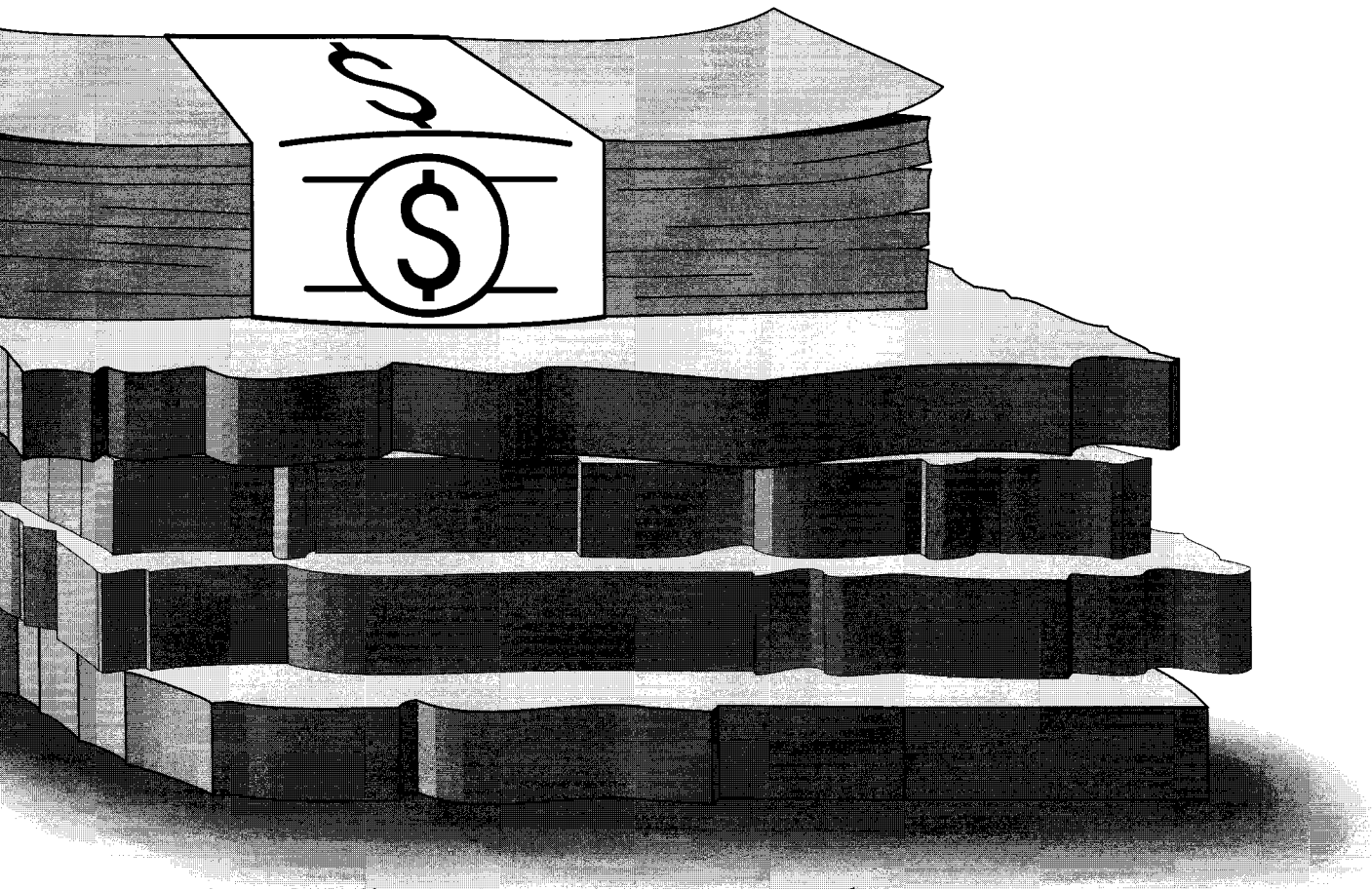
# CHALCEDON *Report*

## *The Economics of the Eighth Commandment*

No. 393, April 1998



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*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



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

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

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

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

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

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

# CHALCEDON *Report*

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


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### Chalcedon Scholars:

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

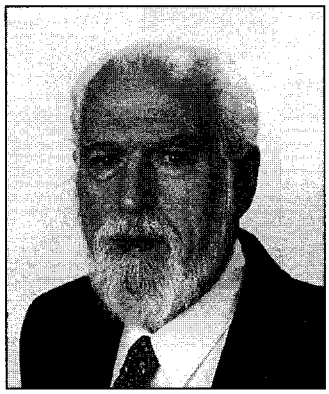
**Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony** is president of Chalcedon and director and a teacher at Chalcedon Christian School.

**Rev. Andrew Sandlin** is executive director of *Chalcedon*, 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 Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, California; a Chalcedon board member; and Chalcedon's conference director. He can be reached at 209-544-6132 or Abshire@thevision.net.

# Modernism, Old and New

## *By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony*



The term "modernism" as applied to church history is relatively new, being used to describe the application of higher criticism, scientific discovery, and contemporary culture to the Bible, and the consequent alterations of Christian faith and doctrine in terms of this.

The fact of modernism, however, is as old as the church, and it was present in Judaism, before that in various movements, and in men like Philo. The science and culture of the times have constantly been used to try to revise and remake Christianity. In movements like Gnosticism it was an effort to convert Christianity into another religion. In other efforts, it was an endeavor to amend and impose the Faith by the use of current and prevalent thinking. The converts in the early church were formerly pagans, and they brought their mindset with them, Greco-Roman and other ideas. Neo-Platonism very early infected the church early in A. D. 390 extensively, so that men like Augustine, who took a dim view of the historicity of the Genesis creation account, were, like other church fathers of their day, modernists after a fashion. Some, like Augustine, outgrew and renounced many of their pagan views, while others retained them to their end.

It is thus dangerous and foolish to reverence the church fathers uncritically. Many were painfully in error; others transcended their severe limitations to put us in their debt.

In all sections of Christendom, every era has had its modernisms. Thus, Eastern Orthodoxy is deeply saturated with various forms of Platonism and became in many leaders an alien faith. Rome's main dereliction is also Greek, *i.e.*, Aristotle. Protestantism very early picked up the Enlightenment reverence for rationalism. Thus, the modernism of fundamentalistic churches is their rationalistic apologetics. (Rationalism sees the priority of understanding in reason; this does not mean that anti-rationalists affirm irrationalism; rather, they insist on God's priority and the primacy of his inscripturated word.)

For examples of modernism in the church fathers, one can begin with St. Irenaeus (d. c. A. D. 202), a very able man. In his *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, he held, for example, that charity supersedes the law. He also said that the Spirit supersedes the law and also that the Spirit delivers men from the oldness of the letter of the law. We are thus beyond the law and have no need of it (Joseph P. Smith, S. J. translation: St. Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, pp. 101-106. New York, N. Y.: Newman Press, 1952).

St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. A. D. 335-c. 395) was a brilliant theologian, as was his brother, St. Basil, but ability is not necessarily faithfulness to Scripture! His subtle thinking on the doctrine of the Trinity shows the Greek mind at its subtle best; but, in the practicality of interpreting the Bible, he was painfully, embarrassingly, bad. Take, for example, his work, *The Life of Moses*, an attempt to make the Bible readable and understandable to Greeks, especially educated Alexandrian Greeks. Writing early in A. D. 390, Gregory saw the five books of Moses as symbolic, as allegory, not as history. He held, "The narrative is to be understood according to its real intention," and his purpose was to "lay bare the hidden meaning of the history." The actual meaning was irrelevant. The "true" meaning is occult doctrine. "We are in some manner our own parents, giving birth to ourselves by our own free choice in accordance with whatever we wish to be, whether male or female, molding ourselves to the teaching of virtue or vice."

For Gregory, everything in Moses (and elsewhere) is symbolic. Thus, "The ark, constructed out of various boards, would be education in the various disciplines, which holds what it carries above the waves of life" (Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, translators: Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, pp. 55f. New York, N. Y.: Paulist Press, 1978). Who and what guides us? According to Gregory of Nyssa, "all the movements of our soul are shepherded like sheep, by the will of guiding reason" (*ibid.*, p. 59). Good Platonism, that!

According to Gregory of Nyssa, there will in the end be universal salvation. He "saw" Moses as clearly teaching this (but you and I have minds too darkened to see it). Hell "will not be eternal" because Moses' outstretched hands represent "the healing of pain and the deliverance from punishment" (*ibid.*, p. 18). Gregory was not alone in this opinion.

Naturally, for Gregory of Nyssa the dietary laws could not be about anything so crass as food! They had a higher meaning. So too did Mt. Sinai; climbing it was the ascent to God: "The majority of people scarcely reach its base" (*ibid.*, p. 93).

Clearly, nothing in all this is recognizable as Biblical. Gregory and others like him excelled, however, in developing a rationale for the church, its rites, and its offices, so that the power of the church grew more rapidly than did its understanding.

Am I rejecting patristic literature? Far from it: I respect and use what is good in it, whatever is Biblical. I do very

emphatically reject the ungodly reverence for and kowtowing to the authority of idealized church fathers. It is unrealistic and foolish.

We cannot combat the errors of our time if we cannot recognize kindred errors in the past. Ancient modernisms are no more to be accepted than contemporary ones. In every era, the modernisms of the day have reshaped men's views of the Bible when in fact the Bible requires us to reshape our world, our times, and ourselves in terms of the word of God.

Whatever one says about Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, and others like them, our attitude towards those who give priority to them over the word of God must elicit our clearer condemnation. These ancients were often in error, sometimes in the truth, but they did represent sometimes feeble, sometimes very real, steps in the growth of the Faith. This was true even of Origen, whom I particularly dislike. The important question is this: Is the cause of Christ advanced in and through *us?*

EDITORIAL

# In Praise of the Market: "Christian" Socialism Versus *Christian* Capitalism

***By Rev. Andrew Sandlin***

Christians have not always spoken with a unanimous voice on the issue of what we today term economics. The Bible expressly defends the notion of private property and requires the civil magistrate to protect it (*Ex. 20:15; 22:1*). The Bible also warns the rich of many dangers into which they can fall (*Pr. 22:16; 1 Tim. 6:17-18*); and it repeatedly commands God's people to care for the poor, oppressed and needy (*e.g., Ex. 23:11; Lev. 25:25; Dt. 15:7-8; Rom. 15:26; Gal. 2:10*). This second classification of Biblical texts led many in church history to espouse and practice a simple socialism, or at least employ arguments that sounded quite socialistic.[1] The medieval church uniformly condemned usury[2] (a cornerstone of an advanced free-enterprise economy) and even many of the Puritans supported price controls.[3] While the Reformation did not advocate a consistent free-enterprise economy, it certainly laid the foundation for it. The Reformation broke down the medieval sacred-secular distinction, showed men that they were responsible first to God and only secondarily to the church, and alerted them to the necessity of hard work and provident use of resources, all of which comports well with a market economy.[4]

To a large extent the "contemplative" (other-worldly) model which predominated in the medieval world had come to be identified with Christianity. The notion that the most contemplative were the most spiritual was considered a Christian tenet. The Reformation broke the monopoly of that idea. This helped lay the groundwork for an atmosphere in which the free market could prevail. Remember, too, that the Reformation was immensely popular among the rising middles classes, what we would call today the commercial classes, artisans, peddlers and "small businessmen." In short, while the Reformation did not espouse an explicit free market system, it is hard to imagine the emergence of "classical" economics without a Reformational base; a patristic and medieval "Christian socialism" springs from presuppositions alien to Reformation thought.

The idea of "Christian" socialism, in any case, is wrong on two counts. First, it violates the Eighth Commandment. Second, it vests the state with authority that the Bible never gives it (*Rom. 13*). Free market economics, or what in some quarters is known as classical liberalism, is actually a recovery of the Biblical view of property and wealth. Not that most of the early classical liberals were explicitly Christian or understood that they were articulating what was in essence a Scriptural view of the issue. But the fact is that any view of Biblical authority which takes Biblical law seriously must arrive at an endorsement of what we call free market economics.[5]

## Free Market Wealth Generation

We in the United States live in the wealthiest society ever known in the history of man. Most middle class people in our country live better than most kings did until 1900. The ultimate reason for this is God's blessing. The British colonists who brought Christianity to this shore were, by and large, God-fearing Calvinists who held the gospel and law of God in high esteem and implemented God's word in their society. Today we are living on the borrowed ethical (and financial) capital of those forefathers, because God blesses covenant keeping intergenerationally (*Dt. 5:9-10; 6:1-3*).

The one aspect of covenant keeping that makes itself evident in a society is respect for property, adherence to the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." A free market economy is the most consistent social expression of Eighth Commandment law keeping, even when practiced by God-hating covenant breakers. True, covenant breakers will tend to misuse the wealth which is the reward of their willingness to obey the Eighth Commandment and thus incur God's judgment for their disobedience (*Dt. 6:10-12*). But we simply cannot deny God's blessings on a free market economy, that is, an economy that honors the Eighth Commandment. The free market always generates wealth. It seems magical.

## The "Magic" of the Market

What is this "magic" of a free market economy? What is the chief functional reason free market economies always, without exception, develop into robust economies over time? The answer to that question is really quite simple. When individuals have their own economic interest at stake in a society in which they are free to sell and buy without coercion or fraud, they will tend to make economic decisions that benefit society. This may seem strange. Notice I did not say they will tend to make decisions that benefit themselves, although this also is true. Economists call it "the law of unintended consequences."[6] At Christmas when I purchase a dress for my daughter, I am not especially interested in the son of the salesman from whom I buy the dress, but the purchase of my daughter's dress from this salesman helps this salesman purchase a toy gun for his five-year-old son. I care much less for his five-year-old son's enjoyment than my teenage daughter's enjoyment, but my decision to secure a measure of happiness for my daughter may equally be a decision to secure happiness for the salesman's son, though wholly unintended. This is one reason why, contrary to socialists' canard, market economies are more compassionate and humane in action than interventionist economies.

The free market is not basically about money. It is about human decisions concerning the use of property. The Biblical teaching is that I can do with my own as I wish (*Mt. 20:15*). Of course, as a Christian, I wish to do what God wishes me to do (*Mt. 6:33*). But God gives men the ability, though never the permission, to sin. He gives them the ability to use their property unwisely or even sinfully. But it is still their choice to make. They will enjoy the reward of right choices or suffer the consequences of wrong choices. In the United States every day the total number of decisions relating to the use of property numbers into the billions. This is what Ludwig von Mises calls human action.[7] It is the voluntary exchange of property and factors related to property, like services. The free market economy generates wealth because it allows "self-interested" people to make decisions all of which when combined lead to the wise, productive use of assets. The free market rests on the action of the simple statement, "If you do good to me, I'll do good to you." This happens billions of times a day in economic exchanges in the United States alone: people with a vested interest in their own welfare make decisions based on that interest, and this economic "self-interest" secures a voluntary cooperation that benefits all of society.

## Christian Economic Ignorance

Most Christians, I have observed, haven't the foggiest notion of these things, although they are really not hard to understand. For one thing, they tend to think that wealth (which they erroneously equate with money, or its substitutes, like paper currency) is simply a given, or "there." Like socialists, they seem always to know (or think they know) what to do with wealth, but they do not seem to understand how wealth gets there in the first place. They do not understand that wealth is generated when people offer a product or service other people are willing to pay something for. That payment may be in the form of dollar bills, gold, peanut shells, glass bottles, or Pop Tarts, but it is payment nonetheless. Automobile corporations do not make cars because they like people in general, or even people who buy their automobiles, but because they like what they can do with the payment they can get for selling automobiles. This by no means implies they are necessarily selfish. Sometimes, it means just the opposite of selfishness, or even of "self-interest" (though there is nothing wrong with self-interest, which is not the same as selfishness [*Eph. 5:29*]). Maybe they want a lot of money so they can give it to charity or to family and friends. The specifics of the motivation are not the issue. The wealth generated by voluntary exchange is the issue. But how specifically do these exchanges generate wealth?

Well, if an automobile manufacturer knows he can make, let us say, five thousand dollars on the sale of a twenty thousand dollar car, he may get the bright idea that if he could make a thousand, or ten thousand, or a hundred thousand cars a month, he could make a lot more money, provided people were willing to buy his automobiles. But of course, he alone cannot generate this number of cars. He needs many more people—or at least the technology that many more people produce—to make these automobiles; in other words, he needs other people to help him, even if only to purchase the product from him. Those who help him by working for him need some incentive to work for him. In a free market economy, they are not forced

to work for him; therefore, he has to make it worth their while, that is, he has to offer some form of payment. In a free market economy, he cannot coerce them. But he needs to sell automobiles in order to get enough money to pay people to help him make more automobiles. For this reason he needs capital investment or start-up capital. If he is wise, he will not waste his resources—including his workers—in making automobiles. So he has to be careful of how he treats them, because if he treats them poorly (including paying them poorly), he may not have any more people to help him make automobiles, and his wealth will be diminished or lost. In other words, generating wealth in a free economy is based on making wise choices. This often involves risk. An entrepreneur does not know for sure beforehand just what people will buy. He may look at the market and see how other people are spending money for a product and service, and decide he could offer a similar product people would pay for. He may be wrong. But he will never know until he tries. Risk is a vital aspect of a Biblical, *i. e.*, free market economy. A free market economy assumes and requires individual responsibility. Any attempt to forcibly shift loss for poor economic choices is a step toward socialism, no less than is the attempt to shift the benefits of sound economic choices (statist redistributionism). The point is that, from a procedural standpoint, a free market generates wealth because it allows people to make their own decisions about how to use their time, minds, effort, and property; and when they use these personal factors to benefit themselves, they benefit the entire society in which they trade.

I have not included all of the factors. A trained economist could include many more,[8] but you should get the point by now. A free market economy helps everybody all the way around. Some people foolishly say capitalism means that the rich get richer *and the poor get poorer.* This is demonstrably false. In a true free market economy, that the rich get richer and the poor get richer. The poor in America today would be considered middle class in most countries around the world. Poverty is a relative term. Many "poor" people in this country own an automobile, a radio, a television set, and have an indoor bathroom. This did not happen by chance. It happened because a free market economy always tends, if left unmolested, to up the economic ante. It tends to produce better goods and services at a more affordable cost. This means that people can buy more products or services for less money, and have more money left over. They spend this money (recall that even saving is spending, since banks use money from savings accounts to invest) and thereby generate more jobs, products, and services. Marx taught that capitalism alienates men (at least most men) from themselves since it ties them to the whims of the private owners of production.[9] This is nonsense. Man is alienated from himself, God, and his fellow man by sin, not by capital (*Gen. 3*). The free market economy allows men to contract with employers, just as they contract with one another in any economic transaction. And in allowing this contract (and every purchase and sale is an implied contract), a society assures the generation of wealth—or at least the benefits of wealth—to everybody. The next time you hear some "deep thinker" attack the free market, gently remind him that his fancy clothes, shiny car, and roomy home didn't spring from utopian socialistic schemes. He got them because somebody wanted to help himself or family or friends, and in so doing helped the "deep thinker."

God has established private property and free exchange as mechanisms for attaining, generating, accumulating, and bequeathing wealth. This is why every assault on the market (no matter how pious) is an assault on God's law for wealth creation in his world. Coercive socialism is thus at war with God.

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[1] John C. Cort, *Christian Socialism* (New York, 1988), 42-52; see also Justo L. Gonzalez, *Faith and Wealth* (San Francisco, 1990).

