

CHALCEDON

Report



No. 409, AUGUST 1999

Andrew Sandlin on Cultural Subversion

Calvin Jones on the Biblical View of Music

The Significance and Subversiveness of the Arts

**Ingrid Dahl on the
Christian Philosophy of Art**

Plus . . . R. J. Rushdoony on Precisionism

Brian Abshire on J. I. Packer's Attack on Christian Reconstruction

Steve Schlissel on the Informed Principle of Worship. . . and more

Chalcedon's View of Christian Reconstruction

Rev. Andrew Sandlin
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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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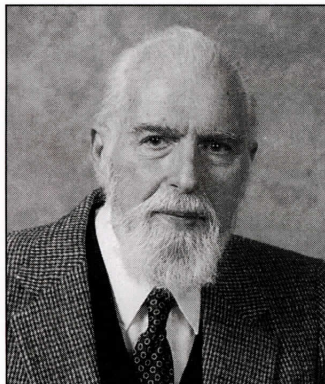
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Precisionism

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony



One of the marks of the twentieth century has been the insistence on precision. The modern era has required such a view. Computers, mechanization, and urban culture have required an adherence to the clock, to accuracy, to a mechanical precision, and more.

The reverse has been true in the world of ideas, and especially religion. Two movements and attitudes have marked the twentieth century where religion is concerned, Christianity in particular. The *first* has been *agnosticism*. Previously, the atheist openly professed his faith that there is no God. This, by the twentieth century, was superseded by the ostensibly more thoughtful position of agnosticism, meaning, in essence, "I do not know whether God exists, nor is it really possible to know." This supposedly more modest stand than open atheism in effect held that it is not possible to know; and it eliminated religion as an area or source of knowledge. By a show of modesty, it ruled out religion, Christianity in particular, as a source of knowledge, certainly not the source of knowledge.

The *second* perspective has been *relativism*. With this attitude, we cannot make moral judgments, nor can we determine what truth is. Relativism has been used to eliminate the Biblical doctrine of man as a sinner, as a fallen creature in need of salvation. It has been used to vindicate once forbidden sexual practices, to undermine God's law, and to create a society essentially open to lawlessness and godlessness while open to every evil. Its

logical conclusion is that of the Marquis de Sade, that the only evil is the Biblical God and His law.

Popular culture today, its entertainment and religion, is based on agnosticism and relativism. Because of this, with each year it descends further into the abyss of a world whose foundation is the Fall, and its premise that every man is his own god and the determiner for himself of what is good and evil. Our education and politics are increasingly based on agnosticism and relativism. We are now far from Augustine and Calvin and very close to Wagner, Marx, and Darwin.

Our state schools are temples to agnosticism and relativism, as are our laws. We have adopted with Nietzsche a philosophy of death, and our culture is a dying one. We are increasingly disrupted by violence and by hatred and murder.

Sadly, the church has become widely infected by these influences. Precision in theology has given way to pietistic fuzziness, and truth to feeling. The pulpit gives voice to imprecision, and it replaces truth with feelings. Sound and precise preaching is condemned as having no heart, and emotional outbursts have replaced sound faith.

We need a return to sound theology and to an emphasis on understanding the Word of God. As of now, a life-long churchgoer is often as ignorant of the Bible as a novice in the Faith.

It is interesting to note that Calvin, a precise and clear thinker and writer, is commonly spoken of as "difficult" reading and too theological. Such judgments tell us more about the critic than about Calvin.

The church should surpass the world in the clarity and precision of its faith. This is what the Bible gives us, a clear and precise account of our faith. There is no excuse for fuzziness. The word "fuzzy" is not a synonym for *faith*.

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Cultural Subversion

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin



Because culture is religion externalized, every attempt to alter the structure and content of a culture constitutes a form of religious subversion. The ancient Greek philosophers were well aware of the possibility of cultural subversion; and Plato, a devout statist, singled out the arts as a field

potentially hazardous to the commonwealth which should never be reluctant to suppress artistic expression.

What we term the *status quo* of any culture is always dynamic, never static, always with internal (and often with external) forces committed to cultural change. From the standpoint of the *status quo*, “cultural change” is a euphemism for cultural *subversion*. We should have no illusions about this fact, and the most devout advocate of “democracy” cannot escape the force of its logic. To argue, for example, that democracy (however defined) is merely a *mechanism* to assure that the majority’s will can peacefully prevail in a society is thereby to acknowledge the successful subversion of all non- and anti-democratic programs of society and politics. “Democracy,” therefore, is not merely a political mechanism; it is, has always been, and must always be, a form of cultural subversion.

When our Lord spoke parabolically of His ministry as binding “the strong man” (*Mk. 3:22-27*), He was asserting that in the prime struggle of the ages—that between the Triune God and covenant-keepers on one side, and Satan and covenant-breakers on the other—transformation from covenant-breaking to covenant-keeping is not possible apart from the suppression of the former. While this suppression begins with the individual, it works its way outward to affect and reshape every area of life and society. Christ’s expulsion of demonic forces did not merely set the stage for His spoiling of Satan’s power over individuals; it was an act of cultural subversion—the subversion of Satan’s iron stranglehold not merely on particular individuals, but on the culture itself. Just as Satan, under the inscrutable decree of God, had temporarily subverted divine culture in the Garden of Eden, so Jesus Christ permanently subverted Satanic and humanistic culture in His earthly sojourn, culminating in the great redemptive complex of His sacrificial death, bodily resurrection, glorious ascension, and victorious session at the right hand of the Father, where

He presently sits in anticipation of all His enemies being made His footstool (*1 Cor. 15:24-28*). The subversive effects of this redemptive complex are no less cultural than individual, and cultural precisely *because* they are individual.

Cultural Subversion an Inescapable Concept

In Rushdoony’s language, cultural subversion is an inescapable concept: individuals and forces within a society are constantly working to subvert that society’s culture. Different societies legally permit certain forms of subversion, though no society legally permits the subversion of its basic structure. This is why blasphemy of the Triune God is forbidden in a Biblically ordered society (*Lev. 24:16*) but permitted in a humanistic society, while suppression of homosexuality is permitted in a Biblically ordered society (*Lev. 20:13*) but forbidden in a humanistic society. The issue is never unfettered free speech, but that no society permits certain selected forms of speech immediately subversive of that society. As the United States has become increasingly homosexualized, censure of homosexuals has been labeled “hate speech,” already forbidden on many “politically correct” campuses and gradually in other areas of society. In a Biblically ordered society, blasphemy is culturally subversive and therefore forbidden; in a humanistically ordered society, suppression of homosexuality (and several other sins) is culturally subversive and therefore forbidden. Just as cultural subversion is an inescapable concept, so the political suppression of certain basic forms of cultural subversion is an inescapable concept. The political structure of every society works to preserve certain basic cultural tenets, and when we observe an alteration in laws respecting particular subversions, we are in actuality seeing the success of some particular subversion itself.

Today’s Cultural Subversion

The present cultural *status quo* of the United States reflects the successful subversion of a bland and liberal cultural order regnant roughly since the 1870s, an order which itself had subverted the older Puritan, Trinitarian order first brought to these shores in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The culture of the United States we observe today is an extension of the 60s revolution to virtually every area of modern life. This is especially evident in the recent impeachment debacle, and I refer not merely to the White House. To the extent that there existed any genuine conflict, it was a conflict between certain Republican politicians who retain a vague sense of Christian morality and, on the other side, the entrenched

perpetrators of the 60s revolution. It was a conflict of decades—between the predominant cultural vision of the 60s revolutionaries, and the vastly outmanned and outgunned vision of the successors of the 40s patriots. Given the cultural dominance of the 60s revolutionaries, it is not surprising which decade's champions won out. As E. Michael Jones perceptively argued, this recent debacle was indeed about sex—about the dominance of the sexual revolution and about the revolutionaries' rabid commitment to preserving it at all costs: "President Clinton is going to defend Dionysos to the death; he can't afford to back out now. Like Ahab he is willing to take the whole country down to make a point."¹ What the 60s sexual revolutionaries were fighting for in the late 90s was the perpetuation of the cultural *status quo*, and the fact that the President's approval ratings increased with every Republican revelation of his philandering, adultery, perjury, deception, and obstruction of justice indicates that the Republicans, in this particular case, were occupying a subversive role. Their ultimate failure stems from the resiliency of the 60s revolutionary culture that dominates American society. This resiliency, as Joseph Sobran effectively notes, is a part of the liberal program, constantly reshaping itself to push toward greater depravity: "I gnash my teeth when conservatives argue that 'affirmative action' violates 'the spirit of Dr. [Martin Luther] King'—'colorblind justice,' and all that. Nonsense. If King were alive today, he'd certainly support state-imposed racial preferences. He was a Marxist, always moving leftward. Liberals are right to claim him as their own; conservatives who appeal to his 'spirit' only make fools of themselves. . . . In the maze of history, today's conservatives are nearly as lost as the liberals. That's why their critique of liberalism is fundamentally weak: more than they realize, they are liberals too."² Even as today's *status quo*, the Left is subversive.

Subversives on the Right

The so-called Religious Right, so active in the 70s and 80s and so fragmented and misdirected in the 90s, has not learned the lesson of culture and cultural subversion. Its champions have been seduced by the popular but pathetic illusion that politics is central to life and have assumed that we can "clean America up" by electing Christian and Christian-influenced candidates. They have tended to assimilate the mechanism of this vision from political liberals for whom political power has always been the prime implement of social engineering. The more astute political liberals, however, are aware that politics is only a single cultural phenomenon, one among many, and that *the* fundamental issue in society is culture, that is to say, *religion*. All cultural wars are in reality religious wars (note my July editorial). The Religious Right, unfortunately, is often less culturally astute than politically active. Thus, it fails to recognize that any fundamental change in society must be a cultural, a religious, change. The Religious Right and other Christian organizations

as well as individual Christians disturbed by the overt depravity of modern culture would be better served in penetrating and transforming the fundamental culture itself than in electing individual Christian candidates and passing individual Christian legislation, vital though these activities are. In modern democracies, the culture is eventually the manifestation of the will of the majority. The broad religious perspective of the populace at large creates a culture which in turn shapes political outcomes. If Christians wish to alter the *political* landscape, they should devote themselves to altering the cultural (religious) landscape. This means training and commissioning a greater number of culturally astute orthodox, Bible-believing ministers, educators, musicians, poets, theologians, novelists, disc jockeys, film makers, journalists, and so on. The predominating attitudes of a society are more fundamentally shaped by its university professors, film and TV personalities, pastors and theologians, popular musicians, and journalists than it is by its politicians, who generally are little more than an echo or reflection of the prevailing cultural ethos—particularly in modern democracies. In simpler terms, the *X-Files* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are more culturally significant in the United States than President Clinton and Henry Hyde. The former are *religious* statements that shape cultural norms; the latter tend to be products and therefore reflections of the culture itself.

Cultural subversion of some sort is always occurring in a society. As long as men remain in a sinful state, cultural subversion is inescapable. Not until the eternal state will all cultural subversion disappear. Revelation 20:7-10 discloses that, even at the conclusion of the earthly millennium, Satan will stir up his followers in an attempt to subvert Christ's kingdom. God will effectively and decisively quash this cultural subversion, but the fact that it could occur even within a predominately Christian society evidences the inevitability of cultural subversion in all human society. The commission of Christians, in fact, is to be godly subversives in every area of life. It is, by the power of the Spirit of God, to subvert the indwelling sin in our own lives. But the subversion does not stop there. It is designed to move outward to every area of thought and life. Of this subversion, Cornelius Van Til states:

The individual believer has a comprehensive task. His is the task of exterminating evil from the whole universe. He must begin this program in himself. As a king reinstated it is his first battle to fight sin within his own heart. This will remain his first battle till his dying day. This does not mean, however, that he must not also seek to destroy evil in his fellow Christians and in his fellow men while he is engaged in destroying evil within himself....

We must go one step further. It is our duty not only to seek to destroy evil in ourselves and in our fellow Christians, but it is our further duty to seek to destroy evil in our fellow men....

Still further we must note that our task with respect to the destruction of evil is not done if we have sought to fight sin itself everywhere we see it. We have the further obligation to destroy the consequences of sin in this world as far as we can....³

To argue that Christians are simply one competing interest among many "options" in the modern pluralistic culture is to talk nonsense. Christianity is designed to be a dominant faith, like all faiths, including the faith of democratic pluralism. Modern pluralism is the natural outgrowth of Enlightenment liberalism which sees "reason" as the arbiter of all claims. Differing and conflicting religious views are permitted (even encouraged), for what is really important is maximum freedom under the guidance of reason. The emergence of postmodernism has exploded this myth of reason, and it is expressed no more baldly than by Stanley Fish:

But what if reason or rationality itself rests on belief? Then it would be the case that the opposition between reason and belief was a false one, and that every situation of contest should be recharacterized as a quarrel between two sets of belief with no possibility of recourse to a mode of deliberation that was not itself an extension of belief. This is in fact my view of the matter ... [L]iberalism is tolerant only *within* the space demarcated by the operations of reason; any one who steps outside that space will not be tolerated, will not be regarded as a fully enfranchised participant in the marketplace (of ideas) over which reason presides.⁴

Liberalism itself, he implicitly acknowledges, is a subversive faith, subversive of all views that do not conform to the dictates of reason as shaped by liberalism.

The Church's Great Miscalculation

A prime theological error of the church in the United States in the last century and a half which has effectively translated into its prime tactical error is the assumption that cultural subversion is not inevitable, that covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking can peacefully coexist in a single society. Since Genesis 3, however, there has been no possibility of cultural détente between covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking—and there never can be. Virile, Biblical Christianity works at all points to subvert covenant-breaking—in the individual, the family, the church, science, art, education, technology, and the state. While sinless perfection can never be achieved in any individual, institution, or sphere in this life, Christianity is not *in principle* compatible with covenant-breaking. It works, in other words, to subvert covenant-breaking wherever it is found. It works to gradually transform prodigal sons into obedient sons, and prodigal cultures into obedient cultures. It would be an event of nothing less than epic proportions were the church of Jesus Christ to recover not only a recognition of the inescapability of cultural subversion, but a restoration of its calling as cultural subversives. By the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the application of His law-word, the Bible, to all areas of life, Christians must commit themselves to subvert and replace evil in all individuals, institutions, and spheres. While Christ definitively bound the "strong man" in His earthly ministry, the calling of His people is to translate this redemptive victory into every area of life.

¹ E. Michael Jones, "The Nomenclatura Calls for a Referendum on the Sexual Revolution," *Culture Wars*, November, 1998, 14.

² Joseph Sobran, "Media and Mythology," *Sobran's The Real News of the Month*, November-December, 1998, 1.

³ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Ethics* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1980), 86-87.

⁴ Stanley Fish, *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech (. . . And It's a Good Thing Too)*, (Oxford, 1994), 135, 137, emphasis in original.

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The Prisoner's Confidence

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

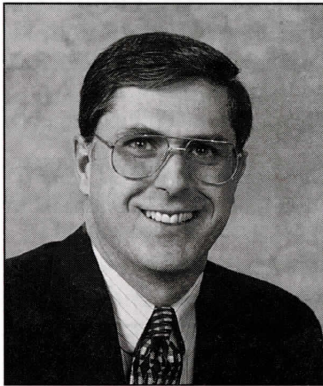
Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

(2 Timothy 1:6-12)



Paul predicates these statements on the joy he has in Timothy. The history of God's grace in Timothy's life and those of his mother and grandmother (vv. 4-5) must cause Timothy "stir up" or develop this grace, especially as it relates to his ministry.

Paul is speaking of Timothy's ordination to the ministry when he refers to the laying on of hands. This was a carryover from ancient (and then current) Hebrew practice. Paul himself had laid hands on Timothy at his ordination. It was therefore an act that had a great deal of personal meaning for Paul, as Timothy certainly knew. This ceremony was a solemn act of consecration. The sign itself did not convey grace merely by its performance but rather represented the grace of God in making a man a minister of the divine message. The ceremony represented an outward acknowledgement of God's grace in the life and ministry of his faithful messenger. Timothy's job was to "stir up" that grace.

God has not given us the spirit of fear, Paul says. Then as now, there was every human reason for a minister to fear. Timothy was reading a letter from his spiritual father and mentor who was imprisoned and awaiting his appeal to the emperor.

