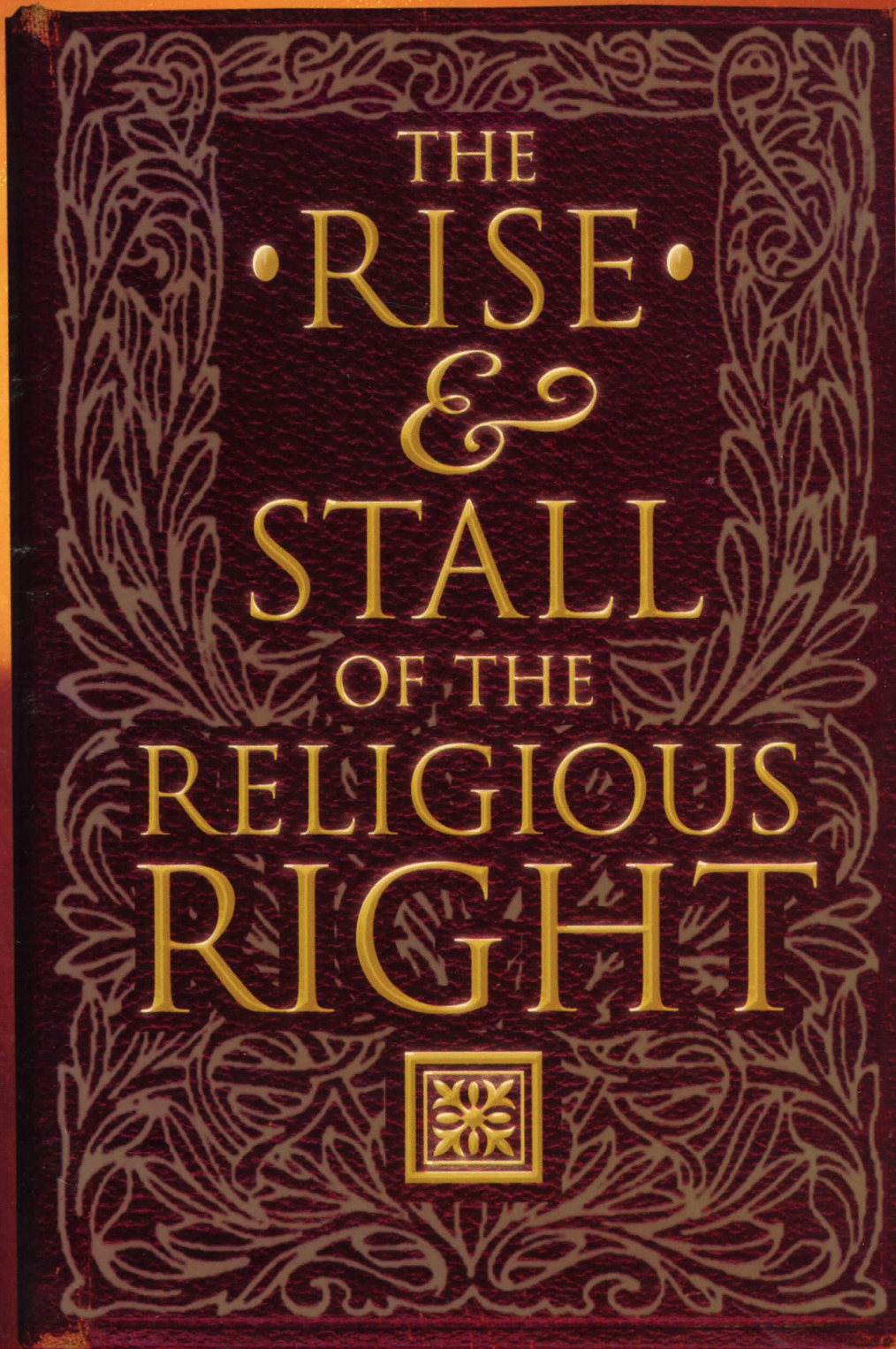


CHALCEDON

Report

No. 408, JULY 1999



R. J. Rushdoony on:
The Collapsing
Right Wing

Andrew Sandlin on:
Cultural War as
Religious War

Wayne Johnson on:
Political Illusions of the
Moral Majoritarians

Colonel Doner on:
A New Agenda for
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George Grant on:
The Southern Agrarians

Larry Pratt on:
The Compromise of the
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Howard Phillips on:
Defining Victory

Plus...

**Special Roundtable
Discussion on:**
The Religious Right
Featuring:
Andrew Sandlin,
Colonel Doner,
and Monte Wilson

Chalcedon Vision Statement

Chalcedon labors to articulate in the clearest possible terms a distinctly Christian and explicitly Biblical solution to the prevalent evils of the modern world. Our objective is nothing short of setting forth the vision and program for rebuilding the theological fortifications of Christian civilization. These fortifications have been eroded by the forces of humanism and secularism over the past three centuries. We are not committed, though, merely to reproducing a glorious Christian past. We work to press the claims of historic Christianity as the Biblical pattern of life everywhere. We work for godly cultural change across the entire spectrum of life. We strive to accomplish this objective by two principal methods.

First, Chalcedon is committed to recovering the intellectual foundations of Christian civilization. We do this in two main ways. Negatively, we expose the bankruptcy of all non-Christian (and alleged but compromising Christian) systems of thought and practice. Positively, we propose an explicitly Biblical system of thought and action as the exclusive basis for civilization. Only by restoring the Christian Faith and Biblical law as the standard of all of life can Christians hope to re-establish Christian civilization.

Second, Chalcedon is dedicated to providing the tools for rebuilding this Christian civilization. We work to assist individuals, families, and institutions by offering explicitly Biblical alternatives to anti-Christian ideas and practices. In this way we guide Christians in the task of governing their own spheres of life in terms of the entire Bible: in family, church, school, vocation, arts, economics, business, media, the state, and all other areas of modern life.

We believe that the source of godly change is regeneration by the Holy Spirit, not revolution by the violence of man. As God regenerates more and more individuals, and as they reorient their lives and areas of personal influence to the teachings of the Bible, He employs them to advance His kingdom and establish Christian civilization. We believe that God's law is the divine pattern of sanctification in every area of life, but it is not the means of justification; man is saved by grace, not by law. The role of every earthly government—including family government, church government, school government, vocational government, and civil government—is to submit to Biblical law. No government in any form can make men Christians or truly obedient; this is the work of God's sovereign grace. Much less should civil government try to impose Biblical law on an unbelieving society. Biblical law cannot be imposed; it must be embraced.

A guiding principle of Chalcedon, in fact, is its devotion to maximum individual freedom under God's law. Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition of Jesus Christ as God of very God and Man of very man, a formula directly challenging every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; only Christ may announce that "All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Historically, therefore, the Chalcedonian creed is the foundation of Western liberty, setting limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of all human freedom (Galatians 5:1). Consequently, we oppose top-heavy, authoritarian systems of government which are, by definition, non-Christian. We advocate instead a series of independent but cooperative institutions and a highly decentralized social order.

Chalcedon is an educational institution. It supports the efforts of Christians and Christian organizations to implement the vision of Christian civilization. Though unapologetically Reformed, Chalcedon supports the kingdom work of all orthodox denominations and churches. Chalcedon is an independent Christian foundation governed by a board of trustees, Christian men in accord with Chalcedon's vision statement. The foundation is not subordinate to the authority of any particular denomination or ecclesiastical body.

CHALCEDON Report

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

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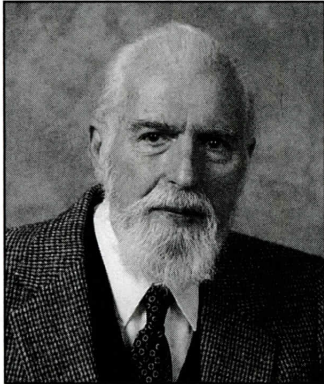
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The Collapsing Right Wing

By R. J. Rushdoony



The centuries between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance were named “the medieval era” or the “Dark Ages” by the historians of the later Middle Ages because they were seen as a lapse in the culture of Greco-Roman humanism. Earlier, that era was also called “the Dark Ages,” but the

witness of the cathedrals and the church’s scholarship made that term ridiculous, and it was in the main dropped. What was retained was the view of the modern age as a resumption of true civilization, *i.e.*, humanistic statism.

This statism early revealed itself in the high role given to kings, who supposedly had “divine rights.” A portrait of Louis XIV depicts him as a god. Palaces such as Versailles were the cathedrals of the new culture.

In the early years of humanistic statism, the powers of the state did not extend into such spheres as education and economics as was later the case but, from the beginning, the over ruling power of the state was apparent.

As against all of this, the American War of Independence was a conservative counter-revolution. The people retained for some time a Christian character, but the leaders, after c. 1825, were increasingly lawyers and very much in the Enlightenment tradition. After the two Roosevelts, political thought was increasingly humanistic.

As a result, while the Left in politics steadily pursued its quest for the ancient pagan state as portrayed in Plato’s *Republic*, the Right lost its roots in Christianity and became a conservative version of the Left’s agenda. The Bible and the name of God could be used by the Right, but with less and less meaning. John Locke, very much a humanist, was cited oftener than John Calvin. American culture was being remade in terms of humanism, and the “public” school became the holy house of many.

The results favored the Left, which was faithful to its humanistic presupposition, whereas the Right was either

rootless or grounded in the premises of the opposition. As a result, America faces the twenty-first century with a philosophy alien to its origins.

Salvation in the twentieth century has been by political action or military force. Any reading of the Bible makes clear that war is never seen as the way of salvation, but the American Presidents of the twentieth century have acted as military saviors. Since World War II, American troops have been in action all over the world, as though ancient wrongs can be righted with more killing. Political assassinations all over the world reflect this humanistic faith in salvation by killings. Not atonement, but murder, is seen as the saving force.

Now because military action and revolution have become so popular a means of social salvation does not alter the fact that it usually compounds existing evils.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, America’s major world role was as a Christian missionary power. All over the world, Americans built missions, orphanages, Christian schools and colleges. All over the world also, Christian charity met crises with redeeming grace and action. American intervention then meant godly help and relief. Now, while the missionary action is still important, some of it is modernistic, and our political and military intervention has been hated and resented. The nineteenth century plan of a world commission to bring salvation through Christ to all men and nations has been replaced by humanism and its plan to save the world with interference, military action, and a rejection of the Christian Faith. No wonder these United States, once seen as the land of faith and freedom, is now hated and resented.

The American Right has little to offer the people except a slower-paced leftism.

“The Land of the Free” has become the home of would-be tyrants with ever-expanding dreams of control.

What is required is the recognition that salvation is not the work of the states, or a super-state, but of Jesus Christ, that the only valid law is God’s law, and that God does not bless men and nations who invoke His name but neglect or despise His Word. Such actions are pharisaical and hypocritical. It is time to leave such a stance to the Left.

“The Y2K Problem”

The special Chalcedon audiocassette “The Y2K Problem” in which Walter Lindsay is interviewed by Andrew Sandlin, Mark Rushdoony, Douglas Murray, and R. J. Rushdoony is now available for \$5.00, postage paid.