[2] Patrick Cleary, *The Church and Usury* (Hawthorne, CA, 1972). But see Murray N. Rothbard, "Late Medieval Origins of Free Market Economic Thought," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* Vol. II, No. 1 [summer, 1975], 62-75.

[3] Gary North, *Puritan Economic Experiments* (Tyler, TX, 1988), 22-40.

[4] Allister McGrath, *Reformation Thought* (Oxford and Cambridge, 1993 edition), 225-227.

[5] Ronald Nash, *Poverty and Wealth* (Westchester, IL, 1986); Gary North, *The Dominion Covenant* (Tyler, TX, 1982); Tom Rose, Economics: *Principles and Policy from a Christian Perspective,* second edition (Mercer, PA, 1996);

[6] Michael Novak, "The Ideal of Democratic Capitalism," in ed., Franky Schaeffer, *Is Capitalism Christian?* (Westchester, IL, 1985), 58-61.

[7] Ludwig Von Mises, *Human Action* (New York, 1963 edition).

[8] A fine gem of an introduction is Henry Hazlitt's *Economics In One Lesson* (New York [1946], 1962).

[9] Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* (New York, 1963), 106-115.

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# Accusations and Judgments

## *By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony*

*Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear.*
*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.* (*1 Tim. 5:19-21*)

Paul reminds Timothy not to so much as receive an accusation against an elder without at least a corroborating source. He is merely reminding Timothy of the requirement of the law. First mentioned in capital crimes (*Dt. 17:6*), it included "any sin" (*19:15*) and was quoted by Christ (*Mt. 18:16*) as applicable in the church.

Why would Paul specifically apply to the church a law requiring at least two witnesses when it already applied to all men and all sins? Several tendencies serve to necessitate a guard against false accusations against elders.

Godly men are especially susceptible to slander. Evil men will not hesitate to lie; we must, therefore, resist accepting an unsubstantiated accusation. In a sinful age, insults and put-downs are considered trivial and humorous. The godly, by setting a higher standard before men, are more susceptible to character assassination by mere rumor or slander. The charge alone harms the minister and the church. Certainly this, rather than justice, is often the goal. Prudence dictates we recognize this.

It is a strategy of Satan to lie. He is, we must remember, the father of lies. We all learned very early, whether as perpetrators, victims, or both, that lies can seemingly have lives of their own. An oft-repeated lie seems more plausible with each retelling. It has always been a device of Satan to bring the godly into contempt and ridicule. Nothing accomplishes this like the lie. The lie can cause those who should be a man's staunchest defenders to turn against him. When men, as they will, display normal faults and errors of innocence or judgment, the lie can distort it into a seemingly heinous offense. In so doing, the lie can render the minister of God ineffective and discouraged. Our Lord himself was accused of being a drunk, a demonic, a bastard, and a troublesome, irreligious, and seditious revolutionary. It was false accusations like these which led to Pilate and Calvary. We should perhaps not expect to receive better treatment by the world than our Lord, but Paul warns Timothy that we should expect better in the church.

Accusations must be substantiated because there is a natural jealousy of those in authority. It is a minister's duty to admonish and reprove. This can create resentment, especially in those who refuse to acknowledge their need for reproof. Such people are more likely to believe and, perhaps foster, false accusations. Otto Scott often recalls a proverb he learned from his grandmother—"If you give a beggar a horse, he'll ride you down every time." Many accusations stem from deep-seated resentments and animosities which are never honestly expressed.

The law was clear that two or three witnesses generally accepted to include corroborating evidence) were required for conviction. Christ applied this to believers in the church. Paul goes beyond what is required
for conviction and says not to "receive" such an accusation against an elder unless those witnesses are presented. Accusations are not to be accepted or pursued without prior corroboration. Adjudication in the church, even in cases where a vindication results, can do real damage. Elders are to be protected from such harm to their ministry by a prior examination of evidence.

Paul's purpose was not to protect wrongdoers in the church, however. Evildoers can use their position as a shield of privilege. It is an evil thing to allow any justice system to be used as a means of avoiding justice itself. If the harm to the church by false charges must be carefully prevented, so too must clerical privilege. Those who do sin must be rebuked publicly. Paul's purpose was to protect the innocent, the congregation, and the ministry, not evildoers.

It is difficult to follow Christ's admonition to "judge righteous judgment" (*Jn. 7:24*). Paul thus warns Timothy of the gravity of his responsibility and that of the church. He tells Timothy to remember his responsibility "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels." Christ is at the right hand of the Father, the Head of the church, and the Judge of the quick and the dead before whom all men will one day stand. The angels also stand before the throne as part of the heavenly host. Elect of God for their eternal purpose as are believers, they minister to the saints, and are spectators of things in earth and in heaven. They stand as witnesses now who shall come with Christ at the end of time (*Mt. 16:27*). Paul's

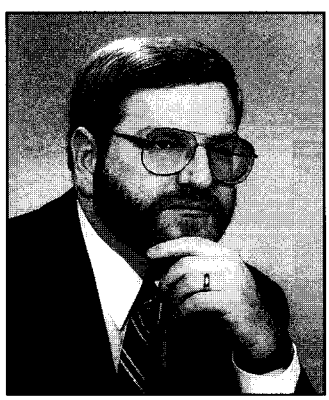
point is to impress on Timothy the fact that the judges of the earth are accountable before the throne of God for their judgments.

Justice is a human goal based on our fallen understanding of an attribute of God. It is God's justice, or righteousness, which must be our goal. Our inclination to protect the potentially innocent accused should come from both our understanding of God and human nature. Our understanding of God's justice must direct us to "judge righteous judgment," and our knowledge of human nature must cause us to realize that sin is as likely to be expressed by a lie as by the improper conduct in question. Even more importantly, we must look within ourselves and our own motives. Paul warns that our judgments must be without partiality or preference. Those who stand in judgment of men stand themselves before the throne of God.

COUNTER-CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY

# Reconstructing Family Finances or, A Cheapskate's Guide to Economic Dominion

***By Rev. Brian M. Abshire***



Growing up in rural Maine in the 50s was hard, and I imagine that by modern standards, we would be considered poor. Not dirt poor, mind you. We could afford the occasional rock (about the only thing our land would grow), but poor enough. My parents raised five kids in a two-bedroom house with no indoor plumbing (ever try tackling a "two-holer" during a -40 degree Maine winter? It's not so bad; the chemical decomposition actually generates considerable heat, and the home-made methane has the most "interesting" aroma!). At least we never went hungry. For breakfast we'd be served up a big mess of uncooked beans. For lunch we'd get all the water we could drink. And for supper, we'd just let the beans swell! Sunday dinner, however, was the finest kind. Dad would go to the smokehouse and get a great big smoked ham, hang it over the table, and we'd all get to sop the shadow!

Though poor, my family's greatest boast was that we never went "on the county" or took financial assistance from the state. Though plagued by "bad luck" (one summer was so hot that the few meager stalks of corn in the fields actually started popping! The stupid cows thought it was snow and all froze to death!), lack of education and a harsh environment, my family knew the value of hard work, prudent living and thrift. Each generation was thus able to improve its economic lot. Granddad never did learn how to read and write, and my Mom never made it past the eighth grade. My generation was the first to actually finish high school. Yet, each of my brothers, with no capital except his own sweat, parlayed a commitment to hard, diligent labor into profitable, privately owned business. My being the lazy one of the family, I decided that education was the key to a job that did NOT involve heavy lifting or sweat. But since my family had no capital for educating their children, if I wanted to go to college, I'd have to pay for it myself. One thing they would NOT do was co-sign a student loan.

So, I sold myself into bondservice to the Federal Government for six years. The U. S. Air Force promised me free room and board and half the minimum wage if I would volunteer to let myself be used as target practice by pragmatic Marxists. I took the bet, and won. The war ended before our little brown brothers had a chance to warmly welcome me to Southeast Asia, and I spent my time in the military slugging it out in the pubs of East Anglia (a dirty job, but someone had to do it). In return for my "sacrifice," the Federal Government gave me "veterans'" benefits that essentially paid the costs of college, seminary and grad school. Of course, if I wanted to eat, I had to work as well. But for the entire six years of bondservice, I sent half my paycheck back home. As a result, I financed my entire education, debt free (in fact, when I finished college, we had $10,000 dollars in the bank, enough for the down payment on our first house). Now, 20 years later, we are about to buy a new five-bedroom home and we'll pay cash for it. Granted, an inheritance paid for some of that house, but please note that for most of the 80s I was in seminary or grad school,

raised a family and the best paying job I ever had (I was paid four hundred a month, plus room and board). How did we do it?

I hesitate to offer the following principles of economic dominion because they sound so basic that I fear offending Chalcedon's intelligent audience. And yet, repeatedly, when I talk personal finances with highly educated, extremely bright and well-read individuals (including Christian Reconstructionists), I have found that many, many just don't have a clue as to why they have economic problems. Ironic, isn't it, that we are proudly ready to reconstruct the entire world according to God's Law-word, yet are often unable to reconstruct our own bank accounts! Please notice that I give no formulas for getting rich quick, or how to maximize your investments (I've never had any capital to invest!). Instead, I'd like to offer some practical suggestions as to how to get out of the financial hole that so many of us are in.

### #1 Trust in the Sovereignty of God (*Dt. 6:10-15*)

The Lord of creation blesses according to his divine providence. There is no true wealth apart from him. Therefore, obedience to him is fundamental to everything else. A commitment to personal holiness is absolutely fundamental to prosperity in any area. This personal holiness means that all that we have, all that we are, must be dedicated to him. We own nothing, but are simply stewards of what God has given. Therefore my health, my wealth, my family, my time, my energy, whatever, belongs to God and must be used according to his law, not my wishes. Every moment of every day ought to be lived in conscious recognition that we bring nothing into the world and will take nothing out of it. While our God is gracious and allows us much latitude, we ought to be firmly aware that one day the Master will demand an accounting for every deed done, every penny spent, every minute wasted. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Therefore, life is not a game but a solemn duty to live in humble submission to Christ. Perhaps God does not bless more of his people financially, because they would abuse the resources with which he would entrust them. With great wealth comes great responsibility. And too many of us, if given wealth, would just waste it on foolishness (*Pr. 30:8-9*).

God in his sovereignty chooses to bless some with greater skills, talents, intelligence or ability than others. He may prosper their labors differently than our own. We must never be envious or covetous of others' prosperity, but rather be content with what God has given us. "Contentment with godliness is great gain" says the Apostle Paul. "Cease worrying about acquiring wealth" says Solomon. Instead, the real issue is obedience to God. Get that right, and the material blessings will follow.

### #2 Tithe (*Mal. 3:8-12*)

The tithe is God's tax for living on the earth, the recognition that he is the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe. When we tithe to God (not the church) we demonstrate our faith in his gracious provision. He is our Lord and will watch over and protect us. There were three tithes in Scripture that Rushdoony says added up to 13.3% of total income. While part of the tithe went to support the temple and the Levites who taught the law, there was also a tithe to help the poor and destitute and a festival tithe to celebrate God's gracious redemption. Thus while the tithe advances the work of the Kingdom, God also commands his people to enjoy the fruit of their labors, and even commands them to put aside a portion of the tithe so they could eat, drink and be merry! Our God is gracious, and while there is serious work to be done (and done diligently and conscientiously), there is also a time and a place to relax and enjoy the benefits that come from God's grace.

### #3 Live Debt Free (*Rom. 13:8*)

A man in debt is a slave to the lender. Slavery is contrary to the Christian Gospel. Therefore, Christians ought not to acquire long-term debt. For example, if you must borrow money to buy a car, you can't afford that car. By the time you finish paying it off, it will be a piece of junk and you'll have to go into debt all over again to finance a new one. Hence a vicious cycle begins that can be hard to break. Instead, buy only the car you can afford, and save your money so that when it finally does die, you can buy a better one. It doesn't make sense to pay the bank to borrow their money, when they could be paying you to borrow yours.

Similarly, buying a house with a thirty-year mortgage is economic servitude. Granted, it's better to pay a mortgage every month and have a house after thirty years than pay rent and end up with nothing but a stack of receipts. Better yet, if Christians do not have the capital assets to buy a nice house when they are first married, let them purchase a cheaper, smaller home that they can pay off in seven years, saving a fortune in interest payments. Let them live in that smaller, more uncomfortable house until they have enough money to buy another, larger house which they can then pay off in seven more years. Eventually, they will have a major financial asset, debt free, and have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest charges. Granted, the first house will be cramped, inadequate and not in the best neighborhood. But, forgive me here, most modern Americans are sissies. They've never had to suffer any real hardship in life and are totally unprepared and unwilling to suffer any in the future. Just spend a few days with the saints in Kiletchie township outside Capetown where the houses are made out of packing crates and cardboard boxes and then say, "But my house is too small."

### #4 Live Frugally (*Pr. 30:24-27*)

Life does not consist of things, so don't buy things you don't need. Simple, right? When was the last time you moved? Amazing just how much "stuff" even the poorest

Americans acquire. The question is, did you need that "stuff" or just want it? Christians must learn to differentiate between wants and needs. A need is something without which we cannot function. A want is just something that makes life a little nicer and easier. There is nothing wrong with having "stuff," if one can afford it. But our greed and envy often outrun our income. Hence, we must learn to live within our means; if you ain't got it, don't spend it.

Many Christians spend themselves into poverty. For example, Christians will spend a fortune on such things as Internet connections, cable television, movies, videos, CD's, eating out, etc. They think nothing of dropping 20 to 50 bucks at fast food places every WEEK! And the fact is, they don't NEED any of this. A fundamental problem is that too often we look at what others have and want the same life-style even if we do not have the income to support it. Consequently, we live above our means because we think this is the norm. So what if you don't have nice new clothes, a house full of fine furniture, vacations, etc? Life consists of making decisions with limited resources. Every dollar we spend on "stuff" that we don't really need is a lost asset that could be put to good work someplace else.

Now, if you have the money, if your debts are paid, if you are saving and preparing an inheritance for your children, then fine, if you have discretionary income to spare and if you want you can lawfully buy these things. But they are wants, not needs. You need food, you need clothes (but most Americans have closets full of clothes they never wear), you need a roof over your head. Most Americans need transportation of some sort. "With food and covering, with these we will be content."

A great way to distinguish between wants and needs is to keep track of where your money goes. Buy a small book and simply record what you've spent money on this month. It can be quite eye-opening to see how much we waste in useless and foolish expenditures. Then think of what you could have done with that same amount of money!

### #5 Buy Wisely (*Pr. 31:16*)

When you do determine that certain "stuff" is really a need and not just a want, then buy wisely. Over the years I have always bought cheap, and this has not been the best use of money. Shop around, find the best value for the money, and buy only the quality you need. Finding a quality item, even if one has to pay a little more, is often a better investment in the long-term. The problem is that Americans don't think long-term anymore and therefore do not build things to last. Most goods, even expensive ones, are shoddy and ill-made and with normal use will self-destruct within a few years. So we have to be more diligent in finding the right item at the right price. Second-hand shops are great places to buy things like quality furniture that will last.

We decorated our first apartment with "Brick and Board" (you know, boards placed on top of bricks to make tables, book-cases, etc.) that saw us all the way through grad school. We then moved up to genuine, imitation, pressed-wood furniture because that was all we could afford. Finally, recently, we were able to purchase a couple of pieces of good quality, real-wood furniture (the kids got the old pressed-wood stuff!). No, our home is not in any way a showcase. We are not out to impress anyone with the splendor of our furnishings. My wife was committed to getting that pesky mortgage paid off, and paid off now! And after 20 years of marriage we can finally afford some of the good "stuff" (and see it as a part of the children's inheritance). Yet many young people look at their parents' homes full of nice things and forget that it took their parents a lifetime to acquire it. They then buy on credit. Don't do it!

### #6 Always put a certain percentage of income into savings, regardless, for emergencies (*1 Tim. 6:17-19*)

This can be hard, especially if one is in a financial hole, but in his sovereignty God does afflict his people occasionally with trials and tests because they prove our faith and develop our character. Savings keep a trial from becoming a disaster. Hence a good rule of thumb is to adjust your living expenses (remember, life is a process of making decisions with limited resources) so that 10% of your income is put into savings. Then when the inevitable emergencies arise, you can deal with them. Now, my wife has often confessed that her faith was sometimes in our bank account rather than in God. So because he loves us, on several occasions he has emptied that bank account, forcing us to make decisions that we would not otherwise have made (it's not all her fault: sometimes God had to blast me out of my security so that I would be willing to take a few risks for the kingdom). As a result, no matter how hard we worked, scrimped and saved, we eventually had to throw ourselves on the mercy of God and trust in him completely for relief. God was gracious and ALWAYS replaced the capital that he had taken. But we learned that our security is from the Lord. An expensive lesson, but one well learned.

### #7 Work is good and takes priority over entertainment (*Pr. 21:17; 13:4; 27:23-27; Col. 3:23-24*)

Man is called to work as the means of subduing the earth. Work is good. Work is not a means of getting money so one can buy "stuff" but is valuable in and of itself. God blesses diligent labor and all men ought to expect to work long and hard. This is the key to long-term career development and advancement. Power flows to those who serve (*Mk. 10:45*). In American culture today, work is seen as a way to increase one's self-esteem, or subsidize one's affluent lifestyle. Nonsense.

It may be that different people are suited for different types of work and there is certainly nothing wrong with looking for a vocation that takes full advantage of one's

gifts and natural talents. But all work is meaningful and rewarding, if it is done to the glory of God.

Sometimes, a family with no inherited capital may find that a single income from Dad is not enough to support the family. The American solution has been for Mom to leave the home, put the kids in public schools, and take a job herself. But I would argue that this is contrary to Biblical norms. It is the man's responsibility to work at a dominion calling and the woman's to help him. If two incomes are needed, then Dad had better think of getting a second job. Wow, a Dad sacrificing his leisure time to provide for basic economic necessities for the family. What a concept! Yet our immigrant ancestors did exactly that. The men labored 12 hours a day, six days a week for their families. Remember the fourth commandment is to WORK six days and rest one, not work five days, rest one and putter around the house on Saturdays. One of the families at our last church was experiencing financial difficulties. They had taken a pay cut in order to be a part of Lakeside Church. So Dad went to work on Saturdays at another company to pay for basic necessities. Eventually, the work experience gave him a superior resume eventually leading to a job at almost twice his original salary!

Working two jobs does not mean that the family has to suffer. The godly Dad mentioned above spent the Lord's Day resting from his labors by spending quality time with his children, catechizing and instructing them. He was also faithful and diligent in daily family worship. Yes, he sacrificed some personal peace and all his leisure time; but starting with literally nothing, he is building up economic capital for his family.

### #8 Start your own business (*Pr. 16:26*)

A Christian is a free man and ought therefore to live a free and self-governed life. Employers know something that most employees don't: you don't get rich working for someone else. Because of the division of labor in this country, the right man with the right skills can demand a very reasonable wage. But he is still working for someone else, and the man who owns the business makes more than those who work for him. Hence, men should try whenever possible to work for themselves. This gives a self-governed man the most freedom (and the least security) to live his life responsibly before God. It is interesting that in one church I pastored the family with the largest, nicest home (and the biggest annual income) had the least exciting job. The father ran his own carpet-cleaning business. Though the man was a seminary graduate, he found that he had no calling for the ministry and no marketable skills. So he bought a carpet-cleaning machine and went to work. His hard labor and conscientious attention to detail made his customers very happy. Soon, he bought a truck, and then another. Eventually he had to stop expanding the business because of a chronic labor problem; most people just will not work, even if they are extremely well paid. No one ever got excited about a glamorous career in carpet cleaning, but this godly father is capitalizing his family. His beautiful home is paid for. He supports several missionaries. He gives generously above the tithe to his church. His children are home-schooled and will inherit a family business that will bring them economic dominion (when the boys get old enough, he will let them do the sweaty stuff while he manages the business end).