When Paul said to stir up the gift of God, he was urging Timothy to give evidence of the gifts. He could not do this if he allowed himself to be controlled by fear. The opposite of fear is power. He was telling Timothy to engage his duties with strength of purpose, secure in the strength of God's Spirit. This power must be balanced by love and a sound mind. This balance distinguishes godly strength from foolhardiness masquerading as courage.

There is a tendency in all ages to yield to conventional thinking. But the conventional thinking Timothy was confronted with was that the gospel of Jesus Christ was for those who chose to put themselves on the fringe of society. It went against the prevailing Greek philosophy of the day and was not really protected by Roman law. Paul tells Timothy in verse 8 not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Going back to Paul's comments about the spirit of power (v.7), we can see that Paul is saying that if your ministry is in the spirit of power rather than fear, you will not be so concerned about man's opinion that you will fear to give an unpopular message. The world will often show its contempt for Christ and His gospel; it requires courage to confess openly what men despise.

Paul adds "nor of me his prisoner." There were, no doubt, those within the church who advised Timothy that making known his association with Paul could be a dangerous thing, given the apostle's long imprisonment at Romans hands. Outside the church there were those who probably suggested that Timothy would soon find himself in Paul's situation. Paul invited the young minister to be "partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." He was telling Timothy to accept such afflictions, for to avoid them was tantamount to hiding in shame from the implications of the gospel message as it confronted sinners. We cannot always have a message of sweetness and light; sooner or later the gospel must confront men with the uncomfortable message that they are sinners. Paul had even more to deal with than a few angry pew-warmers—he had the anger of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem and the arbitrariness of a state that saw itself as sovereign. Thus, he advises Timothy that he needs "the power of God" in order to endure.

Paul knows why he is not ashamed of the gospel; God "saved us, and called us with an holy calling." Christ secured our salvation in His death but it becomes ours through the gospel. If he was ashamed of the message he would be ashamed of the salvation it announces and the Savior it proclaims. Paul attributes his eternal salvation solely to the election and grace of God in Jesus Christ. If Timothy is to do likewise he must preach the gospel with confidence and strength of purpose.

God's "own purpose" was made manifest by the "appearing" or incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christ's atoning death was not some divine afterthought or "plan B" as dispensationalism teaches. Christ was the manifestation of God's eternal purpose at the time of His choosing. He "abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light *through the gospel*." The only way in which the benefits of Christ's work can be communicated to men is through that gospel. To be ashamed of the "testimony of our Lord," the gospel, is thus to be ashamed of God's "own purpose and grace." Timothy's responsibility was to preach the gospel with the spirit of power. To fail in this was to fail in his most basic obligation.

Paul again brings in his own apostleship. It is easy to feel Paul plays this "trump card" too often. But it is important to realize that even with Paul's teaching and epistles, error abounded in the early church, and from Paul's own writings we see the hostility and opposition he acknowledged. Paul's comments about his apostleship were to assert the authority of his message and the purity

of the gospel he urged. As a *herald* he proclaimed the king's decrees, as a *teacher* he speaks with authority to his pupils in the Faith.

Paul suffered for the gospel of Jesus Christ (*v. 12*). Yet he adds that he was not ashamed. Imprisoned without charges, and sent to Rome to await the whim of the emperor, Paul is unashamed. He knows the cause of his imprisonment was his stand for the gospel, especially its message to the Gentiles. Far from being ashamed, Paul knew his imprisonment was for obedience to Christ's call. Neither was Paul discouraged, and his encouragement to Timothy was to think likewise.

"For I know whom I have believed," Paul writes. This is the confidence we have when the world would have us be "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." Paul's faith was great, but he also *knew*—he understood the implications of his faith. If our faith is combined with an understanding of its scope and its implications it will be strong so that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (*Mt. 16:18*). Paul, remember, was not theorizing; he was under arrest in Rome and writing his final epistle. Paul had committed his soul to God and was confident in His promise. Our eternity is in God's hands; we must act and speak as though we believe our times are also.

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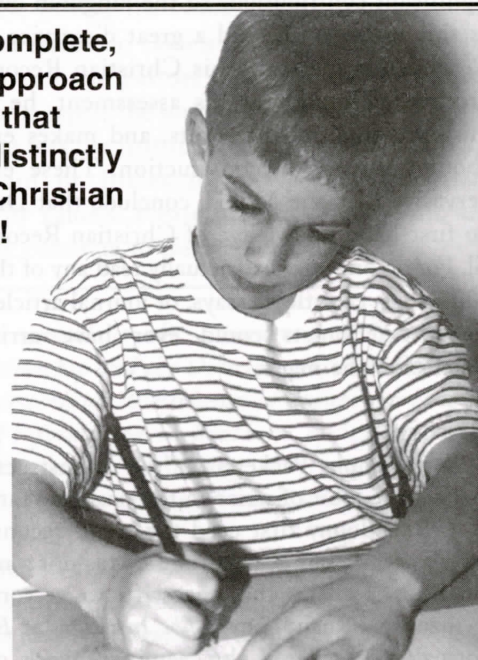
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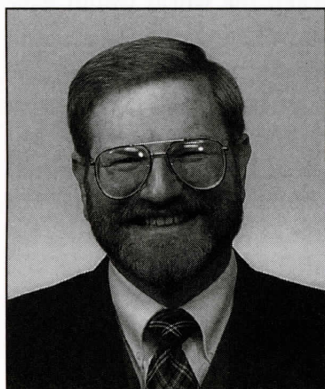
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Misrepresentation Is Easy: The Truth Is a Little Harder

A Response to J. I. Packer's Assessment of Christian Reconstruction

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire



In a recent interview with *Christian Renewal* magazine, one of evangelicalism's preeminent authors and theologians, J. I. Packer, was asked for an analysis of Christian Reconstruction (CR). With Dr. Packer's reputation as an evangelical scholar, one would have expected and

hoped for an insightful and profitable critique. Alas, this did not happen. As much as we have appreciated Dr. Packer's many significant contributions to the kingdom over the years, in this interview he did a great disservice to *Christian Renewal's* readers and his Christian Reconstructionist brothers. Throughout his assessment, he consistently misrepresents, misinterprets, and makes errors in fact about Christian Reconstruction. These errors are so pervasive that one MUST conclude that Dr. Packer has no first-hand knowledge of Christian Reconstruction at all. For no one who had actually read any of the more than 300 books, countless essays, or journal articles written by Reconstructionists could ever have arrived at the conclusions he made.

History

For example, Packer says "the reconstructionists have made quite a bit of noise in the past 40 years." Granted, R. J. Rushdoony first used the term "reconstruction" as early as 1965, but at that time it was not a movement so much as a task—the necessity to restore Christian civilization. Rushdoony's *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, normally considered the "seminal" work of Christian Reconstruction, was published in 1973. Hence the Christian Reconstructionist "movement" is more like 25 years old, not 40. Granted, this is not a great error, but if Dr. Packer makes such an easily verifiable mistake in fact on something as fundamental as when the "movement" began, can we really trust him on more arcane matters? It appears not, especially when he makes the following comments.

Presuppositionalism

He says, "It is equally true that Rushdoony has among his roles taken it on to himself to expound the presuppositional apologetics of Cornelius Van Til. But I don't think that those presuppositional apologetics have any integral relation to Reconstructionist theology." Again, one wonders if Dr. Packer has ever read ANYTHING by an actual Reconstructionist author. Rushdoony and those influenced by him made presuppositional apologetics one of the defining marks of the CR movement. *The Creed of Christian Reconstruction* (frequently printed inside the front cover of the *Chalcedon Report*) lists presuppositional apologetics as one of the five defining criteria of a Christian Reconstructionist.

In fact, Van Til's premise that there can be no neutrality is the very reason why Reconstructionists posit Biblical law as fundamental to a Christian culture. It was Van Til himself who stated that there are only two alternatives, autonomy or theonomy (though granted, he did not develop this in the way CR has done). If there is no "natural" law by which the nations can be governed, by what standard will they be judged? CR says that the answer is the Bible—all of it—especially the bits that run counter to modern humanistic culture. Rushdoony and other Reconstructionists ALL make presuppositional thinking fundamental to everything else they write. Van Til's presuppositional thinking is so paramount in EVERY SINGLE BOOK that there is simply no excuse for Dr. Packer's statement, unless of course, again, he has NEVER read the books.

Precedence

Dr. Packer then says, "They say that for nations which have ventured to identify themselves as Christian, the Old Testament legislation (at every point where it hasn't explicitly been cancelled by the New Testament), should be held still to apply, and we should be reconstructing our legal, political, economic, and social systems in the specific light of (that) legislation. That's a twist which I don't think anyone had thought of prior to the Reconstructionists."

This comment is revisionist to say the least. Surely Dr. Packer is familiar with the Scottish Covenanters. Surely he has heard of the New England Puritans. I dare say, has he never read Gillespie and the other Scottish

delegates to the Westminster Assembly? All these men required the state to enforce BOTH tablets of the law! He would do well to read and interact with James Jordan's Calvinism and "The Judicial Law of Moses" (published in *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*) which demonstrates that the "theonomic" position has a long and respectable history within the Reformed camp. Or he might have consulted *Theonomy and the Westminster Confession: An Annotated Sourcebook*, compiled by Martin A. Foulner (Marpert Press, 1997, distributed by James A. Dickson Books, 12 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, EH1 2QN) which demonstrates the very view that Packer sees as a "new twist" is as old as the Reformation!

For a scholar of Dr. Packer's reputation to make such a fundamental gaff is astounding. Granted, this belief is NOT common today in Reformed circles. But it was three hundred years ago. The only new addition that Reconstructionists make is to apply Van Tilian presuppositional thinking to social and cultural matters. But we already covered that, did we not?

He goes on to say, "Historically, Reformed and Evangelical Christians have held that the law of God in the Old Testament, which turned Israel into a theocracy, was for Israel specifically." Is not the good doctor familiar at all with the Westminster Confession (and the Larger Catechism) that, in chapter 19, requires ALL men and ALL nations to submit to the law of God? Granted, the Confession makes a distinction between the ceremonial, moral, and judicial laws (distinctions also made by Reconstructionists), and that the judicial laws are not binding except for the general equity thereof. But anyone familiar with seventeenth century Reformed theology should know that the very term "judicial law" referred to civil penalties applied to violations of the ceremonial law. But even so, the general equity clause states that the underlying principles still apply. Rushdoony's *Institutes* is an in-depth analysis of just how all the other Old Testament laws are subsumed in the moral law. There really is NO excuse for a scholar not knowing these things.

Slander and Libel

Packer goes beyond simple ignorance and enters into the world of slander and libel. The sheer outrageousness of what comes next has to be seen in full to appreciate the magnitude of error. He says:

...They bring in what one would have to call a presupposition which they never allowed fully to break surface—the Messianic presupposition regarding American identity. [In this view], the United States of America, founded by the Pilgrims who fled old England and brought with them the ideology that God wants a redeemer nation, came to the States because they could no longer see England in this redeemer nation role. They then implanted this Messianic mindset into American culture. But this puts the Reconstructionists into the Anglo-Israelite camp.

This charge is simply beyond belief. First, he makes

an incredible error of fact. The Pilgrims were a small separatist group who had little or no lasting influence on the development of American history. It was the PURITANS who established the New England Commonwealth and contributed so much to a distinctive American culture. John Cotton, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards were PURITANS, not Pilgrims. Perhaps Packer can be forgiven this mistake, since as an Anglican, it was his party that drove the Puritans OUT of the Church of England. But surely, a scholar should know better.

But even more importantly, his identification of Reconstruction with British Israelism is simply unwarranted and inexcusable. Over the past twenty years, I have read every single book, essay, and article written by Rushdoony and the other authors who are the acknowledged intellectual leaders of the Christian Reconstructionist movement. Never, I repeat, NEVER have I ever seen one indication of the above heresy of British Israelism. Never, have I read that the United States has any special place in God's plan above that of any other nation. I have read much about the blessings the United States received because of its Christian heritage. I have read much about how we have lost those blessings through apostasy, heresy, and unbelief. But never have any of these authors equated the United States with Israel, past or future.

Packer has thus revealed that he does not really know what Reconstructionists believe and, again, at the risk of being redundant, one must therefore assume that he has simply never read the books. Otherwise, he would be guilty of intentional misrepresentation. Granted, the type of messianic thinking he criticizes might have been true of some seventeenth century New England Puritans, but it is not, and never has been, part of twentieth century Christian Reconstruction. And therefore, with all due respect, Dr. Packer simply does not know what he is talking about.

He then says:

They certainly don't see themselves as fitting into that camp, but that's properly where they belong. I had to do with the 'British-Israel' movement when I lived in Britain, and I recognize the same kind of thinking. [Reconstructionists] of course don't affirm that they're the 'lost tribes of Israel' in the way that the founding Anglo-Israelites did, but they are saying that the mantle of Old Testament Israel has fallen on the United States of America. It follows then that the U. S., just as Jonathan Edwards thought, is to be the centre of worldwide evangelism producing the converted world to which Christ would come back. This implies that America must rise to the height of its vocation as a godly nation in its legislation, culture, and political procedures.

Do you get the point above? Even though Reconstructionists don't think of themselves as being British Israelites, they really are! Why? Because Packer says so! Where, is the documentation for this claim?

There is none. It cannot be documented because the allegation is blatantly false. Reconstructionists do NOT believe that America has inherited the mantle of Old Testament Israel. No one ever said this. No one ever believed this. Why then does Dr. Packer accuse us of this? Furthermore, he says that, "This leads to Reconstructionist backing for all manner of attempts to take political control in the management of the country." Nonsense and double nonsense! Opponents often throw this canard at Christian Reconstruction accusing us of wanting to substitute politics for the gospel. But EVERY leader in the movement has stated again and again *ad nauseum* that the key to cultural reformation is the proclamation of the gospel and the discipling of the nations to obey Christ (you remember, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20?). The nations will be reformed, not by political activism, but by regeneration. God's law cannot be imposed from the top down, but must be embraced from the bottom up. These accusations have been repudiated so often, in so many books, essays, and articles, that it is simply irresponsible that any serious scholar in the field should repeat them. Again, one could make these statements ONLY if one had no personal knowledge of the literature, but instead based one's assessment on hearsay, gossip, and rumor. One would hope for better things from a man of Packer's stature. One would hope, it seems, in vain.

He then says, "They are trying to turn the United States into a Christian nation so the country can inherit the mantle of Old Testament Israel." One question, Dr. Packer: where has ANY Reconstructionist ever said this? You repeated this charge several times. Either give us a citation, or offer an apology. You have seriously misrepresented our position. You have slandered your brothers by equating them with a well-known heretical group. You have accused us of saying things we have never said, and believing things we do not believe; things that we have gone to great pains to refute time and time again in books, magazines, and journals. You have borne false witness and thus you have broken the ninth commandment.

He says, "But I am against the notion that the Lord has His favourite nation in any sense." You might be surprised, Dr. Packer, but I think all published Reconstructionists would agree with you. And since we all agree with you, why would you say we do not?

Dr. Packer was asked to comment about the distinction between Christian Reconstruction, which he thinks is fundamentally wrong, and Kuyperianism, which he thinks is fundamentally right. The sad thing is that he does not seem to know that most Christian Reconstructionists embrace some sort of Kuyperianism! Sphere sovereignty is a widely used and written about presupposition in many of Rushdoony's works. The one major critique of Kuyper is in his use of natural law, the SAME critique that Van Til made!

Evangelical scholarship has come on hard times when one of the leading theologians of our day can make the kind of assessment that J. I. Packer does and be taken

seriously. Without meaning to be disrespectful, quite frankly, he simply does not have a clue. His major criticisms are invalid, because they have nothing to do with what Reconstructionists actually believe or teach.

How could he make such erroneous remarks? Dr. Packer is probably simply repeating things he has heard. For any number of reasons (see my *Chalcedon Report* essay "Why Do Other Reformed Christians Hate Reconstructionists?"), Packer has heard some bad things about us, integrated that "knowledge" with his own broad understanding of Reformed theology and history and formed an opinion, an opinion formed without apparently ever consulting the original sources. If one of his students had done such sloppy work, surely he would have flunked him! But a man in his position, with his reputation and influence, bears greater responsibility. Before he speaks in public about his brothers, he ought to check his facts first.