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Cultural War as Religious War

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

Mt. 12:25-30



Whenever raging secularists bent on imposing their own godless, humanistic agenda on the Western world encounter Chalcedon's commitment to a Biblical dominion commission, they recoil in horror, linking the religious war in which we are engaged to the jihad of Islamic fundamentalists.

Several years ago, an interviewer from National Public Radio inquired of me, "What is the difference between Chalcedon's view and that of the Islamic jihad?" Well, let me count the ways. Preeminently, we deplore revolutionary violence of any kind, and rely instead on the preaching of the gospel and the peaceful application of God's law-word by individuals, families, churches, and so on. The forcible imposition of religious belief is a characteristic of pagan and secular states like ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; revolutionary France and Russia; and the United States since roughly 1962. Men who have given up hope in the power of the regenerating Spirit of God rely on revolution, coercion, torture, murder, and so forth. Most secular humanists are *procedural* materialists—man is a material, plastic being, to be reshaped by an enlightened, political elite. While some sectors of the Christian church have operated this way in the past, this is not the evangelistic program of Biblical Christianity; and Chalcedon deplors it without reservation. In the terminology of our Vision Statement, "Biblical law cannot be imposed; it must be embraced."

It is proper, though, to speak of a religious war. Social conservatives often speak of the "cultural war" of the West, but what they actually denote (or what they should denote)

is a *religious* war, because culture is simply the externalization of a society's religion, as Henry Van Til has pointed out. The great religious war is not the clash of arms, of Army sharpshooters, heat-seeking missiles, and stealth bombers. St. Paul declares that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor. 10:4); rather, we employ the ethical weapons of covenant faithfulness, Biblical law, the gospel, faithful child rearing, and so on. It is the battle of religion, theology, ethics, and ideas; and it is this religious war, initiated in Genesis 3 by Satan himself desiring to subvert the plan of God, that rages relentlessly in Western societies.

Social conservatives, most of whom are either mildly Christian or blandly secular, are concluding that they are losing this war. For example, in his controversial letter of February 16, 1999 (available at www.freecongress.org), long-time conservative leader Paul Weyrich observes:

In looking at the long history of conservative politics, from the defeat of Robert Taft in 1952, to the nomination of Barry Goldwater, to the takeover of the Republican Party in 1994, I think it is fair to say that conservatives have learned to succeed in politics. That is, we got our people elected.

But that did not result in the adoption of our agenda. The reason, I think, is that politics itself has failed. And politics has failed because of the collapse of the culture. The culture we are living in becomes an ever-wider sewer. In truth, I think we are caught up in a cultural collapse of historic proportions, a collapse so great that it simply overwhelms politics.

That's why I am in the process of rethinking what it is that we, who still believe in our traditional, Western, Judeo-Christian culture, can and should do under the circumstances....

... Suffice it to say that the United States is very close to becoming a state totally dominated by an alien ideology, an ideology bitterly hostile to Western culture. Even now, for the first time in their lives, people have to be afraid of what they say. This has never been true in the history of our country. Yet today, if you say the "wrong thing," you suddenly have legal problems, political problems, you might even lose your job or be expelled from college. Certain topics are forbidden. You can't approach the truth about a lot of different subjects. If you do, you are immediately branded as "racist", "sexist", "homophobic", "insensitive", or "judgmental." ...

If in Washington State and Colorado, after we have spent years talking about partial birth abortion, we can't by referendum pass a ban on it, we have to face some unpleasant facts. I no longer believe that there is a moral majority. I do not believe that a majority of Americans actually shares our values....

I believe that we probably have lost the culture war. That doesn't mean the war is not going to

continue, and that it isn't going to be fought on other fronts. But in terms of society in general, we have lost. This is why, even when we win in politics, our victories fail to translate into the kind of policies we believe are important.

Weyrich has accurately concluded after many years, and as Chalcedon has consistently noted, that political victories do not ordinarily translate into cultural or religious victories. In a constitutional democracy, over time politics simply reflects the culture from which it springs. It is a naive delusion to assume that political solutions are ultimate. Politics is simply a reflection of a culture, a society's religion. Weyrich has thus concluded, "I no longer believe that there is a moral majority. I do not believe that a majority of the Americans actually share our [socially conservative] values." He arrived at this altered understanding, no doubt, as a result of the recent failed Presidential impeachment, and the President's soaring popularity ratings, despite revelations of his immoral and criminal acts. Conservative scholar Paul Gottfried similarly observes that the conservative movement is *not* winning the cultural (*i.e.*, religious) war:

While some Washington beltway conservatives are proclaiming a conservative victory, we behold a country pushed to the left. A political and cultural war has been fought and largely won by the social left against gender stereotyping and the nuclear family. Gay/lesbian and abortion rights together with a powerful centralized administration enforcing them are taken for granted by most members of Congress. Opposition to quotas and to the media's bashing of white males increasingly has become restricted to the political fringe. Only extremists now call for a debate on further immigration which beltway conservatives avoid bringing up lest they seem insensitive. The only issue such conservatives risk discussing are tax cuts, military spending, and President Clinton's lust.¹

Gottfried observes how the vanguard of the newer conservative movement (largely the neo-conservatives) are not the true heirs of Russell Kirk and Richard Weaver's decentralist conservative vision which is, in Gottfried's words, "full of nostalgia for hierarchical and premodern

community." Conservatives, by and large, were opposed to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, were economically isolationists, protectionists, and almost nationalistic; they were often deeply imbued with Southern agrarian ideals (this was especially true of Weaver). In sharp contrast, the modern conservatives have made steady concessions to the welfare state, are the *avant garde* of the global economy, are embarrassed by the morality of the older Christian Right, and are confident that more tax cuts and freer trade will solve most of the country's problems. In the cultural war, according to Gottfried, these "neo-cons" are part of the disease, and not the cure. Many social conservatives have come to agree with Weyrich and Gottfried; and they see themselves, in the words of a recent *U. S. News and World Report* article, as "strangers in a strange land" (Feb. 22, 1999, 32-35).

The temper of the country is increasingly libertarian—both economically and morally, but especially morally. (Westerners increasingly prefer free markets and free sex, but they greatly prefer free sex to free markets; they can abide certain state intrusions into the economy, just not state intrusions into their sex lives.) Last year, Chalcedon's Contemporary Issues Series title *The Future of the Conservative Movement* tagged the problem—a year before Paul Weyrich and Co. perceived the loss of the cultural war. *Conservatism loses, will always lose, must always lose, because it is the nature of conservatism to lose.* Conservatism is not interested in a full-orbed Biblical Faith, but in restoring yesteryear's liberal gains. Most of today's conservatives are somewhat to the left of John F. Kennedy's liberalism; and, if things do not change in the next thirty to forty years, the conservatives of 2030 will hold positions quite to the left of Bill Clinton's present views. Conservatism denies the authority of Scripture and Biblical law, is horrified by a godly dominionist vision (the late Russell Kirk, father of modern conservatism, considered Rushdoony a "fifth-monarch" revolutionary²), and thus are destined eternally to ride in the caboose of progressive liberalism's great train of progress (*i.e.*, moral degeneration).

Social conservatives are losing what they term the cultural war, in reality the religious war, because *their religion is defective in precept and practice.* They are using

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butter knives against sabers, pistols against AK47s, trench warfare against radar-guided missiles. By and large, the secular humanist agenda comprises what Abraham Kuyper called a “life system,” what we call a “worldview.” It is a comprehensive system springing from human autonomy. Conversely, social conservatism is at best a watered-down Christianity, and at many points simply an updated version of the humanistic Enlightenment. Until conservatism acknowledges and abandons its inherently defective, compromising position, it will continue to suffer defeats at the hands of epistemologically self-conscious secular humanists. Social conservatism must adopt a consistent, four-pronged approach if it expects to roll back the effects of cultural liberalism: Christianity, covenantalism, comprehensiveness, and conflict.

Christianity

The only peaceful, harmonious, lawful society is the *Christian* society. As Rushdoony observes in his classic *The Foundations of Social Order*, only orthodox Christianity, anchored in the great creeds of the church, creates a social order that avoids totalitarianism on the one hand and anarchy on the other (see also his masterly *The One and the Many*). Properly understood and practiced, Christianity generates a society held together by the truth of the Faith, but which recognizes individual differences and does not attempt to impose Christianity, or any other religious perspective, on anyone. Christianity produces a particular morality, because Christians practice Biblical morals. The great problem with secular conservatism is that it wants many of the benefits of Christianity while abandoning Christianity. This is the great error of many of the Enlightenment philosophers, potently refuted by the nihilist, Friedrich Nietzsche.³ We kill God, he asserts, and then expect Biblical morality. This is nonsense. The only way to maintain Biblical morality and a harmonious law-ordered society is to espouse and practice a consistent, orthodox Christianity. Some social conservatives are finally waking up to this fact. Belatedly, Robert Bork, to his own admission long uninterested in religion, has recently declared, “in an era of moral decline, a reversal [of the modern cultural evil] probably depends on a revival of biblical religion. I have not been religious for most of my life, and I come to this conclusion not out of piety, but through observation . . . The role of religion—traditional, biblical religion—is crucial to cultural health.”⁴ An explicitly Christian approach to all of life—including politics⁵—is the first step in taking the upper hand in the cultural war.

Covenantalism

Christianity, however, does not vanquish cultural (*i.e.*, religious) evil by politics, but by covenant. The covenant is God’s gracious, solemn agreement with man, which includes His pledge to forgive and forget all of the sins of those who place faith in and cast themselves on the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning death, as well as the

pervasive bond between God and all of His creation, which binds it to His sovereign will and predestinating purposes. God pledges to man the gracious salvation effected in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, including protection and provision; man, in response, pledges faith and obedience.⁶ The unconverted stand in the covenant of creation, under God’s jurisdiction, without the salvation of Jesus Christ. No man, however, stands outside a covenant relation to God; every man is subject to God and His Word and will.

Christians win the cultural war covenantally—by the gradual extension of the kingdom of God on the earth. This begins with the individual and moves outward to the family, the church, and the wider society and only *finally and consequently* altering the state and politics. The covenant advances by means of regeneration, not revolution. As God inspires men to declare the gospel and the entire law-word of God, an increasing number are converted, and they in turn reorder their individual lives, families, and churches in terms of the Word of God. As men are covenantally faithful, God blesses them (*Dt. 28:1-14*). As God blesses them, they are given greater areas of responsibility (*Lk. 16:10*), and subordinate larger areas of society to the will of Jesus Christ the King (*Mt. 13:31-33*).