### #9 Education is expensive and ought always to be tied to dominion (*Pr. 21:5; 24:27*)

There is perhaps no more controversial stand that I have taken than that formal academic education is an expensive luxury and is not for everyone. People get really upset at me when I say this, because a college degree has always been seen as a ticket into the middle class. It is a status symbol and one that working-class families are often proud for their children to have (except in my case, where my brothers kept asking me, "When you gonna get out of school and get a real job?"). When only a small percentage of the population had a college degree, then it was something special to have and made one competitive for jobs and promotion. But there will continue to be a glut of college diplomas over the next fifty years. Rich parents can afford to send their children to prestigious schools to give them a life experience (or send them around Europe during the summers). Those without economic capital must not ape their upper-class betters if it means investing limited resources in non-productive ends.

Vocational goals should be set early. In Europe, a thirteen-year-old already has a pretty good idea of what specific job he or she intends to do, and takes high school and college courses that are germane to his eventual career. In America, the average Christian teenager is clueless. Most Americans will change careers three or four times before finally settling down. Hence, all that time, money and effort spent in acquiring an academic degree is, for many Christians, wasted. Instead, parents need to work with their children at a young age, gauge their abilities and seek a vocation that is compatible with their gifts. Then purchase only that education that is pertinent to that vocation. Don't let your kids waste their lives studying nonsense while you are paying for the privilege. If it is absolutely necessary for your kids to go to college, short cut the process. The average home-schooled child is years in advance of those who have suffered in public education. The College Level Examination Program allows college students to test out of many college courses. In fact, I did a full, four-year degree at an accredited Christian liberal arts college in two years, simply by testing out of most of the first two years' courses. Why pay for your children to sit in a classroom studying the same things they should already know (and no doubt learning heresy at the same time)?

But I fear what I am saying here will fall on too many deaf ears. A college degree is just too prestigious for most

people to resist. And the formal academic community has a vested financial interest in convincing Christians that they really do need to send their kids to their schools. Look, if you have the financial resources and want to send your kids to college, then fine, do it. Rich people have more options than poor people. But don't be hoodwinked into thinking you are failing your kids if you use the time and money to capitalize them in a self-owned business.

**#10 Young men, delay getting married and raising a family until you are secure in your vocation (*Lk. 14:28*)**

The normal process for American children is to go through school and college without a clear vocational objective in mind. Along the way, they meet somebody, "fall in love" and get married. Christians want children. They are a blessing from the Lord and therefore Christians start a family as soon as possible. But families are expensive. Mom does not want to put children into the public schools, or to work and let some child-care center raise her kids. However, both Mom and Dad probably have considerable debts from school. Dad may find a good-paying job but then has to go into debt again to buy a house, furnish it and provide basic necessities. Hence, the family is behind the economic power curve from the beginning and must spend a lifetime trying to play economic "catch-up."

A better way is for a man to have a clear vocational objective in mind from a young age and work diligently at acquiring the skills necessary to prosper in that vocation. Then, he should live at home and save every spare cent until he has considerable savings. Rushdoony wisely notes that according to the law a man must pay a purchase price for a bride that is the equivalent of three years' labor. This is a good practice to follow. Say a man makes only $30,000 a year. Now there are some expenses (taxes, necessities, etc.) so maybe the man can save only $20,000 a year. Three years of labor equals $60,000 for a bride price. That bride price PAYS for their first home! (Granted, it's no palace, but it does have indoor plumbing!)

In the same way, young girls ought to be thinking about what they will bring into a marriage. In rural Maine, every young girl received a "Hope" chest when she was about thirteen (I have my mother's, which was hand-crafted by my grandfather). In that chest went the linens, silverware, curtains, etc., that would all be necessary for setting up a bride's new home. If a young girl worked outside the home, every cent was put away for her future. My mom actually bought her first house, out of her own money before she got married (you remember, the two-bedroom place with rustic accommodations?). Thus, instead of starting married life in debt, young families need to sacrifice now to benefit later generations.

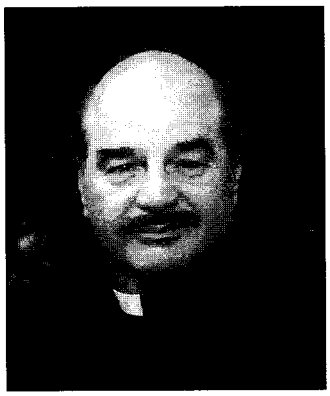
Of course, the family can and should capitalize the young couple (my wife Elaine's Dad gave us a wedding present that bought our first car). But if the family cannot provide an inheritance, or does not, then the young couple must be willing to sacrifice. Elaine's Dad went to work at fourteen to pay off family debts. He then worked and scraped and saved until he could buy a farm. He refused to get married until he could bring his bride into their own home. In England, where land is very expensive, his hard work and thrift resulted in his owning his own farm outright in just a few years. You see, it can be done, and it should be done by more people.

Of course, there is more that can be said. The real problem facing Christians regarding economic dominion is an unwillingness to sacrifice or endure hardship for long-term goals. We tend to want the easy way; and if that means enslaving whole generations so we can eat Big Macs and watch cable TV, then so be it. Long-term prosperity requires prudence, frugality, thrift and a willingness to roll up the sleeves and get our hands dirty when necessary.

Compound interest takes time to work. If you started out with no capital, it will take a while to see the effects of your labor. But time is something we have plenty of. Postmillennialists see not only the trials of today, but the victories of tomorrow. Therefore of all people, we ought to be the most willing to sacrifice for the future. Dominion begins with the family. And family finance plays a key role in subduing the earth.

# Why Christians Are Not Rich

## *By Rev. Ellsworth McIntyre*



When I was a freshman in high school, my Presbyterian pastor invited me to accompany him to a Presbyterian college, where he planned to visit two of his sons who were both on the faculty. I knew that he wanted to persuade me to join the ministry in the future, and I was flattered.

Oddly enough, nothing at all was said about the ministry during our long automobile ride to the college. But after we arrived at the end of the trip, an attractive young woman married to one of the sons sat down to speak to me. After a little while, I realized that she was persuading me to enter the ministry. She chose to stress the pleasures of college life and the fun that I could have as a student. I agreed, in part, and said, "I suppose four years of college is what everyone must do in our society to open the door of opportunity."

She also pointed out, however, that a Presbyterian pastor needs more than college. I would need three additional years of study in a seminary. "What do you study in a seminary?" I asked.

"Greek and Hebrew," she replied. (At that time, I was studying Latin and not too happy about it.) When I said so, she said quickly, "Oh, don't let *that* bother you. You don't *really* need to know Greek and Hebrew. Just memorize some facts about the languages."

Then I asked, "How much money does a pastor earn?" After so many years, I don't recall the amount she cited, but I pointed out that laborers in the steel mill where my father worked had higher incomes. At that, a look of profound disgust crossed her face, and she left the room. It was obvious that I had failed her standards. I was not eager to suffer poverty for the church. She believed, I realized later, in a Protestant version of the Roman Catholic vow of poverty.

I recall this incident about a covenant family in the 1940s, because that situation has not changed much in fifty years. There are many covenant people who still believe that to be a Christian means that one should not only be poor, but should be proud of being poor. The principle that Christianity should produce wealth still seems heretical to many Christians.

Recalling that conversation of many years ago still makes me smile, though some of my readers may still consider me a heretic when I say that covenantal obedience is the only lawful source of wealth for a child of God. A refusal to seek wealth by this means is to bring a curse on oneself and one's children. Covenant children should become wealthy by obeying God's laws for health, happiness, and successful effort. If they do not obey, they have not been taught sound theology.

Conservative theologians such as R. J. Rushdoony teach that Christian families generate wealth when they obey the commands of the Creator. It is the basic command of our God as set forth in Genesis 1:28 that we are to have many children and rule over the earth. Exodus 20 points the way to lawful riches. We are not to steal other people's property or to hate another person because he has more wealth and property. The New Testament repeats and develops this doctrine. In Matthew 6:33, we are told to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these material things shall be added to us.

Matthew 6:33 marks the division between the motivation of the covenant-breakers and the motivation of the covenant-keepers. Those within the covenant see the source of wealth as obedience to God's law. Those without the covenant see the source of wealth as lying, cheating, stealing, and means which are the opposite the Lord's commands. A will to dominate and control property is built into every fiber of our being. Both covenant-breakers and covenant-keepers seek wealth for the same reason that baby ducks swim and young eagles learn to soar. It is in their nature. All men seek dominion, and warfare rages inside every man about how wealth is best generated. This warfare continues in our environment, in the workplace, in the political realm, and especially in our churches.

Faithful covenant-keepers are in competition with covenant-breakers. Faithful covenant-keepers will ultimately win ownership and control of the world's wealth, but it will be a victory of faith, not science. The majority of wealth and power is not today in the hands of Christians. Disobedience has caused the Lord to make us servants of the enemies of our faith. We serve many who call themselves believers in God, but who constantly seek wealth by violating God's covenant.

Dr. Rushdoony's new book, a commentary titled *Romans and Galatians,* concludes on page 410 with, "Failure to see the church as God's new Israel is basic to much of the foolishness of the modern church. This

denial makes men and churches outsiders to the promises of God." Such foolishness, which I witnessed fifty years ago, is accurately defined as a failure to see the church as God's new Israel.

The Lord has taken the wealth that belongs to his people and given it to our enemies, because we refuse to see ourselves as God's chosen people. As a consequence, we have placed ourselves in a position of servitude, poverty, and hereditary failure for our posterity. When the Lord's chosen or elect people repent of the notion that sentimental disobedience can produce wealth, covenant families will accumulate wealth and conquer the world. In that world, pastors will not be recruited by women seeking docile servants of a feminine church.

If covenant Christians were to be examined today in the style favored by our government educators, their questions would be in multiple-choice formats:

Which of these is most likely to be taught to children as a source of wealth in a covenant family?

A. Early childhood work habits
B. Genetic heritage from successful forbears
C. College education
D. A deep-seated fear of God

Option D is correct, if the family is genuinely covenantal in doctrine; but, of course, the fear of God is the least likely doctrine taught in a modern church.

I recall reading in a recent biography of the Mellon family that the founder of the family fortune was offended when a young pastor of a Presbyterian church (built with Mellon money) questioned whether the Bible was really the Word of God. Mr. Mellon, fuming after the service, muttered out loud, "Any fool knows that if you keep the Commandments, you prosper in this world."

Despite the accurate testimony of Mr. Mellon, we have fools among us who credit their genes or their environment for their wealth, but never the fear of God. Many have, in fact, chosen barren emotional love instead of following the command to have children and to multiply. The Bible's definition of Biblical love is keeping the Commandments and finding the Commandments a joy, instead of a grievance (see *1 Jn. 5:1-3*). It is "only by the fear of God that men depart from evil" and become rich (*Ps. 1; Pr. 3:7*).

Christians should ask themselves, "If I am truly God's chosen person, why is God giving the world's wealth to my enemies?" I have never taught in another Christian school that would permit the freedom to teach that the church is God's New Israel. God's chosen people are not members of any particular race or local church. God's chosen are those who believe and obey the covenant. "By their fruit, ye shall know them."

The Lord has created the wealth of the world for the obedient. All parents should teach their children to multiply and to accumulate lawful wealth to the glory of God. Please get a copy of *Romans and Galatians* and *The Institutes of Biblical Law* by R. J. Rushdoony, and teach them to your children.

The wealth of the unjust is laid up for your children, provided they are obedient. Do not allow your children to leave home without their birthright! This is your Father's world; teach your children to go after it!

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*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. E-mail EMcin2415@aol.com.*

# Like Them That Move the Landmark

## *By William Einwechter*

### The Inviolability of the Landmark

Biblical law clearly protects a man's property. The private ownership of property is both established and safeguarded by God in his law-word. An important aspect of this protection of property are the Scriptures concerning a man's landmarks:

> Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. (*Dt. 19:14*)
>
> Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. (*Dt. 27:17*)
>
> Remove not the old landmarks: and enter not into the fields of the fatherless. (*Pr. 23:10*)

The "landmark" was a large stone or heap of stones that served to establish the boundaries of a man's property (his land). By means of these landmarks, a definite distinction was made between the property belonging to one man and the property belonging to another. In Biblical law, God forbids a man to "remove" his neighbor's landmark. The Hebrew word translated "remove" means to move away or to move back. It refers to the devious and insidious practice of a man's shifting the landmark of adjoining property so as to add to his own land. Thus, the law of the landmarks relates to the theft of another man's property and is a specific case-law application of the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." The general commandment forbidding theft means, among other things, that we do not take the property of our neighbor by moving his landmarks. So important is the law against removing landmarks that God pronounces a curse on all who commit it (*Dt. 27:17*).

### Property and Life

A man's property is the means of his livelihood. In the agricultural setting of the ancient Israelites this was clear. A man made his living from land given to him by God according to his inheritance in the promised land. He farmed the land and from its increase supported himself and his family. Therefore, to take a man's property by moving his landmark was to assail the ability of the man to sustain his life and the lives of all who depended on him. J. A. Thompson notes, "There was a close connection between a man's possessions as his means of support and the very life of the man."[1]

It is ever true that a man's property is the means of his livelihood and to take a man's property is to strike at the very life of a man. Biblical law protects a man's property from theft so that he may be secure in his possessions and be able to use the property providentially given to him by the hand of the Lord for the glory of God, the well-being of his family, and the advance of God's kingdom. Biblical law guards the property of a covenant-keeping man so that he can fulfill the command of God to take dominion over that which God has committed to his care.

### Civil Government and Property

Civil government was established by God to enforce the law of God apposite the civil sphere. The civil magistrate is a minister of God charged with the duty of visiting God's vengeance on those who do evil against their neighbor (*Rom. 13:1-6*). Civil government is to protect the life and property of the citizens by being a terror to all who would seek to take the life or property of others. Therefore, the civil magistrate is responsible to enforce the Biblical laws relating to the theft of property, including the law of landmarks. God has decreed in his marvelous law that a man should be secure in his property. The duty of the state is to see that each law-abiding citizen enjoys this security by enforcing God's law.

It is tragic for the citizens when their civil government fails to provide this kind of security for them. When the laws of God relating to theft and its punishment are ignored and the wicked seize the property of their neighbor with impunity, or without required restitution when apprehended, it is a sorry thing indeed. But even more tragic is when the civil government itself is the agent of theft! When the magistrate becomes the one who unlawfully (*i.e.*, as defined by God's law) seizes the possessions and wealth of the very ones he should protect, it is a horrid perversion of his office. Instead of being secure in their property, those who live under such a civil government live in the fear of the unjust seizure of their wealth by government edict, backed by government power.

This apparently was the situation in Judah in the days

of Hosea the prophet. Hosea says: "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water" (*Hos. 5:10*). The words "remove the bound" are the same words that appear in Deuteronomy 19:14 and could be translated "move the landmark." Therefore, Hosea is referring to the Biblical law concerning landmarks. The prophet states that the magistrates of Judah "are like" those who move their neighbor's landmarks. This indicates that these rulers are not actually moving landmarks but that their actions are tantamount to that crime. What does Hosea mean?

Some believe that Hosea employs the law of Deuteronomy 19:14 in a metaphorical sense. Leon Woods states, "Judah's leaders, however, were not shifting physical property lines but spiritual lines established by God, changing the boundary between right and wrong, between true and false religion, between the true God and the idols."[2] However much this may be true, it is too constricted an interpretation to limit Hosea's words to the idea of changing spiritual boundaries only. Calvin interprets Hosea 5:10 as follows: "But by the metaphor of boundaries in the fields, the Prophet refers to the whole political order. The meaning is, that all things were now in a state of disorder and confusion among the Jews; because their leaders, who ruled the people and ought to have kept them in obedience, had destroyed the whole order of things."[3] Calvin sees the verse as a reference to the disorder of the whole political realm. *This may be the case, but it appears too broad* an interpretation.

The best approach to the text is to take it in its primary sense as referring to the unlawful taking of property. After all, that is the definite meaning of the Biblical law of landmarks, and there is no contextual reason why we should not understand Hosea's words in accord with the denotation of these laws. Poole recognizes the metaphorical interpretations of this passage, but then states that the more certain import is that "by injustice and violence [the princes] were seizing what was another's."[4] In accord with Poole (while recognizing the possibility of a metaphorical sense), we believe that the text indicates (at least) the unjust, tyrannical seizure of the lawful property of the people by the rulers of Judah. The text does not indicate the precise nature of their crime against the citizens of Judah; it only says that these rulers "were like them that remove the bound." The magistrates were not actually moving landmarks, but the effect was the same—they were stealing the property of the citizens. Perhaps the princes were seizing the wealth of the people through oppressive taxation, through seizure of land for "public use," or through false accusations. Whichever, the great horror here is that property was being stolen by the ones who were responsible to protect it—the civil rulers! In accord with the curse pronounced in Deuteronomy 27:17, God declares that his wrath will be poured out on these scoundrels.

## Instruction for Today

The law of the landmarks and its application to rulers in Hosea 5:10 is instructive for us today. First, it indicates that civil rulers can be guilty of stealing from the people they govern. That it is possible for the state to steal from the people it governs is denied by the modern humanistic state. Having rejected God and Biblical law, the state believes that it is the ultimate owner of all things within its boundaries and the source of all "property rights." In the place of the sovereign God, we now have the sovereign state that answers to no one and serves no one but itself. Such a state believes that all the wealth of the citizens is there to use (seize by whatever means necessary) as the civil government pleases. But God's law exposes the evil of this notion. God is the ultimate owner of all things and the source of all property rights. He has given wealth into the hands of individuals and families, and this private property is protected by his law against all theft. If the state ignores God's law and takes the wealth and property of the people unjustly, then it is guilty of theft.[5]

Second, the means by which the state steals from the people it governs are varied. One means is oppressive, excessive taxation. How can we determine excessive taxation? Two questions will help us here. One, does the taxation exceed ten percent of the citizens' income? If God himself requires only a tithe to finance the work of the kingdom, it could not be possible that he would authorize the state to exact a tax exceeding ten percent to finance the work of civil government. Two, does the tax fund programs and activities that are outside the Biblical parameters for the state? If so, then the state has no right to tax for the support of these things, and this makes such taxes an unjust seizure of the wealth of the people. Another means is the redistribution of wealth by way of taxation and social programs aimed at "economic and social justice." Bastiat, the French economist, correctly labeled such redistribution as "legal plunder."[6] Another means is the property tax. Property tax is a claim of ownership by the state. In essence, property tax is a rental fee we pay to the state for the privilege of "owning" and using a portion of land within the boundaries of the state. Property tax is like moving the landmark because it is a claim of ultimate ownership (not to mention the confiscation of the property of those who are delinquent in paying their property taxes!). Other means of state stealing are the taking of property for public use (based on the doctrine of "eminent domain"); the power to seize the property of citizens who have never been convicted of a crime (based on "forfeiture laws"); and the control and manipulation of the money supply—to name some of the more prominent means.

Third, the philosophies of Marxism, communism, and socialism are dedicated in principle to removing all landmarks in a nation. The landmark set the bounds for private property. Landmarks are a testimony to the existence of private property. The goal of these anti-

Christian world views is to eliminate all private property and thereby eliminate all landmarks. In theory, the ownership of the land and all property passes from the individual to the group, but in reality all is claimed and controlled by the state. Perhaps the most powerful, single law in the Bible that stands against communism and socialism is the law of the landmarks.