Christian Reconstruction can and should be critiqued, but surely it should be critiqued for what it actually believes and teaches, NOT for accusations based on rumor and hearsay. Theonomy is NOT a new idea: it was held by Bucer (Calvin's teacher), Beza (Calvin's successor), Gillespie, many of the delegates to the Westminster Assembly, the Scottish Covenanters, and the New England Puritans. Postmillennialism WAS the dominant eschatological system of both the early Presbyterians and Puritans right up to the end of the nineteenth century. The only really "new" idea is Van Til's presuppositionalism, a position regarded by a great many contemporary Reformed scholars to be an essential development of Reformed philosophy. Christian Reconstruction simply takes these elements and puts them together to offer a comprehensive, Biblical worldview.

In essence, Christian Reconstruction believes that in God's timing, as the gospel goes forth and wins the nations, that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The only thing "radical" about Christian Reconstruction is the call to start the hard work now of determining WHAT the content of that confession will require in the arts, sciences, literature, education, politics, and every other area of life. Granted, other brothers may sincerely disagree with HOW we put these things together and their critique is welcomed and encouraged. And in one respect, Christian Reconstruction will have had a significant ministry if we are successful in motivating our brothers to do just this kind of rigorous, Biblical thinking about how to apply the Faith.

Apology Owed

Therefore, Dr. Packer, with all due respect for your many contributions to the advancement of the kingdom, you owe us an apology. We do not believe the things you accuse us of believing. You have done us a great disservice by repeating baseless canards. Simple Christian integrity requires you to recant your false accusations and report the truth. And because you ARE a great man, we believe you will do the honorable thing.

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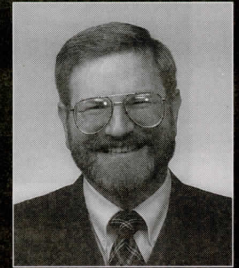
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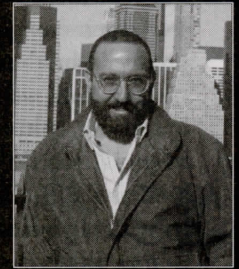
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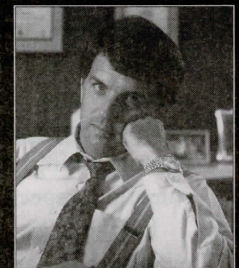
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Monte Wilson
Editor of Classical Christianity

The Biblical View of Music

By Calvin Jones

The State of the Arts



Today, we live in an age where the art of music abounds. Musicians by the thousands jam the airwaves; their recordings fill the floors and walls of music stores in America and around the world. It is hard to think of another time in history when the sheer number of musical works available on a daily basis

has been equaled or even approached. The sales of recordings nationally amount to at least \$12 billion annually.

An entire industry has developed just to produce music for Christians. In more and more churches worship bands lead their congregations in the latest worship music produced by those in the gospel music industry.

It is time we stop and reflect on the vast amount of music our culture has produced and ask ourselves how much of it is really good. To do this we must first take a look at the Biblical basis for music and at the standards by which we should judge a musical work. (Since music is a form of art, we'll be discussing the Biblical view of art in general and music specifically, and then delve into some standards for good art and music.)

The Biblical Basis for Art and Music

God is the ultimate creative genius. He creates by the power of His Word alone. He spoke and things came into existence from nothing. In Genesis 1 we read, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. . . .'" God made man in His image. Man is analogous to God. This means that though man is similar to God in many respects, being made in His image and likeness, he is not God. He is the creature; God is the Creator. The lie of the Devil and of humanism today is that man would like to think he *is* God. Being the image bearer of God in creation, man is to use his mind to order this world and have dominion over it. Like God, he is inventive and able to arrange the world God has made in an orderly way. Unlike God, his works are not *ex nihilo* (from nothing), but rather man's works are made out of something, specifically out of the already existent creation.

Further, we read in verse 26, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very

good." All of God's creation including man and his abilities as the image-bearer of God were declared to be good, even very good. The Biblical basis for the production and enjoyment of art is simply that God declared it to be very good when He created man. Music as a form of art is good in and of itself precisely *because* God declared it to be so. No other justification for the art of music is needed. Indeed, no other justification for art can be given that will stand up to the objective declaration of God that all of His creation is very good, including man's creativity, which is a part of the image of God. All other justifications for art are finally reduced to nothing but the subjective claims of man.

The best works of art and music were created by Adam and Eve in sinless perfection before their fall. When man sinned and fell by wanting to be God, his works of art and music were no longer perfect, but were marred by sin. The image of God in man and specifically man's creative ability is now imperfect. Man's works of art and music no longer accurately reflect the order, beauty, and purity of God and His creation. Since sin entered the world through Adam, we now have good art and bad art, just as we have regenerate men who produce good fruit and unregenerate men who produce bad fruit (*Mt. 7:17*). Sin has blinded man so that he must now work and struggle to produce good art and music. He must use special revelation to interpret and understand the general revelation of the world in which he lives. Only by thinking God's thoughts after him, can man judge good art from bad.

What standards has God given us to judge good art from bad art?

I will define good art as the work of man by which he uses his creativity to produce things or ideas for the enjoyment of man which meet God's standards for human reflection. The art of music exists, as do all the arts, for the enjoyment of man. Art by its very nature is enjoyed by being reflected upon. It occupies our thoughts through the stimulation of our senses. It must be experienced to be enjoyed and to bring pleasure to man. God has given us specific qualifications for the objects of our thoughts and reflections. Paul in Philippians 4:8 gives us by divine revelation this brief but comprehensive list for God-honoring art: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think or meditate on such things"

Good Music Must be True

Good music must be true. Truth is the first standard

by which to judge a musical work. This is the main problem in pop music and generally in pop culture today. Music crooning about the pleasures of one-night stands and adulterous relationships are at best half-truths and almost never include the other half of the truth of these sins. The after-effects include the guilt of lost virginity, the conception of children out of wedlock, the murder of illegitimate babies by abortion, the slavery to the state through welfare programs, etc. Humanists like to tout realism as justification for the pollution that is shoveled at us. "Everybody is doing it," they say. Those who are not fortunate enough to live in the ghettos can now have them brought to them in the convenience of their own living rooms through the joy of rap music which describes in vivid detail all the rottenness of man's depravity. This is the "real world," they declare. One problem with this is that the sins that are portrayed for you are not the *real* world that is eternal but the temporal one which will be judged by God and burned with fire on the last day. This element of judgment is completely missing from pop music. Secondly, the reality that should be our main focus in art and music is that which is eternal, the ideal which we are to strive for on this earth and which will really and truly be attained in heaven, not the temporal and passing moment of gratified sins whose effects soon belie the pleasures promised by them. Later we will discuss further the place of sin and its effects in music.

Sadly, those who hate God are not the only ones spreading lies in music. The Christian music industry preaches the false gospel of self-salvation. The heretical Arminian idea of self-salvation dominates the churches across this country and, not surprisingly, the lyrics of the music from the gospel music industry. The typical lyrics view man not as totally depraved, dead in sins (*Rom 3:10-18; Eph. 2:1*), and wholly incapable of choosing Jesus, but rather as his own ultimate savior as he opens the door to a weak and powerless Jesus who is knocking patiently, having done all that He can to save man. In this Arminian view, man is more powerful than God as he resists the Creator of the universe Who wants to regenerate his dead soul. In the Arminian view, man ultimately gets the glory for saving himself and choosing God. The true picture of salvation given in Scripture is that the sinner is instead bound in a chair guarded by Satan when Christ smashes down the door and crushes Satan, freeing the sinner who delighted in Satan's bondage and who hated Jesus Christ with all his heart. It is Jesus who regenerates our hearts and changes our wills so that we repent and believe. The marvel of the truth of salvation is that while we were still sinners and enemies of God, Christ died for us (*Rom. 5:8,10*). If He didn't set His love upon us first and change our wills by regeneration, no one would be saved. Dead men don't open doors (*Eph 2:1*).

Let me give you an example of this false view of salvation typical of Christian artists. From the evangelistic song "Somebody Loves You" (from the album *Special Love*) by Deneice Williams, who sings:

He's waiting for you.

Oh, he understands the pain you're going through.

There is no problem that my Jesus just can't help you solve.

For He can do wonders.

Won't you open up and let him touch you?

In these lines, man is mightier than God. God just isn't able to save us unless we open up and let Him touch us. He is just patiently waiting for us. The message is that God helps those who help themselves. In this entire song there is not one mention of the true gospel. The true gospel is repentance of that politically incorrect little "s" word, sin. Instead of repentance from sin, which produces life's problems, this song seems to be about salvation from the pain and trouble of life.

Another common falsehood in Christian music is the "easy love" deception. Love towards God and man is described in about every possible way except as obedience to God's law-word. The emotions of love and sentimentalism abound in Christian music while the actions of love defined by God's laws are conspicuously absent. Our Lord said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (*Jn. 14:15*). Love is keeping God's commandments with respect to God and to our neighbor. With love being the dominant subject of both pop and Christian music, why is it that I have never heard the true definition of love from either of them? I expect this from the world but not from Christians. It is no wonder when the modern church teaches that the Old Testament and all of its laws do not apply today. They've replaced obedience to His law with a fickle feeling that we fall in and out of. Of course, this view of love fits hand-in-hand with the Arminian view of choosing God. If, after all, the ultimate choice rests with fickle, unstable man, he can fall in and out of loving God (thus the need for regular resaving or rededication via Billy Graham). But if the ultimate choice in salvation belongs to the unchangeable God of the universe, who keeps us in the palm of His hand where nothing can snatch us away, then our salvation is permanent because His love for us is true and it never fails. It is guaranteed.

Unfortunately, the easy love deception has had severe consequences for many in the gospel music business. Many have been unfaithful in their marriages. We could talk more about this but this should suffice to recognize the importance of the standard of truth in music.

Good Music Must Embody What is Noble

Good music must embody what is noble. A good definition of noble is "having outstanding qualities." For music to be noble it must not be mediocre, unpolished, poorly crafted, of trivial subject matter, etc. It must, instead, inspire the hearts of the listeners to courage, faithfulness, love, persistence, self-sacrifice, hard work, and other noble and godly traits. To do this it must be

well-crafted, performed with excellence, readily accessible, and memorable.

The opposite of being noble is being shallow and simplistic. This is an attribute, unfortunately, not only of most pop music, but also of the gospel music industry. One has only to turn on the local Christian radio station and the simplistic shallowness is readily apparent. Christian music, like public education, too often aims for the lowest common denominator. As Christians have left the world for the ghetto of the gospel music industry, their art has been spared the critical analysis of the world at large to be judged, instead, by a small subculture of those in the gospel music industry. For evangelicals who are fed the creed "No creed but Christ," it does not take much to impress them doctrinally. Further, as Clyde Kilby has stated: "Our excuse for aesthetic failure has often been that we must be about the Lord's business, the assumption being that the Lord's business is never aesthetic."¹ Because the focus of their art is evangelism, musical excellence has taken second place. I have talked with many, who, after being converted, cannot swallow the shallowness of what is offered them from the gospel music industry. They continue to listen to excellent music from unbelievers and question me whether or not it is all right to do so. I'll give you the answer to that question later.

The shallowness of music from Christians is not surprising, since the music produced by Christians is merely the reflection of the shallowness of the Christian church today. In their efforts to promote church growth, pastors have become ear ticklers so as not to offend anyone. A glaring example of this is the ecumenical movement, whether it be the National or World Council of Churches or groups like Promise Keepers. Whether you are Roman, Eastern, Protestant, or New Age does not really matter. After all, doctrine is not important, is it? John Calvin, John Knox, and all of the Protestant reformers would have rolled over in their graves. To give specific truth or give specific answers to problems requires the application of God's law-word and true doctrine to our contemporary culture. It takes men who can rightly divide the word of truth. It takes men who will do what is right regardless of the consequences. It takes men who would rather offend man than disobey God.

Good Music Must Embody What is Right or Just

Good music must embody what is right or just. Most modern music today about social issues is wrong and unjust. For some reason, most artists today are socialist, egalitarian, and environmentalist in their thinking and many are also drug-addicts and perverts. Welfare, nature worship, the noble savage, and the insightful street bum are all common themes of pop music today. Bruce Hornsby spends most of his time on social issues promoting the socialist agenda. One of his lyrics goes like this, "So they passed a law in '64' to give those who haven't got a little more, but it only goes so far." He is speaking, of course, of the so-called "War on Poverty"

enacted in 1964, producing our modern welfare state. Incredibly, though many have documented the utter defeat of this war, Bruce states that he doesn't believe it goes far enough. Bruce looks to the state as the savior of man. Far from saving the poor, however, it is ironic that in reality it is the state which has enslaved the poor to their poverty through the welfare system.

The truth embodied in a musical work must be about what is right and good and just. It must reflect the perfect justice of God found in His law, not promote the further erosion of justice in property rights and taxation, or promote salvation through education. When is the last time you heard a good song about capital punishment? Justice demands that the evildoer be punished and the righteous rewarded. Pop music today consistently reflects the wrong ideas of our culture, the unjust notion of calling good evil and evil good. Right from wrong is dulled as the relativism of humanism is propagated. Music, along with all other artforms today, reflects this graying of absolutes. When there are no absolute answers to our problems, despair and hopelessness result. Consequently, suicidal music has become very popular today in the styles of grunge and metal.

Good Music Must Embody What is Pure

Good music must embody what is pure. Music must promote purity in thought, word, and deed. Today, music is often accompanied by video in a new art form called the music video. Impure scenes abound in today's pop videos. When is the last time you saw a female vocalist in a modest feminine dress with beautiful scenery around her and an actual story line to follow? Instead, the music videos today embody a chaotic, fragmented view of God's world where the moment is all that matters, and sex and death are what sell best. Purity in music and video requires that human relationships be portrayed as God's law requires us to act toward one another.

Purity in art also requires that we be pure or consistent in our worldview. Unfortunately many Christians today are ignorant of sound teaching and often communicate false theology and philosophy through their music. Zeal without knowledge will not suffice in art because art by its very nature is communication of ideas, and all ideas have consequences.

Good Music Must be Lovely

Good music must be lovely. Here God gives us the aesthetic standard of music; it must be lovely or beautiful. Although this has application to the words sung, it is most applicable I believe to melody, arrangement, and instrumentation. Before I go on, some false misconceptions of beauty need to be addressed. It used to be that to be a well-rounded, cultured man, one was trained in music and the arts. Men knew how to read music and sing. Even the sports heroes were well educated in music. The movie "Chariots of Fire" displays this. In fact, it was the boys who were taught at an early age

excellence in music through boys' choirs. I am not familiar with any girls' choirs that were formed.

A man was *educated* if he was trained in the arts. In our culture today, training in the arts is for sissies. We have exchanged culture for blood. Men today crave it. The boxing matches and football stadiums feed this craving for violence. True men are, however, men of God, men who cultivate their families and take care of them, who lead their homes in the pursuit of excellence and the enjoyment of the arts. It is common today to equate beauty with "sugar and spice and all that's nice," meaning femininity. Power, strength, and other masculine traits are not commonly associated with loveliness. Nothing could be more false. Beauty is born of power. There would be no creation, no flowers, or blossoms if it were not for the power of God's voice calling them into existence and sustaining them. God created the powerful and beautiful ocean as well as the delicate rose petal. The voice of God is beautiful if any voice ever was, yet it was so powerful that the Israelites asked Moses to speak with them himself lest they die (*Ex. 20:19*). Beauty involves *both* the feminine and masculine nature of man in balance.

With that in mind, what makes a song beautiful? Melody is key to the beauty of a song. Arrangement and instrumentation both follow. Great production in the end cannot redeem a poor melody. Often, simple melodic lines can have far more impact than complicated wandering riffs. An example of this is Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." Almost anyone who has ever heard "Ode to Joy" is probably thinking of the tune upon the mere mention of its name. Its melody is gripping and easily recalled. Cocktail music, however, tends to obfuscate the melody with excessive arpeggios and runs. Such convoluted and verbose arrangements remind me of a poorly written term paper where the same thing could have been said clearly and easily in half the pages. For melodies to be great, they must be memorable. Good music must be able to be recalled, to be thought or meditated upon. Beauty which is forgotten as soon as it's gone isn't much good. Beauty that lasts for us to hum or sing throughout our day is beauty that accomplishes its end, namely to bring pleasure and joy to man.

Second, to be good, the melody must be well crafted into a finished arrangement. God says that everything must be done decently and in good order. Good music must exhibit good order in melody, arrangement, and instrumentation. Again, an analogy to writing helps to understand this. A great idea for a plot will fall on its face if it is not developed well and the story is poorly constructed. So in music, the arrangement must flow easily and logically from the melody.

