment.

Christ described himself as the Truth (*Jn. 14:6*). His followers are to evidence truth in word and deed. The preacher in Ecclesiastes 5:2 reminded his readers: "Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven and you on earth: therefore let your words be few." When we make a commitment, unless we find it to be a sinful one, we are to carry out that commitment. Again, it is important to remember the great example we have in the Triune God's commitment to sinners.

Christ reminded his hearers in the Sermon on the Mount

that our "Yes" is to be Yes and our "No," No. When we say something we can be expected to carry out our words. God does this on our behalf. Not only does he save us; he preserves us. In the passage mentioned earlier referring to his sheep, Christ says, "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (*Jn. 10:28, 29*). We can neither save nor keep ourselves. God is committed to doing both. He carries out his commitment.

Primarily, Christians are committed to God. As lovers of God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we are also to love our neighbor as ourselves (*Mt. 22:37-39*). We have a responsibility to keep our commitments to each other, as well as to God. This responsibility extends to every aspect of life—family, church, vocation, etc.

Without an understanding of a commitment to God, there cannot be an expectation of man's carrying out commitments made to others. It is in the Triune God that true commitment is exemplified. Our commitment to one another flows out of our commitment to follow God, even through life's tribulations.

The church must once again take the lead in teaching true commitment to its members. This means, among other things, 1) a commitment to teach the whole counsel of God, 2) an explanation to members as to what commitment to church membership means, and 3) elders who will shepherd the flock, even holding them accountable to their membership vows.

Parents, by their example and word, are to show their children evidence of commitment. It is hard for single parents who are not divorced Biblically, to explain to or expect commitment from their children. It is hard for parents who break their promises to their children, and do not repent for so doing, to teach their children commitment.

I believe that the day of true commitment will return, even stronger than in previous years. That day will not come, however, until men love God more than themselves. The church must lead the way by example and in its instruction. May each of us be committed in our prayers and in our local churches, as well as in our families, toward this goal.

Byron Snapp is an Associate Pastor at Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hampton, Virginia. A native of Virginia, he graduated from King College in Bristol, Tennessee (B.A. History) and from Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi (M. Div.). He has held pastorates in Mississippi, South Carolina, as well as Virginia. He and his wife, Janey, reside in Newport News, Virginia, with their three children: Samuel, Anna, and Sarah.

The Challenge of Missions: A Message

By Peter Hammond



Where Are the Missionaries?

Never have there been so many incredible opportunities for missionary work worldwide, yet there are tens of thousands of vacancies waiting to be filled on the mission field today. The harvest has never been so large—and the workers are frustratingly few.

Finding suitable missionary volunteers has never been easy—nor is it likely to get any easier. Missionary service demands dedication, determination and discipline—and these qualities are basically rejected by the television generation.

Every mission leader I know has had to grapple with an almost crippling shortage of staff and a serious shortage of long-term commitment. The increasing attrition rate of first-term mission volunteers leaving the field is destabilizing missionary endeavors worldwide.

Most church goers today are secular in their mindset and lifestyle. They have few convictions, more questions than answers. They are reluctant to make long-term commitments. Our society is existential (concerned primarily about my own personal experience, now!). This throw-away, disposable culture is short-sighted, cynical and short of faith and vision for the future. Our present generation has become selfish, sloppy, soft, spoiled and self-indulgent, unaccustomed to personal sacrifice, unwilling to endure hardship, and unlikely to exhibit loyalty to any mission, devotion to duty or courage in the face of danger.

Bill Bathman—a missionary who has devoted over 35 years to serving the persecuted churches in Eastern Europe—put it this way: *"It's not that Christians in the West aren't willing to suffer persecution for Christ—they just don't want to be inconvenienced!"*

In this computer age our technological advantages over previous generations of missionaries is astounding. Instead of weeks of travel by boat and months by ox-cart and on foot, today we can literally reach almost any location in the world within a few days by aircraft, trains and four-wheel-drive vehicles. The advent of radio, computers, desktop publishing, photocopiers and fax machines have made communications, Bible translations and literature production incredibly accessible to all.

Also medical advances now mean that missionaries to West

and Central Africa are not being sent to almost certain death. Malaria once made Africa the missionaries' graveyard—whole families perished planting the Gospel in this continent. The life expectancy of a missionary to Africa was 8 years and to West Africa was 2 years. Some died within 3 months after arriving. Missionary to Uganda, Alexander Macay, expressed the singleminded determination common to nineteenth-century volunteers:

I want to remind the committee that within six months they will probably hear that one of us is dead. But ... when that news comes, do not be cast down, but send someone else immediately to take the vacant place.

Within 3 months one *was* dead. Within a year two more had perished. Within 2 years Mackay was the only one of their missionaries left alive in Uganda. He actually survived 12 years. Rowland Bingham, a missionary to Nigeria vowed:

I will open Africa to the Gospel or die trying.

Yet such devotion to duty is extremely rare today. With all our technological advantages we still lag far behind the nineteenth-century missionaries in terms of actual effectiveness. It's not that we lack the tools, but the tenacity. Inventions are a poor substitute for integrity, initiative and innovation. Computers cannot make up for a loss of character. We have lots of programs, but it is persistence and perseverance which fulfil the Great Commission.

Listen to these voices from the past, from missionaries who backed up their words with their lives:

Nate Saint, a missionary pilot who was killed by the Auca Indians to whom he was ministering in Ecuador, wrote:

The way I see it, we ought to be willing to die. In the military, we were taught that to obtain our objectives we had to be willing to be expendable. Missionaries must face that same expendability.

C. T. Studd, the famous cricketer turned pioneer missionary to China, India and the Congo, declared:

If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.

Another missionary put it this way:

Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build a church or dwelling house, showing us that the resurrection of Africa must be effected by our own destruction.

Johan Krapf, missionary to East Africa, lost his wife and two children within months of arriving in Africa. He wrote:

Though many missionaries may fall in the fight, yet the survivors will pass over the slain into the trenches and take this great African fortress for the Lord.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, missionary to Tibet, declared:

I must obey my Master and preach His gospel, regardless of the threats or suffering.

Henry Martyn, missionary to India and Persia, wrote:

To all appearance the present year will be more perilous than any I have seen, but if I live to complete the Persian New Testament, my life after that will be of less importance.

Elizabeth Freeman, missionary to India, declared:

I hope you will be a missionary wherever your lot is cast ... it makes but little difference after all where we spend these few fleeting years, if they are only spent for the glory of God. Be assured there is nothing else worth living for.

These are the inspiring words of Christians whom God used in wonderful ways. Their positive impact upon their world was incalculable. They literally affected the course of history. Not because of what they said, but because they put feet to their faith. As William Shakespeare said: "action is eloquence." Our actions are, in fact, the best interpreters of our thoughts and priorities.

Where can we find such Christian volunteers today? Or more to the point—how can we produce such self-sacrificing disciples in our churches?

If the church at the end of the twentieth century truly wants to obey the Great Commission, we must produce tens of thousands of such disciples. To effectively evangelize the entire Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist populations in the final missionary frontier we will need an army of dedicated disciples. They will need to be like the missionary volunteers who made the nineteenth century the greatest time of missionary advance and revival in history. And the prayer support base that sends them out will need to be just as dedicated.

What Kind of Disciples Does the Mission Field Demand?

An effective missionary needs to be a person who diligently studies the Bible to discover God's will and who is determined to obey it. Obedience is the best commentary on the Bible and as Martin Luther stated: *"I had rather obey than work miracles!"*

From this foundation of prayerful study of God's Word needs to develop true Christian character. This cannot be hastily done. Steadfast Christian character is the product of years of prayer and Bible study and the cultivated habit of responding to God's Word in repentance, faith and obedience. It involves a teachable heart and a willingness to accept rebuke and discipline. This is absolutely essential in missionary service because of the difficult tasks required, in the often harsh climates and inhospitable terrains, with the inevitable cross-cultural confusions and misunderstandings, mistakes and failures are inevitable. Resolving inter-personal disputes, overcoming obstacles and enduring criticisms are all part of our job description.

The measure of a person's real character is how he works when no one is watching. Referring to temptation, C. H. Spurgeon advised: *"Learn to say: 'No,' It will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin."* If you choose an act, you create

a habit, if you create a habit, you shape a character. If you shape a character, you determine a destiny. As D. L. Moody said: *"If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself."*

And one of the marks of Christian character is integrity—the unshakeable commitment to be true to one's word. This is important because missions is built upon relationships of trust. We have a sacred trust to honor—with God, the churches and supporters who send us out and those to whom we are sent. There must never be any doubt that you as a Christian missionary will be true to your word, keep your promises and fulfill all your obligations.