Fourth, God's wrath is against all magistrates and governments that steal the wealth of the citizens. In casting off God's law in regard to the protection of property, these rulers make war against God and his Anointed (*Ps. 2:1-3*). Instead of serving as God's minister to protect the individual land and property of the people, they become those who plunder the people, all under the name of "law," "justice," and "the common good." These bandits will neither endure nor triumph. Jesus Christ has been commissioned to crush such thieves with a rod (scepter) of iron (*Ps. 2:9*). The triumph of Jesus Christ is sure. The day is coming when only godly magistrates who honor and serve Christ shall govern. In that day our property rights under God's law will be fully protected. No one shall be allowed to move our landmarks with impunity. But until that day, we must contend with magistrates who are "like them that remove the bound." As God's servants, let us preach God's law concerning landmarks, expose the rebellion of these rulers against God and their thievery against the people, labor to elect Christian magistrates who are committed to protecting our property according to God's law, and pray for the righteous judgment of God against those who use the office of magistrate to steal their neighbor's property—against all magistrates who are "like them that move the bound [landmark]."

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[1] J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL, 1974), 217.

[2] Leon J. Wood, "Hosea," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary,* 12 vols., ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, 1985), 7:192.

[3] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets,* 2 vols., trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids, [1846] 1989), 1:203.

[4] Matthew Poole, *Commentary on the Holy Bible,* 3 vols. (Edinburgh, [1700] 1990), 2:863.

[5] In the ancient world, the moving of landmarks was often hard to detect. Some have suggested that this is the reason why the moving of landmarks was included in the list of curses declared in Dt. 27:15-26. All of this sins mentioned in Dt. 27:15-26 refer to acts that are often done in secret and are hard to detect by men. Nevertheless, God sees and he will punish them. Because the state plunders the people under the guise of law, most citizens never detect what is happening to them. But theft is theft, whether done by individuals under the cover of night or by the state under the cover of legislation.

[6] Frederic Bastiat, *The Law* (Irvington-on-Hudson [1850], 1981).

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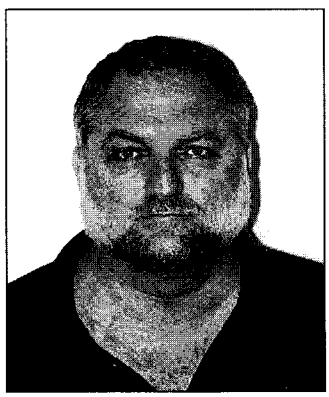
*William O. Einwechter (Th.M.) is an ordained minister and the Pastor of Covenant Christian Church. He currently serves as the Vice-Moderator of the Association of Free Reformed Churches and Vice-President of the National Reform Association. He is also the author of the books* Ethics and God's Law: An Introduction to Theonomy, *and* English Bible Translations: By What Standard? *and editor of the newly released* Explicitly Christian Politics. *He can be contacted at 9385 Royer Rd., Mercersburg, PA 17236; or by e-mail at WEinwechte@aol.com.*

# 2 Corinthians 4:13—A Riposte to Descartes' *Cogito Ergo Sum*

***By James Bilezikian***

## Assertion of Rebellion



Christian philosophers and theologians have never quite been able to respond to the pithiness of the French philosopher Descartes' implied solipsism, *Cogito ergo sum*: "I think, therefore, I am." The power of its rapier thrust can be seen in the fact that in three short Latin words, or five short English words, it attacks the very heart of the Reformation. It assimilates with simple and eloquent brevity a summation of the nature of man's rebellion against God. It is such a powerfully bloated statement of overweening pride, that it leaves the unprepared or unsuspecting breathless and, in too many cases, speechless.

## Assertion of Submission

Our gracious God provides his kingdom with a response even more powerful, which, for its sheer beauty and the garland of love surrounding it, has no equal. It is replete with the sweet scent of redemption. It is the great and much overlooked statement in the passage of 2 Corinthians 4:13, "I believe; therefore, I speak."

This statement is a declaration of our exalted position before God as members of the Body of Christ, as members of the Kingdom of God, as souls resurrected from the dust of death. For God, it is not enough merely to bring us back to life. His love is so embracing that his resurrecting teleology will not be complete until he assures that those whom he brought back to life will themselves be involved in the process of the re-creation of life.

The fullness of restored life can be experienced only in the participation of the resurrection of the life of others. In the Greek, the word used for salvation implies past, present, and future (we were saved, are being saved, and shall be saved). Salvation is not one specific act or moment; it involves the redemption not only of the soul but of the whole of the life of man. Therefore, speech inspired by faith drives us, because of our new identity, to embrace completely the fallen world, fallen man in past, present and future. That full embrace is not on the terms of the fallen world, but established on the terms of the Law-Word and order of God. By the grace of God, we participate lovingly in the whole and continued life of those who respond by faith to the spoken word of God. Since we know from the Scriptures that proper speaking from faith can be done only in love ("speak the truth in love") and that love is expressed with the subjective and objective unity of body, mind and spirit, man can never separate speaking the truth in love from rightly motivated action. Thus, man's derivative creativity realizes its fullness when man is speaking from faith. In the mystery of God's power, the spoken truth acts as an engine of re-creation, squarely positioning man in the center of the Garden with the Tree of Life as his sustenance, his spirit, and his identity.

## The Denuding of Man

Descartes will have none of this. By defining man autonomously and exhaustively in terms of his mind, and by implying the infinite by the use of the "I am," Descartes strips man naked. That is not enough for Descartes. If he is going to desecrate the image of God, he must desecrate the imager. By using the very words that God first uses to describe himself, ("I am"—implying no beginning and no end), Descartes mocks God on the one hand and mocks man on the other. He does this by merging man with the very one he is mocking. Disregard for God is always inextricably linked with disregard for man, the image. Thus, we see with one phrase the hatred for God and the hatred for man consummately proclaimed. It is the identity defined by God and subordinated to God to participate in redemptive activity which places Descartes' statement as the purest form of rebellion hurled at God and hurled at man. When it hits its mark, this splinter of mendacity lodges in the throat of man and deprives him of redemptive speech and activity, thus stripping from man his image fullness, his identity. By accepting the charge of Descartes, the sentence of death hangs heavily on man.

## The Restoration of Man by the Cross and Resurrection

By contrast, Paul says, "I believe; therefore, I speak." He says it quietly, almost as an afterthought. David first uses that phrase in Psalm 116:10. He is describing how his faith led him to appeal to the Lord for personal

deliverance from a desperate, life-threatening situation. David describes how his faith leads him to speak so that he can metaphorically be brought back from the dead. Paul's quiet expansion of David's statement is a wonderful picture of the explosive, resonating reverberation of the Cross. Paul, with the Cross towering behind him and the resurrected Lord marching before him, is emptied of the dread of death. Being emptied of death, just as the tomb was, he is free to speak the word that flows from faith to the salvation and well-being of the lost. This statement by Paul, spoken ever so humbly and quietly as an explanation for his interest in the salvation of others, as an explanation for why he is so compelled to bring the Good News of Life through our Lord Jesus Christ, thunders throughout history as a battle cry served up for those who are being saved and will be saved and against those who would seek to mortify man by securing him to the mast of his own fallen nature.

## Continuity With Nimrod

Thus, the bellicose bile of Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum*, "I think; therefore, I am" with its smug, syntactical web is seen for what it is, the transmogrified sword of a man long since dead: Nimrod, the great hunter of men. The memory of the greatness of Nimrod is the memory of the greatness of his undoing. What he accomplished by his war on men and his fulmination against heaven and his arrogation of glory to himself was to ensure his own ignominy and the dumb stupefaction of his subjects. The loss of communication, of being able to speak to one another, must rate as one the greatest judgments brought by God upon man; it strikes at the very heart of man's ability to realize what it means to be made in the image of God. Thus, Descartes places himself in line with the vanquished, as a new Nimrod, a man who hunts other men, not with the brandished sword that reflects the sun, stained by blood, but with the bare thread of a syllogistic gossamer that man can use in his blind fury against God as a holographic lever projected by his own fantasy to be large enough to move the earth. The droplets that collect on this web are not the droplets of a new world born in the morning, not the collection of the soft sweetness of an awakening earth but, the blood of man sacrificed to the Lord of the Flies.

## The Enlightenment

There is a direct line of regression between Descartes' declaration of man's autonomy, which is exhaustive and self-contained, and the slippery slope of the Enlightenment. This slope culminates at the bottom of a deep and broad pit, the mass graves of genocide. The S. S. death-head insignia captures the inevitable result of man defining himself in terms of himself. In doing this, man arrogates to himself the Godhead, and power over life and death. This is the "Superman" that Nietzsche envisioned, a man who defines his own morality, who can remake the world around him in terms of his own image, and whose driving force is the imposition of his will on the world. "Triumph of the Will," a film directed by Leni Riefenstahl and released in 1934, is a glorification of Hitler's embodiment and apotheosis of Nietzsche's "Superman." The migration from heaven to hell on earth is neatly made. Man as Superman, or as his own god, can grant life, and he can take life. Thus it is no coincidence that we have the phenomenon of Hitler and Stalin, the two greatest mass murderers in history, ruling at the same time. Both are fruit ripened on the tree of death, the tree of lies, the tree of deception that had been planted right at the beginning of the seventeenth century by the philosopher Descartes. He provided the intellectual framework, a pagan call to arms, to rise up against the great edifice of the Reformation to shake off the yoke of "this offending God" whose very existence was an effrontery to those whose worship is man.

The echo of Descartes has carved a great hollow in much of the history of the last four hundred years. It has provided a vast hiding place for the wicked. It has been a gathering point for many pulpiteers to plot their heresies. However, the solid beat of God's drum can be heard behind all the clatter, behind all the murmurings and behind all the lies of the heartless. It can be heard quietly and in attestation to a redemptive God who grants us faith that he may triumph over our will, that we may speak, so that salvation can come from hearing, and hearing from the word of God.

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*James Bilezikian is an institutional bond salesman. He can be reached at jbilezik@accesspro.net.*

# It Is Not Good For Man To Be Alone

## *By Mrs. Andrea Schwartz*

**Editor's note: Andrea and Rachel Schwartz, authors respectively of the following two articles, are mother and daughter and are extensively involved in the ministry of Chalcedon. Friends of Chalcedon, headed up by Ford and Andrea Schwartz, provides invaluable service to Chalcedon in many forms—projects, typesetting, conferences and seminars, and charity. Among its unique ministries are bringing geographically separated Christian Reconstructionists together for important projects, and soliciting resources for Christians burdened by acute crises. We are deeply grateful for both the faithful friendship and tireless labor of Friends of Chalcedon. They can be contacted at 4960 Almaden Expressway, #172, San Jose, CA 95118, phone 408-997-9866 or andrea@grlesst.com.**

One day recently, I was joking with my husband about an instance where I had followed through on something he'd forgotten to do. I commented, "Honey, God knew you'd need me. That's why I'm your wife." He laughed and I laughed. Then, I got to thinking about what I had just said and realized that, not only was it true, but I hadn't stated it completely. God did not merely know my husband would need me, he fashioned ME and foreordained ME to be my husband's helpmeet.

This may sound trite and obvious, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized that during those very times when I am upset with things my husband "is" or "isn't," my complaint really isn't with him, but with God. You see, part and parcel of who I am and what talents I possess has everything to do with the reality that I was fashioned to HELP my husband—my *specific* husband. What's more, in stating that it isn't good for man to be alone, God was outlining for me, and wives in general, the high calling that we've being given. In a very real sense, we were designed to fill the holes, smooth over the rough spots of the husbands God gave us.

I know some might fear that this will become an excuse for husbands to take their wives for granted or to reduce them to status of slave or servant. Steve Schlissel in his excellent sermon, "Husbands, Love Your Wives" (available from Messiah's Congregation, 2662 East 24th Street, Brooklyn NY 11235-2610, 718-332-4444, UrbaNation@aol.com) gives a wonderful description of the common traps married couples can fall into. I make it a point to give it as a wedding gift with a recommendation that the couples listen to it one year after they're married and once every year after that. In more than one case, husbands who have listened to the tape have come to their wives and apologized and asked for forgiveness for taking them for granted and abusing their position as husband.

*During those very times when I am upset with things my husband "is" or "isn't," my complaint really isn't with him, but with God.*

I am not unaware of tendencies in some Christian circles to belittle women. In an effort to ensure that women don't assume roles in church government not properly theirs, some men assume they don't have any place in discussion or decisions. It's as though their wives' thoughts and opinions don't matter—they are merely extensions of their husbands. Women in this position will find their comfort in fulfilling their God-ordained role in realizing they were fashioned to help their particular man, whether or not they are appreciated at the moment.

Marriage is a perfect institution comprised of imperfect people. Failure to put our whole effort into glorifying God through our marriages leaves us open for most of the ills our society inflicts. Marriage and the family are the basis of society; if we want to build a culture, we must start with ourselves. Both wives and husbands need regularly to evaluate their faithfulness to the high calling given them by God.

# What's Wrong about Loving What God Hates?

***By Rachel Schwartz***

## The Question

Does the Christian have the right to hate? Is it ever righteous to hate? To go one step further: is it sinful to love what God hates?

This article will show that not only is it right to hate what God hates, but that it is wrong to love what God hates. If we say that we must love what God hates then we are trying to be holier than God. If we try to be holier than God then we are, in a way, making ourselves our own god. For God says: "Be holy as I am holy" (*1 Pet. 1:16; Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7*); and since he defines holiness, any other definition is unholy.

## God Hates Certain People and Things

First, the question of what hate is and what God hates needs to be discussed. Many Scripture references state clearly that God, indeed, hates certain things and certain people. I first reference Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

This Scripture obviously shows that God indeed hates the sin AND the sinner who commits that sin. "A false witness that speaketh lies" is clearly a person whom God hates and is an abomination to him. He that sows discord among brethren, is, again, a person. These are *people* whom God hates, not just their sin. This is important because if God hated only the act and not the person who commits the act, then *we* would have no right to hate the person either. However, some might argue that God can do things that man can't do: "God can hate but hasn't told us we should hate." Again, the Scripture addresses this very situation.

The 18th chapter of 2 Chronicles gives the account of King Jehoshaphat's assisting King Ahab, a true enemy of God. Afterward, he is reproved; "And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord" (*2 Chr. 19:2*).

This is what the Bible, the word of God, states. Are we holier than the Bible? Are we raised to a standard higher than that of the Bible and of God? What is higher in authority than God's word and God himself? The obvious answer is that nothing is higher in authority than God. Since God is the definition of holiness, it is impossible to be holier than God. When we say we must not hate what God hates, we are deciding for ourselves what to hate and what is right and wrong. This is the sin of Adam and Eve as recounted in Genesis 3:5.

Let's examine a logical implication of the premise that man is not free to hate anyone. Are we to love Satan and the demons? After all, why would they be excluded? Most Christians would find such a proposition abominable.

God does hate the sin and the sinner. The Psalms repeatedly demonstrate this position: "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul HATETH" (*Ps. 11:5*).

"Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart, For thy loving kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have HATED the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked" (*Ps. 26:2-5*).

"Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. I have HATED them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord" (*Ps. 31:5-6*).

"Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I HATE them, O Lord, that hate thee? I HATE them with a perfect HATRED: I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (*Ps. 139: 21-24*).

The last three verses are David's asking the Lord if he has been faithful to him. David reminds the Lord that he has hated those who are the Lord's enemies. David knows that this is not unrighteous.

## New Testament Revisions?

Some assert that the New Testament must restate what the Old Testament states for the Old Testament to be valid. This is not true, because Christ said that not one jot or tittle of his law shall pass away (*Mt. 5:18*). Since at that point the New Testament had not been written, he was talking about the portion of Scriptures that we

refer to as the Old Testament. The only Scripture around when the Apostle Paul was writing his letters was the Old Testament. Paul never said (and for that matter no New Testament writer did) that we do not have to listen to what the Old Testament says. (In fact, the division of Old Testament and New Testament was not even a reality at that point.) However, on the subject of "hate" there is a place where the New Testament not only refers back to, but also affirms, what the Old Testament said. I refer to Malachi 1:1-3: "The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob. And I HATED Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage to waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

In Romans 9:10-14 Paul states: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac: (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth:) It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved but Esau have I HATED. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid."

## Definition of Love and Hate

Numerous examples have been given to demonstrate the reality that God does, indeed, hate and that there is such a thing as righteous hatred on the part of the Christian. However, it is necessary to define the words "love" and "hate" in order for this discussion to have practical application.

The Bible tells us that "God is love" (*1 Jn. 4:8*). Many, however, interpret that verse to mean that "Love is God" by defining God in terms of love rather than the other way around. God is the definer of all things. So, we must look to the Scriptures to see what God says love is and what he cites as examples of love. He says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (*Rom. 13:10*); "If you love me, keep my commandments" (*Jn. 14:15*); and through the Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 13 tells us what love is.

The concept that "Love is God" ties in with the evolutionary view that God differs in the Old and New Testaments. If God was a God of "Wrath" in the Old Testament and now is a God of "Love," then he evolved into that different attitude. But God said that he never changes. Because people think that God has evolved, they treat his standards and his law as evolving. But you see, God says he does not change, and he would know!

So, how do we as Christians apply godly *hatred* to an enemy of God? Does it mean that we are free to violate God's law in dealing with those we should hate? No, because the Bible tells us to "Do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of household of the faith" (*Gal. 6:10*). Since we have been told that "love is the fulfilling of the law," we are not free to steal from our fellow human, murder him, covet what he has, bear false witness against him, etc. And this does not mean that we do not have to witness to him. In fact, that would be contrary to the Great Commission, which is our primary duty.

What it *does* mean is that we are not to aid and abet the enemy (any enemy of God should be ours as well). This is why Jehoshaphat was reprimanded: he aided and abetted the enemy of God (Ahab). Some examples: (1) we are not to help the enemies of God communicate more effectively; (2) we are not to help a candidate running for a political office get elected if he is one of God's enemies; (3) we must not give our resources to assist the ungodly.

## Conclusion

In order to be faithful to our Lord and Savior we must love what he loves and hate what he hates. To do anything else is to attempt to be holier than God, which is sinful in concept and impossible in reality.

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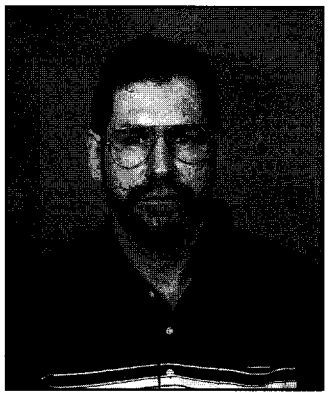
*Rachel Schwartz is a 12-year-old home-schooling student residing in San Jose, CA. Rachel is active in music (piano and choir), competes in junior golf tournaments, is an avid reader, and enjoys chess. Her favorite academic subject is history.*

# "Hard-Believism," "Easy-Believism," and *Sola Fide*

## *By Joseph P. Braswell*



While I am quite critical of the "no-lordship" or "easy-believist" view of salvation that is associated with L. S. Chafer, C. C. Ryrie, Zane Hodges, Robert Lightner, and Hal Lindsey, I must confess that I can nevertheless understand and appreciate certain concerns expressed by its proponents that might seem to make their understanding of *sola gratia* and *sola fide* ("only by grace" and "only by faith") appealing. Sadly, I know of churches in which salvation is something difficult to obtain, something that takes considerable effort and an arduous self-preparation for the reception of saving grace. We can dub this arduous path to salvation "hard-believism."