A key aspect of covenantalism is training children, the godly covenant seed. This is an almost total blind spot among social conservatives, just as it is among many modern activist Christians, though the burgeoning of the Christian homeschooling movement is gradually restoring sight to those previously blind on this crucial issue. Samuel Blumenfeld grasps this point quite well:

[M]any conservative families have ceased to hope for miracles in Washington. So they go about their business quietly and purposefully. They homeschool their kids or build private schools, they build new churches, they create newsletters and magazines. They fight in court to protect their rights and freedoms. That’s where the culture war is being fought and won in America: in the family. And that’s why what goes on in Washington is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

Obviously the homeschool movement is the grass roots answer to the conservatives’ failure in Washington.⁷

Similarly, Paul Weyrich has, at least on this point, come around to see the more Biblical perspective, as expressed in his March 7, 1999 *Washington Post* opinion (page B7):

The bulk of cultural conservatives’ energies should go elsewhere [than politics], into creating the parallel institutions we need. An excellent example of what can be achieved this way is the homeschooling movement. Had the parents of the million children now being homeschooled kept their kids in the public schools and fought the battles over values and standards in the curriculum, they would have lost. Those children would have

received a poor education. Worse, they would have been inculcated with the “attitudes” required by political correctness, which is what most public schools now see as their main function. Instead, because they have been schooled at home, a million children have gotten good educations and learned the sound values inherent in our traditional culture. They provide solid hope for the future.

Because cultural conservatives’ new institutions will reflect sound values, they will work. They will work over the long term, and as they do that, other Americans will take notice. They will choose our ways, our traditional culture, over the culture of instant gratification and inevitable degradation that controls America’s existing institutions. We will do to the politically correct and the other cultural radicals what they did to us: Over time, our traditional, Western, Judeo-Christian “counterculture” will again become the majority culture.

Is this a call for “surrender” in the culture war? I don’t think so. I see it as a call for a new Inchon landing.

This is essentially Chalcedon’s vision to which some of the conservative faithful are finally waking up. We win religious battles over the long term by means of covenant faithfulness, and a leading aspect of covenant faithfulness is training a godly seed, thus ensuring intergenerational blessing and intergenerational kingdom extension. The modern conservative movement, bereft of orthodox Christianity and covenant theology, does not perceive the full significance of this critical point: we change society by covenant faithfulness, not by politics.

Sadly, the notion of victory by covenant has been neglected not only by social conservatives, but by Christians as well. Conservative politics, deeper-life sanctification, and crusade evangelism are three typical right-wing tactics of Christian conservatives’ “Spirit-filled” “instant gratification.” Intergenerational covenant faithfulness they find boring, unattractive, and laborious. God declares to His covenant people in Deuteronomy, though, that long-term cultural victory is the reward of long-term (intergenerational) covenant faithfulness. But the church, and not only social conservatives, has not recognized this intergenerational responsibility, and has paid the price for its omission:

That doctrine [of covenant succession] presupposes that the family, as biblically described, is by divine appointment the fundamental principle of organization of human life.... It must be plainly stated that the promise made to the children of the covenant is not that of a special status of privilege, but is precisely the promise of the gospel, eternal life in heaven.... Further, it is emphatically clear from Deuteronomy to Proverbs to Ephesians that nurture, not evangelism, is the paradigm of child-rearing in the covenant home, a nurture which presupposes a heart, however young, set free or soon to be set free from the native blindness and opposition to the truth into which the fall has cast all mankind from conception.... Currently the

church ... is hemorrhaging its children into the world. Christian evangelism will never make a decisive difference in our culture when it amounts merely to an effort to replace losses due to widespread desertion from our camp. The gospel will always fail to command attention and carry conviction when large numbers of those who grew up under its influence are observed abandoning it for the world.⁸

These are deeply convicting words, and they pinpoint the failure not only of the church, but also conservatives in the wider society. Political victories are the long-term corollary of covenant faithfulness; they are also possible without covenant faithfulness, as Weyrich has noted, but when they do occur this way, as they have the last fifteen years, these victories are inept as a means of cultural transformation. The cultural transformation by means of covenant faithfulness precedes—and does not flow from—political victories.

Comprehensiveness

The older American conservative movement was committed to privilege, hierarchy, and morality (see Russell Kirk’s *The Conservative Mind*). Essentially it was a reactionary movement, opposing the latest egalitarian fads of the Left. It did not have what Kuyper termed a “life-system” of its own, and its distrust of “sophisters” meant that it often turned out to be little more than the “Know-Nothing Party.” For the most part, it did not recognize, as Kuyper had, the great danger that the Enlightenment posed to the Faith. For the Enlightenment, knowledge was an essentially “neutral,” “objective” affair,⁹ and every area of thought and life was rapidly driven into a separate, secularized category to be governed by human reason alone. The conservative answer for this was not to put forth a consistently Christian and Biblical response, but to damn the Enlightenment liberals—and go back into their safe conservative enclaves, leaving cultural transformation to the liberal activists; *i. e.*, conservatives by their very nature were not “activists.” Conservatives did not grasp that *only comprehensive worldviews can vanquish other comprehensive worldviews*. This was paralleled by the retreat of the church: three sermonic points, two humorous anecdotes, and four tearful verses of “Amazing Grace” were thought to suffice against the secularist complex of rationalism, scientism, and, more recently, postmodernism. This was a fatal mistake by both social conservatives and Christians. Christians are to retake territories forfeited to Satan and his disciples; they must work hard in deducing Biblical answers on issues as diverse as elective abortion, coercive wealth redistribution, racial and social quotas, artistic license and freedom of speech, international trade, biomedical ethics, and much, much more. The Bible *does* have the answers to these and all other modern problems—either explicitly or implicitly. The Christian church’s calling is to deduce them, develop them, and implement them. Anything less than a distinctly Biblical answer to these and related problems will reinvent the

manifold errors of recent conservatism which relied on weak trusses like natural law theory; pious sentimentalism; and simple, knee-jerk reactions. *The Bible* has the answers to all of man's problems, and until conservatives wake up and accept this, they can expect cultural defeat and marginalization.

Conservatives of recent date have been more committed to politics as the instrument of social change. Weyrich is quite correct in acknowledging that conservatives have lately been deluded by the idea that politics offers ultimate solutions. This is why so many of them house themselves in the Washington, D. C. area. Because liberals believe that social change is virtually impossible apart from politics, naive conservatives tag along by presuming that, if they are to expect a conservative social change, it must be accomplished by political instrumentality. This is wrong. Godly social change is the effect of regeneration and covenant faithfulness. And covenant faithfulness requires intergenerational faithfulness: training covenant children in the Faith, and to be leaders in the prime areas of cultural reclamation—church, arts, education, military, technology, media sciences, economics, and on down the line. The message of Christianity is comprehensive, and Christians will reclaim culture when they restore and implement this comprehensive message—and not until then.

Conflict

The Bible does not teach perfectionism—there will be no sinless perfection in the individual life, in the church, and in society, including the state, until one's death or the eternal state. The course of history is the course of conflict between covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking. This is the *antithesis* between righteousness and unrighteousness. This conflict is not national, ethnic, economic, sexual, or generational—it is *ethical*. In Genesis 3 Satan initiated an unflagging assault on the kingdom of God as it manifests itself in the earth; and while he is destined to defeat in time and history, he will not desist until he is vanquished. Therefore, there can be no détente with evil in any realm of human existence.

Unfortunately, the history of twentieth-century conservatism is constant concessions to the liberal gains, not full-fledged conflict. Eschewing the objective standard of the Word of God, conservatism hinges on a revisionist view of the past (the recent past as a Golden Age to which we should return), a fulcrum whose position moves a little Left in every succeeding generation. Social conservatives, thus, do not mind losing the cultural, *i.e.*, religious battle, just as long as they lose rather slowly. They have not privatized HEW (health, education, and welfare) as God requires, but for the most part, have offered smaller versions of the great welfare state. They have not opposed the bombing of innocent civilians, including Christians and children and churches, in Islamic countries, but, in flagrant violation of the Word of God, have supported the United States' leagues with God-hating Islamic regimes (*Jud. 2:2*). They have not worked to train up an entire generation of godly

dominionists, warriors for the Faith, to assume leadership in every area of modern life, but have simply assured that their gifted children obtain diplomas from respected "necon" institutions and entered the marketplace in collaboration with liberals' cultural endeavors. This is an anti-Biblical agenda. Because of this, it is a losing agenda. For this reason, as long as conservatives employ this agenda, they will lose.

Christian conservatives are often intimidated into silence by rabid, secular religionists who claim that Christians socially involved beyond the four walls of the institutional church are interested in imposing their beliefs on everybody else. What the secularists really mean, of course, is "Get out of the way so we rabid secularists can impose our totalitarian religion by means of the power state in an effort to eviscerate every last vestige of your religion." Most conservative Christians buy this poisonous bill of goods. They go meekly as lambs to the slaughter, and they get slaughtered—generation after generation.

Chalcedon frightens rabid secularists because we threaten their monopoly on virtually every area of modern life. We frighten conservatives because we expose their morally bankrupt movement.

Truth can be frightening.

Conclusion

Conservatives, therefore, have three choices: 1) They can join the liberal monopoly and enjoy temporary cultural prominence and success. 2) They can remain conservatives and continue to lose, year by year, issue by issue, generation by generation. Or . . . 3) They can join the Biblical program in articulating and maintaining a full-orbed Faith which will win out in the end. If they wish to remain cultural masochists, they can remain in the conservative camp. And they can keep on losing.

If they are really committed to victory, they must come over to an explicit Biblical program, which Chalcedon endorses.

¹ Paul Gottfried, "After Three Decades, Has the Conservative Movement Triumphed? No," *Insight*, March 22, 1999, 25.

² Russell Kirk, "Eliot and a Christian Culture," *This World*, Winter, 1989, 15.

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* [many editions], "Expeditions of an Untimely Man," sec. 5.

⁴ Robert H. Bork, "Conservatism and the Culture," *The Intercollegiate Review*, Vol. 34, No. 2 [Spring, 1999], 6.

⁵ William O. Einwechter, ed., *Explicitly Christian Politics* (Pittsburgh, 1997).

⁶ Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1852 edition), 97.

⁷ Samuel L. Blumenfeld, "It's the Culture, Stupid!," Worldnetdaily.com, March 11, 1999.

⁸ Robert S. Rayburn, "The Presbyterian Doctrines of Covenant Children, Covenant Nurture, and Covenant Succession," *Presbyterian*, 22/2, 93, 97, 99, 109.

⁹ Michael Kelley, *The Impulse of Power* (Minneapolis, 1998), 227, 256.

Hebrew Forefathers in the Faith

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

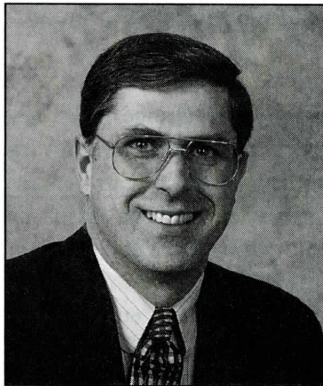
To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.

2 Tim. 1:1-5



We tend not to look for meaning in something as simple as a salutation. But these are the words of the imprisoned apostle who wrote with a sense of urgency because he knew his death could be imminent. *First*, Paul's credential was that he was "an apostle."