Obedience is the best commentary on the Bible.

There is no doubt in my mind that a missionary volunteer's attitude is far more important than his abilities—or apparent lack of them. We all have preconceived notions of just what type of person will succeed in missions—yet time and again God surprises us and challenges us by using some of the most unlikely candidates in the most unexpected ways. The only common denominator is—a willing volunteer with a positive attitude! I have seen many talented, gifted, promising people—with impressive resumes—fail and give up. And I know of many others—with far less apparent ability—persevere and overcome disappointments, delays, discomfort, defeats and difficulties to succeed!

There is a major difference in people; the big difference is whether their attitude is positive or negative! As Leo Tolstoy wrote: "We lost because we told ourselves we lost." Peter Daniels often challenges his audiences: "If you think you can or you can't—you're right!"

Pessimists will not make the most effective missionaries—certainly they wouldn't be very happy in the uncertain and difficult situations which so often prevail in the field. Pessimists have a problem for every solution. A pessimist is one who, when he has the choice of two evils, chooses both. How we steadily and habitually think—that is what we tend to become. Negative people feel trapped by the past and helplessly look backwards at what might have been. Positive people feel inspired by the future and confidently look forward to what can be accomplished.

There are always many reasons why a certain task cannot be done. Those who succeed are those who are willing to learn, to work hard, to adapt, innovate and persevere to overcome all obstacles to complete their mission. This requires an inspiring vision of what God wants done and an optimistic attitude towards how God could use even me—in spite of myself—to accomplish his will (2 Cor. 3:5). The Bible-reading Christian must eventually become an optimist: *"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength"* (Phil. 4:13).

An essential aspect of a missionary's job description is a willingness to endure opposition and criticism. In fact, it would be very helpful if missionaries were sensitive enough

to hear the still, small voice of God's guidance while learning to adapt to foreign cultures, and thick-skinned enough to be unaffected by either flattery or unjustified criticism (the latter is far more common)! A willingness to submit to authority and an openness to receive rebuke and criticism is essential. However, one also needs to discern between constructive and destructive criticism. As C. T. Studd said: "Had I cared for the comments of people, I should never have been a missionary." Of his time in China, Studd wrote: "For five years we never went outside our doors without a volley of curses from our neighbors." To cope with such hostility, a sense of humor is essential—as is seen in these examples. John Paton, missionary to New Hebrides, related the following:

Amongst many who sought to deter me, was one dear old Christian gentleman, whose crowning argument always was, 'The Cannibals! you will be eaten by Cannibals! 'At last I replied, 'Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms'.

Robert Morrison, missionary to China, was confronted by a man who contemptuously chided him:

Now, Mr. Morrison, do you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the Chinese empire? 'No sir,' responded Morrison, 'but I expect that God will!

C. T. Studd, missionary to the Congo, presented this parable:

Remember the miller's donkey ... the miller, his son and donkey went to the market. The miller rode the donkey all the way and people exclaimed, "Cruel man, riding himself and making his son walk." So he got down and his son rode; then people slanged, "What a lazy son for riding while his poor old father walks." Then both father and son rode, and people then said, "Cruelty to animals, poor donkey." So they got down and carried the donkey on a pole, but folks said, "Here are two asses carrying another ass." Then all three walked and people said, 'What fools to have a donkey and not ride it.' So let's go ahead with our work for God and not care what folks say.

Of course, those who endeavor to submit to Bible college or theological training and apply to join a mission will be told by well-meaning relatives and friends that they are wasting their lives. Nate Saint's response to this should be our own:

And people who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that they too are expending their lives ... and when the bubble has burst they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted.

David Brainerd, the eighteenth century missionary to North American Indians, declared:

As long as I see anything to be done for God, life is worth living; but O, how vain and unworthy it is to live for any lower end!

Many reading this article may feel inadequate to follow in the footsteps of such pioneers. It is worth remembering that none of them felt either worthy or capable in and of himself. However, he was willing to learn and trusted in God's power, not his own. Gladys Aylward, missionary to China, expressed her view in this way:

I wasn't God's first choice for what I've done for China ... I don't know who it was ... It must have been a man ... a well-educated man. I don't know what happened. Perhaps he wasn't willing ... And God looked down ... and saw Gladys Aylward ... And God said—'Well, she's willing!'

Isobel Kuhn, missionary to China, issued the following challenge:

I believe that (in) each generation God has 'called' enough men and women to evangelize all the yet unreached tribes of the earth ... everywhere I go, I constantly meet with men and women who say to me, "When I was young I wanted to be a missionary, but I got married instead." Or, "My parents dissuaded me," or some such thing. No, it is not God who does not call. It is man who will not respond.

Which raises the point: Over 80% of all missionaries today are women. Where are all the men? What kind of army sends its women into the frontline of battle? Financial considerations, family responsibilities and career demands no doubt play a major role in preoccupying men, and their personal involvement in fulfilling the Great Commission seems to be "Mission Impossible"!

However, this need not be so. If our congregations would truly make missions a priority, then the financial constraints that hold back so many eager volunteers would be swept away. Less than 10% of evangelical churches have any mission programs at all. Less than 1% of total church income is spent on foreign missions! If churches would set aside at least 10% of their budget to support missionaries, and especially those sent out from their own congregation, then literally thousands more volunteers could be mobilized!

It is a sad commentary on the average congregation that more is spent on carpets, heaters and parking lots than allocated for fulfilling the Great Commission.

There are so very many ways to serve the Lord in missions today: Bible translations, radio broadcasts, medical work, church planting, literature evangelism, education, administration and so on.

We need teachers and technicians, preachers and printers, computer programmers and church planters, artists and artisans, Bible teachers and brick layers, and many more. You will not need to worry about "an opening"—there are thousands of kilometers of opening and you can take your choice as to where you will establish yourself.

But you may ask: What constitutes a call?

THE NEED:

The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few.

Matt 9:37

THE COMMAND:

Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

THE LOVE OF CHRIST:

The love of Christ constrains us, because One died for all ...

2 Cor 5:14

THE WILL OF GOD:

The Lord ... is not willing that any should perish but that all could come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

THE GREAT COMMISSION:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded.

Matt 28:18-20

All Christians must pray, most can give, some can go. We must all serve God somewhere. Whether we are called to go across the street or across the world—our mission is the same—to make disciples ... teaching obedience.

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.

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

Donations for Peter Hammond should be made through:

In Touch Missions International

P.O. Box 28240

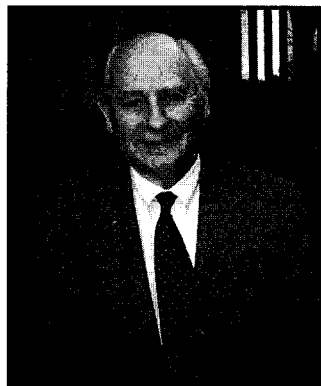
Tempe, AZ 85285

Phone: 602-068-4100 Fax: 602-968-5462

752222215@compuserve.com.

The Founding Fathers on Religion and Morality

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld



It is indeed sad that American children today are not being taught much, if anything, about our Founding Fathers and what their vision of America was. Even when I was going to public school back in the 1930s and '40s, very little was taught about the religious and moral beliefs of our Founding Fathers.

We learned about George Washington as a great soldier and a great leader, but virtually

nothing about his religious convictions. The same was true of all the other noted Founding Fathers: Jefferson, Adams, Hancock, Franklin, Hamilton. They were great revolutionary leaders who crafted the Declaration of Independence, fought a six-year war against Great Britain, crafted the Articles of Confederation and then the Constitution, which is the basis of our political system. Surprisingly you can teach a great deal about all of that with virtually no mention of religion, leaving the impression that religion didn't matter then and doesn't matter now.

In fact, we were taught more about the atheist Tom Paine than about any of the great American religious and intellectual leaders of that early period, such as Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight, George Whitefield, John Witherspoon, John Dickinson, George Mason, Jonathan Mayhew, Nathanael Emmons, Jedidiah Morse, Noah Webster, and others.

Why was this the case? Because by the 1930s the progressives were sufficiently in control of the curriculum so that they could carry out their long-range plan to remove religion from American public schools. Yet, in those days it was still possible for a school principal to read a psalm from the Bible at assembly. Of course, even that is no longer possible. In fact, the atmosphere in some schools has become so anti-Christian that it is forbidden to even mention the word Christmas within their walls.