Obtaining salvation in such "hard-believist" churches is something akin to a wrestling match with a reluctant deity; it is a contest of strength whereby salvation is to be wrested from his grudging grip by sheer force of will and determination. People come forward to the altar in order to "pray through" and "tarry," persistently pleading with a god who hides his face and seems hard of hearing, in order that they may be heard and perhaps persuade him through many tears and loud cries to save them.[1] Vows and promises have to be fervently made to this ill-disposed or apathetic god in repeated supplications. There are well-defined steps to the process of seeking salvation, even involving one's tarrying in a state of desperate misery and anguish, anxiously awaiting this god's decision to grant salvation. Sometimes, apparently, this god is almost persuaded, and members glowingly speak afterwards among themselves about how so-and-so was *almost* saved (he will have to come back next week and try again—trying harder and tarrying yet longer). The strength and purity of an individual's faith, the intensity of an emotional experience of penitence, the depth and totality of his surrender, are all deciding factors in whether his god responds, in whether he deems an individual's prayers to merit an affirmative answer; if not saved, he did not try hard enough, did not seek diligently enough, did not prepare himself—sanctify himself—sufficiently. Sadly but expectedly, some who have "come forward" repeatedly finally give up in despair, resigning themselves to a fate of hopeless reprobation because, apparently, they simply could not attain to the requisite level of fever-pitched intensity in their fervent prayers for salvation; they could not excite themselves to a perfect faith.

Generally, the "no-lordship" proponents understand us advocates of lordship salvation to be putting forth something similar to the above scenario. They see us "lordshippers" as asserting human conditions—meritorious works—when we, in the name of the Lord, demand repentance and the confession of Jesus as Lord. Given the stress on what man must do that can be found in some churches, I can appreciate the concerns of the "easy-believists" and sympathize with their reaction, even while maintaining that they are misinterpreting *sola gratia* and *sola fide* and are overreacting by going to the other, equally erroneous extreme. How then do we lordship advocates differ from the "hard-believists" that have shut up the Kingdom by creating a legalistic obstacle course in the path of those who, crushed by the heavy burden of their trespasses and the terrors of a guilty conscience, would come to Jesus and be saved from their sins?

We "lordshippers" differ from the "hard-believists" precisely because we do most heartily affirm *sola gratia* and *sola fide,* but, unlike the "easy-believists," we affirm these principles in their original, Reformational sense. To see this, we must go back to Martin Luther and his great Reformational discovery of justification by faith alone. However, in order to do this, we must get beyond the mythical and romanticized Luther of the mystical "tower experience" and rediscover the historical Luther: Luther the Biblical scholar and theological professor, situated in the context of his times and the theological paradigm which he assumed and in which he operated in his studies.

### Luther's Background

Luther was an Ockhamist and, more specifically, a disciple of Gabriel Biel and the Nominalist tradition of late-medieval Scholasticism that stemmed from the philosophy of William of Ockham. Central to this theological tradition was that which we might call a covenant theology (though one not to be confused with the covenant theology of later Reformed thought).[2] The Ockhamists distinguished between the absolute power of God (God in his sovereign freedom and ability) and the law-order which God has in fact somewhat arbitrarily ordained to govern the world. This latter was a covenantal order that established the rules God has chosen to follow

in his dealings with his creatures, the rules by which men shall be judged and thus the rules that define the righteousness God requires. Though God is inherently absolutely free, in terms of his sovereign omnipotence, to do whatsoever he will in the created world (a wholly contingent realm), and an unlimited range of possibilities remains in the abstract open to him by virtue of his omnipotence, he is, by virtue of his own gracious condescension, voluntarily self-constrained in his actual exercise of power. This is a self-imposed limitation set by his faithful commitment to upholding, and acting in accordance with, the covenantal order of governance he has sovereignly ordained. He has bound himself by his free will to act in and administer covenantal justice (justice defined relative to the wholly contingent rules governing the economic order he ordained). He has established a contingent order of covenantal causality (or consequence) that is nevertheless sure—assured by his faithful upholding of it.

Accordingly, in speaking of just deserts and what is a man's due, a distinction must be made in Ockhamist theology between *condign* merit (intrinsic value) and *congruent* merit (a relativized value determined by the graciously tempered covenantal standards). If a condignly meritorious deed requires absolute perfection, a congruently meritorious deed need only be judged by the lower standard of what the gracious covenant demands (in which an obligation cannot in fairness exceed native ability to fulfill the obligation). Though Ockhamists recognized the fact of sin (but, in good semi-Pelagian fashion, not the fact of a total depravity), little difference exists between the native ability of man within the original order of creation (what unfallen man would be able to do) and his native capacity within the postlapsarian order of redemption (the somewhat diminished capacity of a sinner), for the Fall primarily resulted in the loss of the *donum superadditum*—a supernatural grace-gift possessed by unfallen Adam to supplement his natural state—and thus in a loss of supernatural capacities. Nevertheless, since there is also (as with the order of creation) no necessity to the order of redemption, then, in terms of the generality or commonness of redemptive grace that functioned as the foundation of a redemptive order of the new commandment, the rules and conditions of that economy of redemption, once it has been freely ordained of God, must be established by him in a manner that is consistent with the divine intent to save and therefore must (in a virtual return to Pelagianism) be suited to the native abilities of all men. The natural man must be able to avail himself of the possibility of salvation, fulfilling whatever conditions God sets.

As this covenant theology plays out in its doctrine of salvation, Ockhamism affirms a justification of the righteous. Man must merit that final (eschatological) justification and will be judged on the last day strictly according to his works. However, the meritorious deeds of righteousness that meet with God's approval and are the conditions of final justification are only of congruent merit, are only righteous because God in his liberality has graciously willed to call them such and impute justifying righteousness to them, however minimal and negligible their inherent virtue (their condign merit). They fulfill the conditions set by the covenantal order and not some demand required by God's own intrinsic character, by the absolute demands of his own holy nature. Because of this accidental or contingent relation between the virtue/condition and the attributed value, the "rate of exchange" is determined solely by God's will—his liberality and goodness. The condition that must be met in order for one to merit salvation is "that which in man is"—that which man is morally capable of performing. While, according to the principle of distributive justice operative in the covenantal order, a genuinely moral act—a good work—was necessary (it had to have some intrinsic merit, some genuine measure of actual "praiseworthiness," as an inherently virtuous act, a morally good deed), the standard was nevertheless lowered enough by divine liberality so that the requirement was something man, despite his sin, could meet by his native powers (a natural act, not the result of a supernatural act of grace in man). God in his generosity, according to his condescending goodness, graciously imputes greater value (congruent merit) to the morally good work than it actually, inherently possesses (its condign merit). Thus, salvation by works was set against a backdrop of grace—albeit, a general grace (the covenantal order)—in order to accommodate the reality of imperfect virtue and relative righteousness so that men need only do their best. God realistically expects only that of which man is capable of performing, blessing it as though it were truly perfect righteousness.

In the nature/grace scheme of medieval thought, this naturally moral act that met with God's requirement prepared one for grace and became the entry-point into the supernatural life of the work of grace—the process whereby one became progressively enabled to do even greater morally good works, was made righteous by degrees. Under grace, the bar of what constitutes congruent merit was raised proportionately as "that which in man is"—the capacity to live righteously and do good—increased by growth in grace; the condition placed upon man became ever more demanding commensurate to the present state of new life (the developed habit of righteousness) that had been inculcated in him by his progressive appropriation of grace through the appointed means of grace.

## Luther's Breakthrough Insight

Luther was concerned with the initial condition of receiving grace. Obviously, the Scriptures spoke of this condition as faith, but many theologians took this to mean The Faith: the acceptance of—assent to—the articles of the Catholic Faith (the creeds) and a submission to the magisterial authority of the Roman

Catholic Church. This submission (which placed one in the church) was concretely expressed in the receipt of holy baptism, and thus baptism was seen as the initiation into the sphere of grace, the impartation of supernatural life that must be then matured through diligent use of the sacraments and rituals of the church and prescribed deeds of charity that served to form faith into perfect love of God (that virtue which had condign merit in final justification). Faith is indeed counted for righteousness, but it is a faith working through love—a love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as these statements would be understood within the medieval-Roman Catholic sacerdotalist system.

Over against this formalistic conception of faith, Luther came to understand faith as an attitude directed towards God, rather than merely an attitude directed towards the church in assent to the Faith (a body of teaching) and submission to the church's authority. He saw this faith-attitude as humility, but (in terms of the Ockhamist scheme and medieval theology in general) he initially understood humility as a virtue. Accordingly, he held that the meritorious act that man must perform in order to receive grace was a humbling of himself before God in acknowledgment of his need of grace, of his lack of condign merit. In this humility man, from a profound sense of lack and of destitution, seeks mercy and thus prepares himself for receiving grace by being hungrily open to God's action and imploring it by humble supplication. It was as Luther became increasingly aware of the contradiction involved in this humility of faith (to wit, it is humbly recognized in penitent confession unto God and prostration before him that there is nothing good in man by virtue of which he can stand before God and claim to possess any merit whatsoever in the sight of God) that he decisively broke with the scheme of meritorious conditions and retreated from the idea of justification's depending upon "that which in man is." Justification could not be because of faith (faith as the condition); it was *through* faith (faith as a receptive response, an affirmation and appropriation).

This insight was a radical break with the synergistic soteriology of medieval Roman Catholicism. Salvation was not a cooperative and collaborative effort wherein God and man, working together as partners, each contribute their respective parts. On man's side, this partnership of mutual effort involved man's developing the grace thus far received, thereby preparing himself for yet more grace, being made increasingly more righteous by doing righteousness until he at last becomes truly worthy of final justification. In the view Luther came to hold, however, that which man did was no longer seen as meritorious in any respect; man could not prepare himself to be a worthy recipient of grace by any action on his part. This meant that the foundation of the present work of grace in the life of man had to lie elsewhere than in man and what he has done. The foundation of saving grace was outside man, wholly a work of God on our behalf (for us).

The Roman Catholic conception certainly appealed to the historical work of Christ, but this dimension of objective redemption (the "for us" of the Cross) was coordinated with the dimension of human response in their synergistic scheme; the application of the grace made possible by Christ's action was actualized in man only by man's works of righteousness such that this human effort contributed to the accomplishment of actual salvation, and was integrally a part of the meritorious foundation of man's salvation.

*Sometimes, apparently, this god is* almost *persuaded, and members glowingly speak afterwards among themselves about how so-and-so was* almost *saved.*

Luther's move dispensed with this coordination of the two dimensions of past and present, objective and subjective, thereby concentrating everything exclusively on the historical work of Christ (*solus Christus*). To say this was to say that Christ is our righteousness before God, that we have a passive and alien righteousness: not what is in us, and dependent on what we do (active righteousness), but that which has been done for us and outside us in Christ. Faith was now seen by Luther as full confidence in the work of Christ, a trust in the sufficiency of that work as the sure basis of a right relation to God and therefore of full salvation—the guarantee of justification. Against the uncertainty that marked the medieval view of the outcome of the Last Judgment and the verdict that would there be rendered (can we ever really know that we have truly done all that we could?), faith, as Luther now saw it, could be a full assurance in our possession of justification because our new status before God (a status possessed by virtue of our being in Christ) is Christ's status before God (the beloved, well-pleasing Son) and is as secure and unchanging as Christ's enjoyment of his Father's favor. We know we have eternal life because we know that we are accepted and approved by God for Christ's sake, not by works of righteousness that we have done (which, even when judged by a sliding scale of congruent merit, may or may not be sufficient).

Faith in its humility before God acknowledges that there is nothing good in man, that he has no merit in God's sight and thus has no contribution to make to his

own salvation, thus throwing himself upon the sheer mercy of God, investing all confidence in the grace of God manifested in the Christ-event and holding fast to the promise of the gospel: *viz.*, that God freely forgives sins for Christ's sake. In its humility it confesses total depravity and total inability, the absolute necessity of divine monergism (God working alone) in the salvation of man. Such faith is not a meritorious condition for grace (such would belie its confession of absolute unworthiness) but an acceptance of grace; it is as empty hands held forth to receive a hand-out and humbly admits to this emptiness, this lack, this abject neediness and dependency on unconditional grace—sheer mercy—from the God who must graciously provide all that is necessary (*sola gratia*). Were faith a condition, this would undermine its character as confidence in the sufficiency of work of Christ. Indeed, as Luther came increasingly to understand in his ongoing reflections, faith cannot be a condition for grace simply because it is itself a work of grace—a supernatural gift and the expression or manifestation of the new life of righteousness imparted to us wholly by grace, a fact which necessarily follows from the recognition of man's native incapacity (total inability, total depravity). There is no natural capacity for good in man, no active righteousness apart from grace; faith, therefore, far from being all that the natural man can do apart from grace to prepare himself for grace, is the certifying manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in that man who has been effectually called and monergistically placed into the state of grace whereby he knows that his acceptance by God—his righteous status before God—altogether depends on what Christ has done for him, that he has been completely forgiven of all his sins for Christ's sake. The assurance of faith—its certitude—is the witness of the Spirit testifying to the elect that they are the children of God, having been adopted to sonship through the redeeming work of Christ that was finished at Calvary.

## The Ockhamist Character of "Hard-Believism"

Returning now to the problem of "hard-believism," it is apparent from the example with which we began that such churches view faith as a condition and that they view salvation synergistically. They have bought back into the same sort of Ockhamist covenant theology which Luther and the Protestant Reformation repudiated. They are still concerned with the merit of "that which in man is," of what man is capable of doing in preparation for receiving grace. The quantity, strength, and purity of faith thus becomes an urgent concern, and the working up of sufficient faith to please God falls upon man and his efforts. Lost, therefore, is the Gospel teaching that faith the size of a mustard seed (the smallest of seeds) suffices; that we can pray, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief"; that God is as the waiting father, ready to receive and welcome with open arms and loving embrace the prodigal son (even running out to meet him eagerly); and that Christ, inviting all to come unto him for rest, promises that none who so come will be turned away. Lost, in other words, is Luther's emphasis that it is not the quality of the act of faith itself that is of consequence, but the object of faith: that to which one's faith (however imperfect and faltering) is directed and in which it comes to rest—the Lord Jesus Christ. God does not respond to us (our initiative); we respond to him, responding in faith to the Christ who seeks out and saves sinners. We respond to Christ as he addresses us and calls us in his word of invitation to come, as he is presented and comes to us in the gospel proclamation. This response of faith is nothing but believing what the gospel announces and promises, personally laying claim to the promise as a promise addressed to us and applicable to us.

If we rely upon our personal experience, we will either engage in the self-deception of a legalistic self-righteousness (feeling righteous) or we will have only the despair and disillusionment that results from our failure to obtain righteousness by our efforts (feeling guilty). Accordingly, "hard-believist" churches are filled with Pharisees and hypocrites (trumpeting a false spirituality and a false holiness) and with the despondent who, unable to work themselves up into the lather of perfectionist attainment, cannot find a gracious God.

## Luther's *Sola Fide* Versus "Easy-Believism"

Having seen that "hard-believism" is indeed a repudiation of Luther's affirmation of *sola fide*, must we now address the "easy-believists" who claim that they are the true heirs and contemporary champions of the Reformation's principle of *sola fide*? In answering this question negatively, it is important to note that Luther fully believed that this faith was itself the God-imparted presence of righteousness in us. Faith constitutes a principle of active righteousness that renews and transforms us ethically (a change of moral character). By imparting faith, God has begun a work in us; he has imparted experiential righteousness to us to sanctify us.

This sanctifying faith is the same faith as justifying faith; it is saving faith in Christ. It has no merit before God (it is rather his gift to us) and is not that righteousness which avails for justification; faith and justifying righteousness are distinct, for the basis of justification is the "alien righteousness" of Christ's fully accomplished redemptive work for us, a perfect work on which faith merely rests, contributing nothing. This faith-response is nevertheless the presence of new life and new righteousness in us, the principle out of which good works issue forth. Luther emphatically insisted that he held a very active view of faith, a living faith necessarily productive of good works. Chiefly, he maintained that this faith manifested itself in a continuous state of repentance and an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as our Lord.

Luther, treating the Apostles' Creed in his Small Catechism, comments on the Second Article, "I believe in Jesus Christ . . . our Lord," in a way that shows that, for him, saving faith is commitment to the Lordship of

Christ. Faith is not merely knowledge of, or intellectual assent to, the fact of Jesus' Lordship; it does not simply recognize and acknowledge that Christ is the Lord, but it also owns him and addresses him as our Lord. Faith, by confessing Jesus as our Lord, recognizes the existence of a special covenant relation that solemnly binds us to Christ's Lordship in his capacity and office as covenant Lord whereby we are his people, consecrated to him, belonging to him, and under his rule in a special way (one that is distinct from his general, cosmic rule over all). It is clear that Luther here teaches Christ is personally confessed by me to be my Lord, the Lord with whom I have personally to do and to whom I must render an accounting. I recognize his right, the legitimacy of his claim; I acknowledge my obligation to obey and serve him as my Lord. Accordingly, I must relate to him as my Lord and respect him as such, acknowledging the propriety of his claim to my loyalty and my responsibility to serve him diligently. Saving faith takes this shape of obedient submission, for we should so fear, love, and trust God as to do his will and keep his commandments.

Easy believists cannot appeal to Luther and the Reformation tradition for their peculiar view of *sola fide*. Luther conceived of *sola fide* in a deeply theocentric manner, ascribing all glory to God. Luther held that one could keep the first two commandments of the Decalogue—having no other gods and not taking the Lord's name in vain—only by faith. Faith therefore restored the Law of God to its proper function by ending the perversion of the Law by legalism and the idea of works-righteousness—a form of idolatry and a barrier to loving God (the fulfilling of the Law) and giving to him all glory. As such, faith was true (though imperfect), active righteousness and obedience to the Lord, and only that which was not of faith was sin.

Salvation by faith alone did not let man "off the hook" with a free gift that had "no strings attached" (a case of God's serving man). This gracious salvation was the necessary condition of man's truly serving God in selfless devotion; we are saved unto good works, made capable in Christ of doing works in the Spirit that are truly pleasing in the sight of God our Father. Only because man need no longer concern himself with saving himself was he set free from the self-absorption of medieval religion in order to love and so fulfill the Law. Both "hard-believists" and "easy-believists," though in different ways, have succumbed to this sinful self-concern and self-exaltation, refusing to submit to the righteousness of God that effects salvation.

We must understand Luther as addressing the problem of man's total inability—the bondage of the will to sin—so that man may be set free from the thrall of sin's dominion, dead to sin and alive to God. This liberation of the captives was from the power and dominion of sin that had enslaved man; it was a release from the realm of sin, delivering man out of sin into the Kingdom of Christ (*i.e.*, under the jurisdiction of his Lordship), so that man, no longer under the sway of sin, might be enabled and empowered to serve God acceptably from a heart renewed by grace and, because freed from guilt, made right with God. Because the reconciliation effected through justification by faith reconciled both sides to each other, ending the estrangement—the enmity—on both sides, Luther did not consider the liberty of the gospel liberation from sin to be a freedom for an unchanged (still rebellious, still fleshly) man to continue in sin as one granted a license to sin. Luther insists that, while the justified, who, despite the accompanying work of renewing and transforming grace in them, remain always sinners (not perfect) in this life, that same faith which lays hold of justification in Christ is also marked by a spirit of continual repentance over remaining sin such that the justified are always penitent and cannot take their sins lightly nor fall into moral laxity.