Timothy would not have challenged him, but those among whom Timothy worked might have. Paul's words were more than those of just a teacher or minister—they were authoritative. *Second*, Paul was "an apostle of Jesus Christ." His authority came from Whom he represented; he had been chosen by Jesus Christ to be His "vessel" (Ac. 9:15). *Third*, this was "by the will of God"; Paul's authority was not open to dispute. *Fourth*, Paul's calling was "according to the promise of life" in Jesus Christ. Paul's responsibility was to proclaim the reality of that life in Jesus Christ. To do that, he had to urge the integrity of the pure gospel and its faithful dissemination. These are the themes of Paul's second letter to Timothy.

He addresses the letter to his dearly beloved son in the Faith. This was a commendation to express, obviously, his love for Timothy as well as to honor him. Just as Paul's credentialing himself in verse one was for the attention of others more than Timothy, so was this honor. Paul was making it clear that Timothy knew the pure gospel and his teaching; if you challenged Timothy you were challenging the apostle himself.

In verse three Paul says that his thoughts of Timothy led him to prayer, and his joy in his beloved son led him to thankfulness. When Paul thinks of Timothy he gives thanks for him night and day, reminding us of Paul's exhortation to the church at Thessalonica to "pray without ceasing." Paul may have had regular times of prayer, morning and evening. More importantly, he was always in a state of mind of devotion to praise and thank God for His grace and implore His mercy.

In verse three Paul thanked God. In doing so he makes a point of bringing in the faith of his forefathers as well. In verse five he also refers to the faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother. Paul's faith and that of other Jewish converts was not a departure from the faith of Abraham but rather its covenantal continuation. Paul served the God of Abraham and believed in his Messiah. Despite the unbelief and error that had come to dominate many in the Hebrew community, true piety and faith remained. Paul and those who believed in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile, continued that covenantal belief. Those who believed in Jesus Christ had a fuller understanding of God's messianic promises than their forefathers, but all who believed were saints. Paul is saying that his faith was in line with the true faith of the Hebrews as children of Abraham. Those Jews who rejected Jesus Christ and, especially after the destruction of the temple, followed Judaism, were the real apostates. Paul made very clear that he, though accused of heresy, was the faithful believer: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Ac. 24:14).

The Faith of Abraham

This claim of Christianity to be the real faith of Abraham is at the root of Judaism's contempt of Christianity; it goes beyond offense at our belief in Jesus as the Messiah. A pastor recently told me of a startling admission by an elderly rabbi. The pastor asked him publicly if they were not the only two in the assembly who believed in the law of God. The rabbi declared publicly and to the point, "You misunderstand Judaism. Judaism is not a religion of the Torah; it is a religion of the rabbis." But Paul not only knew he served the God of his forefathers; he could do so "with pure conscience." Paul worshipped the true God free of guilt because, as he could say, "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" (v. 12). Paul knew he believed in the

Messiah, that he was His apostle, and that his death might be near. He was, though a prisoner in Rome, secure in his faith and encouraged Timothy to be strong in his faith and ministry.

Timothy's devotion to Paul gave the apostle great strength. Paul, in writing what would prove to be his last epistle, fondly remembers his "beloved son's" tears and asks him to come to Rome to visit him. He later repeats this request (4:9) and even suggests he do so before winter (4:21). In Paul's last letter he asked one he loved to comfort him with a visit. Paul was, at times, badly abused by enemies both within and without the church. In his last days, he asked one he had loved for twenty years to give him joy by his presence. Paul was disliked by some; he was in both these epistles mindful of the burden that would fall squarely on young Timothy's shoulders at his death. The old apostle knew his time grew short and his thoughts on this were turned to hope for Timothy. Hence he recalls his tears (v. 4), his faith (v. 5), his ordination (v. 6), and his godly youth (3:15).

Paul refers also to Timothy's covenant heritage (v. 5). He speaks of the faith of Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois. We know from Acts 16:1 that Timothy's mother was a Jewess who believed. We do not know if Lois was Christian. Having just referred to the faith of his Jewish forefathers as the antecedent of his own, Paul may be referring back to the same in Timothy's grandmother. We cannot know this for sure, but if we

believe what Paul said about believing in the God of his fathers, it does not matter whether Lois died hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like Paul's believing forefathers, Lois might have believed on the Messiah without ever hearing his name.

This faith, Paul tells Timothy, he believes was "in thee also." This would be a strange statement by Paul if he was referring to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul would not have said he was "persuaded" of this belief by Timothy, for Paul wrote certain of his young disciple's faith. Paul may have used such a reference to say he was convinced of Timothy's adherence to the true faith of Abraham (as taught him by his mother and grandmother) before his knowledge of Christ's atonement. In other words, Paul may here be saying, "Timothy, your grandmother believed on God's salvation as promised to our forefathers, and I am persuaded you believed in it before you ever heard the gospel." If this is Paul's sense, he was reminding Timothy of his covenant heritage, just as he had referred to his own. This, in fact, would give a greater depth of meaning to Paul's words. He was telling Timothy that as he had grown in knowledge of the truth and in grace and mercy (v.12), he must continue to grow and be faithful to the purity of the gospel and sound doctrine. Paul's love and concern for Timothy are very clear, but so to is the weight of the mantle the imprisoned Paul places on the young man. Equally weighty are our covenantal responsibilities passed on to us.

CHALCEDON TAPE MINISTRY TO RESUME

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

Chalcedon is now in the planning stages of a major project that will make hundreds of R. J. Rushdoony's taped sermons and lectures available, some for the first time in many years. For many years, Chalcedon has allowed its tapes to be produced by independent vendors with varying degrees of association with Chalcedon itself. When Christian Tape Productions, our most recent vendor, ceased production in February, we were already negotiating for the rights and master tapes of all its Chalcedon tapes produced in the past thirteen years. These negotiations were successful and Chalcedon now owns these tapes and rights. Chalcedon intends to keep these series available. The subscriptions to these weekly sermons by R. J. Rushdoony, Andrew Sandlin, and myself are also being continued.

In addition, Chalcedon has in its archives many older tape series that have not been available for over thirteen years. We intend to make these available once again and are beginning the process of cataloging these tapes. We could, within months, have a tape catalog of over 1000 tapes, including nearly 500 tapes of sermons and lectures (most with two talks per tape) and over 400 Easy Chair tapes, which are monologues or discussions between my father and guests.

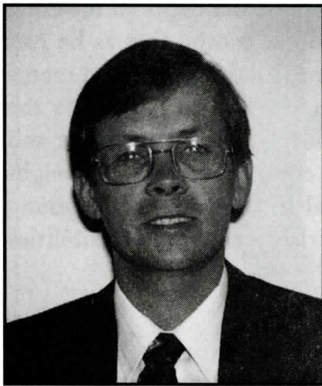
Bringing all of these into production at once is a massive undertaking. Chalcedon must sort, inventory, number, and catalog each tape. In addition, we must purchase production equipment and create a computer system and database of over 1000 labels. The data entry alone will be a time-consuming project.

When we have accomplished the above, we will tackle older tape series. What we do not have, George Calhoun of Mount Olive Tape Library has offered to make available to us from his extensive collection that goes back into the 1960s. I believe that eventually we could have a catalog of some 2,000 tapes. It is our goal to have these available individually as well as by sets, hence the great deal of cataloging required. Our progress in making these tapes available will be announced in the *Chalcedon Report*.

“Hundreds Boycott Rally!”: Political Illusions of the Moral Majoritarians

By Wayne C. Johnson

Editor's Introduction: Wayne Johnson is one of the most astute Christian political observers on today's scene. His unique combination of unwavering commitment to Reformed Christianity and extensive knowledge of the political process forges deeply insightful assessments like the one below.



“Hundreds Boycott Rally!” screamed the headline.

The occasion? A sparsely attended meeting sponsored by a city council candidate in a small town that remains appropriately anonymous.

With a single line of type, a clever editor with an ax to grind turned a non-event into a happening. All the local citizens ensconced in their easy chairs watching Wheel of Fortune were suddenly transformed into active “boycotters,” their indifference magically reborn as statement.

I couldn't help but be reminded of that apocryphal incident when I read the flurry of obituaries for the “Moral Majority.” Presiding at the funeral was the man credited with coining the “Moral Majority” moniker in the first place, Paul Weyrich.

Always good at getting press, Weyrich soared to new heights this time. Like a mountain man who occasionally wandered down among the people of the valley to regale them with stories of Bigfoot, Paul had us all leaning into the campfire to hear about poor Sasquatch's untimely demise.

Yup, old Bigfoot is dead, all right, and you heard it here first.

No matter that no one ever actually *saw* Bigfoot. His obituary has now been dutifully reported by the gullible pecksniffs of the fourth estate coast to coast. And that is as it should be, since they're about the only ones who actually believed he existed in the first place (that is, when it suited their purposes). H. L. Mencken would have loved it. And Mark Twain? He actually wrote Weyrich's

script, with Tom and Huck tearfully watching from the balcony at their *own* funeral.

The actual non-event that triggered this outpouring of joy, angst, and blather was a letter sent by Paul Weyrich, head of the Free Congress Foundation, to—as we say in politics—“several hundred of his closest friends.” Within hours, a plethora of stories gushed forth chronicling the retreat of the “Religious Right” back into the swamps and bayous from whence it had lumbered some years ago.

Weyrich correctly identified American culture as a “widening sewer of cultural collapse.”

Much of what Weyrich actually said was, as usual, good stuff. He's been defending freedom the whole of his life, and ought to be honored for the good soldier that he has been, and is. He correctly identified American culture as a “widening sewer of cultural collapse.” “People of faith” ought to “declare our cultural independence,” said Weyrich, whom the *Sacramento Bee* characterized as suggesting that “since the drive to push its political agenda has failed, the social conservative movement should build its own world of schools, media and entertainment to create a moral counterculture.”

Ambivalence on the Right

Chalcedon readers and those with a good working knowledge of Reformed history and theology must find this entire brouhaha odd, indeed. When were we *not* trying to build our own schools, media, and entertainment? And businesses, families, churches, and other institutions as well? The Protestant model has always been bottom up. Lacking an understanding of the one and the many, hierarchical religions tend to seek top-down, imposed solutions—*political solutions*. The so-called Christian Right has wavered between these worldviews with inconsistent and often demoralizing results.

While there are certainly examples of Protestant abuse of the power of civil government, it occurs in spite of

Protestant theology, not because of it. Principally, we find ourselves on the opposite side of any earthly power that claims autonomy and sovereignty; and for this reason, we have lived in a very uneasy truce with the “new Protestants” who largely compose the membership of such groups as the “Christian Coalition.”

To be perfectly blunt, their ways are not our ways. While we certainly acknowledge a political *aspect* to our world and life view, it comes not as a precursor to social change, but as a result. In other words, we begin with the understanding that most of the problems in our country do not have political solutions, and believing and acting as though they do is a prescription for despair.

And as for the newest “Moral Majority” incarnation *du jour*—those “people of faith” that Christian Right “talking heads” keep referencing on the talk show circuit—we’ll take a rain check. Why? Because we are not polytheists.