John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report* (Jan. 6, 1997) wrote that in Fayette County, Kentucky, school bus drivers were warned not to say Merry Christmas to any of the children, and in West Orange, N.J. a student was reprimanded by the high school dean for singing "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" on school property. And the principal of Loudoun High School in Virginia told student editors to keep the newspaper as secular as possible and "to be careful that they don't associate the upcoming holiday with any particular religion." One wonders how they were supposed to do that inasmuch as the upcoming holiday celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ! Talk about censorship. I wonder what the ACLU or People for the American Way will do about *that*. But they'll probably

argue that the intent of the Bill of Rights was to grant Americans freedom *from* religion, not freedom *of* religion. That certainly seems to be the rationale behind all of this undisguised anti-Christianity.

Some schools now allow only instrumental versions of traditional carols. The words are simply too controversial and violate the sacred separation of church and state.

And that's why the religious convictions of our Founding Fathers cannot be taught to American children in our public schools. These poor children no doubt get the impression—if they are taught at all about the Founding Fathers—that they were men with no religious convictions at all and that religion simply did not exist as a vital spiritual or cultural force in America when in reality it was the very force that made America possible. If they are taught anything at all about religion in early America it is usually about those mean, bigoted Puritans who hounded the poor witches of Salem.

Christopher Columbus

And yet, what the Founding Fathers had to say about God is so inspiring that I wish there were a way that American children could be made aware of this. It's easy enough for homeschoolers to get this knowledge. David Barton has written books on the subject, and there's an excellent book by William J. Federer, *America's God and Country, Encyclopedia of Quotations*, filled with wonderful and inspiring words from the time of Columbus to the present day, proving that belief in God, acknowledging his blessings, and working to fulfill his promises are the most important themes in the entire American enterprise. Christopher Columbus wrote in his *Book of Prophecies*:

It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies....

There was no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because he comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures ... encouraging me continually to press forward, and without ceasing for a moment they now encourage me to make haste.

In a letter written in 1493 to Spain's General Treasurer Gabriel Sanchez, Columbus wrote:

That which the unaided intellect of man could not compass, the spirit of God has granted to human exertions, for God is wont to hear the prayers of His servants who love His precepts even to the performance of apparent impossibilities. Therefore, let the king and queen, our princes and their most happy kingdoms, and all the other provinces of Christendom, render thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Pilgrim Fathers

In June of 1630, ten years after the Pilgrims founded the Plymouth Colony, Gov. John Winthrop landed in Massachusetts Bay with 700 people in 11 ships, thus beginning the Great Migration, which lasted 16 years and saw more than 20,000 Puritans embark for New England. In a sermon aboard the ship *Arbella* before disembarking on the shores of New England, Winthrop said:

We are a Company, professing ourselves fellow members of Christ, and thus we ought to account ourselves knit together by this bond of love....

Thus stands the cause between God and us: we are entered into covenant with Him for this work. We have taken out a Commission, the Lord hath given us leave to draw our own articles....

We must hold a familiar commerce together in each other in all meekness, gentleness, patience, and liberality. We must delight in each other, make one another's condition our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our Commission and Community in this work, as members of the same body....

We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when He shall make us a praise and glory, that men of succeeding plantations shall say, "The Lord make it like that of New England."

For we must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.

That's the kind of religious fervor and covenantal love that permitted the Puritans to create a Christian civilization in the wilderness of the new world. And from that community came some of the most learned men of God that Christendom has ever known. Harvard College was founded in 1636 for the purpose of training up a learned clergy. And indeed it did. Increase Mather, who became President of Harvard, was one of the first to criticize the British monarch, Charles II, for demanding in 1684 the return of the charter which had given the colonists the right to govern themselves. He wrote:

To submit and resign their charter would be inconsistent with the main end of their fathers' coming to New England.... [Although resistance would provoke] great sufferings, [it was] better to suffer than sin. Let them trust in the God of their fathers, which is better than to put confidences in princes. And if they suffer, because they dare not comply with the wills of men against the will of God, they suffer in a good cause.

Already one can see the seed of the War for Independence being planted in the soil of New England.

Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards, the great theologian whose preaching began the revival known as the Great Awakening, was the third President of Princeton University. Concerning the Great Awakening, he wrote:

And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to ... work amongst us.... In every place, God brought His saving blessings with Him, and His Word, attended with Spirit ... returned not void.

George Whitefield, the famous dynamic evangelist of the Great Awakening, preached up and down the Eastern seaboard of America. Benjamin Franklin wrote that he was able to hear Whitefield's voice nearly a mile away. Whitefield wrote:

Those who live godly in Christ, may not so much be said to live, as Christ to live in them.... They are led by the Spirit as a child is led by the hand of its father....

They hear, know, and obey his voice.... Being born again in God they habitually live to, and daily walk with God.

Sarah Edwards, wife of Jonathan Edwards, wrote of Whitefield:

It is wonderful to see what a spell he casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. ... Our mechanics shut up their shops, and the day laborers throw down their tools to go and hear him preach, and few return unaffected.

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin wrote:

It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk thro' the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.

On matters of education, in 1750 Franklin wrote to Dr. Samuel Johnson, the first president of King's College (now Columbia University):

I think with you, that nothing is of more importance for the public weal, than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue.... I think also, general virtue is more probably to be expected and obtained from the education of youth, than from the exhortation of adult persons; bad habits and vices of the mind being, like diseases of the body, more easily prevented than cured.

I think, moreover, that talents for the education of youth are the gift of God; and that he on whom they are bestowed, whenever a way is opened for the use of them, is as strongly called as if heard a voice from heaven.

Franklin wrote in his *Autobiography* this prayer that he prayed every day:

O powerful goodness! Bountiful Father! Merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolution to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful nonsectarian prayer for school children to recite each day? It is said that Franklin was a Deist. He had been brought up and educated as a Presbyterian, but he rejected many of the doctrines of the Presbyterian faith. But he writes in his *Autobiography*:

I never doubted, for instance, the existence of the Deity; that he made the world, and governed it by his Providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; that our souls are immortal; and

that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter.

In July 1776, Franklin was appointed to a committee to draft a seal for the newly formed United States. He proposed:

Moses lifting up his wand, and dividing the red sea, and pharaoh in his chariot overwhelmed with the waters. This motto: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

In 1787 Franklin wrote in a letter:

Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.

At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Franklin, disturbed by the bitter debates among the delegates, said in a speech to the convention:

I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God Governs in the affairs of men....

We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that "except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it."...

I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.

It should be noted that prayers have opened both houses of Congress ever since.

George Washington

It would take a full day to talk of the religious character of George Washington who was deeply conscious of his Christian faith. He believed that he was miraculously saved from death after a battle in 1755. He wrote to his brother:

But by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me!

As Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army Washington often prayed and fasted, invoking God's protection and providence during the entire War of Independence. He appointed chaplains for every regiment. In 1789, at his inauguration as the first President of the United States, Washington said:

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to the Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may

consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes; and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success, the functions allotted to his charge....

No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States.

Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency....

Washington's inaugural address should be required reading in every American public school. But, of course, all of Washington's references to God would send the ACLU and People for the American Way screaming to the Supreme Court that such an act would be a violation of the separation of church and state. That's how far we've come.

On Oct. 3, 1789, Washington issued a *National Day of Thanksgiving Proclamation* in which he stated:

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the twenty-sixth day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these United States that we then may all unite unto him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed....

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed, to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord, to promote the knowledge and practice of the true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us, and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

This fervent proclamation indicates quite clearly where the hearts of the American people turned to for their blessings. Today, our school children think that the Pilgrims thanked the Indians, not God, on Thanksgiving Day. Our children are being lied to by our educators, and what good can come from such lies?

One merely has to read the prayers that Washington wrote in his own personal prayer book to understand how deeply he was imbued with the Holy Spirit and how deeply he relied on God for all matters of importance in his life. And it is this aspect of Washington's character that is rarely if ever referred to in school textbooks. Even so great a man as Washington could fall to his knees and pray for forgiveness. In one prayer, he wrote:

I have sinned and done very wickedly, be merciful to me, O God, and pardon me for Jesus Christ sake.... Thou gavest Thy Son to die for me; and has given me assurance of salvation, upon my repentance and sincerely endeavoring to conform my life to His holy precepts and example.

We must forever praise God and thank him for raising up such a leader as George Washington, the father of our country. Isn't it a tragedy that American children are no longer taught about this tower of a man who should be their hero? I remember when I was in first grade, there was a portrait of George Washington in our classroom. That portrait looked down upon us children and I revered him. It was the Stuart portrait, in which the bottom part was unfinished. But to me it looked as if George Washington were in heaven.

Americans revered George Washington with good reason. But today he is just a figure on a one-dollar bill.

Noah Webster

Another great American whose godly influence was felt by millions of children was Noah Webster, whose blue-backed speller taught millions to read and spell. In 1828, Webster completed his *American Dictionary of the English Language*. In this dictionary are constant references to God and the Bible, for Webster was an orthodox Christian. He stated:

Education is useless without the Bible.