## Conclusion

The gospel is glad tidings, not that we can be self-righteously puffed up in a pharisaic spiritual pride, boasting of our personal holiness and our attainment, nor that we can now sin with worry-free impunity as those who have obtained "fire insurance." It is rather the joyously good news that we have been set free to be the people of God, in order "that we, being saved from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives," as those saved from sin and unto good works. This is good news indeed!

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[1] I am somewhat reminded of the priests of Baal crying unto their deity from morning until noon in their contest with Elijah and of Elijah's mockery of them (*1 Kin. 18:26-29*). I cannot refer to this reluctant deity as God—the true God. Whatever god they seek to appease and propitiate by such Baalist supplication is not the God revealed in Christ Jesus as rich in mercy, the God who invites us to come to him.

[2] I would argue that dispensationalism has far more in common with this Ockhamist "covenant theology" than does Reformed covenant theology in even its most scholastic presentations.

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*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. He can be reached at 1520 Prospect St., Palatka, FL 32177-5935.*

# Should Hate Be a Crime?

## *By Sheldon Richman*

Some policymakers in Washington want to make it easier for the federal government to prosecute people for what's in their minds. Among those who support that idea are President Clinton and Senators Edward Kennedy and Arlen Specter. The foolishness, as you can see, is bipartisan. Kennedy and Specter are co-sponsors of a bill that would expand the federal government's authority to prosecute what are called hate crimes. There is already federal authority in the matter but apparently not enough for these senators. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act (a typical Washington title) would stiffen penalties and give the Justice Department more power to preempt local law-enforcement authorities. At a recent White House conference on hate crimes, President Clinton also got on board.

Maybe it should be a crime to show such contempt for the Constitution. The President and senators would be in the hoosegow today.

What could be wrong with federal prosecution of hate crimes? Lots of things.

First, there is no definition of "hate crime" that does not make feelings a criminal offense. In typical hate-crime legislation, someone committing a murder or assault faces additional punishment if it can be proved that the perpetrator bore his victim ill-will for reasons relating to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and similar considerations. In other words, if you strike someone because you dislike that person in particular, you get one penalty. If you strike him because you are bigoted toward that person's racial group, you are punished more severely. The hateful state of mind is a crime and therefore gets you a longer jail term.

On at least two counts, that approach departs from how the United States has handled crime since its founding. As Western legal thinking has developed over many centuries, one could be punished only for deliberate acts against the person and property of another. The word "deliberate" does refer to a state of mind. The criminal must have intended to do harm or at least have been reckless with respect to the consequences of his action.

The category of hate crimes goes beyond identifying a general malicious state of mind and distinguishes between different kinds of malice. Given identical criminal acts, malice born of bigotry is treated more severely than malice born of other considerations. That is ominous. What other distinctions will enterprising policymakers and interest-group lobbyists come up with in the future?

I don't think we want to learn the answer to that question.

If bigotry can be an element in a crime, why isn't bigotry itself a crime? It doesn't take a huge stretch of the imagination to see this as the next step. Actually, bigotry has been a federal crime for quite a while. An employer is free to turn down an applicant for a job for any reason unless the reason is defined as bigotry by civil rights employment law. A landlord is free to turn away a prospective tenant—unless the reason is defined as bigotry in civil rights housing law. State of mind makes all the difference in whether a peaceful act is treated as a crime.

Blind bigotry is morally objectionable. Nevertheless, hiring and renting are aspects of freedom of association. And freedom of association must include the freedom not to associate according to one's chosen standards. We may not like those standards, but we should defend to the death another's right to have them.

There is another problem with federal prosecution of "hate crimes." The Constitution does not give the federal government general authority in criminal law enforcement. That makes it a state and local matter, and for good reason. Centralization of power is always to be feared. The chance of abuse is lessened when power is decentralized. The framers of the Constitution knew what they were doing when they gave the federal government jurisdiction over only a few crimes. They opted for decentralization regarding the rest. Violation of that principle in recent years has been a bad thing. Rather than going further in that direction, we should repeal the federal intrusion that has already taken place.

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*Sheldon Richman is a senior fellow at The Future of Freedom Foundation in Fairfax, Va., and editor of* The Freeman *magazine.*

# An Expressly Biblical Approach to Economics

## *By Tom Rose*

### Author's Autobiography

Years ago, when I was still a religious agnostic, I was opposed to Christianity because most of the Christians with whom I was acquainted adhered to a socialist/statist ideology. Some of the strongest expounders of this left-leaning statism were pastors of Christian churches.

"If this is what the Bible teaches," I reasoned, "then I don't want anything to do with it!"

But, unknown to me at that time, the Holy Spirit was working in my life. A business associate where I worked was a "Bible thumper." He was always coming into my office to "needle" me about the Bible. One day he advised me that the various theological books I was reading in my search for an unchanging and everlasting righteousness were just leading me further and further away from Christ. Then he asked, "Tom, how much of the Bible have you read?" My friend's name was Seldon Brown, and we worked for the Associated Industries of Missouri in St. Louis.

I replied, "I guess I haven't been fair about this, have I?" So I went out at lunch time and bought a King James Bible at a downtown "5 and 10" store.

When my friend passed by my office after lunch and looked in, I waved the Bible at him, and he said, "I know exactly what you're going to do. You're going to read that Bible with the intent of disproving every word in it, aren't you?"

"Of course," I replied.

"You can't read it that way! You have to read it prayerfully," he replied.

"How can I read it prayerfully, Seldon? I don't even know if there is a God to pray to!"

But, instead of getting a rise out of him, as I expected, Seldon just looked me in the eye and sternly retorted, "That's *your* problem!" Then he spun on his heel and walked out!

That night I took the Bible, got down on my knees and said a prayer that was honest, though a bit different than the prayers I now pray: "Oh God, if there is a God, and if this is your word, speak to me through it."

God answered that prayer, and thus began a spiritual and intellectual journey of inquiry which was destined to change, not only my world-and-life view, but also my career.

I started reading at Genesis 1:1. And as I read, it became overwhelmingly clear that the collectivist ideology that so many of the Christians whom I encountered were espousing evidently did *not* come from the Bible! For I discovered that the Bible expounds, explicitly and consistently, a position that upholds man's individual freedom and self-responsibility before God. Accordingly, the Bible did not, as I had erroneously believed, come anywhere near to endorsing the centralization of power in the hands of civil authorities, but rather the opposite. Nor did the Bible look with favor on monetary inflation to "stimulate" the economy, nor manipulation of the economy through fiscal or monetary policies. Nor did it approve of government "transfer payments" to help the poor, to subsidize or assist other "needy" groups, business firms, or occupations. I found the Bible to be consistently adamant about the principles, "Thou shalt not steal" and, "Thou shalt not covet."

Finding in the Bible the unchanging and everlasting righteousness which I had hungered after for so long worked to lower my mental resistance to the truth of the Bible. God's word changed my hardened mind-set, the Holy Spirit wooed my heart, and in short order I joyously discovered that I had been one of God's elect from before the foundation of the world.

What follows is an expressly Biblical approach to economics. It has gradually developed over the years by my constantly searching Scripture and then attempting to apply God's thoughts (*2 Cor. 10:3-5*) to the science of economics, which might be better defined as "man's work in God's world."

### The Economic Question

*It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer:*
*but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.*
(*Pr. 20:14*)

Some years ago I was invited to serve on a debate panel with two other economists. One was to speak on the Biblical basis of socialism. Another was to speak on the Biblical basis of, believe it or not, Keynesianism. And I was to speak on the Biblical basis of the free market. In my introductory remarks, I warned the audience that each of us would be presenting ideas that conflicted and that each of us would claim that the Bible supported the position that each speaker expounded. But I pointed out that the Bible could not support such diametrically opposed views; that some of us, no doubt, would be expressing Satanic ideas, and that it was up to the

audience to evaluate and weigh what each of us had to say with reference to Biblical precepts.

How is it that three economists, each claiming to be a Christian, could look to the Bible for support of such opposing "brands" of economics? Is it that *any* system of economics can legitimately be defined as harmonious with Biblical precepts, and that the real issue depends on the economist's presuppositions? (As economists, we were all aware of the warning: "Don't accept an economist's model without first checking out his assumptions!")

Or, perhaps, is the real truth concerning economics that the Bible has nothing at all to do with the so-called "science" of economics, since the study of economics is purely a matter, as some economists claim, of searching for cause-effect patterns through the positivistic process of applying the scientific method?[1]

For example, I once attended an economics seminar in Chicago. During a coffee break, one of the speakers overheard some of us discussing a "normative"[2] economic issue. At the next session the speaker digressed a few minutes to make this assertion:

> Look, I'm a professional economist. As such, I don't get involved in choosing or weighing the moral or ethical aspects of the projects I'm hired for. If I did so, I would immediately lose my status as a professional. Thus, it's up to my employers—a business corporation, foundation, or government—to choose the ends they desire. As a professional economist, my only job is to show those who hire me the most efficient means of achieving the ends they have already chosen!

After his talk, I approached that positive practitioner of economic science and engaged him in conversation. After verifying that he *really* meant to say what he did, I asked, "But haven't you just accurately described the viewpoint of a professional prostitute when she sells her services?" He, of course, was highly offended that a fellow-economist would suggest that his line of operation resulted in his prostituting his services. This true story helps us focus on just one of the problems that practitioners of so-called "positive" economics must deal with, that is, the false dichotomy that modern science attempts to establish between man-the-economist and man-the-moralist. It simply cannot be done if one values moral integrity!

Lastly, when considering the Bible and economics, is it possible that the Bible perhaps *does* have something to say about economics, but *only* in the "normative" aspect of economics in which the economist is confronted with evaluating choices that directly impinge on moral issues? I have often advised my students that "man-the-moralist" must always look over the shoulder of "man-the-economist," to make sure that he is headed in the right direction!

## The Fundamentals of Economics

In order to adequately answer the question "What is an expressly Biblical approach to economics," we must start with fundamentals. First, we must remind ourselves *what* the study of economics deals with: it deals with man. It deals with how man acts economically in the world that God created. Second, we must define it. I define *economics* as the science of choice: the science, or study, of how man values alternative choices, and how he acts in implementing those choices in order to maximize his sense of well-being. You will note that this definition is somewhat broader than the dictionary definition of economics, that economics is "a social science concerned chiefly with description and analysis of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services."

Since the study of economics deals with man and how he chooses, we should take yet a third step in order to answer the question, "What is Biblical economics?" That is, we should see what the Bible has to say about man—his origin, his role in life, as well as his destiny. In short, we must always remember that God is the Author and Controller of all economic law, and that man's role is to discover and to apply God's law in God's created universe!

Now, at this point, fairness requires that I make some of my implicit assumptions explicit for all to see: I accept the Bible as the God-breathed word of God, and that it speaks authoritatively to *every aspect of man's life,* including the study of economics (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*). Furthermore, I operate from a presupposition that the Bible has worthwhile light to shed, not only on the aspects of *normative* economics, but also on the *positive* aspects as well.

In answer to the question of whether or not there is such a thing as "Christian" economics, my answer is both **yes** and **no**. It is *no* in the sense that a Christian economist will use many of the theorems,[3] theories,[4] and economic models that his secular counterparts customarily use. My own leaning on this question, perhaps, can best be discerned by the titles of two texts I have written on economics. They both are entitled: *Economics: . . . from a Christian* Perspective rather than "Christian economics."[5] Let's take a couple of ordinary-life examples: Before my wife, Ruth, and I accepted Christ as our personal Saviour, she used to bake biscuits for breakfast two or three times a week. After we were saved, she continued the same practice, but she didn't change her biscuit recipe. Thus, her salvation didn't affect her practice of baking one iota. Of course, there were other areas of our household management that *did* change after we became Christian, especially those dealing with value orientation.

Take, for another example: Mr. Brown is the manager of the produce department in a supermarket. His customers sometimes complain that his packaged fruit and vegetables often contain spoiled items. Mr. Brown now comes to know the Lord. After this heart-changing encounter, is it unreasonable to expect Mr. Brown to show more care in packaging his fruit and vegetables? Good business practice alone would suggest such improved care after customer complaints, but the leading of the Holy Spirit would practically insure it. This is a good example

of how the application of Biblical theology, through changed hearts, leads to good economics and honorable business practices.

The point I am making in these examples is that a person's theology certainly *does* beneficially affect the practice of economics in every aspect of life: at home, in one's career, and in one's relationship with others.

My "yes" answer as to whether or not there is such a thing as "Christian" economics goes something like this: Christian economics is simply the application of Biblical precepts[6] and insights[7] to the study of economics. Having said this, let's recognize that the Bible can be applied, or misapplied, in many different ways, depending upon one's *a priori*[8] and one's relative state of Christian maturity, which is always changing—one hopes, in the direction of bringing all thought captive to the mind of Christ. In spite of this potential "*a priori* hazard" and maturity problem, it is my belief that one *can* confidently rely on the Bible to shed meaningful light and give meaningful direction in the study of economics, both in the so-called "positive" and "normative" spheres into which the study has been artificially divided.

Let us, then, take Bible in hand and investigate in a practical way how God's word can indeed shed needed light on man, on man's purpose in life, and on man's economic activity while he temporarily sojourns in God's created world. Though there are many potential applications, we will select only a relatively few.

## Man Was Made Free and Responsible to God

**Genesis 1:26-27**: Man is made in the very image and likeness of God. Man, therefore, is free and has a *right to be free* because he is God's image bearer. Also, for the same reason, man is an *economic being*. That is, he is able to think, to impute value, and to rank his imputed values on a comparative scale so that he can make intelligent choices. Man engages in the mental process in the very same way that God does. If man were not created in the very image and likeness of God, he would be incapable of making value imputations,[9] and there would, therefore, be no such thing as the study of economics.

This observation, by the way, is a *positive* application of the Bible to the study of economics. Note, too, that God's dominion mandate to man was made in relation to man's covenantal role as head of the family. This, as well as other verses, brings us face to face with the Biblical concept of *sphere law*,[10] which serves to decentralize social power structures into the separate spheres of self, family, church, voluntary organizations (like schools, business firms, clubs, etc.), and civil government. This Genesis passage, and others, therefore suggest a decentralized economic system which emphasizes man's right to individual freedom and self-responsibility before God.

## Man is a Covenant Creature

**Genesis 1:27-28**: Man stands in direct covenantal relationship to God with respect to his role as vice-regent over God's creation. In order to exert dominion over God's creation, man must be *free* to do so. Without economic freedom to act, man cannot properly be held responsible by God for his actions. Thus, God's cultural mandate to man also calls for maximum economic freedom coupled with maximal responsibility to God. Maximal responsibility of self to God can best be achieved in a society in which voluntarism is practiced. This is nothing more than an operative "free market" system, which is defined as the voluntary exchange of goods and services between free and self-responsible individuals before God.

## Man's Sin Leads to Lust for Tyranny

**Genesis 3:1-19**: Man sinned! Therefore, the natural economic scarcity (a result of man's being created as a finite being) that existed even before man's fall was exacerbated in intensity. Thus, man is condemned in this fallen world to continual economic struggle simply to survive. Civil rulers who attempt to build Utopias here on earth through economic intervention might well take this passage to heart; for rulers are not only finite beings with limitations to their knowledge and ability, but they are sin-burdened just as much as, if not more than, the citizens over whom they exert hegemony. As a result of both their created finiteness and sin burden, civil rulers cannot be trusted with the heady experience of centralized political or economic power. They would be sure to abuse it! The Kentucky Resolution, passed by the Kentucky State House of Representatives on November 10, 1798, and concurred unanimously by the Kentucky State Senate three days later, recognized the sinful tendency of civil rulers to tend towards tyranny:

> In questions of power then let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.[11]

## Civil Authority Must Be Limited

**Jeremiah 17:5,7,9,10**: Man's heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Therefore, as we have already indicated, it is not safe to allow fallen men to rule over others. The dilemma is that *all* men are sinful and cannot be trusted. So what is the solution? The answer is a strictly limited civil authority which serves to repress the natural outworking of man's evil heart in society so that voluntary exchange will be maximized and the use of coercive force minimized. The very existence of evil in the world *requires* some sort of institutional arrangement which will deter the outworking of evil from man's heart and the fostering of voluntarism. For instance, it would be a breach of an important Biblical principle for me, or you, or the civil authority, or even the elders of a church, to dictate to someone else how he should spend his income or direct his tithe to God. To do so would be a pompous and blatant act of tyranny, for the control of another man's abilities, income, and wealth is solely his *own* responsibility before God. God reserves to himself sole authority for searching the heart and trying the reins

of men's hearts. It is not a responsibility that can be legitimately or safely entrusted to any other earthly entity. Yet, how often do we see individuals, civil rulers, and sometimes even church leaders judging the spending and giving of others! It is this mindset and practice that fuels the growth of centralized civil government and the so-called "welfare state" which we have observed for most of this century in our American Republic.

## Economics, Civil Government, and Sin

A few more words should be directed at this point to man's inner sin problem and God's outward provision for man's living in a sinful world without tyranny and utter chaos being the result. Consider this: yes, it is true that man's heart always turns toward evil, and that he cannot therefore be trusted in positions of authority (*Gen. 6:5*). Yet, God *has* made a unique provision to stem the outward working of man's evil heart. He has done so through a combination of man's very God-given nature in conjunction with the proper functioning of civil government, the only valid *coercive* social institution, which God himself instituted.

How does this God-instituted synergistic combination of sinful man and coercive civil government function? It works like this, and it depends upon a great big "IF." *IF* the civil authority faithfully performs its God-given role of maintaining lawful peace and order (*2 Tim. 2:1-2*; *Rom. 13:1-7*), then outward social harmony results, in spite of man's inward evil heart. As long as civil rulers faithfully fulfill their God-given responsibility to punish evildoers, then no person or entity in society will be able to tyrannize anyone else by wrongly imposing his will on another. The beneficial result of this proper functioning of the civil authority is that all men will then be forced by law to enhance their own well-being *only* through the peaceful process of voluntary exchange. And, each person, because he is self-interested, will agree to engage in economic exchanges in a free market scenario *only* if he perceives that he will be better off after an exchange than before the exchange takes place.

What does this mean in practice? It means that neither person in a potential exchange will proceed to finalize the exchange unless the perceived benefit of what he receives is *greater* in value than what he surrenders in the exchange. This guarantees that *both* parties to a voluntary exchange benefit from it. How can this be so? Because each party to the exchange process mentally imputes a *higher* value on what he receives than on what he gives in payment. If this were not so, then one or the other would abort the exchange process. Forced exchanges always benefit one party at the expense of another. Only voluntary exchange guarantees that *both* participating parties are better off after the exchange than before.

If civil rulers are truly interested in the economic welfare of the citizens over whom they bear rule (and is there any office holder who would deny that he does?), then they would be very careful to apply God's higher law evenly and without bias. Thus, voluntarism would abound, and unlawful force to tyrannize others would be quickly punished. In such a peaceful atmosphere, the general economic and social welfare of mankind would be fostered; and man's right and duty to stand self-responsible before God likewise would be maximized.

## God Desires Social Decentrilization

**Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9**: God's response to Nimrod's attempt at building history's first worldwide totalitarian State at Babel was to confuse the language, scatter the people, and divide the lands. Thus we see that God's plan for man in a sinful world is to move toward a decentralization of power and towards a one-to-one basis for economic exchange. This is a movement towards free-market exchange rather than towards a system of centralized economic control and government-directed exchange, which is exactly what we see occurring in the world today. The centralization of power leads inescapably to tyranny and to the subsequent loss of man's freedom and self-responsibility before God. This point is especially important for Christian patriots to be aware of and concerned about. Why? Because there are hidden forces in our own country and in other countries of the world that are in the late stages of quietly dismantling our constitutional republic with the objective of melding it into a one-world, fascistic State under the United Nations.