“Now Moses, here’s what I want you to do. When you get to the Promised Land, I want you to get all the People of Faith together. You got your Hittites and your Amorites. And of course, your Baal worshippers are big, big, big. And whatever you do, don’t be so judgmental with the Molechites and that child sacrifice thing. They have a long history and, need I remind you, a ton of votes.”

Oh yeah, love those “People of Faith.”

Political Implications of Faith

To blur the distinctions between Christianity and false religion is not only wrong; it actually makes working with non-Christian social conservatives more difficult. The bounds of our national covenant enfranchise people of different religions, and therefore, we quite properly engage in political organizations defined by the parameters of that civil covenant. Roman Catholics, Jews, evangelicals, Protestants, Mormons, etc. may all work together in a Republican or Democrat Party about those things which affect the civil covenant, *i.e., politics*.

Where our faith has political implications, we seek to work those implications out and through political organization. The nature of our civil covenant determines the limits of our political action. The rub is when we expect too much of politics. Certainly, the Bible does not propose that civil government be the most important institution in society, nor is civil government given the primary responsibility for regulating the conduct of the citizenry.

Sidestepping the Terrorists of Civil Government

The magistrate is to be a “terror to evildoers.”

What does that mean? It means, don’t bring civil government into the picture unless you think only a terrorist will do.

As Reformed Christians, we begin with the presupposition that God—not the state—is sovereign. We also confess that this sovereign God holds the parent responsible for the actions of the child, the individual

responsible for personal conduct and the pastor and elders responsible for the government of the church community. Frankly, when those “governments” are functioning Biblically, there aren’t a lot of evildoers for the magistrate to terrorize. Just remember that when you invite civil government to solve a problem, the solution will be either a real or figurative sword, but a sword nonetheless.

Negligible Political Solutions

To frame the distinction between us and what the media refer to as the “Christian Right” as succinctly as possible, is to say that **we do not believe that most of the problems in this country have political solutions.**

The problem, of course, is that modern evangelicals have so little historical context for dealing with matters of economics, aesthetics, politics, art, statecraft (and yes, theology), etc. that their public adventures are at once bold, passionate, myopic and, well, sad. Most have little grounding in church history and have only recently arrived on the political scene, bringing with them huge, and in most cases entirely inappropriate, expectations.

*The magistrate is to be a
“terror to evildoers.”*

*What does that mean? It
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government into the
picture unless you think
only a terrorist will do.*

Theirs is a melting pot of social conservatism, revivalist fervor, moralism and righteous outrage, combined with an unhealthy desire to be loved by the world. Starting from a moral majoritarian presupposition, one must, as Alice’s Queen, “believe two impossible things before breakfast”: first, that there is a moral majority, and second, that majority rule acts as a guarantor of what is right and good.

This view of democracy as end, rather than method, is a trap into which one quite easily may fall—and into which the moral majoritarians *have* fallen. For the Christian, the end must be justice, not simply majority rule. A lynch mob is majority rule, but it does not meet the standard of Biblical justice. To view democratic systems as inherently good, particularly combined with the notion that majorities are moral and the bad apples few, will lead to exactly the sort of frustration, anger and alienation that currently afflicts so many Christians today.

Realistic Expectations of Civil Government

We must also be careful not to read too much into the media's characterization of what Paul Weyrich actually said. To the extent that he recognized and articulated the necessity to rebuild the crumbled foundations of our society, he ought to be commended. Actually, what he suggests has been going on for a generation now. To the extent, however, that Mr. Weyrich's words are used to justify a neo-monasticism, a wholesale retreat akin to the fundamentalists' societal withdrawal in the early years of this century, then we must demur.

We must also avoid the temptation to use civil government to achieve ends which, though they may be good in themselves, are not properly within the purview of civil government. How fascinating to watch social conservatives demand family values from their politicians, only to see the family-values camel, once in the tent, bear with it government-mandated family leave, government-funded child care centers, paternalistic medical and "health" programs in public schools, etc.

Is it possible that we got what we asked for?

So what do we do, as individuals, as a movement, as a community, as families? Well, it ain't rocket science, folks.

Recognize the limits of civil government and then spend a portion (note, a portion) of your time attending to your civil duties. Not only vote for the lesser of two evils, walk precincts for the lesser of two evils and encourage your friends and neighbors to vote for the lesser of two evils. Sometimes it's even a good idea to contribute to the lesser of two evils.

In other words, lower your expectations, not only of politics, but of political saviors. The humanists speak of being a "renaissance man," defined as one who has a cosmopolitan, urbane and far-reaching knowledge of the things of the world; but *they* occupy the halls of music, art, literature and learning by default. The same may be said of civil government. Let us seek rather that "Reformation man" dedicated to a love of learning and knowledge about *God's world*, and His purpose for it.

From God's world, there is no retreat. "Occupy till I come."

Wayne C. Johnson is a veteran political campaign consultant and Trustee of the Chalcedon Foundation. He can be reached at johnson@ns.net.

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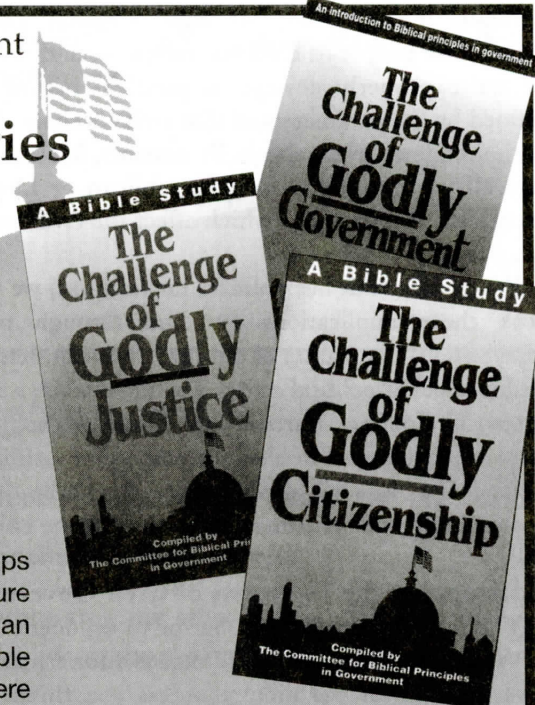
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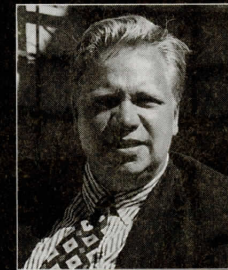
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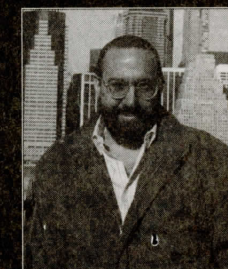
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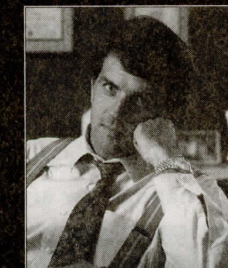
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Monte Wilson

Editor of Classical Christianity

The Compromise of the Religious Right

By Larry Pratt



Our view of the world will determine how we act. If our understanding of reality is faulty, then our actions will to one degree or another be unrewarding.

The Christian Right tends to think more as conservatives than as Christians. This has impaired its understanding of the true

nature of politics and what we should expect from it. As a result, its adherents have been consigned to failure after failure.

Admirable goals have often characterized the agenda of the Christian Right: opposition to such evils as abortion, homosexuality, evolution, and more. Try as it might to equip itself for battle spiritually, the Christian Right has typically entered battle without the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. God's standard for human action has been kept out of the public arena. Thus the Christian Right has lost its bearings, and the world that Christians are to confront has been deprived of a prophetic witness.

Many contemporary Christian soldiers are of a mind that our Orders of the Day are not to be found in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, but in some sort of "what all reasonable men can agree on," or even an explicitly natural law view. Since there are not enough Christians to comprise a governing majority, it is assumed that we must reach out to non-Christians on their terms.

Of course, it is not stated quite that starkly. It is argued, instead, that there is some common ground to which all men can come and agree on for the proper ordering of society. What is often stated, is that explicit civil laws, particularly if found only in the Old Testament, simply will not do.

If Christians are to think Biblically in the political arena, then we cannot reach out to non-Christians by abandoning the Bible as the basis for civil government. Since unbelievers are made in the image of God, they are capable of recognizing the truth of a Biblical argument. They may reject it in their rebelliousness, but that same rebelliousness will not incline them to respond to a natural law argument. Of course, if the natural law argument is not a restatement of Biblical law, we might get unbelievers to agree to some form of natural law. But that puts the Christian in rebellion, not

just the unbeliever. So that course of action should not be pursued.

*Not only did Dole lose,
but also had he won, access
to his office would have
entitled conservatives only
to access to a front-row
seat to see him betray
them.*

This is not to say that we have to cite chapter and verse, although if we are asked: "How can we say that?" we can hardly avoid citing Scripture. Nevertheless, the Scripture tells us a lot about crime and punishment. Ideas of restitution, rather than incarceration, are both Biblical and appealing to many. Capital punishment enjoys broad popular support—and it is commanded in both the Old and the New Testaments. The use of lethal force in self-defense is taught throughout the Bible, so we are on firm ground when we oppose gun control.

Biblical Positions Should Be Advanced

Clearly, there are positions that are Biblical that also have strong support among some groups, and even majorities, of our population. Why not use them?

Those who want to base public policy on something other than the Bible have not shown that Scripture supports their view. Isaiah insisted that all of Scripture is to be the standard: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (*Is. 8:20*).

Christ insisted that we keep the law: "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (*Mt. 5:18*). Paul made the same point in his letter to Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*).

In the light of this, there is all the more necessity to

insist on the centrality of Scripture for the source of our public policy discussion. How else are we possibly to come to agreement about the good in this passage: “For he [the civil magistrate] is a minister to you for good” (*Rom. 13:4a*)? If we do not insist on Scripture’s definition of evildoer, we are defenseless against the claims of a majority or an elite group. Whoever has the most votes or the most guns gets to define what is good.

Christians have erred seriously by conceding some other way of determining the legitimacy of government action than by Scripture alone. If the laws of our country are contrary to the Bible, then to that extent, the government, and perhaps the people as well, are in rebellion against God. Rebellion and legitimacy are hardly matters of indifference, but the Christian Right tends to ignore them. This has resulted all too often in getting off course.

Lack of a clear Biblical basis for its public policy positions—or an unwillingness to state a Biblically based defense—has too often opened the door to a willingness to accept the politicians’ definition of how politics works. By leaving the “What” up to politicians and public opinion, the “How” has also been defined by politicians.

The best-known issue associated with the Christian Right is that of the right to life. It labored hard to keep a pro-life plank in the Republican Party in 1996. Delegates who were pledged to vote for retention of the pro-life plank were all the while increasingly falling in behind Sen. Bob Dole, a most infamous compromiser (or better yet, an equal opportunity compromiser who would betray any pledge for short-term political gain).

Once Dole had the nomination secured, he boasted that he had not, and had no intention of, reading the Republican Party Platform. The Christian Right had settled for rhetoric, but the political establishment retained control over policy by selecting the candidate. Ironically, many of the Christian Right justified supporting Dole during the primaries because “he was the one who could win.” They would have access and a place at the table once he was President.