God's Word, contained in the Bible, has furnished all necessary rules to direct our conduct.

He also wrote:

In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government ought to be instructed. ... No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.

Alexis de Tocqueville

This strong American adherence to Biblical religion impressed the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville who traveled throughout America in the early 1830s and wrote a marvelous book about his observations. He wrote:

In the United States the sovereign authority is religious, ... [T]here is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human

nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth....

America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

The safeguard of morality is religion, and morality is the best security of law as well as the surest pledge of freedom.

The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.

Abraham Lincoln

It is hard for us to believe that thirty years later this Christian nation would be torn asunder and plunged into a civil war that took a half million American lives. Men prayed to the same God on both sides of the conflict. In his second inaugural address after the defeat of the Confederacy, Lincoln said:

The prayers of both [sides] could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."...

And then Lincoln concluded with these famous words:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Indeed, only Christian charity could restore the United States as one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

America's Christian heritage is so rich, so powerful, so sustaining, that even President Clinton felt compelled to end his second inaugural address, stating:

May God strengthen our hands for the good work ahead, and always, always bless our America.

How sincere was the President, we have no way to know. We know his faults, we know his immorality. Yet, even the profoundly sinful must face the consequences of his sins. Obviously, President Clinton, born in the Southern Bible belt, must reflect his Baptist roots if he is to maintain a modicum of credibility among his fellow Southerners.

Our secular education system, of course, makes the teaching of Biblical religion to American children impossible, but nothing prevents our educators from inculcating the moral principles of humanism which emphatically teach that there is no connection between religion and morality. Moral relativism, situational ethics, sexual freedom, and multiculturalism, which teaches that all values systems are equally valid, are now the order of the day.

Chuck Colson, the former special counsel to President Nixon who went to prison for his role in the Watergate cover-up, underwent a religious conversion that changed his life. In 1993, he lectured on the subject, "Can We Be Good Without God?" He said: "What we fail to realize is that rejecting transcendental truth is tantamount of committing national suicide. A secular state cannot cultivate virtue. . . . We are taking away the spiritual element and abandoning morality based on religious truth, counting instead on our heads and our subjective feeling to make us do what is right."

And that is exactly what our educators are doing when they talk about universal values, basic values, and common values as if 3,000 years of Judeo-Christian values are totally irrelevant or never existed.

At the age of 15, George Washington copied in his own handwriting 110 "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation." Rule 108 stated:

When you speak of God, or His attributes, let it be seriously and with reverence. Honor and obey your natural parents although they be poor.

How about distributing that book among American school children! Abigail Adams wrote to her son Quincy Adams in 1780:

The only sure and permanent foundation of virtue is religion. Let this important truth be engraved upon your heart.... Justice, humanity and benevolence are the duties you owe to society in general. To your country the same duties are incumbent upon you with the additional obligation of sacrificing ease, pleasure, wealth and life itself for its defense and security.

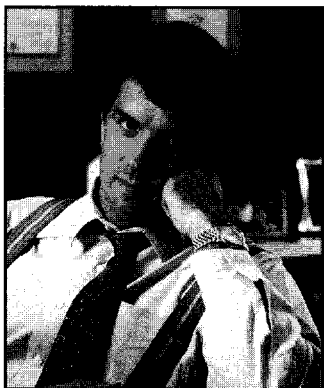
Thus was the American character formed in the early days of the republic. Which means that as long as we continue to maintain a secular government education system, we shall be plagued with all of the social problems that are the natural results of secular morality.

How long will it take for Americans to abandon our godless education system? It won't happen until Christian leaders exhort Christian parents to leave these schools. When will this happen? Perhaps never. The average Christian "leader" is anything but a leader. Meanwhile, parents are slowly but surely making their own decisions about their children's education without the help of politically correct Christian leadership. And that is why the homeschool and Christian school movement continues to grow exponentially. It's the only proper decision for Christian parents to make in New Age America.

Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the leader in U.S. homeschooling and phonics, and he has lectured on these subjects from coast to coast and abroad. State school authorities once called him statist education's "public enemy number 1."

If It's Hebrew, Must It Be Holy? (Or Judaism-Lite)

By Monte Wilson



What would you say is the greatest national victory for modern-day Israel? Most will immediately reply that this came in 1948 when Israel became a nation. I would suggest, however, that an almost equally significant victory has been the seduction of many evangelicals as instruments of Jewish propaganda. Somehow, the church has been duped into

believing that the Jews still hold some special favor with God and will be blessed by him *for their own sake*. The fact is that God is finished with the Jews as a unified nation. They no longer have anything to do with carrying the message of salvation to the world. That mission now belongs to the church.

Watch your local Christian TV station and you will see just how far this If-It's-Hebrew-It's-Holy attitude has filled the church. Talk show hosts daily discuss events in the Middle East and then search the Scriptures for some verse that will prove the event's prophetic significance. Many ministers wear Jewish regalia to draw attention to their affinity for and support of a Jewish Christianity. In charismatic song services, if the "anointing" is sagging, the leader will have the congregation sing a Hebrew-sounding song (always in a minor key) and the people will shout the roof down. Write a book about how to incorporate Jewish Feasts into your Christian worship services and you will have a best-seller.

The problem is not with various people's expressing their faith and worship within the context of their cultures. The problem—or more accurately, the sin—is when a particular culture attaches a superior value to its cultural expressions of worship.

When Christ came as the mediator of the new covenant, the old covenant became obsolete (*Heb. 8:13*). The Jews rejected Christ so "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you [Israel] and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it" (*Mt. 21:43*). There is no longer a partition wall standing between Jew and Gentile. Christ has broken down that wall and has reconciled "them both in one body to God through the cross" (*Eph. 2:15,16*). As Paul states in *Gal. 6:16*, Christians—the church of Jesus Christ—are now the "Israel of God." As for the old Israel, Paul says that "wrath has come upon them to the uttermost" (*1 Thess. 2:16*).

I assert that there is no longer any such thing as legitimate Judaism. Ever since the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, there have been no rituals, sacrifices, priests, adherence to civil laws or any other such observances of a real Jew. In fact, ever since A. D.

500 the Jews have no longer even followed their Scriptures but almost exclusively adhere to the Talmud—a man-made system of religion developed by their Rabbis. This is why it is a joke for Christians to say that we have so much in common with modern Jews (*i.e.*, the Old Testament), for the orthodox Jew always interprets (and thus perverts) the Old Testament through the teachings of the Talmud.

The problem we face today is no different from what Paul faced in Galatia. Though no one is demanding for Real-Christians-To-Be-Circumcised, many do consider you more holy if you observe any Jewish traditions. And if, per chance, you are a Hebrew Christian, three years are knocked off of your discipleship program and you get to go to the head of the class. Of course, one has to wonder how such a mindset will effect the evangelization of the Arabs. Actually, as Gary North has pointed out, if the Arabs understood the intricacies of many of the adherents of dispensational theology, they might grow to like these folks. Think about it. If the Jews in Israel were to have a revival and tens of thousands of them were converted, there would be too few Jews left after the Rapture for the Anti-Christ to even care about invading Israel. If there aren't enough post-rapture Jews to muster an army with, there won't be enough Jews in Israel to surround. There simply cannot be a Great Tribulation (that time where two thirds of the Jews are annihilated) if there are too many conversions before the Rapture. So, why evangelize Israel? The dispensationalists need to stay away and not mess things up. This is the part the Arab should like: many dispensationalists rarely evangelize in Israel. There are no great win-a-Jew-for-Jesus blitzes. These dispensationalists just let the citizens of their beloved nation die and spend eternity in hell. Better that than mess up their eschatological maps!

Some will argue, "But Monte, Israel has outlawed Christian evangelism and is even persecuting believers who refuse to obey this law." Really? This anti-Christ nation has outlawed evangelism and is persecuting your brothers and sisters in Christ and you still insist on giving it your unqualified political support?

Understand this: according to the vast majority of dispensationalists, the State of Israel must be preserved for their system of theology to hold true. For them, no State of Israel means there are no Jews for the Antichrist to murder. No State of Israel, no Armageddon. Therefore, no matter what crimes are committed by the State of Israel against the Palestinians, these dispensationalists must always lobby for the State of Israel. On the other hand, we also must be careful and not lead too many of them to the Lord. So much for those folks who say one's eschatology is irrelevant!

Dispensationalists believe that the Old Testament prophecies and promises were given exclusively to the house of Israel and, therefore, must be fulfilled to the people of Israel. The problem here, however, is their failure to understand that the church was originally an Israelite body. Therefore, it was qualified to receive the promises claimed by Israel. In fact, the Israelite believers who made up the membership of the church in its conception were the only ones still worthy to wear the name of Israel and Judah.