## Man's Duty Is to Be Free

**Exodus 8:1**: Man has not only the *right* to be free, but he has the *duty* to preserve his freedom. Why is this so? Because in no other way can man be held accountable to God. Note that the purpose of freedom is not freedom simply for the sake of being free (which would be nothing more than a license to sin), but rather freedom for the purpose of serving God (*Ec. 12:13-14*). Likewise, economic freedom isn't simply for the sake of enjoying unfettered license without any moral restraints; rather, its purpose is to allow mankind maximum freedom in enlisting all of his resources—his personal gifts, and his physical wealth and financial resources—in the challenging service of faithfully building the Kingdom of God until Christ returns. This is what Christian Reconstruction is all about.

Once I gave a lecture at a faculty forum at a Christian college. I spoke on the voluntary exchange of goods and services (the free-market process) and how it is the *only* system of economic exchange that squares with Biblical precepts. A professor in the history department took strong exception. He held to the idea that man, in his God-given freedom, had the free choice of opting for either a free-market system or one of the non-free systems like socialism, fascism, or communism.

I explained that God does *not* give man freedom, only to give it up in exchange for some form of totalitarian "ism" because, in doing so, he would pervert God's mandate that man is responsible for self to God.

Totalitarian systems rob man of his *duty* to be responsibleto God for all of his actions.

## Civil Government Licensing Is Wrong

**Exodus 31:1-5**: This passage informs us that God gave Bezaleel, Aholiab, and "all that are wise hearted" the necessary gifts to construct the tabernacle. What implication does this passage have regarding government-imposed licensing laws which serve to restrict entry of would-be competitors to various licensed professions? Licensing laws serve economically to artificially raise the incomes and social prestige of the favored licensed practitioners above what they would otherwise be able to enjoy in a truly competitive free-market situation. Such protective laws are simply bald attempts to benefit a privileged few at the expense of the unorganized many. Also, such licensing laws always come about by planned collusion between the professional practitioners who are seeking to be licensed and the civil authorities who grant licenses.[12] The push for licensing laws is often said to arise from the need to "protect the public from quacks." But this is the argument presented by practitioners who desire the special benefits that licensing laws provide; it never comes from the general public, who always prefer a wide choice of service providers at low prices. Licensing laws serve effectively to squelch competition from would-be competitors by using the power of the state on behalf of the licensed profession.[13]

Question: Since every person is a unique, God-created individual with special gifts that can be applied in economic service to one's fellowmen, is it then proper for the civil authority to hinder the use of gifts that only God is capable of bestowing? Does not the civil authority that passes such protective legislation arrogate a power to itself that belongs only to God?

Question: Are there other workable alternatives to government-mandated licensing laws? Yes, but none that bestow such large benefits on those who are licensed. One alternative that would adequately protect consumers while still giving them wide choices at much lower costs is this simple solution: Let "licensing" be done by each competing professional organization, but *without* the coercive backing of the civil government! In short, let each professional group—and there might be a number of competing groups in each profession—grant "certificates of approval" to those practitioners who meet various criteria established by their professional group. Then let each group advertise to the general public the advantages that are bestowed on consumers for choosing to do business with their members! This method is simple, fair to all concerned, and, best of all, *competitive*! I used to write a weekly newspaper column with the by-line, "The competitive free-market is the workingman's best friend"! That, in my opinion, is an unchanging truth, as long as the civil authority fulfills its God-given role of maintaining a peaceful environment in which citizens are free to seek their own welfare and no one is allowed to use coercion on another. Most people are familiar with the Underwriters' "Seal of Approval." Consumers have come to trust this "Seal of Approval" because it has stood the test of time. The same procedure can be used in the non-government "licensing" I am describing here. Is it time to try it? I highly recommend doing so! Already-licensed professions would fight the idea to protect their hard-won turf; but it would be a boon to consumers in the form of much wider choices and much lower prices. Look what is happening as a result of more competition in the communications industry, the gas industry, and in the electrical energy industry. In each of these, service is rising at rapid rates, and prices to consumers are falling!

## A Free Market Generates Charity

**Leviticus 19:17-18**: God requires us to fear him, to love him, and to serve him with our whole heart and soul, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Thus, the application of economic enquiry must always be circumscribed and directed by God's law. This means that man-the-economist must continually delve into the Bible to make sure that he is always headed in the right direction; that is, that the economic ends man chooses to reach (a normative aspect of economics) are always in harmony with Biblical precepts. Also, the mandate to love our neighbor seems to require that the study of economics be directed toward the end of *serving* our fellowmen rather than *manipulating* them to achieve our own self-centered ends. This is a quite-contrary perspective from the perspective that most secularly-oriented economic textbooks present, because they focus mainly on Keynesian-oriented manipulation to induce the population to meld in with government-induced monetary and fiscal policies. At least that is the major focus of secular economic texts in studying what is called *macro-economic* policy. In short, God's mandate to love our neighbor as ourselves would seem to indicate that all government attempts to micro-manage the economy to achieve nationally-established goals (which is nothing more than fascism in practice) is un-Biblical.

These forbidden activities and agencies would include such things as taxing and spending to finance so-called "transfer payments" (Social Security, welfare, business and farm subsidies, etc.), wage and price controls, special legislation favoring one group over another. Also included are the numerous fascistic government control agencies such as the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), the Federal Reserve Bank (FRB), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and many, many others too numerous to mention. All of the above-mentioned practices and agencies serve to build a fascistic centralized State similar to what existed in Mussolini's Italy[14] and Hitler's Nazi Germany. They are all totalitarian in nature and threaten

the freedom of American citizens. Most Americans have succumbed to decades of government propaganda, so they have wrongly come to believe that such evidences of fascism are a natural part of living in an advanced industrial and technological society; but nothing could be further from the truth.[15] Our challenge in this respect is to search the Scriptures to learn what God's word says about the limited role the civil authority is to play in society. Let us remember that only the Biblical system of voluntary market exchange serves to maximize the outworking of true charity and service to others in any society, but especially in a society of free and self-responsible individuals before God.

## Monetary Inflation Is Evil

**Leviticus 19:35-36:** Monetary inflation is immoral, whether it is effected by the government treasury's printing fiat money, or whether it is brought about by the central bank (read: Federal Reserve Bank) insidiously "validating" government deficits through sophisticated, hard-to-understand forms of credit creation. Monetary inflation, properly defined as the creation of new purchasing media (money), is immoral because it insidiously changes the measure of the monetary unit by debauching the currency that people use in their everyday transactions. Monetary inflation is what counterfeiters engage in when they create false money, and it is just as morally wrong for civil rulers to "legally" create false money as it is for counterfeiters to do it illegally. In short, it is a clear breaking of God's admonishment to maintain a system of just weights and measures.

Garet Garrett, in writing about the Federal Reserve System and World War I, said:

> ... after many years of blundering toward it, and only a few months before the beginning of the war in Europe [WWI], we had found the formula for the most efficient credit machine that was ever invented. This was the Federal Reserve System.[16]

We should evaluate this powerful, secret money-making machine in light of God's word and in light of a clear reading of the United States Constitution. At worst, it should be reconstructed; at best, it should be disbanded, for it is a threat to people's liberty.

The Federal Reserve Bank has provided the needed sleight-of-hand credit financing to involve us in every foreign war during the twentieth century. The net result of our getting involved in one foreign war after another has been a consequent steady decline in personal freedom; the growth of a highly centralized, bureaucratic and fascistic government; a horrendous rise in taxation; the planned destruction of the gold standard, which used to give some degree of protection to American citizens against an out-of-control, profligate, high-spending government in Washington, D. C.; and decades of planned monetary inflation which has brought the 1940 purchasing value of the dollar to less than 8 cents. Yes, 92 percent of the value of the 1940 dollar has evaporated as a result of the Federal Reserve's long-term monetary policy, which has quietly cooperated (*i.e.*, colluded) with the federal government to finance government deficits with Federal Reserve credit.

## The Limited Role of Civil Government

**Romans 13:1-8; 1 Timothy 2:1-2:** The Biblical role of civil government is simply to maintain law and order so that men can be free to pursue their legitimate economic interests in an atmosphere of peace in service to God and their fellow men.

When the civil authority goes beyond this very limited role by arrogating additional powers to itself, then it unlawfully invades other law spheres—the individual and home, the church, business firms and other voluntary organizations—and thereby becomes tyrannical.[17] In essence, the corporate state then becomes a secular god which will not allow any other law sphere to exist in freedom and independence. We are seeing this ugly face of atheistic humanism on the rise in our own American Republic, as well as throughout the world.

Only a return to a Biblically-based concept of sphere law will be able to turn this ominous tide of social revolution. What people need to do is:

1) Study God's word to determine what the God-given role of civil government is in society. People who value freedom and who desire to remain free must rediscover the answer to this question: What is the proper sphere of operation, and what are the legitimate Biblical limitations to the power of civil rulers?

2) Study the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights to rediscover the clear limits of power that were so carefully delegated to the federal government by America's Founding Fathers. Also, it would be good to study the Anti-Federalist Papers to learn why certain Christian leaders like Patrick Henry opposed the Constitution of 1787 as giving too much power to the central government, and why certain Christian leaders, as now exemplified by the National Reform Association, favored an explicit recognition of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords in our Constitution. In short, a good understanding of the historical setting which produced the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States is in order if needed changes in civil polity are to be wisely implemented.

The Bible speaks in many other ways to the study of economics and to the proper role of civil government (which is a closely related subject). Paul, in Chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, speaks about the diversity of spiritual gifts in the church. This same principle, applied to economics, teaches us that the diversity of gifts which God has bestowed on mankind is what makes economic exchange between individual men, as well as between countries, profitable and beneficial to all participants. Also, the Bible instructs man to rest one day in seven. Fallen man might choose to work seven days and refuse

to rest on the Sabbath, but God's word clearly says, "no." We should obey, first, for the very sake of obedience, but also because of trust that God loves us and knows what is best for us, who are his creation. In conclusion, let me briefly summarize what is clear. The Bible:

1) Provides us with a clear guide for economic development (*Dt. 28*) and limited civil government (*Dt. 17:14-20*),

2) Stresses the dispersal of economic and political power in contrast to a concentration of power at the national or international levels (*Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9*),

3) Focuses on the inseparable concepts of individual responsibility before God, coupled with maximal personal economic freedom (*Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 8:1*), and

4) Insists that, because of man's innate sinful nature, mankind must rely on God's providence through free-market exchange, rather than trusting in the goodness of men, *i.e.*, civil rulers (*Jer. 17:5,7,9,10; Ps. 118:8-9*).

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[1] The "scientific method" is a thought process which involves five basic steps: 1) The searcher for truth collects empirical data. 2) Then he studies the data to discover uniformity to arrive at a generalization. 3) The searcher then forms a hypothesis, which explains the generalization. 4) Next, he take the hypothesis through controlled experiments, thus producing a theory. 5) Lastly, he applies the theory by making predictions and then checking to see if it really works by producing truly predictable results. See Tom Rose, *Economics: Principles and Policy from a Christian Perspective*, 2d ed. (Mercer, PA, 1987), 25.

[2] *ibid.*, 27. "Positive economics" is the so-called "pure science" aspect of economics which stresses the five-point thought process mentioned above. It focuses on the most efficient means of achieving pre-determined ends. "Normative economics" is the broader aspect of economic study which deals with the ultimate ends and the directions toward which economic analysis is applied. Therefore, it involves the consideration of moral and ethical concepts.

[3] *Theorem*: An idea that is demonstrably true, or assumed to be true.

[4] *Theory*: Systematically organized knowledge applicable in a relatively wide variety of circumstances, especially a system of assumptions, accepted principles, and rules of procedure to analyze, predict, or otherwise explain a specified set of phenomena.

[5] *Economics: Principles and Policy from a Christian Perspective*, 2d ed., and *Economics: The American Economy from a Christian Perspective.*

[6] *Precept*: A rule or principle imposing a standard of action or conduct.

[7] *Insight*: The capacity to discern the true nature of a situation, an elucidating glimpse.

[8] *a priori*: A preexisting viewpoint, which is largely determined by the world-and-life view that one holds.

[9] Value exists *only* in a person's mind. To impute value is to mentally place a value onto: a *person* ("I love you"), an *object* ("I like chocolate better than vanilla"), or an *available alternative* ("I'm going to choose this route instead of the other"). Man has the mental capacity of imputing value because God has shared this capability with man, who thus shares in this aspect of God's nature. For more information on the Biblical application of value imputation, See Tom Rose, *Economics: Principles and Policy*, 21, 22, 39, 44, 90-91, 99-100.

[10] The Biblical concept of sphere law teaches that each social sphere (the individual and family, the church, voluntary organizations, and the civil government) is directly responsible to God, our Creator, who rules in every sphere. No sphere thus has the right to invade the responsibilities of another sphere. To do so would be to commit an act of gross tyranny. Note: The modern humanistic state (civil government) errs through the un-Biblical process of arrogating unwarranted powers to itself and thereby invading the proper domain of other God-established law spheres. It is pertinent here to point out that, Biblically, civil government is just one of various God-ordained social agencies. Civil government thus does *not* have open-ended power to do whatever civil rulers get a mind to do; rather, its rightful power is carefully limited by God's word. See Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

[11] Virginia Commission on Constitutional Government, *We the States: An Anthology of Historic Documents and Commentaries thereon, Expounding the State and Federal Relationship* (Richmond, VA, 1964), 150.

[12] For a more thorough discussion of licensing laws and where pressures originate for them, see Tom Rose, "An Economic Analysis of Labor Unions," in *Economics: The American Economy* (Mercer, PA, 1985), 20-24.

[13] For those interested in this subject, look up information of the so-called Flexner Report of 1910. One source is Douglass C. North and Roger LeRoy Miller, "The Economics of Rising Medical Costs," in *The Economics of Public Issues*, 6th ed. (New York, 1983), 61-70.

[14] The socialistic/fascistic state that Mussolini erected in Italy beginning in 1922 fascinated Franklin D. Roosevelt, who copied Mussolini's work when he fathered the National Recovery Administration in the early 1930s.

[15] For a thorough discussion of the differences between socialism, fascism, and communism, see Tom Rose, "The Isms," in *Economics: The American Economy*, 115-146.

[16] Garet Garrett and Murray N. Rothbard, *The Great Depression and New Deal Monetary Policy* (San Francisco, 1980), 5-6.

[17] The fact that most citizens have been conditioned, mentally and morally, to accept such an expanded role of the civil government in society does not negate its tyrannical nature. The most efficient way of imposing tyranny on a population is to psychologically manipulate people, not only so that they will tolerate, but that they will actually *embrace* it and feel naked to the alleged dangers and exigencies of freedom if and when the tyrannical institutions were to be removed!

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*Tom Rose is retired professor of economics, Grove City College, Pennsylvania. He is author of seven books and hundreds of articles dealing with economic and political issues. His articles have regularly appeared in* The Freeman, *published by Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, NY;* Christian Economics, *published by Christian Freedom Foundation, Buena Park, CA;* The Christian Statesman, *published by National Reform Association, Pittsburgh, PA; and in many other publications. For ten years he wrote a weekly syndicated column published by newspapers such as* The Santa Ana Register *(CA),* The Indianapolis Morning News *(IN),* The Manchester Union Leader *(NH),* The Gazette-Telegraph *(CO),* The Odessa American *(TX), and others. He and his wife, Ruth, raise registered Barzona cattle on a farm near Mercer, PA, where they also write and publish economic textbooks for use by Christian colleges, high schools and home educators. Rose's latest book is* Reclaiming the American Dream by Reconstructing the American Republic, *published by American Enterprise Publications, 177 N. Spring Rd., Mercer, PA, 16137. Phone: 412-748-3726; Fax: 412-748-5373.*

# Urban Nations Update:
# *E Pluribus Unum*
## *By Steve M. Schlissel*

Steve Schlissel Joining Many To "The One"

*E pluribus unum.* Out of many, one. A motto of the United States, we see it on our coins. Egalitarianism and multiculturalism are working hard to insure that this is the only place we'll see it, as America becomes a mere collection of warring factions.

And though denominationalism also obscures the truth of this motto in the church, from God's perspective it remains a living reality. From every nation, tribe, people and language, the One who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father (*Rev. 7:9; 1:5,6*). People who make up this Kingdom are formally transferred into it (*Col. 1:13*) by baptism (*Rom. 6:1-5*).

The richness of our relation to Christ is emphasized in Scripture by the diverse figures used to illustrate and explain it. Common to virtually all of them is the idea of union with Christ, and, as a consequence of that, union with one another in him.

Baptism, as the rite of covenant reception, marks the formal moment of union. Roman Catholic nuns may wear rings suggestive of their supposed marriage to Christ, which wedding was alleged to have taken place at their vows; but the fact is that it is at Christian baptism that Christ is united to those who constitute his bride (*Eph. 4:4,5; 5:22-33*). For remaining untouched by and above the controversies concerning mode and candidates of baptism is the Scriptural idea of what it signifies: identification.

When Christ was baptized by John, he was identifying with us, formally marking off the beginning of his work as our federal representative and Messiah. When sinners receive Christian baptism, they are thenceforth identified with Jesus Christ, their covenant head: they are set apart as his disciples (*Jn. 15:1-8*).

Paul uses this baptism imagery in 1 Corinthians 10 where the Israelites are said to have been "baptized into Moses," *i.e.*, identified with and incorporated into Moses as a covenant head, following him through the sea.

Though the writings of Meredith Kline have led many to read Exodus 19-24 as a ratfication of a suzerainty treaty—and I certainly recognize these elements in the narrative—I continue to read it as a wedding ceremony between God and his people Israel. For all the elements of a Jewish wedding are found therein: a matchmaker (Moses; Moses functioned in several capacities, both throughout his ministry, and here), a *chupah* (canopy) under which the bride and groom are wed (*19:18*), a procession of bride to groom (*19:17*), even music! (*19:19*), and most importantly, the *kethubbah* (the marriage contract explicating the mutual obligations between husband and wife; *Ex. 20-24*).

That God thought of this as the day of his wedding with Israel is rather plain. Ezekiel gives us God's thoughts: "When I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became Mine" (Ez. 16:8). This is hardly the language of a suzerain! Jeremiah confirms that God viewed Sinai as his wedding in 2:2: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert."

Those who came after the wedding day would be marked as among those who constituted "the bride of Jehovah" by circumcision. As we know, in the old administration of the covenant, these were, in the main, Jews.

In the new administration, a result of the historical accomplishment of Christ's work, those who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Messiah (*Eph. 2:13*). He has made the two one, creating in himself one new entity out of the two (2:15). Gentiles are now fellow citizens with God's people, members of God's household, constituent members of "Christ's bride." Baptism marks their entrance into this glorious status, for Gentiles need not become Jews in order to become Christians.

The Gentiles, who were themselves a great multitude of nations, are united by faith along with the Jews so as to become one. Out of the many, one. One Lord, one faith, one baptism because one *bride*.

Because of all this, the church, in her missionary enterprise, must not count as converts those who raised their hands at a meeting, but rather those who pass through the waters of identification with Christ, that is, those who are baptized. Coming, as it were, from "the outside," they, by baptism, become entitled to wear the name of their husband, Jesus Christ. Christians are a people of decency and order. We don't believe in mere "cohabitation": we encourage marriage.

What a joyous privilege it is to see souls pass from death to life, to see God's grace in action! To use Ezekiel's imagery, he continues to pity those objects of his love whom he had found "kicking in their blood," hopelessly cast off from life. These he sovereignly picks up, cleanses, cares for, and, in his time, he casts his cloak around them and calls them his own, his beloved.