Finally, if a musical work is suited for more than one instrument, the parts for those instruments must add to the arrangement. It is easy to detract from your melody by poor orchestration or too much orchestration. Obviously, it takes much skill and work to have dominion over the art of music and produce songs that are lovely.

These are some of the objective aesthetic standards of music. There is obviously the subjective element in art, which is a matter of personal tastes and likes resulting from our individuality and experiences. Therefore, out of two objectively good works of music, a person may love the one and not care for the other, just as one may rather look at a picture of a mountain than at a picture of a Ferrari or vice versa.

Good Music Must be Excellent

Good music must be excellent. This is the defining difference, I believe, between God's standards of the art of music and what proceeds out of the Christian music industry. The standard among those in the gospel music business is that of evangelism rather than excellence. As we have seen before, the best works of art were produced by Adam and Eve before the fall in sinless perfection. There was no sin and no need of evangelism. Their art was good in and of itself and brought man pleasure and glory to God. Its validity was certainly not judged by whether it was evangelistic. Today's evangelical—and even some Reformed believers—think that music must be evangelistic to be of value. Thus art is no longer categorized as being excellent or mediocre, good or bad, it is instead recategorized as Christian or worldly, sacred or secular. Underlying this are the assumptions that 1) only God's Word is legitimate for use in art since music must be evangelistic and 2) that this world is somehow Satan's and has no value for music. The truth is that the whole world is God's, even the cattle on a thousand hills (*Ps. 50:10-12*) and, in fact, this world is the inheritance of God's people (*Mt. 5:5*). It is foolish to pit God's Word against God's world. Both are legitimate subjects for the thoughts and artistic endeavors of man. Francis Schaeffer, in his booklet *Art and the Bible* states, "If God made the flowers, they are worth painting and writing about. If God made the birds, they are worth painting. If God made the sky, the sky is worth painting."² Further, he says:

... Christianity is not just involved with "salvation" but with the total man in the total world. The Christian message begins with the existence of God forever and then with the creation. It does not begin with salvation. We must be thankful for salvation, but the Christian message is more than that. Man has value because he is made in the image of God and thus man as man is an important subject for Christian art. Man as man—with his emotions, his feelings, his body, his life—this is an important subject matter for poetry and novels.... What a Christian portrays in his art is the totality of life. Art is not to be solely a vehicle for some sort of self-conscious evangelism.³

Indeed, good art does not need any utilitarian purpose or any other justification than the fact that God declared it to be good. To do what God declares to be good glorifies God. Consider the two free-standing columns

that were to stand just outside the temple. In 1 Kings 7:15-22 we read:

He [Hiram] cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high [twenty-seven feet] and twelve cubits around [eighteen feet].... A network of interwoven chains festooned the capitals on top of the pillars, seven for each capital. He made pomegranates in two rows encircling each network to decorate the capitals on top of the pillars. He did the same for each capital.... The capitals of both pillars, above the bowl-shaped part next to the network, were the two hundred pomegranates in rows all around. He erected the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakin and the one to the north Boaz. The capitals on top were in the shape of lilies. And so the work on the pillars was completed.

These pillars supported no architectural weight and had no utilitarian engineering significance. They were there only because God said they should be there as a thing of beauty. There were no Bible verses engraved in them.

Unfortunately, the evangelical myth has done great damage. The reduction in the view and place of music has resulted in the reduction of the standards of music. The standard of excellence or goodness in music is replaced by the nebulous standard of whether it is "Christian" or not. Music is judged by its evangelistic Christian clichés, not by excellence of craftsmanship and creativity. The world knows this. Since Christians abandoned the mainstream music marketplace in the early 70s for the ghetto of Christian bookstores, the world has been watching and laughing at their mediocrity, both in art and in life.

What does it mean to label a musical work as excellent? For a musical work to be excellent, the melody, arrangement, and instrumentation of a song must move or impact the listener. This means that it must affect people powerfully by stimulating their thoughts and emotions. It must capture their attention. It must be relevant to them. The opposite of excellence in the art of music is irrelevance. Music that is irrelevant is switched off. As C. S. Lewis said: "To *interest* is the first duty of art; no other excellences will even begin to compensate for failure in this, and very serious faults will be covered by this, as by charity (emphasis added)."⁴

The Biblical view of man and history is that they are accomplishing the purposes for which God made them. There is a purpose and goal of our lives and of history that give them meaning. History is not cyclical and man is not reincarnated. History is linear and the lives of men end either in glory or damnation. In other words, our lives have direction and meaning. Excellent music must reflect this and be directional. Our message and art must be relevant and in the front, not irrelevant and in the background. Much of new age music is ethereal, directionless, and irrelevant. It does not compel the

listener to pay attention but instead is used as part of the paraphernalia of the occult to lull the mind to sleep, producing fertile ground for manipulation and acceptance of occultic suggestions.

Excellence in music also requires excellence in lyrics. They must achieve the standards we have already discussed.

Good Music Must be Admirable and Praiseworthy

Finally, good music must be admirable and praiseworthy. I've put these two standards into one category. These are the culmination of excellence in all the other standards. Music to be admirable and praiseworthy must lead man towards God, not towards himself. In other words it must communicate the Christian worldview. Francis Schaeffer rightly divides the Christian worldview into a major and minor theme. The minor theme is the abnormality of the world in revolt against God. This consists of the unregenerate who have revolted against God and who self-consciously convey the meaninglessness of their worldview in their art. The other part of the minor theme is the Christian's defeated and sinful side. Honesty requires that we admit there is no such thing as totally victorious living. As Apostle Paul puts it, "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. . . . O wretched man that I am! who will deliver me from this body of death?" (*Rom. 7:19, 24*). Schaeffer explains:

The major theme is the opposite of the minor; it is the meaningfulness and purposefulness of life.... God is there. He exists. Therefore all is not absurd.... Man being made in the image of God gives man significance. Love exists along with sex, true morals, as opposed to conditioning exist and creativity, as opposed to mechanical construction, exists. The major theme is optimism in the area of being. There is also a major theme in relation to morals. God exists and has a character which is the law of the universe. There is therefore an absolute in regard to morals. It is not that there is a moral law back of God that binds both God and man, but that God himself has a character and this character is reflected in the moral law of the universe. Thus when a person realizes his inadequacy before God and feels guilty, he has a basis not simply for the feeling but for the reality of guilt. Man's dilemma is not just that he is finite and God is infinite, but that he is a sinner guilty before a holy God. But then he recognizes that God has given him a solution to this in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Man is fallen and flawed, but he is redeemable on the basis of Christ's work. This is beautiful. This is optimism. And this optimism has a sufficient base.⁵

There is place for both the minor and major themes in the Christian worldview. Good art must not leave out the defeated aspect to even the Christian life. If our art emphasizes only the major theme, then it is not true to the Christian worldview but is simply romantic art. On

the other hand, it is possible for a Christian to so major on the minor theme, emphasizing the lostness of man and the abnormality of the universe, that he is equally flawed in his communication of the Christian worldview. In general, good art must be dominated by the major theme. For music to be excellent and praiseworthy it must have this balance. It must major on the major theme and minor on the minor. Music which majors on the minor is not worthy of our praise and admiration. It is not in proper perspective. It does not have the proper balance.

Christian artists also too often take their cue from the world. They seek to be the Christian version of so-and-so, not realizing that it is the Christian's imagination which is truly free to soar beyond the stars. Let's give the world something worth imitating.

Indeed, the Biblical standards for the arts are liberating when compared to the evangelical myth. The whole universe being God's provides countless subjects of art: the sky is the limit, so to speak. We are not restricted to God's special revelation but have all of God's general revelation as the scope of art. Schaeffer points out, "The Christian is the really free man—he is free to have imagination. This too is our heritage. The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars."⁶ God's Word provides the spectacles with which we can properly interpret and view God's world and thereby accurately reflect the Biblical worldview in our art.

Faith and Art

In contrast to the Biblical view of art, the atheist and unbeliever have no basis for art. In a materialistic universe where matter is all that exists, there can be no such thing as aesthetic beauty. After all, what is beauty as distinguished from what is ugly in a world where paintings are merely the collection of different molecules and where musical notes are merely different frequencies of sound? Further, how can we know in a materialistic universe whether there actually are different colors or

different pitches? What if what we see is really not there or what we hear is all in our mind? In short, in a materialistic universe, how can anyone know anything? By experience, some would say. How then do we know that experience will give us knowledge? By experience? That is begging the question. You see, the atheist has no basis for knowing anything. He cannot make sense of the world he lives in. There are, in fact, no absolutes at all, no truth, no justice, no right and wrong and no Creator. Events are simply molecules colliding, nothing more. Only in the Christian worldview where the creator God has revealed Himself to man through His Word and world can man account for objective absolutes which are outside of himself. Only in the Christian worldview can truth, beauty and laws be accounted for as reflections of the character of the God of the Bible. All unbelievers operate on a Christian worldview when producing good art.

But, many would say, can the unbeliever actually produce good art? Once we strip away the myth that art must be evangelistic to be good, the answer is yes. There are, in fact, but four different possibilities, two producing good art and two producing bad art. The first is the born-again man who creates within the Biblical worldview. The second is the non-Christian who creates art on the basis of the Biblical worldview. Just as non-Christians like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, being influenced by the Christian society in which they lived, could write that men have certain inalienable rights, a notion derived from a specifically Christian worldview, so also an unbeliever can be inconsistent with his worldview and produce good art that is in keeping with Biblical standards. Both the Christian and unbeliever can produce great works of art. The third possibility is the non-Christian who expresses his own non-Christian worldview, whether that be the exaltation of man, nihilism, etc. The fourth possibility is the born-again Christian who does not understand what the total Christian worldview should be and therefore produces art which embodies a non-Christian worldview.

Some may find it hard to believe that good art can come from an unbeliever. They may think this because they don't think an unbeliever can do anything which glorifies God (*Rom. 14:23; Pr. 21:4*). This is correct. An unbeliever cannot glorify God with his art. As the Heidelberg Catechism (one of the creeds of the Protestant Reformation) explains, good works which glorify God must proceed from true faith and be done according to God's Word (HC #91). However, just because an unbeliever cannot produce good works does not mean that he cannot produce good art. It is imperative that we distinguish between good art and good works. Just as an unbeliever may build great houses or raise excellent watermelons, so he can also produce great art. God will not reward him, just as God will not reward the carpenter or farmer who does his work with excellence, but will tell him on judgment day to depart from Him into the lake of fire. This is precisely because the unbeliever's work of

excellence was done for man's glory and not for God's glory. It did not proceed from true faith.

It is appropriate here to distinguish between technical skill and a work of good art. A song may indeed exhibit great skill in melody, arrangement, and instrumentation but the lyrics are false or trivial. An artist may have amazing technical ability with his instrument but fail to create a good melody. Good art must have all of the qualities we have mentioned in order to be good. If any of its parts are lacking in the standards God has given, then it is not good art. Good art requires that all the components of a work meet God's standards for our reflections. This is not to say we cannot experience and learn from songs which do not measure up. Just as we can read about the unbelief of philosophers or theologians to learn their arguments, so we can also analyze art which is not good, in order to critique it from a Biblical worldview or learn from its technically excellent components. Our conscience must guide us here by the Word of God. For example, we are tempted to sin when we view human nakedness in art, even though the artist might have produced it with much skill (*Gen. 9:22-24*). Bad art which is pornographic or vulgar must be avoided. In a sinful world we will inevitably experience art which embodies a false worldview. We may sin in our response to bad art, but it is not sin to experience bad art. The majority of the art we experience should fill our minds with that which is good, just as the majority of our reading should be books which embody the truths of the Christian worldview.

Christians, however, can and should produce good art that is also a good work. They are even commanded by God in Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men . . ." (cf. *1 Cor. 10:31*). It is most sad when Christians don't heed this command of God in the art of music. Too often they are looking for praise from men in the subculture of Christian Contemporary Music. Actually, many so-called Christian rock groups are usually composed dominantly by men who are looking for praise from women. Too often the Christian's art does not qualify as a good work either.

Ultimately the church is mainly responsible for the pathetic attempts at good art by Christians. When the preaching, teaching, and discipline of the church are weak, so are the endeavors of its artists. Because of the evangelical myth that music is for the purpose of evangelism, the subjects of legitimate art have been severely and needlessly restricted. Creativity has suffered greatly. How many different versions of "Amazing Grace" can be produced? How many ways can the false gospel of modern Christian artists be expressed? As the church today has lost its standard of ethics by which to judge right from wrong, it has failed to discern against the false ideas of the world, even baptizing them.⁷

Likewise, Christian artists also too often take their cue from the world. They seek to be the Christian version of

so-and-so, not realizing that it is the Christian's imagination which is truly free to soar beyond the stars. Let's give the world something worth imitating. Let the Christians once again dominate the airwaves and culture. What we need today are true artists who will eschew the mediocrity of the gospel music industry and work at their craft with intelligence and creativity, so that once again good art will permeate the music of our time and bring honor once more to the name of Christ. Excellence in the art of music achieved by professing Christians will do much more in exalting the name of Christ than evangelization with mediocrity.

Nurturing Good Music

John Adams once said, "I must study politics and war that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy . . . in order to give their sons a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain."⁸ In a society of lawlessness, good music and good art do not flourish. Art is a reflection of the values and ideas of a culture. Art is religion externalized. You see this when you look at the countries afflicted with communism. The great architecture and art of those nations came to a screeching halt when the communists took over. As hopelessness and meaninglessness have taken over, the spiritual and emotional state of the people made it all but impossible for them to produce beauty. Dr. Greg Bahnsen on his trip to Russia reported that the windows were all filthy. Life was so dismal for these people that they cared about almost nothing. They did not even desire to wash their windows. Many of our own country's artists are also in this state of meaninglessness and pessimism because of their unbelief. As the church becomes less salty, our culture has taken on the attributes of unbelief.

When the property rights of artists and the profit incentive are continually eroded through confiscatory taxation, it becomes more and more difficult to make a living by selling one's art. Instead of a just tax system to encourage artists as well as all other business enterprises, our government has, instead, turned to welfare for artists in the form of government grants to artists and arts councils (who fund artists with these moneys). This usually results in the funding of pornographic, weird, and shocking works which appeal to those in the socialistic arts community whose minds are as bent as the art they fund. There is a diligent effort by many in the arts communities to erode all sense of what is true and Biblical. They actively challenge their communities to accept the validity of all cultures, all beliefs, and moral relativism.

To make matters worse, we have adopted in music academia the notion of what I call the "Decomposing Composer Phenomenon." This is the myth that all good composition ended with the classical period, and that to be a contemporary artist is automatically equated with mediocrity at best. In other words, all truly great

composers are now decomposing! This has resulted in the virtual absence of compositional education in private lessons and in the attitudes of discouragement or indifference in secondary education to the skill of music composition. Even our most prominent music contests, such as the Van Cliburn competition and similar contests, test only part of a musician's skill—that of repeating the works of others while totally neglecting the real work of a musician which is skillful composition.

To encourage great music we must once again teach music as English is taught. We must insist on teaching writing of music as well as reading of music simultaneously. We must support the works of good artists, just as we support good candidates and good businessmen. We must stop all government funding of the arts as legalized plunder. We must end the confiscatory taxation of property and income. We must encourage Christian artists to achieve their calling with excellence instead of expecting them to be evangelists and pastors. We must give Christian artists the Puritan vision of advancing kingdom of God on earth rather than the doom and false gloom of Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*. Christian artists must be Biblically optimistic in order to produce music that majors on the major theme of victory in the life of the Christian. In short, the church needs true reformation by the Spirit and Word of God, so that once again our whole society will experience the salt of the church. The arts in our culture will then be

dominated once more by the Christian worldview and great music will again abound to the glory of God!

¹ Clyde Kilby, as quoted in Leland Ryken, *The Liberated Imagination* (Wheaton, IL, 1989), 59.

² Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL, 1973), 60.

³ *ibid.*, 60-61.

⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Quotable Lewis* (Wheaton, IL, 1989), 52.

⁵ Schaeffer, 56-57.

⁶ *ibid.*, 61.

⁷ For some examples: many churches accept women in positions of rule over men, supposed "Christian homosexuality" (*i.e.*, sodomy), "theistic evolution," government socialistic education, complete abandonment of the Fourth Commandment (the Sabbath commandment), ignore Biblical church discipline and accept the heresies of Arminianism, dispensationalism, premillennialism, and antinomianism.