Dr. Albertus Pieters makes this point in his book, *The Seed of Abraham*, when he writes:

....Just as it would have been impossible for any Israelite to refuse God's offer in the Sinaitic Covenant and still retain his standing and rights under the Abrahamic Covenant, so it was equally impossible for those under the Sinaitic Covenant to refuse to accept the New Covenant in Christ and still retain their standing and privileges as the seed of Abraham. There is always but one group that is recognized by God as being the Seed of Abraham, the community with which he is in covenant, and that group, after the rejection of Jesus by the rulers and the majority of the Old Covenant Israel, was the remnant with whom he set up the New Covenant in his blood. The Lord then deposed the unfaithful rulers of Israel and appointed the apostles as the new head of the covenant people.

Pieters goes on to note that, in light of the preceding—as well as many other arguments—the church is the legitimate heir and successor of Old Testament Israel. In fact, the Old Testament prophecies and promises that remain unfulfilled are to be fulfilled not to the Jews but, rather, to the church which is the New Israel.

At this point, the dispensationalist will ask about those prophecies that premillennialists point to as indicating a return of the Jews to Palestine. These Old Testament prophecies were either given before the return from Babylonian captivity (and so were fulfilled by that event) or, as in the case of Zechariah 8:7-8, were given while that return was still in progress (the return having occurred over a period of years). So, any return to Palestine by the Jews at this time has no prophetic significance. When Israel rebelled against her Messiah, they were excommunicated from the Land (A. D. 70). Modern Jews have no theological right to the land of Palestine.

For the sake of argument, however, let's say that the prophecies concerning a return of the Jews to Palestine had remained unfulfilled. The fourth chapter of Romans implies that the seed of Abraham (*cf. Gal. 3*) inherits all the promises made to Abraham. The land, therefore, belongs to Christians. Not just Palestine, however, but the world. The Christian meek shall inherit the earth.

The church is the agent God has chosen to carry the gospel. It is the Israel of God. Because of this the promises and prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Israel that have gone unfulfilled will be fulfilled in reference to the church. This, of course, points to a victorious future for the gospel and the church.

The Israelites were the people of God and are to the church what the flower is to the fruit . . . but they are not the fruit. Moreover, nowhere in the New Testament are we encouraged to implement Hebrew culture in our churches. If it's Hebrew, it might be interesting or even informative but only if it's Biblically Christian is it holy.

Dr. Monte Wilson is a noted Reformed speaker and writer. He can be contacted at 770-740-1401, montethird@aol.com, or P.O. Box 22, Alpharetta, GA 30239. He is available for preaching, lectures and conferences.

Do We Need The Government's Permission For Everything?

By Sheldon Richman



The other day I caught the television news report about America Online's plan to buy out its largest rival, CompuServe. At the end of the report the broadcaster said that "the government will have to approve the deal."

It got me thinking: does the government have to approve everything we do? President Clinton says we've left the era of big government behind, but

I'm not convinced, especially when things like the AOL-CompuServe deal come along.

AOL, the largest online computer service, with more than 9 million subscribers, wants to buy the number two service, CompuServe, with more than 2 million subscribers. CompuServe will continue to operate as a separate service. The antitrust watchdogs at the Department of Justice will scrutinize the proposed deal, ever ready to protect us helpless consumers from big companies.

But is there anything to save us from? Antitrust law has always been based on a misleading theory of the competitive economy as a static place where no one profits by bold initiative. When things get a little too dynamic for that theory, the government gets worried and considers putting a halt to activity it cannot understand.

In reality the marketplace is dynamic. Knowledge is always incomplete and changing. Errors in the use of resources abound. There is always much to learn, and the churning competitive process is the forum for discovery. Entrepreneurs in quest of profits seek opportunities to serve consumers in ways they are not now being served. Success indicates that an entrepreneur found an "error" regarding how consumers were being treated and corrected it. After all, the way to make profits is to provide something consumers are willing to buy.

If AOL buys CompuServe and increases its profits, that's a sign the deal was good for consumers. If it experiences losses, the opposite verdict would have been rendered.

But would the AOL-CompuServe deal harm consumers by providing fewer choices in the computer online-service industry? It would seem so, but actually it would not harm consumers. Although CompuServe would no longer be independent, other choices would still exist. There are many large and small providers of access to the Internet, for example.

They don't offer users the in-house content and services that AOL and CompuServe do. But there are equivalents on the Internet, even if they take some searching. The point is that every Internet service provider is a competitor of AOL.

Besides that, AOL has a competitor in Microsoft Network. This is a young service and would be only one-sixth the size of AOL-CompuServe. But that is just its present condition. It would grow quickly if AOL, having bought CompuServe, became complacent. As a matter of fact, a short time ago, people were frantically predicting that Microsoft Network would come to dominate the online-service business because the company includes the access software with Windows, the operating environment most commonly found on personal computers. This has obviously not happened.

Companies often seek regulations to make it difficult or impossible for new competitors to challenge them. All the government needs to do to protect consumers is to refuse to go along.

Our memory is very short in such matters. AOL was not always the top online service. Before AOL existed, CompuServe was the major service, having bought out its closest rival, The Source. But CompuServe's domination did not prevent the upstart AOL from blanketing the country with computer disks containing its access software. Before long, AOL's membership surpassed CompuServe's.

There is a critical lesson in that story. Potential competition is every bit as important in an industry as actual competition. Venture capital is always looking for new places to invest. If the dominant firm in an industry leaves room for a competitor to seize an advantage, someone will do it. But if the firm is so effective that no one wants to challenge it, consumers are the winners. The antitrust people still have not gotten the message.

The only thing that can keep the process from working is the presence of legal barriers to the entry of new firms. Companies often seek regulations to make it difficult or impossible for new competitors to challenge them. All the government needs to do to protect consumers is to refuse to go along. To put it another way, if the freedom and property rights of all people are protected, the free market serves everyone and creates prosperity. Antitrust laws violate property rights, punish success, and harm consumers. They should be repealed.

Sheldon Richman is vice president of policy affairs for The Future of Freedom Foundation in Fairfax, Virginia.

The Restoration of Education

By R. J. Rushdoony

The background of American schooling is the Protestant emphasis on the reading of the Bible. The Calvinistic and Lutheran emphasis on literacy came from its Biblical doctrine of God. God is unchanging because totally self-consciousness. His word is an infallible word because he is the infallible God; his infallibility and total self-consciousness are apparent in his predestination of all things. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (*Ac. 15:18*). Such knowledge is only possible to a totally self-conscious, omnipotent, and infallible God. The Bible, his word, is an expression of his Being and its infallibility. Knowledge of it is thus basic to existence. Reading this has a dimension in Biblical religion not found in any other. *When, as in some areas of the Christian world, literacy, tradition, or anything other than the Bible is given priority, the result is a regression into a non-Christian religion. Mystery will then often be stressed above knowledge.*

The American Puritans stressed literacy to defeat "that old deluder, Satan." Education was also important to man in terms of his calling. Schooling was thus very practical. In my youth, older men with any American schooling were excellent at "figuring." They could calculate in their heads data about crops, expenses, and so on.

Early American schooling, and in the era of the early republic prior to Horace Mann, had short years, six weeks to three months. It was solid and hard training because the parents expected it. "Reading, writing, and arithmetic, taught to the tune of the hickory stick," was what they wanted for their children. Schooling discipline, like home discipline, had to be strict.

After grade school, *i.e.*, after grade 8, those going to a college or university attended a summer academy to get foreign languages, mathematics, and science. This meant college graduation at age 17-19, and an early entry into the adult world, and earlier marriages often.

Statist educators gradually lengthened the school years, weakened its content, and lessened its discipline. However, up to the 1929 Depression, an eighth-grade school prepared students ably for a working world. They had the basic skills.

With the 1929 Depression, state compulsory attendance laws were raised, even up to 16 and 18, to remove vast numbers from the work force. Many youths, unemployed, returned to school, *i.e.*, high school. In my high school years, graduating in 1934, many students who were involved in sports were routinely disqualified from further participation because they had reached their twenty-first birthday. A problem of the day was that some younger teachers were 20 and 21 years old, and some students were dating them.

Especially after World War II, a dilution of the curriculum followed. Young parents who felt that the Depression and the

War had been deprivations sought "a better life" for their children, leading in the 1950s to the child-centered society, which meant the spoiled-brat student rebels of the 1960s.

At the same time, the influx of more students into junior or community colleges led to watering down that area of education. Next came the universities and graduate schools.