In January, Messiah's Congregation welcomed into membership four precious souls. Joseph Williams, an American, was received by reaffirmation of faith, as was Ursula Matos, a Peruvian. Received by baptism were their respective spouses: Myhuong Williams, from Vietnam, and Henry Matos, from Peru.

Rejoice with us in this our common work, gathering, in Christ's Name and by his Spirit, souls from diverse nations so that they might be, out of the many, one Bride for him. *E plurubus unum* is true only in Christ.

**Urban Nations**
**2662 East 24th Street**
**Brooklyn, NY 11235**
**(718) 332-4444**
**UrbanNations@usa.net**

POSITION PAPER NO. 223

# Autonomy

## *By R. J. Rushdoony*

The goal of man in his sin was and is autonomy, to be his own ultimate, his own god. This meant determining, or knowing for himself, what is good and evil in terms of purely personal criteria. This has come to mean a number of things, *i.e.,* power for power's sake; sex for radically experiential reasons without reference to law, morality, or the personality of the other person; speed for the sake of speed; and so on and on. One aspect of this exaltation of autonomy has been art for art's sake. Leo Tolstoy attacked this bitterly but falsely in that his view was one governed by moral considerations, not by religion, not by theology. However important moral considerations are, in Tolstoy's hands they were separated from theology and were humanistic. We now have science for science's sake, and the theological questions raised about certain types of investigations are seen as intrusive and extraneous. Science as its own justification is now a deeply entrenched practice, and any questions raised against it are held to be ignorant and retrogressive.

Robert R. Preato has observed,

> The exaggerated and distorted form of the Aesthetic doctrine declared that art is *self-sufficient and autonomous, serving no other purpose, be it moral, religious or political. Nor should art be judged according to scientific laws or doctrines.* This was the doctrine expounded by Theophile Gautier in the preface to his novel, *Mademoiselle de Maupin,* published in 1835: "Art may not serve any other values than the aesthetic without damaging its aesthetic value." (Robert R. Preato, "Whistler's Aesthetics and Japanese Design," in Gary Levine, Robert R. Preato, Francine Tyler: *La Femme, The Influence of Whistler and Japanese Print Masters on American Art 1880-1917,* p. 66. New York, NY: Grand Central Art Galleries, 1983).

This quest for autonomy is basic to what is known as "modern" art. It is separated from any association with religion, meaning, coherence, culture, history, and all else. It is the autonomous expression of the artist, and the more autonomous it is, the more successful is the composition.

Art for art's sake is an expression of original sin, of man's insistence on autonomy from God. It is an aspect of the premise, man for man's sake. Not surprisingly, almost all people today expect to go to heaven, if they believe in a heaven at all. After all, by what standard can they be excluded? They may be dissatisfied with themselves, but God has no right to be, because man is an autonomous creation, which means that none in heaven, hell, or earth has any valid ground for rejecting them. One spoiled modern man confessed once when drunk to his wife of his involvement in various evils. She already knew him to be a sadistic torturer and a depraved

man. When later, she reproached him for his evils, his answer was that none had a right to judge him except himself. This is the logic of autonomy. Every man becomes his own god and universe, and no one else has the right to judge him. Jesus Christ requires judgment according to God's law: "judge righteous judgment" (*Jn. 7:24*), but his requirement that our judgments avoid the personal for the Biblical criterion are passed over and, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (*Mt. 7:1, 2*), a requirement that our standard for judgment be not personal, is routinely misused to mean *no judgment.*

Antinomianism is related to this quest for autonomy because God's law is, among other things, a criterion for judgment. The commandments against theft and false witness (*Dt. 5:19, 20*), for example, mean that no autonomy of action is possible. Because there is no autonomy in these spheres, or any other, there is no immunity from judgment.

Autonomy means deliverance from judgment. It also means autonomy, ostensibly, from God. The autonomy of reason from God is basic to rationalism. Both its concepts of reason and God are false. For rationalism, reason replaces God as the judge of all things, and "the bar of reason" gives us a new judgment seat for all things.

Genesis 3:5 makes clear that man's original sin, to be his own god and his autonomous source of determination, is his continuing offense. Romans 5:20 tells us that "the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." As Herman N. Ridderbos observed, the law increases sin in fallen man by bringing out his resistance, fury, and hatred of God:

> The law provokes sin, for sin shoots forth like a bright flame when the law is applied to forbid it. Sin properly manifests itself in its very nature whenever the law raises its voice. Paul discusses this fact in a remarkable way in Romans 7 (RSV): "Our sinful passions [were] aroused by the law" (v. 5), and further on in the same connection: "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means!. . . But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead; I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived. . . For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me" (vv. 7-11). (Herman N. Ridderbos: *When the Time Had Fully Come,* p. 67. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1957).

The Law exposes the heart of sin, its enmity towards and hatred of God. The sinner is not allowed by the law to live hidden from the light of the law and its exposure, so the law compels man to see that God knows he is a sinner who deserves the death penalty. The law reveals the penalty, but even more its words point to the greater power of grace.

Autonomy is a heady doctrine. For Edward Carnell, his autonomous reason meant that all deities and revelations were under his judgment. His rationalism made him god over God.

Cornelius Van Til, in discussing S. U. Zuidema's analysis of the philosophy of William of Ockham, pointed out that Zuidema saw that for Ockham man was ultimate: "Ockham's god is made in the image of the 'free man,' whose image and whose nostalgia is lawlessness" (Cornelius Van Til: *The New Hermeneutic,* p. 183. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974). Because *autonomy* means literally *self-law,* autonomy and antinomianism (meaning against law, *i.e.,* God's law), autonomy is the logical goal of man in his revolt against God. Autonomy is manifest in many ways: in the man's revolt against God, in the woman's revolt against God and men, in children's revolt against discipline and authority, and so on. In every sphere of life and thought, autonomy invites anarchy. Van Til rightly observed that the choice is between autonomy and theonomy, self-law and God's law.

In the twentieth century, churches have succumbed to autonomous spirituality, divorced from God's law on the one hand, and autonomous rationalism. Creatures made by God argue solemnly on the "proofs" of God when the very idea that anything can exist without God is ludicrous. Instead of autonomous man, the sovereign God must be the starting point of all thinking. Autonomous reason ends in irrationalism and blasphemy.

### Surgery and Recovery

At press time, laser surgery on Dr. Rushdoony's right eye prevented his writing Random Notes. God willing, Random Notes will return in May.

### Now Available

The special Chalcedon audiocassette "The Y2K Problem" in which Walter Lindsay is interviewed by Andrew Sandlin, Mark Rushdoony, Douglas Murray, and R. J. Rushdoony is now available for $5.00, postage paid. **Contact us for your copy today.**

# Where Should We Then Live? Covenant Community (I)

***By Steve M. Schlissel***

Covenant consciousness. Its importance is incalculable. The Bible, after all, is a covenantal revelation of the covenant God to his covenanted people.

In the older administration, the covenant was largely confined to the Jewish people (*Eph. 2:11-12*), who were given circumcision as a sign and seal of covenant admission. To be uncircumcised was to be cut off from the people of God (*Gen. 17:14*). Thus, from the beginning, the sign and seal was to be administered in terms of a people; Israelite males (future covenant heads of households) were by circumcision formally incorporated into that people who were the people of God. Yes, circumcision spoke of what ought to be true of each Israelite (*viz.*, that they placed no hope in the flesh, but rather in their God), yet the rite itself insured no such thing. As Paul by the Spirit so perfectly expressed it: *"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

Did that mean that there was no advantage in being a member, externally, of the covenant community? Paul certainly thought there was! *"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way."* The Jews were Paul's "kinsmen according to the flesh" they were the *"Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."* Their chief advantage was found in the fact *"that unto them were committed the oracles of God."* Thus, above and prior to the (subjective) conversion of any Israelite stood the objective ground of their covenant status. The faith or unbelief of individual Israelites did not negate the covenant. As Paul said, *"What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid!"*

In the new administration of the covenant, baptism (a bloodless sign) replaces circumcision as the rite of admission, admission to a new people, as it were, composed of Jews and Gentiles sharing in the promises of God on an equal footing. The church, with the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ as her head, is now seen to be "a chosen *people,* a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a *people* belonging to God." To us is now committed the complete "oracles of God."

All who are properly baptized are part of this people. Baptism, however, like circumcision, cannot be regarded as a guarantee that there is or will be in each candidate the subjective reality of which it objectively speaks. Rather, lawful baptism, like lawful covenant circumcision, is a rite of formal reception *into the community* covenanted with God. It is a legitimate pastoral concern to see, subjectively and experientially, in all who are baptized the realities of which baptism speaks. But this concern must not cloud or (worse) negate the objective reality that those lawfully baptized in the Triune Name properly constitute a *people.*

American Christians in 1998 seem virtually unable to *think* in terms of covenant peoplehood. Why? Because we make the subject (the individual) our starting point, rather than the object (the covenant). We then filter all Scripture data, seek to answer all problems, and live out our lives, in individualistic terms. In this column I want to highlight one manifestation of this hyper-individuation: where we choose to live. It seems most Christians today do not even entertain the thought of living in a Christian community. And no wonder, when our thinking about Christianity is restricted to individual regeneration or, at most, individual churches.

Demographers tell us that the average American will move many times during the course of his life. Decisions regarding where to live typically involve employment, proximity to other family members, factors regarding housing costs, transportation, education, cultural venues, and, among the more committed, proximity to a sound church. Rarely, if ever, do Christians put Christian neighbors at or near the top of their list. But we should.

That is how observant Jews make this important life decision. They will, they may, move only to a Jewish community. There are many reasons for this, but two are inescapable: the *minyan* requirement, and the Sabbath day's walk. Christians are familiar with the latter from Acts 1:12 where the Mount of Olives is said to be "a

Sabbath day's journey," *i.e.*, 2,000 cubits or about a mile, from Jerusalem. To walk a greater distance is considered "work" and therefore forbidden.

*Minyan* (Hebrew for "number") refers to the minimum number of male Jews above the age of thirteen required for congregational worship. They have a saying: "Nine *tsaddikim* (righteous men, often Torah scholars) do not make a *minyan*, but one common man joining them, completes the *minyan*." It is not uncommon today to find, outside small *shuls* (synagogues), a man seeking to flag another Jew, urging him to come inside that they might commence with the liturgy. Some find support for this minimum number for a congregation in Abraham's "bottom line" (*Gen. 18:32*); others in the ten spies who, in Numbers 14:27, are called an *edah* (congregation), a word commonly used in Exodus to refer to Israel (see, *e.g.*, 12:3, 6, 19, 47).

The reality is that in order for a Jew to live *as a Jew*, he *must* live in an area where there are at least nine other post-bar mitzvah Jewish males. And since Jews have worship services twice daily, having only the minimum number available is undesirable. The numerous other advantages of covenant community are very real (for example, convenient access to Jewish day-schools, availability of foods and goods which conform to rabbinical standards, etc.), yet ingenuity might find ways to have some of these met (mail order, homeschooling). But there is no way around their requirement for ten men for congregational worship and no handy way around the limitation imposed by the "Sabbath day's journey." Serious Jews *must* live in communities of Jews who are within walking distance of each other.

One happy result of these traditions is—and this is the point I wish to impress upon you—in the Jewish mind, *the community comes first*. Thus, when considering *where* they might live, Jews have at the top of their list an item which rarely, if ever, appears on the list of Christians considering the same. Some might think this a distinct advantage for the Christian. I regard it as an unmitigated disadvantage as well as a severe missiological handicap (more anon).

Pastors who suggest that Christians *ought to live* in close proximity to one another are sometimes eyed suspiciously or even as "cultish." But the idea is hardly novel. In Acts 2 we learn that "every day" believers met together in the Temple courts, broke bread in one another's homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts: a tough thing to do if scattered in far-flung pockets. Rev. John Butler has called my attention to Lane's notes on Hebrews 3:13 (*q.v.*) where he acknowledges that Christians were likely meeting daily. And Calvin's *daily* preaching in Geneva relied for efficacy upon a people living in sufficiently close proximity to avail themselves of the opportunity to hear him.

That Christians have the freedom to do "x" is not a compelling argument for them to choose to do "x." As Paul taught, asserting that "all things are permissible" should not lead one to conclude that "all things are expedient, profitable or beneficial" (*1 Cor. 6:12*). Though Christians are free to live wherever they choose, there are good reasons for them to choose to live in covenant community, *better* reasons than those employed by our Jewish friends.

Those reasons I hope to set forth in next month's column; let us first try to jump one or two nearer hurdles. For what is being suggested may have grounds and implications beyond our received, comfortable ken. We are simply unaccustomed to thinking in terms of covenant community. Even people who do live in a *de facto* Christian neighborhood don't usually regard it as such. They are more likely to think of it in ethnic or nationalistic terms, or even denominational. Somehow, the fact that the neighbors go to a different church becomes akin to saying, "They serve a different Master." And when house or apartment hunting, Christians *rarely* put, "Is it a Christian neighborhood?" near the top of their requirement list. Thankfully, as noted above, some Christians at least consider, "Is it reasonably close to a sound church?" Far be it from me to discount this consideration! But I fear that framing the question like that may leave unchallenged the very mindset which is in need of a covenantal adjustment. For we too easily think of *the Christian religion* and *the church* as conterminous, *i.e.*, as having a strictly common boundary. But this is not correct.

The Christian Faith is larger by far than any church, even than *the* church. The role of the church is vital, critical, even central. But it is not *all* there is. By equating Christianity with the institutional church, we start with a faulty premise and, not surprisingly, end with defective practice. Christ's claims may begin at the church, but they do not end there. All of life is to be lived self-consciously under his Lordship. He, *not the church*, is the sole mediator between God and man. God's covenant lays claims upon all in all walks of life and is to govern us in all manner of living. Churches exist to aid us in pursuing that goal, not to absorb us as if the church alone may pursue it.

The New Testament epistles contain a great deal of instruction about Christian living, but very little of it is directed to elders of the institutional church for enforcement. The Corinthian Christians, for example, each and all, were instructed not to eat with "professors" who openly dishonored God's law. The Thessalonian believers were admonished not to associate with professors who disregarded Paul's apostolic instructions (*5:14*), and they were all commanded to keep away from every brother who is willfully idle (*5:6*). These, along with many other instructions and warnings, lead us to conclude that the primary sphere of Christian government beyond the

individual and his family is the Christian *community*, not the Christian church. In a vibrant covenant community, a community well-taught at the local assemblies, the social costs of sin serve as the front-line infantry, with the artillery of formal church discipline reserved only for flagrant, unrepentant violators.

The church is a servant of God's covenant. When we see the covenant and the church as strictly contiguous or, worse, reduce the covenant and put it in subjection to the church, we ask the church to assume a role and to bear a burden it was not designed for. And too often, when assuming this burden, we find the church imposing itself where it does not belong, sometimes usurping the role of covenant fathers, or the covenant community, and in extreme historical instances, the state, as well.

God's dealings are with *a people.* As God's people, we are active servants in many spheres. We are active in our families; God has instructions for all family members. We are active in churches; God has instructions for church members, for those *serving* as officers as well as those serving in diverse other capacities. We are active in our communities; God has instruction for us in our service at work and at play. We are active in civic circles; God has instructions for our behavior in the political sphere.

*A wise woman builds her house, preparing her children for maturity. The church which prepares her members for* independence, i.e., *for service* outside *her precincts, will find members tripping over themselves to serve inside and out.*

The church is the place where the community assembles for formal corporate *worship.* It is also the place where the community is to receive comprehensive *instruction* in the whole word of God—confessionally rooted, authentic instruction. These functions are the Jakin and Boaz (*1 Kin. 7:21*) of the church. Her third pillar, her glory, is found in the *deeds* of love and mercy (done in truth) which flow forth from her. But even these pillars, though found in her uniquely, are not found in her alone. Every family is to be a worshiping family; and there are many means by which instruction may come; and to restrict love and mercy to the church is to ask to live in a cold world beside!

The point of all this is simple. When the church is viewed as comprehending in itself the totality of the covenant, it will become a robber baron. It will (inevitably) shift its orientation from that of servant to that of Lord. It will seek to govern every aspect of anything calling itself Christian, will seek to micro-manage the affairs of its communicants, will impose its power to discipline in ways the Apostles never dreamed of, and will short-circuit the ability of its members to press Christ's claims beyond its own borders. Confusing the church with the covenant means, worst case, the loss of both in any given generation.

But when we see that God gives his word to a *people*—and that the members of this people are all prophets, priests and kings—when these people of God live together in community so that their lives intersect at ten thousand points during the week, when we see that God's covenant Word—*not the church*—is to govern every member at every one of those ten thousand points, *then* the true glory of the church is ready to shine forth. For in serving the community as a center for worship, instruction and mercy, she makes herself absolutely indispensable, just as God intended. Then she, just like a wise and good mother, finds that her children would rather cut off their arms than live without her. For she, like a wise and good mother, has worked herself into the *hearts* of her children through the power of self-denial and love, through nurture and faithful instruction, through the incalculable power that accrues to one who has exercised no other muscle than that which was required to be always there to *serve.* A wise woman builds her house, preparing her children for maturity. The church which prepares her members for *independence, i.e.,* for service *outside* her precincts, will find members tripping over themselves to serve inside and out.

Just as such mothers can normally exist only where there are strong fathers, so also such churches can exist only where there are strong Christian communities.

An Associated Press story last year told of a planned "gay" neighborhood in Chicago. It was receiving institutional and municipal recognition as such, along with millions of dollars to showcase it. I live where I was born: in New York City. We've long had "gay" neighborhoods. We have just about every kind of neighborhood, too: Italian, Polish, Caribbean, Russian, Pakistani, Arabic, Yuppy, Orthodox Jewish, you name it. Guess what we don't have? Right.

But we're working on it.

*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 24 years, Jeanne, and their five children.*

# Ministries Changing the World

Ministries around the world are engaged in the task of pressing the claims of historic, Biblical Christianity; faithfully and courageously evangelizing the unconverted, often in places others refuse to go; training Christians in a full-orbed Faith; starting and maintaining Christian schools and works of godly charity; holding elected officials to the standard of God's law; and much, much more. All these, in one way or another, are implementing the vision Chalcedon has been articulating for over thirty years. We want to alert you to one such ministry:

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Founded by Dr. Monte E. Wilson III, Global Impact's mission is to instruct, motivate and equip Christians worldwide to live their faith in such a powerful way that families, businesses, communities and nations are impacted for Christ.

Two important areas utilized by Global Impact to accomplish this mission are **publishing** and **teaching.** Among many monographs and books, the publishing realm also includes a monthly newsletter, *Classical Christianity* written by Dr. Monte Wilson. Eager to provoke his readers to pursue truth, no topic is ever considered too controversial in this always thought-provoking and enlightening publication.

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If you would like a sample audio tape of Dr. Wilson or more information on how Global Impact can impact your church, business or community for Christ, please contact Dr. Monte E. Wilson, III at Global Impact, P. O. Box 22, Alpharetta GA 30009 or montethird@aol.com. Consult www.global-impact.org.

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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.*

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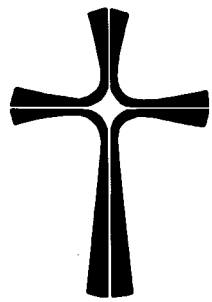


**CHALCEDON**

**P.O. Box 158**
**Vallecito, CA 95251**

**Phone (209)736-4365 or Fax (209)736-0536**
**e-mail: chaloffi@goldrush.com; http://www.chalcedon.edu**