⁸ John Adams to Abigail Adams, 1780, in Charles Francis Adams, Ed., *Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail Adams, During the Revolution* (Boston, MA, 1875), 381.

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The Message of the Most Holy

The Christian Philosophy of Art

By Ingrid Dahl



One of the most difficult subjects to draw is the human face. Of course, I didn't learn that until after I tried drawing it. My art teacher specialized in portraits and encouraged me to follow suit. I did, but my first few pictures taught me more patience than technique. My family tried to encourage me, "If

you cross your eyes and cock your head it kind of looks like. . . ." My Mom insisted that I needed to "capture the look," in other words, make my drawings look like a particular person instead of an organized collection of facial features. I adamantly insisted it could not be done until my teacher took a pencil, sketchpad, and five minutes to prove me wrong. He actually made my brother *appear* on the page. Instructed by his careful hand, I eventually learned to make my drawings look human. I learned to "capture the look," to trap a bit of reality on my page.

Modern Art and Self-Expression

In contrast to "modern art" my teachers told me, "draw what you see, don't draw what you know." They knew that if I relied on my imagination, or mental images, I would produce distorted images. They taught me to look at the objective reference in creation and reflect it in my drawings. Modern art, however, has adopted "expression" as its aesthetic philosophy. It has denied the authority of reality and made the artist's autonomous imaginings the goal of artistic expression. The philosophy of expression is the art theory that says, "there are no laws, art is an 'expression' of yourself, and thus can be whatever you make it to be." Where my teachers stressed copying reality, modern art stresses creating it, allowing the artist to become his own god and the shaper of a purely subjective reality. Rushdoony pointed out that "basic to the modern perspective in the arts is a reduction of meaning to something purely subjective." He noted that because of this subjectivity modern art has increasingly separated itself from reality and thus "continually seeks new ways of saying nothing."¹

Because it must deny the authority of an objective reference to maintain the philosophy of expression, modern art encourages the artist to define aesthetic value

for himself. Beauty and order are thus placed at the mercy of the artist's subjectivity. If a work "expresses," it is art. No other criterion is allowed to intrude upon its autonomy.

When we were little, my sister and I used to play with water colors. Once, one of us put two lines on the page in no particular direction and said, "Look Mom, you could hang this in a museum and call it modern art." She agreed, but hung it on the refrigerator instead.

Evidenced by what is produced as modern art, expression reduces art to the autonomous wanderings of fallen man, who, in his hatred of God, rebels against the created order and tends toward chaos. When art that denies God ceases to borrow order and beauty from Him, forthrightly declaring autonomous expression its mode of operation, it inevitably loses order and becomes chaotic.

Expressional art denies the true basis for all reality—God the Creator—telling the artist he, too, is a creator who "creates himself."² He thus creates a pseudo reality out of his own depravity. Self-expression is an expression of evil: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. . ." (*Jer. 17:9*) and ". . . an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil" (*Lk. 6:45*).

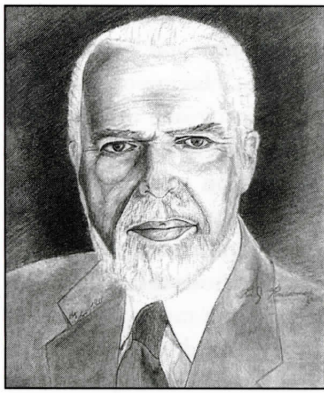
According to Wesley Hurd, "Modern artists like Picasso tell us: 'the important thing is to create. Nothing else matters; creation is all' . . . for many contemporary artists to make art is to be God-like, to be free from all constraints, and to create and define reality for themselves according to their own autonomous desires."³

Picasso's creation theory was his way of affirming his allegiance to modern self-expression. He did not want to depict the creation of God; he wanted to make himself the standard for a new creation. Dr. Van Til, commenting on unbelieving philosophers said, "They try to make the world what it isn't."⁴ Expression is the artistic philosophy of the humanist, who shapes his life around denying the true God.

Expression is not the Christian philosophy of art. The Christian artist will recognize that true art is first a depiction of divinely defined reality, and second a mode of communicating truth.

Christian Art and Depiction

Man, made in the image of God, is by nature an artist. But artists do not create as God did, *ex nihilo*. Instead, they take the elements He has made and arrange them into a representation of life. They make new combinations out



of existing components. True art is thus a depiction of true reality. It explores God's handiwork, both earthly and heavenly, and portrays it in its medium. The philosophy of depiction treats art as a highlighter that sweeps across a piece of creation, grabbing our attention and directing it there.

Wesley Hurd applauded Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Rembrandt because "they are realistic . . . they exhibit at least something commonsensically recognizable in their depiction of the subject matter."⁵ True art depicts God's work Biblically, historically, and materially and acts as a lens that focuses the eye on some aspect of His work. Depiction, as an artistic philosophy, recognizes the absolutes in God's creation as the external standard of order, reality, and beauty and seeks to build on these through its art. Depiction, then, must presume an order outside itself. It must recognize God as the author and standard of order and beauty.

Christian Art and Communication

Beyond depiction, art is a form of communication. Rushdoony said, "Art is a theological exercise and . . . most certainly a form of communication."⁶ A work of art will inevitably carry meaning beyond the raw materials of the medium used to assemble it. It is the embodiment of a message. It *says something* to those who come into contact with it. Christian artistic philosophy will thus see art as a vehicle of truth. No clearer was this made to me than through my training in chalk art.

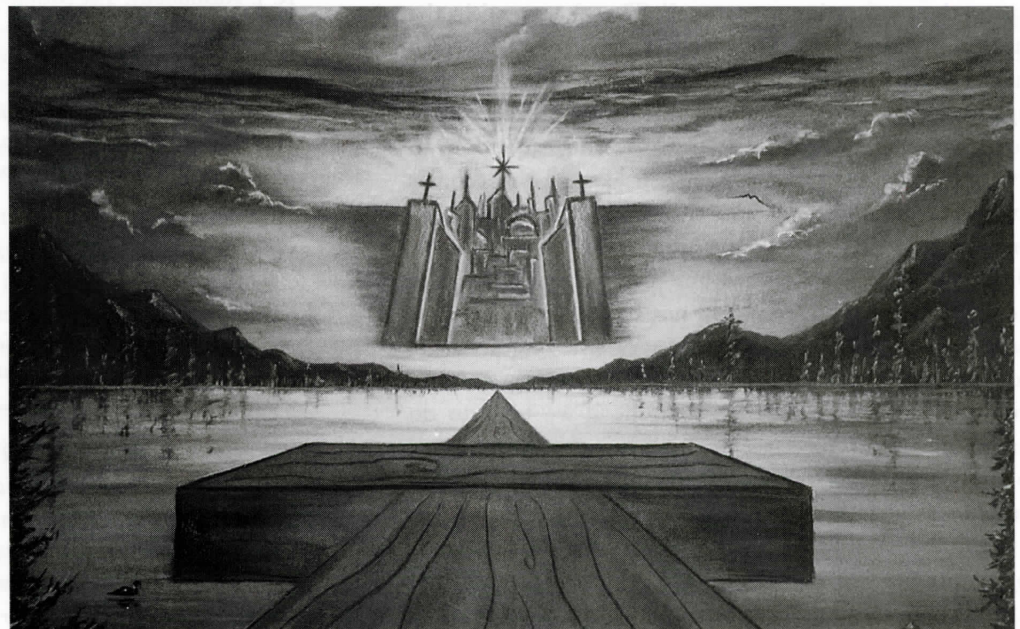
After my brief career as a portrait artist, I decided to try chalk. It couldn't be any worse than trying to draw people, I reasoned. But having been spoiled on the sharp point of a pencil, I found chalk to be about as precise as a five-year-old with finger paints; so much for progressing as an artist. But what chalk art training did provide was an emphasis on the ability of art to communicate a Biblical message. (It is also a medium that alters the appearance of the artists themselves. When the same hand that applies chalk to a

picture is used to wipe a face it creates quite an effect.) A chalk presentation usually includes a spoken message (*i.e.*, preaching or storytelling) that is complemented by a picture, drawn before the eyes of the audience, illustrating an aspect of the spoken message. What separates chalk art from other mediums is that it is built entirely around communicating the gospel. It focuses the artist on capturing an aspect of God's truth in his picture, and teaches him to use the communicating power of art to promote Biblical precepts. I am not saying that all art, in order to be godly, must be evangelistic. Art can and should communicate about the totality of life and truth. What a medium specifically devoted to evangelism demonstrates is the communicative ability and purpose of art. Communication is thus the second half of a Christian philosophy of art. Scripture says "everything that has breath" should praise the Lord. That includes the artist, whose work, representing the character of God displayed in the created order, is a declaration of praise to Him.

Depiction vs. Expression

A Christian philosophy of art will view art as depiction rather than expression. It will see art as framing an aspect of God's creation rather than creating the artist's own reality. The believer recognizes that his art is an imitation of God's creation, an attempt to capture a piece of His handiwork in the art form. The unbeliever, under the guise of self-expression, makes a mockery of God's creation by perverting it with an "expression" of his own depravity.

Expressional art works to deny the objectivity of reality and any order outside itself. It refuses to admit that God is the author and founder of beauty. Its products will thus fail to represent recognizable subjects and will end up in chaotic nothingness, preserving only its autonomous expression. Historian and critic Allen Leepa saw this as



An example of Ingrid Dahl's chalk art

artistic failure: "When art fails to mirror life it fails as art."⁷

Expressional art finds itself in a constant struggle to recreate reality. Depictive art, however, will strive to *represent* reality in accordance with the law of God.

When the children of Israel gathered together and crafted the golden calf, they were acting as artists. The golden calf was a form of art. It was self-expressive art. They crafted an emblem of worship after the wickedness of their own hearts and not according to the stipulations of God. God later called gifted artisans, blessed them with skill and knowledge, and set before them the task of sculpting the intricate designs of their center of worship. He did not allow them to meddle with the design, only to work according to His description. As a result, their work became a rendition of the heavenly throne room (*Heb. 8:5*) and they communicated through types the redemptive plan of God. At the foot of Mt. Sinai, the Israelites tried a self-expressive form of art and brought upon themselves the wrath of God. The art of the temple was a pictorial forerunner of Christ, a depiction of the majesty of God.

Communication vs. Expression

Christian artistic philosophy sees art as a communication of the message of God rather than an expression of the artist. Expressional art turns away from communication because it rejects God and thus rejects absolutes and order. Expression is the art of confusion. Rejecting order, it testifies of nothing but chaos. Communication, the transfer of ideas, implies absolutes, order, and truth. It implies God. God-haters try to make art into self-expression because it removes the necessity for external standards and allows the artist to deny God and create his own reality.

Expression has intruded not only upon the fine arts, but on the performing arts as well. There's a trend in the theater that has even allowed the performers to slash themselves with sharp objects and suspend blood-soaked rags over the audience, calling this "artistic expression." But who can say that it isn't? Once they abandon an artistic law outside themselves, their expression becomes law. If expression rules the theater they can perform *anything* and call it art. Expression also invades music. Different "styles," no matter how cacophonous, are now judged only on preference and not by the laws God has built into musical composition. When the artist is expected to express, and not communicate, governing absolutes can be abandoned. Imagine if we tried to do math problems on the same premise. It is obviously absurd to apply arbitrary expression to mathematics, and should strike us as equally absurd to allow it in art.

Rushdoony said that "the hostility of the modern artist to communication is intense." He pointed out that "the attitude of the modern artist is 'choose your own meaning.'"⁸ Rejecting external absolutes, expressional art sacrifices any possibility of communicating. Expressional

art *cannot* communicate unless, as Dr. Van Til often observed, it denies its own philosophy and borrows the artistic philosophy of the Christian. "Having no objective standard, it is incapable of maintaining one internally or artistically. By its radical subjectivity it denies communication in favor of expression and thus cannot maintain continuity."⁹ Christian art communicates. Humanistic art expresses. Communicative art assumes order. Expressional art denies it. No more stunning is this contrast than in the comparison of the music of Bach or Handel to what is known today as "hard rock" or "heavy metal." The former is a dynamic, but ordered, assembly of musical components, the latter a random collection of noise. Contemporary music is steadily abandoning the use of musical principles, like rhythm and harmony, in its relentless plunge toward total autonomous expression.

Conclusion

Christians should not casually adopt the philosophy of expression, but should recognize it as an intrusion of the unbelieving world on the arts. The philosophy of expression demonstrates an attempt at consistent atheism: a rejection of God *and* His universal order. Art in its true form is not meant to be an expression of the artist, but a glorification of God. In his perversion man uses it in his attempt to be his own god, expressing the wickedness bound up in his heart. Art is a tool for the Christian to communicate truth to the culture. It represents our drive to follow in the Creator's footsteps. It should be used to depict the beautiful graciousness of His creation, not turned into an unchecked outlet for the expression of sin. The Christian artist is called to depict the majesty of the Creator and communicate the message of the Most Holy.

¹ R. J. Rushdoony, *The Meaning and Greatness of Christian Art*, 1993, www.ArtsReformation.com.

² Burne Hogarth, *Drawing Dynamic Hands* (New York, 1988), 9.

³ R. Wesley Hurd, *Art and Modern Art: Reflections from a Human Being*, www.ArtsReformation.com.

⁴ Dr. Cornelius Van Til, *Philosophy: Church Fathers*, Covenant Media Foundation, tape 5.

⁵ Hurd, *ibid*.

⁶ R. J. Rushdoony, *Art: Christian and Non-Christian*, 1996, www.ArtsReformation.com.

⁷ Allen Leepa, as quoted by Wesley Hurd in *Art and Modern Art*.

⁸ R. J. Rushdoony, *Art: Christian and Non-Christian*.

⁹ *idem.*, *The Meaning and Greatness of Christian Art*.

Ingrid Dabl graduated in 1997 with the TEACH Institute after 9 years of home education. She is currently enrolled in the Southern California Center for Christian Studies. She received her chalk art training through the Advanced Training Institute and is now the resident chalk artist at her church. She lives in Minnesota with her parents, Doug and Maureen Dabl, and three of her siblings. She can be reached via e-mail: ddabl@isd.net.

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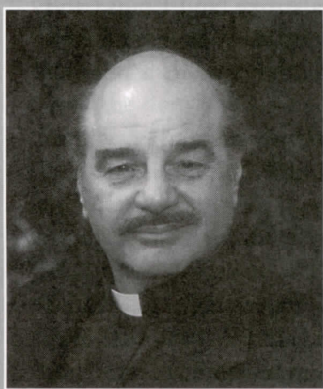
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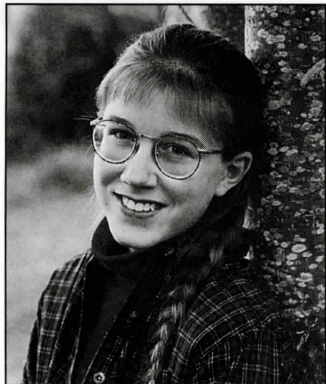


Ellsworth McIntyre

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A Biblical Critique of the Works of Louisa May Alcott

By Sally Walker



Louisa May Alcott's writings have been considered good reading for over a century; however, upon closer inspection, one finds that her ideas verge on the heretical. My goal in this critique is to explore her works and compare some of Louisa's statements to what God has revealed to us in His Word.

Her Life

Louisa May Alcott was born on November 29, 1832 in Germantown, Pennsylvania to Bronson and Abigail May Alcott. She was the second of four daughters: Anna, Louisa, Elizabeth, and May. Her father was a teacher and philosopher. He experimented with many different jobs and moved his family around Massachusetts a great deal. Bronson Alcott was a firm believer in a cult called Transcendentalism. His close friend Ralph Waldo Emerson was America's leading Transcendentalist.

Transcendentalism teaches that "reality exists only in the spirit world, and that things which are seen in the physical world are only reflections of the spirit world."¹ One uses one's senses to learn about the physical world, but the spiritual world is discovered through reason, which is defined as "the independent and intuitive capacity to know what is really true."² The physical world is second to the spirit world, though it is useful and makes people aware of beauty. One ought to learn all that he can through observation and science, but his life should be ordered according to the truths discovered by reason. Emerson and his followers believed that people find truth within themselves, hence they emphasized self-reliance and individuality.

Transcendentalists believed that in order to learn what is right, a person should rely on reason. Transcendentalism teaches that the doctrines and organized churches of orthodox Christianity interfere with the personal relationship between a person and God, and that we should reject the authority of Christianity and gain knowledge of God through reason. Bronson Alcott brought up his family to believe in Transcendentalism and all its teachings.