Christian and home schools must take the lead in reversing all this, in shortening the present K-12 schooling into K-8, or at most nine, grades, and by again making higher education into sound schooling.

Such a move requires Christian leadership, and it must come soon.

Random Notes, 75

By R. J. Rushdoony

1. The people of the U. S. have changed greatly. I have a book (reprinted) from 1832, by Mrs. Childs: *The American Frugal Housewife*. From first to last, the author gives suggestions on how to save money, how to use as many of the vegetables and meats as possible, and how to economize, economize, and economize! In my early school years, at least one arithmetic teacher tried to teach us how to keep a ledger and account for every penny. My father did just that, so that even two cents given to me for penny candies went into the book.

Well, with all that in my training, I have felt like a spendthrift with my less frugal ways! Certain things routinely remind me that some of that training did take. Today I finally changed the laces on an old pair of everyday shoes. From the beginning, those laces (round ones) had irked me because they do not stay tied, especially on my night shoes. So what did I do with the old laces? I resisted the urge to discard them, so I folded them, to keep for possible need!

2. Do you want to know one reason why Rome fell? According to the church father, Lactantius, in *De Mortibus Persecutoreum*, 7, "There were more tax collectors than taxpayers." Keep trying, Congress: you can make it too!

3. Mark and Darlene were returning home rather late last night. Listening to the car radio, they heard a young woman asking counsel of a psychologist. But she did not know whether or not she was *separated* from her husband or *divorced*. She did not know that there is a difference.

There is today a growing illiteracy, and an ignorance of the most obvious facts of life.

4. More than 40 years ago, I did something while pastor of a better than average sized church that really caused me much trouble. On the back page of the Sunday bulletin, I would add citations of telling passages from theologians, short poems, and interesting quotations. I once added a statement from Spurgeon's *John Plowman's Talks* which I thought was quite amusing. Spurgeon said that many church members reminded him of his neighbor's pigs, "all grunt and no bacon." I was startled at how

many members believed I meant them, and they were angry! On second thought, I realized they were right!

5. I have received several requests lately to comment on Biblical rules for inheritance, a matter I have discussed in *Institutes of Biblical Law*. Briefly, we are to capitalize God's Kingdom by confining inheritance to our godly children. It is a sin to *reward sin*; the ungodly should be disinherited. But it is sad how many people delude themselves into believing that their reprobate child or children are godly. Your other children can usually tell you the truth without illusions.

6. We live in the upper foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. When we settled here some 22 years ago, we quickly learned that the wildlife on the property included mountain lions, a lioness and her cub. But for years, with the arrogance of science, "authorities" denied that mountain lions still existed here. Only when an "authority" found evidence of one were such animals officially considered in existence. A few years later, because they were so plentiful, their presence was a threat, and a law was passed to open up limited hunting. This the courts blocked. Now some mountain lions are in the cities, in parks, and are killing people.

Another problem: in Stockton, California, a city about 65 miles below us, a widow, Kettie Numley, age 87, has a home on a quiet street near the river. She also has a large and beautiful pine tree in her front yard. Black-crowned night herons, *Nysticorax Ayticorax*, have made the neighborhood their home, especially her tree. A reporter counted 25 to 40 young ones alone. The bird droppings have hit the widow about 200 times. Also, the birds bring fish, frogs, rats, mice, and crawdads to the tree and house to eat, and they are prone to upchucking. The roof has to be cleaned weekly, and the smelly upchuck on the walks and lawn fill several garbage cans weekly. It would cost \$1600 to cut down the tree, and Mrs. N. cannot afford that. But any damages to the birds can mean a severe fine and imprisonment. The herons are supposedly an endangered species!

Aborting a human child is legal, but touch a heron, and you go to jail!

7. I like this statement of a mid-eleventh-century abbot, Herluin of Bec: "Of what use is a man who is ignorant of letters and of the commandments of God?"

The Venerable Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, tells us of the King Sigebert of Essex who was killed by his own kinsmen because as a new Christian he forgave his enemies in violation of the barbarian's code.

8. *Tempus fugit*. Time flies, indeed it does. When I was 18, age 80 seemed very remote, and now I am 81. "I don't remember getting older!" But I have, and, hopefully, a little wiser and more patient. And the Lord remains always gracious.

Letter to the Editor

Thanks for sending me your book "A Postmillennial Primer" #2. As Reformed Dutchman I grew up in a-mill surroundings. However, it was different from so much defeatist evangelical theology of today. For Kuyper taught us that all of human endeavor must be under the rule of Christ.

After being immersed in Theonomy for many years, I think I can now say that I am post-mill. Part of that immersion was listening to tapes by Dr. F.N. Lee about "The Eschatology of Victory," very good.

It must be 35 years ago that I read Dr. J. R. Rushdoony's little book, "Cast your Bread Upon the Waters." Since that time I have read much about Reconstructionism. After spending my young years in Holland where at our young people society we were steeped in the Bible and Kuyper, theonomy is not something entirely new. Especially when I translated the book "The Wonders of the Most High" by Abraham van de Velde who lived 1614-1677, I became aware that what the Church has taught for many years is not exactly the doctrine of the Reformation. The book, as the title suggests, is about history, Dutch history from approximately 1550-1675.

Knowing this, you can imagine how I rejoiced when I read about "The Diversion of the Church" on page 43 of your "A Postmillennial Primer."

Enclosed you will find a few pages I translated. These were written by a Reformed pastor who lived in Holland and was also post-mill. As a rule these people and their views were not appreciated.

I thought to let you know these few things. Keep up the good work! The *Chalcedon Report* is very good. I enjoy reading every issue.

Gilberta Zekveld

Christian Reconstruction Explained on Videocassette

"RECONSTRUCTION FROM THE GROUND UP"

Exciting new thirty-minute videocassette interview
with Andrew Sandlin

Suitable for home, church, classroom, or Bible study
use; ideal at informal coffees and social gatherings

Cost: \$14 each, or \$10 each for five or more (quantity
price not applicable to regular bookstore discounts)

Postage and handling: \$2.50 under \$20.00, 15% for
\$20 and over

MY BACK PAGES

Tattoo You?

By Steve M. Schlissel



Ever since our first mother, Eve, facetiously discovered multiple reasons to do what God had expressly commanded her through Adam not to do, we've proven to be, in our fallen estate, a darkness-loving lot that excels in creatively justifying any sin-embracing choice we desire to make. This ability wreaks havoc in ethics. No sooner do we learn

the right thing than we begin paralogizing in the pursuit of what we think of as "freedom."

But freedom from God's Law as a rule of faith and life is no freedom at all. Some think the opposite of Law is Grace. Rather, the opposite of Law is chaos, meaninglessness and death. Thinking which leads to a justification for disobedience is, by definition, wrong thinking.

With the modern church having largely capitulated to some or another form of antinomianism, it should not surprise us that it seems ever to be engaged in lowering the flag before each new assault on the ethics of the Antithesis. Whether we are asked to adjust God's standards for marriage and divorce, or Lord's Day worship, or the tithe, or homosexuality, or love of the brethren, we find an ever-vigilant phalanx of theologians whose favorite color is grey and whose favorite work is dismantling the Antithesis, directing us, like the serpent did Eve, to ignore what God says and to seek life in death.

In every dispensation God has made it clear that his people are a people of *life*, a people distinct from "the world," a people with a different idea of "wisdom," a people with a different way of living. God's word to Israel and the church is (of course) one: "Do not think as they think; do not do as they do" (*Dt. 18:9; Eph. 4:17-20*).

Keeping God's law in Christ is a community affair. To comply with the demands of the Antithesis, it is necessary not only to have those commands, but to have a people committed to abiding by them. Though we are made up of individuals, the covenant community is an entity in its own right, an organism which confesses covenant truth and lives the covenant life. We are to be a *people* set apart both by what we believe and how we behave.

Included in the set-apartness required of us in both the Old and New administrations of the covenant is the sanctification of our bodies unto God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world" (*Rom. 12:1-2a*). Only a Gnostic, a Platonist or a nut would interpret the command to present our bodies to God as having nothing to do with our bodies. The human body is most definitely a

concern of God's and he has given us various laws designed to maintain its integrity and dignity, to keep it suitable for one in service to the living and true God. If anything, the New Testament heightens our concern with the body, for there it is oft-designated a temple of God. And we must not desecrate God's temple. The wicked say, "Our lips [and our bodies] are our own" (*Ps. 12:4*). The Christian answers with the great confession: "I am *not* my own, but belong *body* and soul to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ."

But confessions without content remain mere words: pretty, maybe, but empty. When we confess that our *bodies* belong to God, do we actually believe that he may regulate what we do with them? At one time this was definitely what the Christian community believed. Lately, however, it seems to be standing with its hands in its pockets as it watches a new wave of defiance of this confession.