Of course, they were wrong on both counts. Not only did Dole lose, but also had he won, access to his office would have entitled conservatives only to access to a front-row seat to see him betray them. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is death” (*Pr. 14:12*). The “end of it” with Bob Dole would have been no stopping of the death of many unborn children.

Delicious Policies

The Christian Right has fallen into the trap warned against in Proverbs 23:1-3: “When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you; and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.” More than the ruler who, of course, would like to deceive us, we deceive ourselves when we are snared in this way.

Many a politician and a citizen alike have been seduced by the invitation to be in the presence of influential

politicians. This can be a meeting in their office or perhaps a party or banquet. These are the delicacies that tempt many to forget their principles for the sake of being well-behaved. Good behavior keeps one in the presence of “his Excellency.”

The model for Christian lobbying, after putting off feasting on the ruler’s delicacies, is putting on the tactics of the widow of Luke 18. She sought justice from an unrighteous judge who neither feared God nor man. Because she wearied him, he finally relented and gave in to her repeated requests for justice. The text does not tell us, but I would not be surprised if that judge tried to use the same dodges that politicians use today. “This is not the time to do that.” “It is not possible to get the votes for that at this time.” “You do not understand how the process works; if you continue to importune, you will endanger the very objective you are pursuing.” “Look, if you don’t back off, I will vote against you.”

All we know is that the widow was rebuffed on more than one occasion, but she persisted. The pattern of the Christian Right is to accept the dodges of today’s unrighteous judges, and worse, sit down to dine on his delicacies. In other words, they get co-opted.

How do we know when the Christian Right has been co-opted? When it supports Bob Dole or any other candidate who either has voted for abortion (as had Sen. Dole on occasion), voted for pro-abortion judges (as had Sen. Dole) or has a pattern in public life of having a “yes” that is not their “yes.”

Jesus Christ is the King of kings, and that means that He is the head of our nation. When a people and their politicians choose laws that are directly in violation of the Bible, those laws can not have legitimacy. The Christian Right cannot truly speak as Christians if they do not challenge the legitimacy of a law legalizing murder.

In a debate involving differing opinions among men, the Christian Right will continue to lose, and continue to seek a place at the table instead of insisting on justice. They will continue to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution. We should prefer to lose a vote or an election rather than to lose the legitimacy of our position. When we agree to the false legitimacy of illegitimate government actions, we have lost before we start.

If we are after a place at the table, the others engorging themselves on the king’s delicacies will not permit us to insist on calling for total victory. Victory and a place at the table are incompatible goals. We cannot serve both the King of kings and the master of the table. The Christian Right must chose this day whom it will serve.

Larry Pratt, Executive Director, Gun Owners of America (150,000 membership), has held elective office in the state legislature of Virginia and is an elder in the Presbyterian Church in America. Gun Owners of America can be contacted at (800)417-1486, web site <http://www.gunowners.org>.

The Samaritan Strategy: A New Agenda for Christian Activism

By Colonel V. Doner

Editor's Introduction: What follows are excerpts from Colonel Doner's important critique of the Christian Right which he wrote exactly 10 years ago. It seems that his insightful assessment is as valid today as it was then.

Lack of Vision



In the book of Proverbs we read, "where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). They also get burned out, confused, and scatter their energies in a hundred different directions.

What was the Christian Right actually for? What was our vision for the future? Yes, we were *for* stopping

abortion, pornography, sexual degeneracy, big government, communism, and a host of other evils. We were *for* prayer in school and the rights of parents and churches to be free from government intrusion in ecclesiastical and family affairs. But these are single issues, not a cohesive platform or vision of what could be or even should be. And they are negative stands often made simply in reaction to the aggressive or adversarial positions of those not in agreement with Christian values.

Cal Thomas, in his obituary on the Christian Right, observed:

Evangelicals have contributed to their own political demise by failing to develop a unified social ethic. They have preferred to limit their agenda to the "gut issues" (abortion, school prayer, the family).

To many, it appeared that all the Christian Right had to offer was a negative/reactionary collage of "don'ts" rather than a comprehensive and constructive agenda of "do's." Worse yet, most Christians could not understand how all the issues connected to each other. If one was opposed to abortion and pornography, why should one also support Contras and Star Wars? Why should concern for protecting churches and Christian schools from government interference or regulation dictate allegiance to conservative or Republican political movements?

Compassion, Justice, and Righteousness

While it is possible for such a rationale to be thoughtfully developed through a Christian worldview, applying Biblical principles of compassion, justice, and righteousness to each issue, it was never fully developed by the activists of the Christian Right. Christian worldview thinkers and writers, like Schaeffer, Whitehead, and other scholars, were largely ignored by the major leaders of the Christian Right and their constituent churches.

Without a clear Christian worldview, Christians were unable to act in unison behind a comprehensive and clearly understandable agenda. Each Christian Right issue on its own, with the possible exception of the pro-life issue, lacked the sense of life-changing or life-threatening urgency that compels volunteers selflessly to devote their energies on a long-term basis to see the battle through to a victorious conclusion.

And with its constituency divided among so many causes and projects, the Christian Right was unable to mobilize its forces in any unified manner except at election time. Even then, only the overwhelming importance and excitement of the presidential election year seemed to turn out the volunteers—at the expense of the crucial in between "off-year" Congressional elections.

What happened, in fact, is that around each "single issue," *i.e.*, abortion, pornography, etc., there developed a host of small organizations dedicated solely to eradicating that particular evil. Unfortunately, such organizations were for the most part too small to accomplish much on their own, too limited in scope and resources to cooperate in any effective way with Christian Right groups focused on other issues, and too competitive for the limited supply of volunteers and money to cooperate with other groups focused on the same issue!

Turf battles, personality conflicts, and general mutual animosity characterized many, though certainly not all, of the Christian Right groups both locally and nationally. Once the momentum of media attention and the consequent excitement wound down, the volunteers upon which all movements are dependent "burned out" or simply moved on to the next issue or cause that offered some momentary stimulation or meaning.

Effective action demands an integrated, strategic use of resources (time, labor, and money) and the focused attention of all participants. A movement that seeks to alter the course of the world's mightiest and most complex nation, and accomplish this redirection in the face of all-out warfare from a powerfully entrenched opposition, had better be able to command complete and total loyalty and

selfless dedication and sacrifice for its objectives on the part of its supporters.

Single issues, even a whole pot full of them, will not stimulate this necessary but rare level of commitment. What was required was a vision of a better, greater, more just, and merciful society to command such devotion. The Christian Right was also incapable of finding a spiritually sound mandate for involvement. Without an orthodox and historically sound Christian doctrine that clearly demands all Christians be active in some mode of service and “fruit bearing,” the Christian Right’s battle was lost before it was begun. Without such a “non-optional mandate” for Christian service, millions of Christians would choose (and still do) to “opt out” by opting to emphasize “personal growth,” “peace,” or “affluence,” rather than “bearing fruit” through service and self-sacrifice.

This concept of vision is what the Christian Right failed to understand. Without vision, there is no clear agenda. Without such an agenda there is no clear direction. Without direction, there is no effective mobilization of forces.

If the Christian Right’s potpourri of goals were ever realized, what would our future look like? Would it look like the Kingdom of God? Would it look like the 1950s or the 1700s? Should the civil government be run by Christians or just be more friendly to Christian values? Should politicians enforce Christian values by law or just expound them by personal example and persuasion or perhaps a mix of these approaches? And how do we define Christian values?

What would a Christian conservative coalition in power really do about the economy, national defense, nuclear war, hunger, poverty, AIDS, etc.? No one seemed to know, or at least no one that could speak for any semblance of a unified Christian Right. In meeting with other Christian Right leaders, including members of Congress, I often observed that our movement did not know where it was going, how to get there, or what to do if we ever did get there.

Failing to Meet the Needs of Our Time

Any movement trying to redirect the nation’s course must have as one of its primary goals that of convincing the populace that it is capable of leading them to a better, brighter future. Unfortunately, the Christian Right has squandered a golden opportunity to establish itself as an alternative source of leadership for the millions of Americans dissatisfied with our present state of confusion and stagnation.

At a time when America was looking for leaders with answers, courage, compassion, and integrity, the Christian Right failed to convince anyone—the Church, secular conservatives, or the traditionally value-oriented public—that we were the ones best suited to step into America’s obvious leadership vacuum.

We in the Christian Right failed to provide real leadership because we did not understand the real problems that needed to be solved. Before a doctor can successfully prescribe a remedy for the patient’s complaint,

he must have an accurate diagnosis of what’s wrong with the patient. The doctor must carefully examine the patient, listen to his list of complaints, and study his medical history. He must take time to really know the patient’s symptoms and their underlying causes.

The Christian Right failed to provide remedies for people’s problems, which is what leadership is all about, because we did not take the time to discover what was really bothering people. We were too absorbed by our own needs and agendas and too sure that we had one or two “cure-alls” that would heal any problem that came up.

We were like a doctor who refuses to see patients in person, saying that he doesn’t have time to listen to their individual complaints; and anyway, he has developed his own miracle cure for everyone’s problems. If they just take it, their symptoms will disappear.

But we did not have a cure-all for society’s problems, which we could have learned from a careful study of God’s Word. In fact, we didn’t even understand what the world’s problems really were. Never taking time to discover the needs of our generation, it was impossible for us to meet them.

Of course, we were diligent in recording and categorizing the many symptoms of a nation and church beset by serious moral decay and degradation. We knew we faced a patient with a potentially terminal illness. What we lacked was a real insight into the cause of the illness. Our America does not need treatment for her painfully obvious symptoms of social breakdown as much as she needs radical therapy for the underlying causes of those symptoms.

To Sum Up

The Christian Right, in its hurry to stop the obvious deterioration of our nation, failed to devote the time to take stock of root causes. Men of action like to act, not analyze, and most recently the church’s strength has not been in analyzing social trends. Such a failure puts tactics before strategy, short-term goals before long-term objectives, and denies us any way to provide comprehensive answers to the very deep problems facing our generation.

The real problems facing us are not abortion, homosexuality, pornography, drugs, sex, and violence, communism, immorality, etc. These are the symptoms of much deeper problems of fear and alienation from God, from civil government, from each other. As our society becomes more alienated from both its leaders and its foundation, it increasingly turns to unhealthy forms of escape to bury its frustration.

Before we can offer solutions, we must learn to understand the underlying problems. We must feel the needs of those for whom we want to provide answers. This is the real challenge to meeting the needs of our generation. We will succeed only to the extent that we offer a vision that promises answers to people’s fears in a way that gives them hope and confidence for the future.

As Christians we should know that God is the answer for man’s alienation. God’s love and compassion is the

appropriate prescription for millions of hurting, alienated people. Our individual identity of whom we are in God is essential to any true sense of personal security. Christian principles of honesty, integrity, and truthfulness in government are the remedy for a nation disillusioned with its leaders.

The Christian Right misunderstood our generation. Our generation is not *looking for single issues*, or busy projects. It is looking for real answers to fundamental problems. It is waiting for someone to point the way, from listlessness to purpose, from futility to hope, from despair to vision, from alienation to commitment, from fear and anxiety to the strength and courage of great convictions.