As Louisa grew, her talent for writing became evident.

Her mother encouraged Louisa as she began to write plays and short stories.

Her father never stayed with one job long enough to make much money, so Louisa worked as a tutor, seamstress, and maid, and wrote as she found time, while her sister Anna worked as a governess. In 1854, she published her first book, entitled *Flower Fables*. In 1858, her younger sister, Elizabeth, died.

Louisa volunteered as a nurse for the Union army in November, 1862. She was impressed by the sight of so many suffering soldiers. She went home after a few weeks, ill with typhoid fever. In July, 1865, Louisa went to Europe as a nurse to a young lady.

After returning home, she wrote *Little Women* in 1868 at the request of her publisher, Thomas Niles of Roberts Brothers Publishing House. It was unlike any other book she had written.

Louisa was a strong supporter of women's rights. This movement started in the early 1800s, when women began to receive higher education and to participate in reform movements which involved them in politics. As a result, they questioned why they should not have "equal" rights with men. It was not only voting rights these women wanted. They hoped that if women gained the vote, they could use it to fight for additional rights.

During the next twenty years, Louisa continued to write, care for her family, and advocate women's rights, although she was frequently troubled by bouts of illness.

In 1877, her mother died. Her sister, May, who had married Ernest Nieriker a year earlier, died in 1879, leaving behind her baby daughter, Louisa. The baby was sent to live with Louisa May in 1880.

In 1882, Louisa's father had a stroke, and Louisa and her sister, Anna, were his nurses. In 1888, Louisa's health began to deteriorate, so she went to live in a nursing home.

On March 1, Louisa went to visit her father, whose end was very near. She caught a chill coming home and died March 6, 1888.

Evidence of Feminism

In Genesis 3:16 God says to the woman, ". . . and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This means that the woman would desire her husband's office and want to rule over him. It is very evident from Louisa May Alcott's later works that the desire to rule was strong in her.

She writes in *Jo's Boys*, "Old maids aren't sneered at

half as much as they used to be, since some of them have grown famous and proved that woman isn't a half but a whole human being, and can stand alone."³

God created woman to complete man, not to be a completely separate, independent being. "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Cor. 11:9).

In *Little Men*, Louisa asserts that women who marry regret the act after awhile and tire of being helpmeets by writing, "I'm tired of dolls, and I guess I shall put them all away and attend to my farm; I like it rather better than playing house," said [Nan], unconsciously expressing the desire of many older ladies, who cannot dispose of their families so easily however."⁴ Also, "I sometimes feel as if I'd missed my vocation and ought to have remained single; but my duty seemed to point this way, and I don't regret it," said Mrs. Jo, folding a large and very ragged blue sock to her bosom."⁵

Though "Mrs. Jo" doesn't regret it, how can her husband trust her knowing that such thoughts are in her mind? In writing this, Louisa is sympathizing with women who do not respect their husbands and fulfill their duties, but instead long after a career. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of Spoil" (Pr. 31:11). "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

Along the same lines, Louisa scorns the wifely duty of caring for their household when she writes:

"Phebe and I believe that it is as much a right and duty for women to do something with their lives as for men; and we are not going to be satisfied with such frivolous parts as you give us," cried Rose, with kindling eyes. "I mean what I say, and you cannot laugh me down. Would *you* be contented to be told to enjoy yourself for a little while, then marry and do nothing more till you die?" she added, turning to Archie.

"Of course not: that is only part of a man's life," he answered decidedly.

"A very precious and lovely part, but not *all*," continued Rose; "neither should it be for a woman: for we've got minds and souls as well as hearts; ambition and talents, as well as beauty and accomplishments; and we want to live and learn as well as love and be loved. I'm sick of being told that is all a woman is fit for! I won't have any thing to do with love till I prove that I am something beside a housekeeper and baby-tender!"⁶

In Proverbs 31:15, 27, God tells us the godly woman "riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens," and "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Concerning careers for women, Louisa writes:

"I have made up my mind not to be cheated out of the real things that make one good and happy; and, just because I'm a rich girl, fold my hands and

drift as so many do. I haven't lived with Phebe all these years in vain: I know what courage and self-reliance can do for one; and I sometimes wish I hadn't a penny in the world so that I could go and learn my bread with her, and be as brave and independent as she will be pretty soon," [said Rose].⁷

And also, "Nan . . . clamored fiercely to be allowed to do everything that the boys did."⁸

Women should not be working outside their home. If they must work, it should be a task within the realm of the home. It is not a woman's place to be "independent" in the sense of being out from under the authority of men, and especially not over men in authority. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:12). "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3).

Louisa writes of the wife submitting to her husband as something to be avoided: "I think I should like [being a spinster], on the whole—they are so independent. My Aunt Jenny can do just what she likes, and ask no one's leave; but Ma has to consult Pa about everything."⁹ Louisa makes it seem as though "Pa" is being rather tyrannical to be always wanting "Ma" to "consult" him about "everything." She portrays "Ma" as "Pa's" slave and hints that it would be wiser to remain a spinster who is "independent." However, "[t]herefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5:24).

Lastly, on the subject of votes for women, Louisa writes, "[About a statue Rebecca is molding] 'Give her a ballot box,' cried a new voice, and turning round, they saw an odd-looking woman perched on the sofa behind them. 'Thank you for the suggestion, Kate. I'll put that with the other symbols at her feet, for I'm going to have needle, pen, palette, and broom somewhere to suggest the various talents she owns, and the ballot box will show that she has earned the right to use them' [said Rebecca]."¹⁰ "The women of England can vote, and we can't. I'm ashamed of America that she isn't ahead in *all* good things," cried Nan, who held advanced views on all reforms, and was anxious about her rights, having had to fight for some of them."¹¹

Now, it is not a woman's place to vote. All this about "earning the right" to use God-given talents is nonsense. These talents that she writes of can be used to God's glory without women having to do everything that men are called to. A woman simply should not be voting. It is the men's job to elect leaders of our country; it is not necessary for women to assist, much less run for office. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. . . . For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:11,13).

Evidence of Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism is also present in Louisa May

Alcott's works, though not so blatantly as feminism. Rather, she introduces her religious beliefs subtly. While reading her works, one becomes aware that the references to Christ, life, death, and soul do not ring true. For instance, she writes, "Alas for Charlie! his to-morrow [sic] never came: and, when [Rose] saw him next, he lay there looking so serene and noble, it seemed as if it must be well with him; for all the pain was past; temptation ended; doubt and fear, hope and love, could no more stir his quiet heart, and in solemn truth he *had* gone to meet his Father, and begin again."¹² "Charlie" is a wild, intemperate youth who had an early death as a result of an excess of drink. She speaks not of Christ and the need for His blood to cleanse our hearts of sin, rather it was because "Charlie" was in heaven that he was "serene and noble." One might wonder: how did "Charlie" get to heaven? This would seem to be a statement of the Transcendentalist belief that truth is found within one's self, which is a denial of total depravity. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (*Rom. 3:10*). The only One Who can make us righteous is Christ. Not even going to heaven can do that. As C. H. Spurgeon said, "Put a thief in heaven and he will pick the pockets of the angels."¹³ What Louisa writes of Christ is more glaring: "That is Christ, the Good Man, and He is blessing the children."¹⁴ ". . . and Nat lay fast asleep, lying with his face toward the picture, as if he had already learned to love the Good Man who loved little children, and was a faithful friend to the poor."¹⁵ This is a direct denial of the deity of Christ! She writes of Him as nothing more than a Good Man.

But God tells us in John 1:1,14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This clearly shows that Christ is God.

Regarding sin, Louisa's character, Miss Celia, states:

"I try to be [pious], but I very often fail; so every Sunday I make new resolutions, and work hard to keep them through the week. That is a great help, as you will find when you begin to try it."

"Do you think if I said in meetin', 'I won't ever swear anymore,' that I wouldn't do it again?" asked Ben soberly; for that was his besetting sin just now.

"I'm afraid we can't get rid of our faults quite so easily; I wish we could: but I do believe that if you keep saying that, and trying to stop, you will cure the habit sooner than you think."¹⁶

Another character, Mrs. Bhaer, declares:

"I want my boys to love Sunday, to find it a peaceful, pleasant day, when they can rest from common study and play, yet enjoy quiet pleasures,

and learn, in simple ways, lessons more important than any taught in school. Do you understand me?" she asked, watching Nat's attentive face.

"You mean to be good?" he said, after hesitating a minute.

"Yes; to be good, and to love to be good. It is hard work sometimes, I know very well; but we all help one another, and so we get on."¹⁷

The thought she expresses is that we can rid ourselves of our sin by ourselves. This is wrong, for the only way our sins can be cleansed from us is by God's gift of faith in Christ's cleansing blood: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (*Isa. 53:5*). "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (*Jn. 3:15*).

Conclusion

I think it should be very evident that, although Louisa's works are generally considered "moral," they contain very serious theological errors which must be detected in order to make her books safe and instructive reading. By examining Louisa May Alcott's works in the light of Scripture we may better analyze the thinking of those outside Christ and be prepared to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (*1 Pet. 3:15*).

¹ John Clendenning, "Transcendentalism," *World Book Encyclopedia*, ed. 1990, 371.

² *ibid.*, 371.

³ Louisa May Alcott, *Jo's Boys* (Garden City, NY, 1957), 247.

⁴ *idem.*, *Little Men* (Mahwah, NJ, 1988), 235.

⁵ *idem.*, *Jo's Boys* (Garden City, NY, 1957), 25.

⁶ *idem.*, *Rose in Bloom* (New York, 1918), 10-11.

⁷ *ibid.*, 11.

⁸ *idem.*, *Little Men* (Mahwah, NJ, 1988), 285.

⁹ *idem.*, *Jo's Boys* (Garden City, NY, 1957), 250.

¹⁰ *idem.*, *An Old Fashioned Girl* (New York, 1996), 241-242.

¹¹ *idem.*, *Jo's Boys* (Garden City, NY, 1957), 74-75.

¹² *idem.*, *Rose in Bloom* (New York, 1918), 253.

¹³ Pastor Jim West of Covenant Reformed Church used this quote during a class he was giving on the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

¹⁴ Louisa May Alcott, *Little Men* (Mahwah, NJ, 1988), 44.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 46.

¹⁶ *idem.*, *Under the Lilacs* (Garden City, NY, 1955), 116.

¹⁷ *idem.*, *Little Men* (Mahwah, NJ, 1988), 28.

Sally (14) and her two younger sisters, Leah (11) and Ellen (9), are homeschooled in Elk Grove, CA. Sally enjoys playing piano, reading, and writing. Two of her favorite authors are Jane Austen and J. R. R. Tolkien. The Walkers are members of Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento.

Annual West Coast Reformation Bible Conference

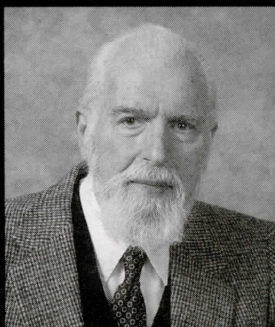
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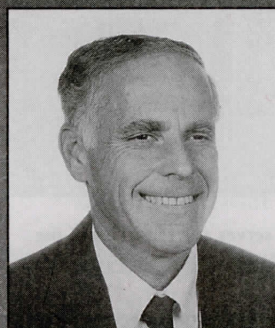
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Rushdoony



Rev.
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Rev.
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Rev.
Jim
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Topics:

- The Creature-Creator Distinction
- The Framework Hypothesis and the Sell-Out of Six-Day Creation
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Time:

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Through Fire and Flood in Sudan

By Peter Hammond



During April we delivered and distributed into the officially Islamic Sudan over 23,000 Bibles and Christian books in fourteen languages. This involved driving through flooded rivers, flying far behind enemy lines and walking, many hours, with heavy loads up and down the Nuba Mountains in Central Sudan. Much of our

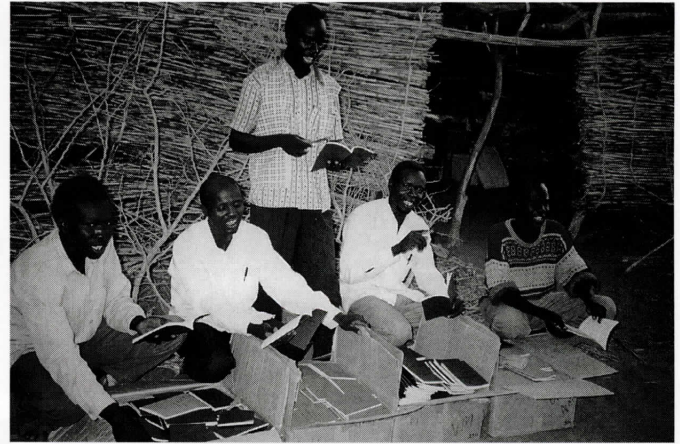
ministry in Sudan was carried out in oppressive heat which sometimes reached 58C. Every night in the Nuba Mountains gunfire was heard. The Islamic government of Sudan had recently and repeatedly bombed each of the places we visited. On one occasion, as we walked across a valley at night, tracer lit up the sky and shells exploded overhead. Sometimes we walked past burning fields and burned out homes.

Leadership Training and Literature

The purpose of our mission trip was to minister to body, mind, and spirit. During this time inside Sudan, I presented a "God and Government Seminar" for 25 chaplains and commanders; a "Reformation and Revival Seminar" for 80 schoolteachers; and a "Discipleship Training Course" for 70 Bible students, pastors, and evangelists in the Nuba Mountains. Some of these pastors walked over 200 km to attend this course! There was much rejoicing over the new hymn books, prayer books, catechisms, Sunday school books, and Bible study materials which Frontline Fellowship had especially printed in the Moru, Otoro, Heiban, Moro, Kwalib, and Krongo languages.

Celebrations in Lui

By God's perfect timing I arrived with the new Moru hymn books, prayer books, and catechisms just in time for the "consecration" of the new bishop for Lui diocese in Western Equatoria. This was the most strategic opportunity possible for the distribution of these new publications, because almost every Moru pastor of the Episcopal Church of Sudan was present for this historic event! Since the war began, most bishops have been appointed and installed outside the country in neighboring Kenya or Uganda. So it was most significant that this important church event took place inside Sudan—in the newly liberated areas east of the Yei River.

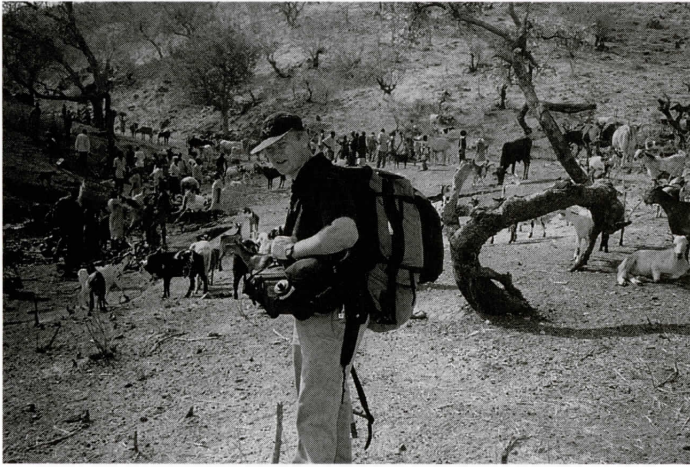


Krongo pastors and evangelists in the Nuba Mountains rejoice to receive hymn books, catechisms, and Bible study materials in their own language. The Krongo have been listed as an unreached people group.

Two years before, I had stood in Lui shortly after it had been liberated from the Arabs. The devastated town was deserted with no civilians living there at all. Amidst the trenches, foxholes, and the debris of war I held a prayer meeting with the small platoon of SPLA soldiers stationed there. We praised God for the great work that had been pioneered by Dr. Kenneth Fraser who had first come to Lui in 1920. Dr. Fraser had established the first hospital, the first school, and the first church in Moruland. I praised the Lord Jesus Christ that He is the Resurrection and the Life. Christianity is the religion of the empty tomb. We prayed that the Lord would again bring life out of death; that this town of Lui, the birthplace of Christianity in Moruland, would be restored; that the hospital would be repaired and again be used for



A crashed aircraft in the Nuba Mountains serves as a reminder of the dangers of landing in this rugged terrain.