A phenomenon among us that is gaining notoriety and adherents, and sadly making inroads into Christian circles, is the deliberate and systematic desecration of the human body. It is making progress among us for three reasons: the Christian community has 1) neglected the law of God; 2) largely lost its sense of being a *community* of grace and law; and 3) bought into the notion that fashion is, for all intents and purposes, a matter in which God is disinterested.

The diverse methods of self-desecration have been lumped together under the fitting initials BM, though here it stands for body modification. BM includes piercing, tattooing, scarring, branding, cutting and mutilation. BM is becoming more than a trend: it is an identifiable subculture, impacting millions through a huge presence on the Internet. There are even international conventions. BM shops are proliferating at an astonishing rate (the one across the street from Messiah's offices does a *very* brisk business).

Body piercing, like marijuana to heroin, is often but the first step into a world of multiple self-inflicted indignities. And like marijuana, proponents think it is the easiest to justify. After all, who hasn't seen the male athletes and movie stars with their earrings? And haven't you seen the picture of Shakespeare wearing one in his left ear?

And thus the reasoning begins with an assumption that what is right for women must also be right for men, and what is right in popular culture must be right for the Christian. But our standard is the word of God. And that word gives us warrant to regard piercing as possibly appropriate for some, but not necessarily for others. (The other forms of BM are fit for none but pagans, as we'll see.)

Put plainly, piercing is normally an act appropriate only for women and, in some cases, male slaves.

Delicacy is difficult here—and I want to avoid a charge of misogyny—but the fact is that woman, by her from-the-creation role in the marriage act, is a "piercee." Within marriage, of course, no stigma at all attaches to this, but outside of marriage, Scripture often refers to it as a "humbling" (*Dt. 21:14; 22:24; 22:29*). (In this regard, too, childbirth is woman's triumphant vindication—consider this when exegeting *1 Tim. 2:15*.)

Obviously, piercing for a woman need not involve sodomy or "lowering." She was made a woman, *for* man, a fact to which her body itself testifies.

Man, however, was not made a woman nor was he made to abide piercing. It is still a universal that he is not expected to. The recent attack on a Brooklyn prisoner provides a tragic case in point. The Associated Press reported: *One of the police officers charged with torturing a man by sodomizing him with a stick bragged about the attack, saying he had to "break a man" who took a swing at him. Officer Justin Volpe also told fellow officers "I had to bring a man down tonight."*

Piercing may or may not bring a woman down, depending on many factors. But piercing *always* brings a man down. That piercing bespeaks a relational subordination is implicitly recognized even in our American culture, yet often below the surface. To the astute it appears dramatically when considering the vocabulary of popular "curses" (as in humiliating phrases, not maledictions). The most common two-word curse in English, the one we want our children never to use, is simply a wish for someone to be humiliated through being pierced. To be pierced, for a man, is *necessarily* to be lowered.

For in the view of Scripture, *piercing is a token of being under the dominion of another*. (Even the unique piercing of Christ was a testimony of his total submission to the Father: *Isaiah 53:5,10; Philippians 2:8*; see also *Psalm 40:6-8*.) Since woman was created to be under the loving headship of her husband, piercing can be seen as consistent with that calling. Hebrew men, however, were called to be directly under the authority of God (see *1 Cor. 11:3*).

Consequently, limitations of Hebrew servitude were codified in the law. But if a Hebrew servant, at the time of his manumission, desired to be permanently under the dominion of his master, this was to be indicated in a rite in which his ear was bored with an awl (*Ex. 21:6; Dt. 15:17*). The fact that a pierced ear served as a sign of permanent subordination suggests that it was not practiced by males in general, else it would hardly serve as a distinguishing mark.

Some have called attention to the fact that Israelite males took off their golden earrings and contributed them to Aaron for the making of the golden calf. This seems to be the case (*Ex. 32:1-4*). But out of what estate had they just escaped? That's right: slavery. So this proves nothing other than that slaves had earrings. Similarly, those who cite the Ishmaelite practice of wearing gold earrings (*Judges 8:24*) must not miss the point: the Ishmaelites had this custom, *not* the Israelites. Newly-delivered Hebrew slaves and Ishmaelites don't constitute a powerful precedent for free males to engage in piercing themselves!

It is interesting that as men in our culture began to pierce their ears, women began piercing multiple holes in their ears. But it didn't stop there. Piercing parlors now routinely pierce ears, lips, eyebrows, tongues, noses, nipples, and male and female genitals. For those who cringe, not only at the ghastliness of the piercings, but at the thought of the pain involved, you need to understand that the pain is *central* to the experience. This is freely admitted, even boasted of, in this new "subculture."

One woman describes the piercing of her clitoris as "a rite of sexual reclamation." The piercer explained, after a pre-piercing examination, that hers was going to be a particularly painful experience. She insisted that he proceed, and described the procedure: "My body tensed. I heard Jim say, 'Ready?' [It was as if] one hundred thousand volts of electricity jolted me out of my body. My scream never passed my throat . . . I

couldn't see. After Jim inserted the ring in my clitoris and handed me a hand mirror, I stood up and paced the small room. I never had an experience of such intensity. My body tingled. I felt powerful, charged, triumphant . . . I was alive! For the first time in my life I felt whole, complete and perfect." She then tells that years later, she returned to school "to broaden [her] understanding of pain, ecstasy and body modification."

Anyone who believes that this current obsession with body modification is simply a fashion statement is not merely naive, but ignorant of the literature of BM devotees. For them, the more radical piercings are self-consciously *religious* experiences. This association with paganism is known, understood and cherished. The piercings, *etc.*, are regarded as *rituals*. "Rituals take place in urban settings: libraries, public parks, warehouses, abandoned city sites. Rituals take many forms: piercing, tattooing, branding and scarification in private and public ceremonies, S/M [sado-masochistic] psychodramas in private dungeons, technoshamanic trance dances at underground Rave parties, psychedelic shamanism, in living rooms—any activity capable of producing the direct experience of spiritual truth and healing in the participant." Consider the mindset of someone who regards *mutilation* as healing!

What we are witnessing in BM is the developing self-consciousness of a Christ-rejecting culture. For the fundamental need of fallen man is *atonement*. This is critically important to know and understand. There is only one God-provided atonement, and that is the pierced and risen Christ. A societal rejection of this atonement will result in the arising of pseudo-atonements, typically involving the infliction of pain upon others or oneself.

Thus it is, that to ask "Doesn't that hurt?," is to miss the point. Of course it hurts! And the permanent holes and markings and scars are as sacraments of the false atonement. Thus the devil leads astray his hordes, turning their eyes and hearts from Christ to themselves.

A recent feature article in the *New York Times Magazine* talked about young people cutting themselves with knives, glass, fingernails, whatever, "to feel better." The girl featured in the story told of how she cut herself the first time with a wallpaper cutter: "It felt good to see the blood coming out, like that was my other pain leaving, too. It felt right and it felt good."

The *New York Times*, lacking a Christian worldview, can only describe the phenomenon; it cannot explain it. "In an age of tattoos and nose rings, self-mutilation is the latest expression of adolescent self-loathing." According to Dr. A. Favazza, professor of psychiatry at the University of Missouri-Columbia medical school, "Self-injury is probably a bit epidemic." He defines self-mutilation as "the direct, deliberate destruction or alteration of one's own body tissue without conscious suicidal intent." The *Times* recognized the relationship between the growing popularity of body modification and the estimated "two million people injuring [themselves] in secret." We are beginning to "look like a nation obsessed with cutting." One expert called it "the addiction of the 90s."

The article cites self-injury in other cultures, but the antecedents noted are cults, pagans, homosexuals and sado-masochists. Hardly the kind of gallery to which a Christian or a Jew might appeal for justification for body-mutilation. Yet there is an increasingly vocal number of self-professing

Jews and Christians intent on making BM just another form of lawful expression.

Interestingly, all the apologists I've read begin by rejecting the law as normative. First, a Jew: "Are Jews prohibited from practicing body modification? In my opinion, the answer is 'No,' for several reasons. One, most Jews in the Reform [not to be confused with the Christian version of Reformed], Reconstructionist [not to be confused with the Christian version of Reconstructionist] and Conservative movements do not take the Bible to be pure divinely inspired word." He then explains that this view of Scripture (not surprisingly) facilitates acceptance/tolerance of such things as "homosexuality, premarital sex, birth control . . . and our general rejection of antiquated sexist ideas. . . ."