The Christian Right is living proof that without vision any movement is guaranteed to fail. When the Christian Right attempted to substitute isolated planks in place of a cohesive vision, we quickly discovered that one cannot mobilize an army with a disparate collage of single issues. Ninety percent of those we sought to mobilize viewed each issue separately. Finding none of them overwhelmingly compelling on its own merits, they took little or no action. Or, finding one all-consuming issue, they concentrated on it to the exclusion of the other equally important issues. While most of the Christian Right's issues were of legitimate concern, most were not compelling enough to merit the devotion required to transform a society.

To make up for our lack of visionary agenda, we were forced to rely upon emotion and fear to stimulate action. Every fundraising appeal virtually screamed that some terrible catastrophe would befall the reader or his family

if the suggested action was not taken immediately. This sort of continued melodramatic overstatement was justly and roundly criticized as being hard-edged, irresponsible, negative, and reactionary.

Lacking a vision of our own, all we could do was react in a negative way to the vision or programs of those with non-Christian or anti-Christian visions and agendas. In this sense, we were guilty of being "reactionaries."

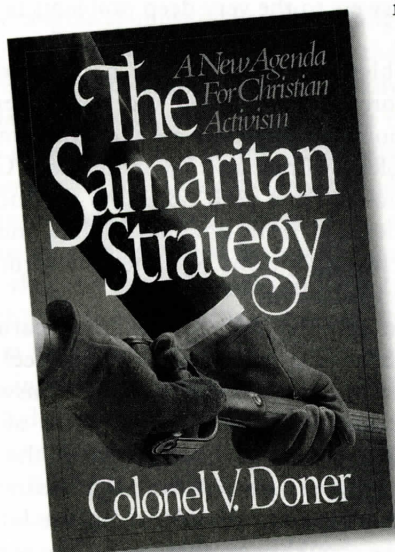
Beginning with the fundamentalist Right in the mid-60s, Colonel Doner spent three decades in Republican and Christian politics as a professional fund-raiser, media strategist, organizational consultant, and architect of the Christian Right. In the 70s his clients spanned the range from The American Conservative Union to Ronald Reagan. In the late 70s he co-founded the first wave of Christian Right organizations: The Christian Voice Lobby, which pioneered issuing "Report Cards" on how members of Congress voted on "values" issues; the American Christian Voice Foundation, publisher of the renowned Presidential Biblical Scoreboard magazine; and American Christian Cause.

In 1984, he served as chairman of the national Reagan/Bush Christian voter registration campaign, and co-founded The American Coalition for Traditional Values, the broadest based coalition of major evangelical leaders ever to unite behind a political objective since prohibition.

He is currently working on two new books and serves as president of "The Samaritan Group," an international consulting company specializing in organizational, media and fund-raising strategies. He resides in Auburn, California with his wife, Miriam, and their son, Brant.

"The Christian Right suffered from many of the same flaws as the Church itself. A lack of vision and profound misreading of the needs of our generation, an ineffective demonstration of love and compassion, a misunderstanding of the relationship of service and leadership and an inability to articulate a Christianity that mandates rather than just suggests involvement.

"Motivated by a Godly compassion, we must learn to demonstrate our faith through acts of service if we are to effectively evangelize others by the strength of our witness. God's love working in and through us in an observable manner testifies to His presence more than anything we might say."



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—John Beckett, Chairman, *Intercessors for America*

If you wish to see Christianity reclaim its power and relevance . . . this book is indispensable."

—*Network of Christian Ministries book review*

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Cognitive Dissonance of Political Activists Or, Whatever Happened to the Christian Right?

By Colonel V. Doner

The Christian Right is a classic case of a movement without a worldview. It is also an instructive example of the consequences of cognitive dissonance.

Let's take a look first at the lack of worldview. Consider the dramatic shift in worldviews from the founding of this country (which Christian Rightists love to harken back to). From the mid-1600s to the late 1700s the country was influenced by the Puritan worldview which itself was rooted in "dominion" theology. Christians were in America to establish the new Israel and to be a light shining to the rest of the world (*Mt. 5*). Around the time of the American War for Independence, Anabaptists and Wesleyans began growing in number. Within a few decades, they decided to target Puritan cultural dominance, which they saw as a potential religious establishment. In what historians call one of the most pernicious non-violent, long-term wars, the Wesleyans, Baptists, Anabaptists, and other sects managed to undermine and destroy Puritan cultural dominance by the mid 1800s.

Calvinist Culture

No doubt this diminution of Calvinist cultural hegemony contributed to the divisiveness of the Civil War. Shortly after the war, tremendous pessimism began to permeate the country. In the wake of such an unprecedented national bloodbath, a new evangelical worldview came to replace the Puritans'. It was called Dispensationalism and predicted the futility of any effort to make the world a better place. Both the church and the world were doomed to corruption, failure, and destruction—in that order. Eagerly grasped by uneducated revivalists and circuit riders, it became the predominant paradigm for the fundamentalist and later the evangelical communities. So within approximately one hundred years, the Protestant community, or at least the evangelical portion of it, went from a victorious worldview with a mandate to serve the community, lead the community, and to restore Biblical justice, to preparing for ultimate defeat and escape from this world. If you simply think about the consequences of such a radical paradigm shift, the Christian Right's predicament becomes painfully obvious. The dispensational worldview obviously did not provide the Christian Right with the sort of mindset necessary for a long-term struggle or a comprehensive strategy.

Since we still retain a few elements of our earlier Puritan belief system, house evangelicals and political

activists, in particular, struggle from a severe case of cognitive dissonance, that is, holding two totally opposite and contradictory principles at the same time, *i.e.*, we are doomed for destruction *and* we need to work toward a Christian America, or some derivation of these two ideas.

In 1984, I was one of the three people who put together the largest coalition of evangelical leaders ever to unite behind a political candidate (Ronald Reagan) or a political cause since at least the Prohibition. As I would sit down with leaders of evangelical denominations, best-selling authors, televangelists, and so forth, it was interesting to see them trying to come to grips with why ninety percent of the church refused to be mobilized. The irony was that, as Pogo poignantly stated, "We have met the enemy and he is us." The men at my Roundtable were all leading dispensational teachers and preachers. They were reaping twenty or thirty years of their teaching. Their followers had listened well: the Old Testament was irrelevant, as well as God's law, and the gospels. Basically, the Bible was reduced to Paul's epistles and a few other select books, all of which were applied to one's own spiritual walk. The idea of any sort of societal reform was considered liberalism. The evangelical community had been dispensationalized out of any notion of victory, which, of course, is required to fuel the sort of movement the Christian Right pretends to be.

Why the Christian Right Failed

When I say "pretends to be," what I mean is that at no time was the Christian Right anything but a tiny vanguard, say one to two percent, of the overall evangelical movement of supposedly forty million people. In other words, we were able to mobilize only an extremely small percentage to be activists. These were people who had either not been contaminated by dispensationalism or who compartmentalized their cogitative dissonance long enough to get heavily involved in various causes or campaigns. Our few successes came when, during elections that were relatively close, we could exploit certain "wedge" issues (such as gay rights, pornography, abortion, prayer in school, etc.) to motivate evangelical voters to spend one hour every two years going to their polling booth to vote against someone who was obviously antagonistic to their values. This is the extent to which we were able to motivate most Christians.

If the 1870s marked the end of the Puritan worldview, then the 1970s began a period devoid of any worldview for the evangelical community, including

Dispensationalism. Since that time, as George Barna has recently reported in a poll that at once verifies our suspicions and yet still stuns, "Fewer than one out every ten born-again Christians possesses a Biblical worldview that impacts their decisions and behavior." Dispensationalism and pietism with their anti-worldview, their anti-intellectualism, and their proclivity toward separatism and withdrawing to an inner, individualistic spirituality, were easy marks for the secular and Enlightenment *zeitgeist* which sets each individual up as basically the creator of his own worldview. In reality, this simply meant that Christians did not have a worldview and saw no reason to have one. They borrowed ideas here and there mostly from secular sources. Few churches taught the importance of a Christian worldview. They taught only a need to get saved, go to church, and try to live basically a perfectionist life. The world and the flesh were evil and doomed for destruction, so why bother with a worldview? This is, of course, an ancient heresy of Gnostic and neo-Platonic dualism revived under Dispensationalism and Pietism . . . but that's another story.

So I maintain that the reason for the Christian Right's feebleness and disarray is the lack of a worldview which, in turn, is reflective of their deficient theology. It is interesting to read one of Ralph Reed's books where, as the preeminent Christian political strategist, he bemoans

the lack of a "theology of political action" at the same time as he attacks Reconstructionists. Mr. Reed may be very bright, but he did not pay much attention in Sunday school. He has, in fact, been trained in a dispensational theology of political action which is, of course, that all such action is futile and should be abandoned. Conversely, there is the theology of political action that has been revived from the Protestant Reformation by R. J. Rushdoony and others at whom Mr. Reed and his ilk scoff—mostly because they misunderstand it and because they lack appreciation of the need for a cohesive worldview. They are too comfortable in their own eclectic worldviews that give them the primary advantage that they get to be the arbiter of their own set of truths and standards. As George Barna's poll has revealed, when it comes to morals, or what is right and wrong, "Christians" believe there are no absolute standards that apply to everybody in all situations. This conclusion was agreed to by over two thirds of evangelicals—70%—who responded to his survey! As Mr. Barna summed up, Christians "do not influence the lives of other people and consequently have little impact on the national culture, primarily because they have failed to integrate their spiritual beliefs and their behavior." In other words, they don't have a worldview.

But after all they don't need one because in their paradigm, Jesus is coming soon.

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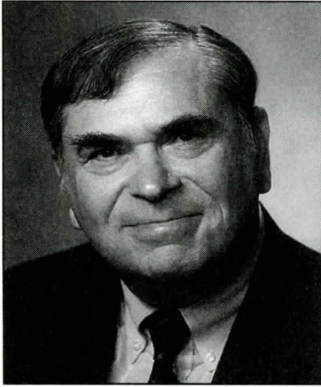
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Defining Victory

By Howard Phillips



To achieve victory, you must first seek it. But, even before you seek it, you have to define it.

The U. S. Taxpayers Party (USTP) defines “victory” as restricting the Federal government to its limited, delegated, enumerated functions and restoring the common law Biblical presuppositions of American jurisprudence.

If you don’t know where you are going, any train will get you there.

The presupposition of the U. S. Taxpayers Party is that throughout this century, the Federal government has been led in the wrong direction, either at the initiative or with the acquiescence of Republican and Democrat officeholders alike.

Generally speaking, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to have an agenda for change when they bring a Presidential administration to office, even though the content and course of the Federal government is already on track with their ideological premises and policy goals.

Republicans tend to assume that merely holding office and exercising authority is an end in itself. The pattern of their incumbencies has been to leave intact those programs and policies established prior to their arrival, and then to quibble about how to spend any funds left over on still more un-Constitutional activities.