On this, Frontline Fellowship's 37th mission trip to Sudan, Peter Hammond flew far behind enemy lines and walked many hours and days with heavy loads up and down the Nuba Mountains.

the healing of bodies; that the school would again be rebuilt and used to renew minds; and that the church building—which the Muslims had destroyed—would be restored and would again be filled with people worshipping our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Less than two years later we could rejoice that all those prayers had been answered in a most wonderful way. The Kenneth Fraser Memorial Church was overflowing with over 3,000 people singing praises to God. The school was again a vibrant place of learning. The hospital was fully operational providing the finest medical treatment available anywhere in Southern Sudan. The market place was full. Lui was bursting at its seams with over 6,000 inhabitants.

The transformation of Lui from an occupied government garrison town to a liberated area full of vitality was dramatic. As an important and fast growing center in New Sudan, Lui has also become a target for the NIF government's bombing campaign. The SPLA warned us that the government of Sudan (GOS) air force was going to bomb Lui on Sunday to disrupt the Bishop's consecration service. There was serious talk about shortening the service, moving locations, or even postponing the event, because of the fear of bombing. I strongly urged the leaders to go ahead with the planned service and not to allow the Muslims to cause us to give in to fear and be deviated from our calling.

As it turned out a rainstorm erupted just as the service began! We all arrived in sunshine and departed in sunshine, but during the service heavy rain protected the church in Lui from any bombing raid that the Muslim government forces may have been planning.

Crashed Aircraft and Scorpions

As Tim, Delia, and I flew into the Nuba Mountains with 9,000 Christian books in 7 languages, we saw a crashed aircraft by the airstrip. It was another reminder of the risks of landing on such rugged terrain. One night

Tim killed 3 scorpions in our tukel (hut). That episode actually took a few hours as the scorpions hid amongst our clothes and kit. One large scorpion needed over a dozen hits before it succumbed.

Bombs and Raiders

One pastor related how Arab raiders had attacked his village to steal their cattle. He had fought them off with a shotgun. Pastors at Kauda related how over a hundred bombs had been dropped on their village in October. Then from Christmas day to the New Year, Antonov aircraft bombed them every day. Pastors at Gadel related how 16 bombs were dropped on them by a circling Antonov in February. The NIF garrison at Mendi had also repeatedly shelled nearby villages with artillery fire.

Muslims Come to Christ

Numerous Nuban pastors related testimonies of Muslims in their communities coming to Christ. Some spoke of 8, 10, 20, and even 40 Muslims becoming Christians in response to preaching, the Jesus film, and Gospel Recordings audiovisual presentations. Six Muslims were known to have been converted in Kauda last year in response to the Jesus film. Ten were converted in Achurum, this year, through the Gospel Recordings presentation. Seven were converted, this year, in Tira through the Gospel Recordings presentations.

By Camelback

As we were exiting the Nuba, I was surprised to see several armed Arabs on camels coming towards us. "It's all right," one of the pastors reassured me. "We hired them to help transport the sorghum your plane is bringing in!" Well, that was the first time Frontline Fellowship has had relief aid or Bibles for persecuted Christians transported by camels! Please pray for Steve, Tim, and Delia as they continue to minister in Sudan.

Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship and the Director of United Christian Action (a network of 20 Bible-based groups working for revival and reformation in Southern Africa). He is an international speaker, presenting about 400 lectures or sermons each year throughout Africa, Eastern Europe, and America.

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

Donations for Peter Hammond should be made through:

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A Macedonian Plea

In late June, we received an email from Peter Hammond. Not only does it give an update of the wonderful ministry opportunities facing Frontline Fellowship, it is also a plea for help. We thought it important to share excerpts with our readers as soon as possible.

Dear Brothers at Chalcedon,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Thank you very much for the great news of all the Chalcedon books en route to Zambia!

By God's grace we have several exciting ministry opportunities coming up. As you know, at this time Robert and two of our other workers are conducting 13 Biblical Worldview Seminars throughout Zambia. This is Robert's third trip to Zambia so far this year. The Minister of education has organized (genuinely confirmed) three Teacher Training Colleges where our team will conduct BWS's for their teachers-in-training. Our other Zambian team, Virgil, Louise, and Hansie will be physically establishing the permanent mission base and Bible college later in July.

Now, we have a definite invitation to conduct a Biblical Worldview Seminar for some Parliamentarians here in Cape Town. Yesterday, two other Frontline leaders and myself were at Parliament, meeting with the leadership of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). They have asked us to come and conduct a 3-day Biblical Worldview Seminar for their Members of Parliament and for the Legislators. The ACDP is a small party, but they have a fine track record of no compromise and very bold and brave stands made for Biblical principles in Parliament and the media over the last 5 years. They turn to us for resource material, research, speech writing, and policy drafting, etc. They have joined us for many of our public meetings, for marches on Parliament, prayer vigils, life-chains, etc. We know them and we trust them.

Yesterday, we were in fact at Parliament to give them critical feedback and rebuke for some mistakes made during the recent election campaign. They received the correction and rebuke graciously and immediately asked us to come and conduct a Biblical Worldview Seminar specifically for their Parliamentary and Provincial leaders. The dates settled on are Wednesday the 28th to Friday the 30th of July. This is planned to be the first of several BWS's spread throughout the next year.

They have also asked us to put together a library of books for Parliamentarians to be in their offices at Parliament, and also to draw up a required reading list for each of their members of Parliament according to their committee responsibilities, (e.g., Economics, Welfare, Crime, Justice, Education, etc.).

By way of a follow-up, we are planning a further BWS with the Parliamentarians later on in the year. The ACDP has 6 members of Parliament, 1 Senator, and 5 members of Legislature, 12 people in total, who will be attending the BWS at Parliament. The numbers may not be great, but we have guaranteed attendance and this is a very strategic group.



Over 70 pastors, evangelists, and Bible students from all over the Nuba Mountains walked to participate in the Discipleship Training Course.

I believe it to be well worthy of our best efforts. Small groups in opposition tend to be a lot more open to teaching than those already in government! Perhaps these are some of Gideon's band.

Also of interest is that the weekend of 29th to the 31st of October is going to be Reformation weekend. We are planning a Reformation Conference to be held here in Cape Town, high-powered, leading up to Reformation Sunday the 31st of October. Should anyone be interested in coming out to join us at that time, we would be most grateful.

On another subject entirely, we have an invitation from the Ministry of Education in Nigeria for four expatriate missionary teachers to come and "help uplift the spiritual and educational standards" of the Nigerian schools. These are government-sponsored posts. The government of Nigeria has requested foreign missionary teachers to help them. The initial quota is for four Christian missionary teachers. If Chalcedon knows of any qualified teacher who wants to work as a missionary in Africa, Nigeria has schools, and students, just waiting to be taught. The intra-structure is set up, the door is wide open, the opportunity and challenge stand before us.

On another subject, I desperately need more staff. We definitely do not have enough qualified people to be able to handle the tremendous opportunities and invitations of ministry before us. I need someone with experience in book ministry, to run our "Christian Liberty Books" ministry, and we need an office manager who can juggle the many demands, matching available resources, vehicles, and personnel to the tasks at hand according to the priorities (this would free me up to do the writing, pioneering, and other ministry that I need to concentrate on). We always need more field staff, and administrative staff, but there is a wide-open opportunity for expanding our tape ministry, pastoral training, leadership training, Bible teaching, etc. Would it be a possibility in any particular edition of Chalcedon to put in a straight challenge and invitation for missionary volunteers, both short-term and career? The opportunities before us are so unprecedented, and I fear that we may be missing many windows of opportunity by not having sufficient resources and personnel to respond to them adequately.

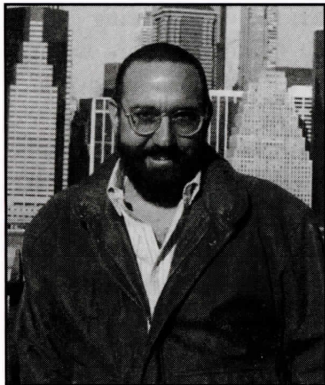
This is a Macedonian Call: come over and help us!

Yours for Reformation and Revival,

Peter Hammond

All I Really Need to Know About Worship . . . I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle (Part V)

By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel



We've sought to show why the Regulative Principle of Worship—if it is not commanded, it is forbidden—cannot survive when measured against the Scripture.

RPW chauvinists:

1. "Discover" it where it is not. They isolate words and incidents from their qualifying contexts.
2. Miss it where it is. The Tabernacle/Temple system was indeed strictly regulated, but why? Because it was *the gospel*, not because it was worship.
3. Miss the humongous implications of the synagogue, a "man-made" worship institution functioning *alongside* the Temple system.
4. Fail to fairly account for the approbated celebration of "man-instituted" special days in Scripture.
5. Fail to fairly account for approbated "man-made" traditions, some of which modified even explicit divine instructions.
6. Fail to be consistent with their own principle, upon which singing in New Testament-era worship services cannot be justified.
7. Have landed themselves in so many pickles they could open a deli.

Speaking of pickles, not more than one or two sourpusses have responded bitterly to our series so far. Sweet mail received from ministers and elders (TR-variety) in the PCA, the OPC, and other Presbyterian denominations were almost uniformly positive (a pleasant surprise), with many expressing sincere gratitude for the salty series.

The responses certainly have been interesting. It's been about six months since our first critique of the RPW was sent out. We estimate that our arguments have been sent to well over 11,000 ministers, elders, churches, and Reformed families. Yet the only feedback resembling an argument against the position taken in these pages was

received independently from two men from the same church. We'll let the minister of that church be the spokesman. A proud-to-be-strict-RPW brother, a good and well-loved man whom I rejoice to call my friend (though we certainly disagree on this issue!)—expressed in a colorfully worded question what we suspect is on the minds of many: If there's no RPW, then "rock 'n' roll bands, longhaired hippies, dancing in the aisles, 'slain in the Spirit,' incense waving, smoking peyote, singing of my latest poem I wrote two weeks ago, are all OK in worship?"

To this we must say, first, we are *not* seeking to overthrow the sort of worship found in churches which seek to abide by the RPW. Rather, we are hoping to advance that very sort of worship, but on grounds less vulnerable to informed, Biblical challenge. That is the nail-on-the-head issue: Must we impose a man-made principle, such as the RPW,¹ in order to have God-honoring, people-of-God-edifying worship? Our answer is a flat "No. We do not need a manufactured principle. We have many clear Biblical principles which, if applied, lead to the desired results."

Second, one goal of replacing the RPW with what is hopefully a stronger set of principles is to allow dialogue and debate in terms of "good, better, best," as opposed to those recurring, barren ultimatums of "true/false" or "acceptable/abominable." The ultimatum approach has stagnated the progress *and* propagation of Reformed-style worship. Further, where it has prevailed it has frequently bequeathed to the church a cadre of Tartuffes who make certain Pharisees look like rank amateurs.²

Third, as we suggested in our last installment, the sort of argumentation which insists that chaos is the alternative to the RPW is precisely the sort which Reformed people can reject with a laugh, or even a humble swagger. For it is an argument of identical construction to that which has ever been waged against the Reformed doctrine of justification, a doctrine regarded by many as residing at the very heart of the true Christian faith.

Faith Works

"If you tell people they are justified—declared forensically righteous by God—*apart from their own works*, sin will know no restraint, chaos will abound!"

Such arguments against the doctrine of justification by grace through faith were refuted more than 400 years ago in the Heidelberg Catechism. Q64: *But does not this doctrine make men careless and profane?* A64: *No, for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.*

We are not seeking to overthrow the sort of worship found in churches which seek to abide by the RPW. Rather, we are hoping to advance that very sort of worship, but on grounds less vulnerable to informed, Biblical challenge.

A free and gracious justification was and is regarded as a reality inseparable from sanctification, expressed through good works as defined by God's law. No symbols on earth exalt the law of God, in its rightful place, like the Reformed symbols. The Westminster Confession's treatment of Good Works (Chapter XVI), is excellent. Section II says, ". . . good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith."

The Second Helvetic, in its time the most widely held Reformed confession, speaking of justification by faith in Chapter XV, says, "*Wherefore, in this matter we are not speaking of a fictitious, empty, lazy and dead faith, but of a living, quickening faith. It is and is called a living faith because it apprehends Christ who is life and makes alive, and shows that it is alive by living works. And so James does not contradict anything in this doctrine of ours. For he speaks of an empty, dead faith of which some boasted but who did not have Christ living in them by faith (James 2:14 ff.). James said that works justify, yet without contradicting the apostle (otherwise he would have to be rejected) but showing that Abraham proved his living and justifying faith by works. This all the pious do, but they trust in Christ alone and not in their own works.*"

Earlier (in Chapter XII), Helvetic II refuted antinomianism in a most concise manner: *We condemn everything that heretics old and new have taught against the law.*

And these have not been mere paper convictions!

Reformed and Presbyterian communities have a well-deserved reputation for living out the Puritan sayings, "Justified by faith alone, but faith which appears alone [that is, without good works] does not justify," and, "Faith proves justification; good works prove faith." We Reformed have been a people who have lived lawfully without seeking justification by merit. It is obvious, therefore, not only from the Bible but from the lives of those who believe it, that the fears of bedlam overtaking a *freely* justified people were unwarranted.

Such a sort of argument, then ("The boogeyman will get you!")—whether offered to retain works-righteousness or the RPW—is weak. In fact, the very offering of this as the only argument left in the case before us may represent the swan song of the RPW. When its advocates can only say—"Oh yeah? Well, wadda ya gonna do without us?"³—we suspect that the time is short till the Reformed and Presbyterian world recognizes that the RPW may be put to rest, without fear, as a once popular but nevertheless extreme view. The RPW is giving way, even among orthodox Presbyterians, to the far more Biblical and balanced *covenantal* view of worship. Shedding the RPW does *not* leave us with nothing! A faithful husband is not such because he is being followed by a shamus, but because he lawfully loves his wife. We have a heavenly Father we seek to lawfully worship, a blessed Savior we seek to serve, and a Holy Spirit who has given us 66 covenantal books to guide us in so doing.

Continental Divide

On the Continental Reformed side of our feedback, we received "So what else is new?" mail. Though some Continental Reformed, through cross-pollination from Puritans, have embraced a version of the RPW, very few have been in the "strict" camp.⁴ Nevertheless, the Continental Reformed have long been a people who worship in a God-centered, orderly, and covenantal manner without the RPW.⁵ Rev. Donald Van Dyken, pastor of an Orthodox Christian Reformed Church, wrote to us, "I must say that I never *heard* of the Regulative Principle of Worship until exposure to my ministerial colleagues here in the OCRC's who were from Presbyterian background."

Rev. Van Dyken provided us with an instructive outline. "My understanding of worship is governed by the Covenantal Principle. That works itself out in several ways, all of them, I believe, covenantal:

1. Covenant is relationship, and the relationship we are concerned with in worship is between the Covenant God (Triune) and His people. Worship, therefore, consists of communion between these two: God and His people.
2. As God initiates covenant, and covenant demands response, so worship basically consists of God speaking and His people responding.
3. Worship as a covenant body means every soul in

the church (no ecclesiastical daycare centers for children) gathered as covenantal family units.

4. Worship in the New Covenant grows out of the Old and is characterized by immediacy because of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. The vicarious character of Old order worship is removed, the congregation of the Lord not being dependent upon human mediators or priests.
5. The New Covenant brings the wonderful liberty of maturity.

"I don't know where people miss the boat on this thing," says Rev. Van Dyken. "The maturity of the church gives her the freedom to work out varying practices so long as they are consistent with the principles in which she was supposed to have been soaked in her OT childhood. New Covenant is covenant maturity. Maturity means work, and perhaps that is why so many want to revert to childhood."

Rev. Van Dyken's thoughts emit the clean fragrance of covenantal air. And his notation concerning maturity is particularly appropriate. But I doubt that our RPW friends are averse to work.

In some ways we might view maintenance of the RPW as *more* work. An illustration of what I mean by "more work" occurred in the course of ministry here. God provided us an opportunity to witness to an official from a United Nations delegation whose native country is still plunged deep in communist darkness (may God deliver them!). Every contact we had with him, though, was not with him alone: he was accompanied by a "chaperone." Though the cost and inconvenience of assigning the chaperone were great, the commies thought it not only worth it, but necessary. They treat *their own officials* like infants—nay, like recreants just itching to switch sides.

My RPW friends who are terrified of what might happen to worship without the RPW are a bit like the Communist Party officials afraid of what might happen to their delegates without chaperones. The presupposition is the same in both cases: the people who are supposed to be friends and servants are actually regarded as enemies, turncoats-in-waiting.⁶ Such a view sees the church void of friends-of-God. That such is our state by nature, we heartily agree. To think that such is our state by grace, however, turns grace into nothing.