Next, a "Christian," a United Methodist minister pastoring two Midwest churches, who has numerous piercings (including sublingual, nipple and genital) and a growing number of tattoos: This "minister" finds "analysis of specific Biblical passages . . . useful," but prefers to justify BM theologically. (His theology includes spelling God as "Godde," explaining that this "is a term being used by some to shift away from the culturally gender-bound term, 'God.'") BM, he insists, must be understood in the light of the Incarnation. For him this means that "Godde acts in and through the human experience." Christians who reject BM are plagued by Hellenistic dualism. Enlightened Christians, such as himself, see the body as "a sacrament of Godde. . . . My piercings and tattoos are my attempt to clothe and ornament well my body." His self-mutilations are "profoundly expressive of Godde." Maybe so, but not of our God, not of the true God.

In the law it is written, "Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD" (*Lev. 19:28*). The rabbis speak clearly on this passage: "It was a pagan custom to gash the skin when a close relative died. They also did this when they suffered any other grief. With this they would call upon their deity to help them (*cf. 1 Kg. 18:28*). God told us to avoid this custom."

"The Torah continues, 'Do not make tattoo marks on your skin.' It is forbidden to make any tattoo marks or to allow oneself to be tattooed. The pagans used to make tattoo marks by gashing their skin and then placing dye or other coloring into the gashes so the color would remain. We similarly see many Gentiles today who have tattoos on their arms, chests and other places. In ancient times this was done to show that they were like slaves to their pagan deity. The Torah therefore commands us not to do this. We are slaves of the Living and Everlasting God. We have our holy signs such as the mark of circumcision as well as the Sabbath and Festivals. These are the great signs that we are God's servants."

The prohibitions of Leviticus 19:28 are said to include "every area of the body, whether [generally] exposed or covered by clothing," and to be "in effect everywhere, at every time, for both man and woman."

Compare this to the defense of BM by a self-described Christian: "Christians are not bound by the Law. Remember that it's not what you do; it's what's in your heart when you do it." Uh-huh. And hear yet another professing believer: "These laws are from the first covenant, which Jesus replaced with the new covenant." This clever man uses the *de facto* American

Christian view of the place of the law in the life of the Christian to release himself from any obligation to it. None but the Reformed can respond potently. But how can anyone respond to this fellow's NT justification for BM? The sum of it, for him, is to be found in Eph. 5:29: "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." What remains to be said when a professing Christian equates piercing, cutting, burning and slashing the body with nourishing and cherishing it? Pity his wife!! (*Eph.* 5:28). And if we are to love neighbor as self, my advice to his neighbors: *Move!*

Among the Jews the historic penalty for violation of Lev. 19:28 was flogging. Of course, the Jews have not practiced flogging for some time, yet voluntary tattooing is non-existent among observant Jews, and almost non-existent among practicing Jews of most varieties. How do we explain this state of affairs, especially in view of the fact that nearly all Western Jews live in largely Gentile urban areas, where tattooing has not been unknown, and is sometimes not uncommon? There is a reason to explain this, and it is brimming with instruction.

Ironically, the reason can be traced to what is actually a myth: that if you have a tattoo, you cannot be buried in a Jewish cemetery. (The truth is that you may be buried in a cemetery, but if it is largely orthodox, you *may* be consigned to an isolated area marked off and away from the *frum* (observant) Jews. Other conditions may apply: no prayers on behalf of the dead [don't confuse these with Romish prayers]; no shrouds; no entitlement to ritual cleansing; no prayers at the time of burial; *Shiva*, the traditional mourning period, may not be observed. In short, the "myth" is a handy, though inaccurate, shorthand for the facts.)

Virtually every Jew I've ever known believes the myth to be true. And that belief alone was enough to utterly banish any thought of tattooing from our minds. We would never even for a moment *entertain* the thought of tattooing ourselves.

But this fear of being excluded in death from "*Am Yisrael*," the people of Israel, is itself predicated upon a profoundly deep-seated understanding of oneself as a Jew. This, in turn, is built upon an understanding of Jewishness which utterly transcends the individual.

This—may I say?—is *precisely* where American Christianity has failed, pathetically and tragically failed. I am convinced that this a fruit of the triumph of Baptistic, atomistic, anti-covenantal theology in our history. Yet, be that as it may, the fact remains that the consciousness of a Jew regarding his being a Jew has value only as part of a called people. The suggestion that a certain behavior will disqualify him from being buried with his people is enough to banish any thought of that behavior.

Now try that with a typical American Christian youth who is contemplating body modification: tell him he won't be allowed to be buried in a Christian cemetery. Oh, wow! Can't you see him shaking in his boots?

Hardly. The fact is that we do not even approach (except among the Dutch Reformed) the Jewish sense of *peoplehood*. No matter that the Holy Spirit tells us that we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9), we can't help but think of ourselves as merely a collection of individuals who have made choices to become Christian. But this is precisely what the truth of the covenant, particularly as it is seen in infant baptism, is so-well fitted to

overcome: we were appointed, designated and constituted a people by the one and only God! It is *he* who made us a people and not we ourselves!

Also involved in the Jewish rejection of BM is, as we have noted, the belief in the continuing validity of the law of God. The orthodox Jews have bested us with a highly developed sense of corporate calling. They also hover closer to Scripture when they regard God's moral standards as irrevocable. It is quite true that Christians, unlike the Jews, are united firstly by a common faith and creed. But this faith must never be thought of as a *replacement* for God's law, but rather as its only proper foundation (*Rom.* 3:31). True Christianity does not differ from Judaism by affirming faith and rejecting deeds. Rather it differs from Judaism in the arrangement of these two essential covenant elements: Jews believe in what they do; Christians do what they believe in.

The church in America and elsewhere will soon find itself plagued by the in-your-face confrontation of Body Modifiers. If it is to respond in a God-pleasing manner, its response will be exceedingly simple: we have no such practices, nor do the churches of God (1 Cor. 11:16). We do not do these things. We do not do such things because: 1) they are contrary to God's Law. We do not pretend to know how to apply every law in every generation and culture, but this one offers little difficulty, Biblically or historically. This is a pagan practice and we are not to be like the pagans. 2) Such practices are contrary to God's requirement to render our bodies unto him in righteousness. Our bodies are not our own. 3) We reject practices which confuse the differences between male and female, and which confuse the differences between Christ's people and the world. 4) Above all, we reject these practices because we are the people of the atonement. All these practices are inseparable from a mindset that operates without atonement. But we are controlled by Christ's atonement in all we believe and do. "He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood." 5) Thus we are of all people the most free, for we alone have "been set free from the tyranny of the devil." It was for freedom that Christ set us free. We do not use our freedom as a cover-up for evil.

The encroachment of Body Modification into the church presents us with yet another opportunity to recover the sense of our unique calling. Shall we rise to the occasion or once again capitulate?

The task assigned by God to us, particularly those of us in Reformed churches, is huge. And it is comprehensive. It cannot be completed, however, unless we inculcate in our congregations a worldview and more: a consciousness, an identity as members of the covenant community, a community redeemed by God's grace to abide by God's law. Our calling impacts everything we do. We do not proclaim a one-dimensional Christ, but a Savior who is Prophet, Priest and King of his people, the Ruler, in fact, over all the world and all of life.

Steve Schlissel has been pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn, NY since 1979. He serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations (a mission to the world in a single city), and is the Director of Meantime Ministries (an outreach to women who were sexually abused as children). Steve lives with his wife of 23 years, Jeanne, and their five children.

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

1. ***The Lofton Letter*** by John Lofton, P.O. Box 1142, Laurel, Maryland 20725, e-mail address: JLoof@AOL.com, \$100 a year, monthly (20 pages).
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 7¹/₄% sales tax.
5. **Friends of Chalcedon** provides networking and other resources to Chalcedon and its supporters. It assists Chalcedon in producing books and video materials, hosts conferences to bring Chalcedon supporters in contact with each other, and refers Chalcedon supporters in ways to help Chalcedon. Friends of Chalcedon is at 4960 Almaden Expressway, #172, San Jose, CA 95118 [408] 997-9866 (phone and fax).

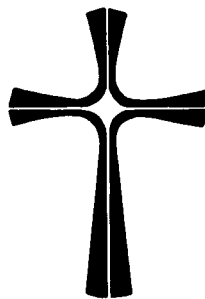
THE MINISTRY OF CHALCEDON

CHALCEDON (kal•see•don) is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and to cogent communication of a distinctly Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested ministers, scholars and laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches.

Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man" This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (*Matthew 28:18*). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (*Galatians 5:1*).

*The **Chalcedon Report** is published monthly and is sent to all who request it.*

Your donation in support of this ministry is appreciated.
All gifts to Chalcedon are tax deductible.



CHALCEDON

P.O. Box 158
Vallecito, CA 95251