For our purposes, the chaperone in the above example represents the unbiblical "principles" of both extreme positions dealing with the regulation of worship. Both Rome and regulativists treat their votaries as people not to be trusted, ready to bolt at the first opportunity, in desperate need of the Watchful Eye.⁷ Rome is totalitarian in what it imposes while regulativists are totalitarian in what they exclude.⁸ Both Rome and regulativists treat the people of God like infants, incapable of maturity or sound judgment. Rome tells her minions that they *must* observe special days (for example; the list of "musts" is long). Those confined to the regulativists' barracks are told that

they *must not* observe special days (the list of "must nots" is nearly as long).

The Informed Principle of Worship, based on a covenantal view of things, rejects both extremes and insists upon considering worship in the light of *tota scriptura*.

All parties agree that what is forbidden must be excluded.⁹ But for the rest, what? High-churchers say, "Not forbidden, then fine." Regulativists say, "If it is not commanded, it is forbidden." Both propositions fail to meet the test of *tota scriptura*. We propose the IPW: What is not forbidden *might be* permitted. It depends. Biblical worship is in harmony with the whole of Scripture and keeps a focused eye on Christ's covenantal achievements in history and the impact of His completed work on worship in the New Order. We'll consider some particulars of the IPW momentarily. First, let's see why the church is to be addressed as bound by principles which approach her as mature. For in capturing this we can see how our appeal on behalf of Reformed worship is more like this: "You should not worship in a manner which is *beneath* your calling," than this: "You abominable, idolatrous wretches! God hates you, and your worship too!"

Coming of Age

When children are small, loving parents regulate their behavior down to minutiae. As the children grow the regulations cascade like scales. They fall *not* to the emergence of antinomian behavior but (one hopes) to the living out of those principles which they learned as children. We forbid our children to go in the gutter when they are toddlers; when they mature, they apply that principle by guarding life. For God's will for us in the sixth commandment is ". . . that I do not harm myself, nor willfully run into any danger."¹⁰ The toddler prohibition was an in-order-to matter. A 36 year-old who is afraid to cross the street has a problem.

There is no need to rehearse the New Testament Scripture's praise of maturity, but we will remind you that the Pentecost event recorded in Acts 2 was the covenantal equivalent of the church emerging into a new maturity. In fact, it was then that the church became capable of "reproduction." Pentecost was the adolescent church's first hormonal rush.¹¹ The church wasn't born at Pentecost: it was bar mitzvah'd.

Just as each individual is reckoned to be the same *person* though passing through several *stages* en route to maturity, so also the one church grew up in accordance with God's plan. We confess that the church, from Adam forward, is organically one. Our catechism properly teaches that "the Son of God, through His Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, *from the beginning of the world to its end*, gathers, protects, and preserves for Himself a community chosen to eternal life and united in true faith."

The one church has been from Eden, but, like a child

on its way to adulthood, the church has not had its affairs identically administered at each stage of its development. There was continual, superintended growth of the covenant, leading—according to God’s express plan—to “the Christ event” and its consequent fruit which ripened at Pentecost. It was only then that the church could truly “be fruitful and multiply,” being freed to carry *the meaning* of the Tabernacle/Temple system around the world in the very portable form of the gospel. The truth was no longer tied to the apron strings of an earthly center. “Headquarters,” Zion, Jerusalem, was now fixed in heaven, equidistant from all earthly locations. The kingdoms of this world had, in principle, become the kingdoms of our Lord.¹²

When Jesus our Savior had accomplished His incarnation, perfect life, substitutionary death on the cross, burial, resurrection, and ascension, the one church (which had existed from the beginning) could enter upon a new phase of its being. It could grow up and begin to live out, *in all the world*, the principles it had learned from infancy. From Moses to Pentecost the church, like a child, was “kept at home,” more or less confined to one geographical location. Now, with the Spirit of maturity, it could leave home, *reproduce*, and encompass the earth.¹³ Looked at this way, the Spirit’s outpouring at Pentecost was less the *goal* of Christ’s work than the provided *means* to empower her and enable her to accomplish the set goal. That goal was clearly articulated by our Lord before His ascension: to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins *to all nations*, to baptize *all nations*, and to teach *all nations* to obey everything He has commanded.

The self-identification of a people bound to one geographical location, united by a common language and common customs, and distinguished by an exclusive access to God—for such a people to achieve and maintain a strong self-identification *as a people* is a rather simple affair. But to give people from all the disparate nations of the earth, speaking different languages and having different customs—to provide a common identity in Christ to this group required a special operation of the Spirit. That is the unity in the Spirit of which Paul speaks.¹⁴ That is how Jews and Gentiles are made one: not by common access to an earthly Temple, but by common reception of the Spirit of Truth, by whom they have access—from anywhere on earth—to the heavenly Temple.

Thus the New administration is characterized by a universalism which *forbids* the imposition of Jewish—that is, Sinaitic—worship forms upon the Gentiles. Any honest reading of the New Testament Scriptures reveals this to be *the* administrative issue confronting the church at that time.¹⁵ To impose upon the Gentiles now a principle which regulated only the Temple service during a specific developmental phase of the covenant would be as improper, as covenantally anachronistic, as wrongheaded, as requiring Gentile males to be circumcised or to visit Jerusalem thrice annually. Such regulation belonged to another day.

Yet some regulativists seem positively *terrified* of treating churches as maturing entities. They would keep them bound to the old Jerusalem’s precincts via punctilious regulation.

Such an approach is backwards. It reminds me of the suburban sot who lived on a tree-lined acre. Night after night, driving home from his favorite pub in an intoxicated stupor, he would smash into yet another tree. The tippler’s solution was to cut down all the trees on his property. A good regulativist answer. There was a better way, however. He should have controlled *himself*.

This difference of approach is evident if we examine how the Apostle reasons with God’s people.¹⁶ Though this is an argument from “texture”—or as they’d say today, “look and feel”—it is nonetheless instructive. Simply compare any standard regulativist tome with St. Paul’s admonitions to, say, the Corinthians. To the Corinthian mantra—“Everything is permissible for me”—Paul responds thus: “But not everything is beneficial.” And again: “But I will not be mastered by anything.” And once more: “But not everything is beneficial.” And lastly: “But not everything is constructive.”¹⁷

Paul spoke to his beloved churches as if they were adult entities; *he always spoke to them in terms of their calling*.¹⁸ He knew that the nurturing and development of Christian character would yield the desired results: the living out of a God-glorifying life in all spheres.

When Paul devotes several “chapters” to dealing with worship irregularities, he does so without once suggesting that the Corinthian problem was soluble simply by forbidding whatever was not expressly commanded.¹⁹ He could have saved himself a lot of effort! But then, he was constrained by God’s *actual* will.

There are Biblical arguments to govern our behavior and restrain excess which appeal to simple principles, *e.g.*, “Nobody should seek his own good but the good of others.” There are also “arguments” which rely on mere authority. When God has spoken on a subject, mere authority is a good form of argument! But when He has not—as is the case with many New Order worship details—one must pursue other avenues of argumentation. Consider church architecture.

“Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”²⁰ It can be justly said that from Moses to Messiah the architecture of the “House of God” was as strictly regulated as the worship within it. Yet God has not given to the post-Pentecost church a blueprint for its architecture. To see this freedom that we now have—in fitting church form (architecture) to function (the activities occurring within)—is to see the church exercising one of its many prerogatives as a mature entity in Christ. God treats us as grown-ups; regulativists treat us as toddlers. Instead of basing their appeals for improvement on higher sensibilities and principles, as one would reason with an adult, they seek simply to “child-

proof" every house with their "must not's." There are locks everywhere because God's covenant people, in their view, are not to be trusted.

[Part VI in September]

¹ Obviously, we are assuming that the evidence thus far presented in this series satisfactorily demonstrates that the RPW is not true to Scripture. Therefore, the RPW's source is to be found in man—no crime in itself, if only it would be admitted.

² One further thought about methodology. I've been told by some regulativist brethren that without the RPW we have no grounds to correct either high-churchers or those who have adopted modern evangelical excesses. First, I don't believe that's so. All schools of worship may be tested by the Informed Principle of Worship. Second, I ask, "Has having the RPW in hand aided you in the conversion of many churches to the Reformed way of life?" I didn't think so. Third, all of us would agree that, in any case, *principle* is above *pragmatism*. Therefore, this is a non-issue.

³ We don't *want* to do without *them*, just their imposed principle.

⁴ You will recall that by 1619 they codified the observance of non-prescribed holidays into their church order and calendar.

⁵ We are aware of those who would enlist in their RPW cause A.96 of the Heidelberg (which teaches that God's will for us in the Second Commandment is that we "in no way make any image of God, nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded us in His Word") and perhaps Article 32 of the Belgic ("... that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only Master, has instituted"). But this is nothing but a grand case of question-begging, for the question remains as to just what God has taught us in His Word about worship, and just what Christ has instituted. We assert that it was God's will, revealed and recorded in His Word, that He be worshipped in a synagogue, for which He did not give "If I have not commanded it, you may not do it"-type instruction. We further assert that it is Christ's express will that the church pattern its worship along synagogal lines.

⁶ This blatantly anti-Biblical attitude is one which appears in many places, not just in the RPW camp. It is endemic to certain morbidly introspectionistic communions where the children of believers, and the people gathered before the pulpit, are addressed, not as reconciled friends, but as enemies of God.

⁷ Both positions depend upon and foster an ecclesiocentrism that consolidates clerical power, swiped from the pool of power conferred by God upon the *community* of covenant men. The power grab is more subtle in some precincts of the

Reformed and Presbyterian world, but it is not less real. We still need to confront Protestant sacerdotalism.

⁸ One correspondent wrote to us describing what he felt to be "the stifling, narrow, almost retentive way in which the [regulativist] crowd expects one to worship. Both my wife and I are struck by the Roman Catholic 'feel' we have when we are in an RPW service. Just as you say, Rev. Schlissel, 'who would've thought the very principle designed to distance us from Rome would actually link us. But all extreme positions kiss, you know.' How very, very true." I thought his comments interesting, though I do not share his opinion. I was referring to principles, not "look-and-feel." Personally, I find RPW-style worship exhilarating, glorious, secure, and man-at-his-best type worship. But I was not at the church these folks visited. Perhaps it carried the RPW to such an extreme that it *experientially* kissed Rome.

⁹ Though not all carry out that conviction.

¹⁰ Heidelberg, #105.

¹¹ Adolescence is important but it too must yield to further growth. The early manifestations of the Spirit were not normative for the rest of church history. We are always to be growing, maturing, "aiming for perfection" (2 Cor. 13:11).

¹² Rev. 11:15.

¹³ We are not here asserting that the *spiritual experience* of covenant believers after Pentecost was superior to the subjective experience of those before; in fact, we deny it.

¹⁴ See Eph. 2:11-22; 4:3; 1 Cor. 12:13.

¹⁵ Acts 15 is just the beginning. The basis of Gentile inclusion in the covenant is *the* issue, either expressly mentioned or alluded to, in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians (see chapter 2), Colossians, Philippians—we could go on.

¹⁶ Unless they tampered with the gospel.

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 6:12 and 10:23-4.

¹⁸ Eph. 4:1, e.g.: *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

¹⁹ In fact, regulativists themselves use the Informed Principle of Worship (viz., "It depends") when they come to 1 Cor. 14:39 where God says, "Do not forbid speaking in tongues." Of course, finding an RPW church which does *not* forbid speaking in tongues—in a worship service!—is a tough task. And well it should be, on our principles. Tongues, like the RPW, belonged to another day.

²⁰ Heb. 8:5.

Rev. 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.

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- September 3-4 Andrew Sandlin preaches at Birdwell Heights Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, TN. For information, call Larry Ball (423)288-3664.
- September 12 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture, 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, Salida, CA. For more information, contact Brian Abshire (209)544-1572.
- September 17 See Denver ad on page 7.
- September 23-25 See Midwest Conference ad on page 5.
- October 2 West Coast Reformation Conference, Covenant Reformed Church, Sacramento, CA. For more information, call (916)451-1190.
- October 10 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture, 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, Salida, CA. For more information, contact Brian Abshire (209)544-1572.
- October 15-16 Andrew Sandlin preaches at National Conference, National Reform Association, Christ's College, Lynchburg, VA. For more information contact Bill Einwechter (717)328-3586.
- October 29-
November 1 Steve Schlissel lectures, Monroe, LA. For more information, contact Randy Booth (870)775-1170.
- November 2-4 Steve Schlissel lectures, Nacadoches, TX. For more information, contact Randy Booth (870)775-1170.
- November 5-7 Steve Schlissel lectures, Texarkana, AR. For more information, contact Randy Booth (870)775-1170.
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How Much Will Your Stocks Be Worth in 2000 - or late 1999?

With the current volatile economic environment of the international monetary system:

- Asia (including Japan) in a depression;
- the complete collapse of the Russian economy;
- Brazil and South America on the brink of collapse;
- the unknown impact of "Euro" currency as the century's first competitor to the dollar;
- the potential of massive bank runs and a severe recession due to Y2K related computer problems (real or perceived, the impact may be the same)

Although not all experts agree, many warn of the possibility of dramatically reduced stock values. Hence, this is an opportune time for us to announce a way to help Chalcedon weather a potentially serious drop in income due to economic uncertainties caused by any one (or all) of the aforementioned factors and to help Chalcedon donors benefit now from the maximum current value of their stock.

Here's how it works: Let's assume you paid \$50.00 for a stock now worth \$150.00. If you sell the stock, you will be taxed up to 20% on your profit of \$100.00 (plus 9.3% state taxes for California residents and any other rates, as states vary). If you hold onto the stocks too long, they may lose value. If you donate your stock to Chalcedon, the entire amount (\$150.00) is tax-deductible, and, you are not taxed on the \$100.00 profit! We believe your donation of stock to Chalcedon will be well timed to provide both you and Chalcedon with the maximum benefit!

*For more information, contact Chalcedon Board Member, Mr. Dan Harris at:
124 North York Road, Suite 212, Elmhurst, IL 60126; Phone/Fax: 630.279.4826.*

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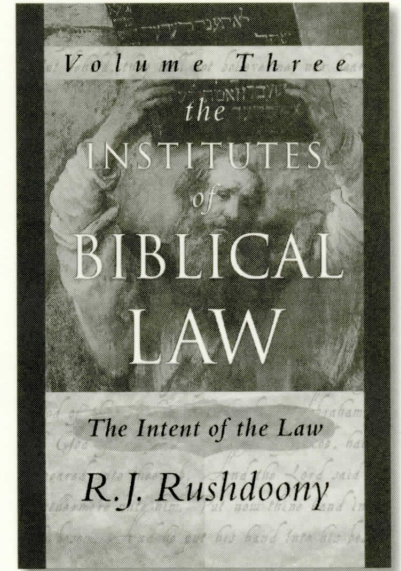
Rousas John Rushdoony's

The Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. III: *The Intent of the Law*

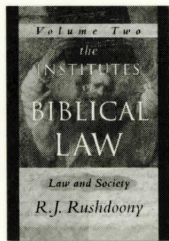
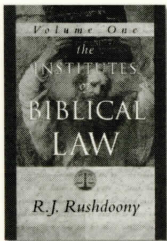
“God’s law is much more than a legal code; it is a covenantal law. It establishes a personal relationship between God and man.” The author first summarizes the case laws. Rushdoony tenderly illustrates how the law is for our good, and makes clear the difference between the sacrificial laws and those that apply today. The second section vividly shows the practical implications of the law. The examples catch the reader’s attention; the author clearly has had much experience discussing God’s law. The third section shows that would-be challengers to God’s law produce poison and death. Only God’s law can claim to express God’s “covenant grace in helping us.”

The **Intent of the Law** is third in a series: Volume I describes the law in terms of the Ten Commandments. Volume II is subtitled **Law and Society**. Volume III illustrates that God’s grace extends to all of the reader’s life,

including hot-button issues that make moderns wince. It illustrates how the law applies to our lives and the lives of those around us and the freedom it brings. The book prepares the reader to think Biblically about modern situations and to share Biblical perspectives with those around him. The practical applications and the beauty of presentation make the book an ideal gift for someone unfamiliar with God’s law. The short chapters and gentle presentation are suitable for study groups or homeschoolers. Both the author’s love for God and God’s tender mercy towards us shine throughout the book.



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