During several years of service in the Executive Branch as part of the Nixon Administration, I observed a simple fact: if it is not in the budget, the government can’t do it, and, if it is in the budget, the Federal government will do it.

Every additional dollar extracted from the American people in taxes is one less dollar of liberty and one dollar more added to the power of the Federal leviathan.

Notice the increase. When John F. Kennedy assumed office in January, 1961, total annual Federal outlays were \$97.7 billion. When Richard Nixon took office in January, 1969, the amount was \$183.7 billion. At the beginning of Jimmy Carter’s presidency in 1977, Federal outlays totaled \$409.2 billion. They were up to \$678.2 billion at the beginning of Ronald Reagan’s term and had nearly doubled to \$1.2 trillion in 1989 when George Bush took office. Bush turned over to Bill Clinton a budget of \$1.4 trillion in January, 1993. By 1999, annual outlays had risen to \$1.7 trillion.

We are told that the fact that we have a budget “surplus” is a good thing. The predicate for this claim is doubly incorrect: 1) we would not have a budget surplus but for the fact that \$852.2 billion in FICA taxes have been diverted from the Social Security Trust Fund to sustain the cost of other Congressionally-approved programs, and 2) taxes have risen steadily in order to keep pace with ever-increasing Federal expenditures. “Balanced budgets” are used as arguments against tax cuts.

The income tax alone yielded \$41.3 billion at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration, \$87.2 billion at the beginning of the Nixon Administration, \$157.6 billion at the beginning of the Carter Administration, \$286 billion at the beginning of the Reagan Administration, \$446 billion at the beginning of the Bush Administration, \$510 billion at the beginning of the Clinton Administration, up to a high of \$869 billion today.

The Constitution clearly limits the purposes for which Congress may tax us, stipulating in Article I, Section 8 that, “The Congress shall have the Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare.”

Those Constitutional purposes could be generously accommodated, not for 2 trillion dollars per year, but for less than 1/4 that amount—1/2 trillion dollars per year.

The GOP Compromise

No political party unprepared to speak seriously about a massive rollback in Federal taxes and spending can be taken seriously on the question of putting America back on the right track.

If they are not willing to say in public that this is their objective, let’s take them at their word and look elsewhere for leadership.

One of the most egregious examples of the GOP’s unwillingness and inability to confront even those government programs which undermine their political standing is the refusal of every Republican President, from Nixon to Ford to Reagan to Bush, to veto scores of billions of dollars in subsidies to ideological activist organizations structured as non-profit corporations, entities which, at the taxpayer expense, are paid to lobby, litigate, propagandize, proselytize, and pander for their preferred politically correct neo-Marxist causes—everything from abortion and homosexuality to racial quotas, higher taxes, and radical feminism.

Republicans have either been too lazy to figure out where their budget dollars are going, or too cowardly to vote against expenditures which are clearly in conflict with the First Amendment stipulation that “Congress shall make

no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

The only religion the Federal government does not fund is Christianity. Congress interferes with the “free exercise” of religion by Christians, insofar as it obliges us to subsidize the propagation of anti-Christian faiths.

It is in direct violation of “the establishment clause” for Congress to underwrite the costs and game plans for all those non-Christian religions, even when they are characterized as “political philosophies” or “theories of social justice.”

In this first speech to Congress as President in August, 1974, Gerald Ford told House Speaker Tip O’Neill and his other former colleagues, “I offer you a banner of consensus, compromise, conciliation, and cooperation.” In other words, don’t hit me and I won’t do anything to challenge your control of the Federal government.

That has been the strategic lodestar for nearly all recent Republican Presidents. There is little they are willing even to attempt unless it offers the prospect of implementation by consensus.

But what party in control of something valuable would consent gratuitously to surrender that which they have worked so hard to achieve and acquire?

In war, no hill is taken unless some are willing to spill their blood. It is the same in politics. If you value nothing more than keeping your job, the enemy will understand that and you will take none of his hills.

One thing that thoughtful voters need to understand is that Republican rhetoric and even Republican platforms have been deceptively distinguishable from the Congressional voting records of Republican legislators and the budget decisions of Republican Presidents.

For example, in their 1980 platform, Republicans said, “We . . . support the congressional efforts to restrict the use of taxpayers’ dollars for abortion.”

Yet, since then, Republicans in Congress and the White House have helped enact more than \$6 billion of subsidies for Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion organizations.

It also is the case that, in order to avoid controversy, the GOP leadership has, for the most part, erased substantive policy disagreements with the Democrats.

They talk of replacing the IRS and the income tax, but they do not act on it. They ally themselves with Bill Clinton in surrendering authority to NAFTA and to the World Trade Organization (WTO). They vote to give Bill Clinton the \$17.9 billion he requested for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They back Bill Clinton on the phony assessment of “back dues” imposed by the United Nations on U.S. taxpayers. They fail to oppose Clinton’s Kosovo intervention.

They have voted with Clinton and with Bush for massive reductions in defense spending. Ever since the high-water mark of defense build-up in 1986, they have neglected their duty to “provide for the common defense,” of the United States (even while spending more on U.N.

“peacekeeping” activities abroad and feminization of the military at home).

They accept Bill Clinton’s premise that there should be an expanded Federal role in education. Although they quibble about the way in which additional education dollars should be spent, they, in fact, propose greater Federal spending on education than even Mr. Clinton dares to propose.

Name the issue—whether it is funding for the Legal Services Corporation, foreign aid, or even most-favored-nation status for Red China, the Republican leadership in Congress is in cahoots with their Democratic counterparts on Capitol Hill as well as with President Clinton and his Executive Branch.

If the Republicans are our best hope, let us acknowledge that there is no fight in that dog, and that we have no dog battling for us on Capitol Hill.

The Ever-expanding Big Tent

Homosexuals and heterosexuals, abortionists and pro-lifers, tax hikers and tax cutters, interventionists and Constitutionalists, adversaries and allies of racial, ethnic, and gender quotas—all these and more opposites have been attracted to the Big Tent.

But, in order to preserve unity within that arena, lowest-common denominator policy objectives become essential.

All that inhabitants of the Big Tent have in common is a willingness to hook their trunks into the tails of the pachyderms which precede them, coupled with an egocentric lust to partake of the accoutrements of office.

For years the Republican strategy has been to “lose as slowly as possible.” The GOP has virtually no vision of victory beyond achieving success at the polls on election day.

To paraphrase FDR’s two-time Vice President John Nance Garner, the whole Republican Party is “not worth a pitcher of warm spit” (“piss” was Garner’s word in his characterization of the Vice Presidency).

The GOP is like a huge tank in the middle of the road blocking our progress. Indeed, so long as gullible Christians, conservatives, and Constitutionalists wrongly assume that the GOP (Gang of Prostitutes) is fighting their fight in Washington, D.C., our side will not even be represented in the crucial battles being waged.

America is headed for the cliff and, from a long-term perspective, it matters little whether we crash with the Democrats at 90 miles per hour or stay within the speed limit, riding a Republican wagon at 55 miles per hour.

We need to do more than change drivers. We need to change direction.

An Alternative

The USTP is the only political instrument in America today for those of us who acknowledge a) that God is Sovereign and that His laws are eternal, b) that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed, c) that all legislative powers are vested in Congress, d) that Congress has improperly surrendered legislative control

over policy and money to regulatory bodies, civil service bureaucrats, private judiciary, the Federal Reserve, and to the President of the United States.

Not only has the USTP correctly diagnosed the disease which afflicts the body politic, we are, moreover, ready with remedies that can secure a prompt recovery from the political ills which afflict us.

No, we ought not view civil government as an instrument of salvation, but we can and must put a stop to the many ways in which it undermines our families and degrades our culture.

A President willing to use his clearly specified Constitutional veto authority can, with the support of one-third plus one of the members of either House of Congress, terminate all un-Constitutional programs and put out of business Federal judges who do not meet the "Good Behavior" standards alluded to in the U. S. Constitution.

He can get us out of the U.N., abolish the IRS, end the Federal government's practice of un-Constitutionally spending more than \$100 billion per year on "education," stop the billions in subsidies which have gone to the homosexual movement in the name of AIDS education, close down the multi-billion dollar transfer of resources to Planned Parenthood and similar groups, impose euthanasia on the National Endowment for the Arts, et cetera.

And, because the Constitution specifies that "No person shall be . . . deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," our President can require his U.S. attorneys, even those installed by recess appointment, to make the close-down of every abortion mill in their jurisdictions the number one priority for them and their staffs.

The Republicans do not even pretend to offer an agenda of Constitutional restoration and reconstruction. They have accepted all the blunders and bad policies initiated by twentieth-century Presidents, including Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson.

There is no plan to abolish the Fed, to repeal the Sixteenth Amendment, terminate Presidential Executive Orders, close down "New Deal" programs, overturn the agenda of the "Great Society," or restore to Congress control over key national security issues.

For us to achieve victory, first we must seek it. The Republicans have no clue as to what victory means.

There are several fine men seeking the Republican Presidential nomination—none of whom has any realistic prospect of securing it in the face of opposition from those who want to sweep abortion under the rug, continue an internationalist interventionist foreign policy, and strip Congress of its obligation to "regulate commerce with foreign nations."

The Republican Party survives and prospers today, not merely because of the state and Federal election laws which seek to institutionalize and subsidize the partisan place, but also and even more because Christians, conservatives, and Constitutionalists have not been paying attention.

They have heard the music but they have not listened to the words. It takes work to supervise your employees.

You have got to read a good newspaper, consider votes on particular pieces of legislation, and consider carefully what is involved when a legislator or executive embraces a budget of nearly \$2 trillion in taxing and spending.

Some years ago there was much talk about zero-based budgeting. It was a good idea then, and it is still a good idea.

Before voting for a Federal program, each U.S. Senator or Representative should ask, "Is this program mandated by the Constitution? Is it prohibited by the Constitution? If it is indeed within the delegated and enumerated functions of our Federal Republic, is that which is being proposed both wise and cost effective?"

We will not win until we throw the Republican Party over the side and complete the building of an ark on which we can ride from the banks of defeat to the shores of victory.

Howard Phillips founded the U. S. Taxpayer Party in 1992 to offer American leadership committed to restoring the Federal Republic to its delegated, enumerated functions, and returning American jurisprudence to its original "common law" foundations.

Since 1974, he has been the Chairman of The Conservative Caucus, a non-partisan, nationwide grass-roots public policy advocacy group. He also serves as president of The Conservative Caucus Research, Analysis and Education Foundation, and the U. S. Taxpayers Institute, and is Chairman of the U. S. Taxpayers Alliance. He can be reached at U. S. Taxpayers Alliance, 450 Maple Avenue, East, Vienna, VA 22180.

ATTENTION PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY/NEW YORK

Andrew Sandlin will be in your area in July. Invite your friends and family to come and hear him. He will be presenting public lectures at the following times and places:

July 16, Hilton Philadelphia Airport
7:00 p.m.

4509 Island Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19153
Direct dial (215)365-4150

July 17, Hilton Newark Gateway
7:00 p.m.

With special speaker Rev. Steve Schlissel
Gateway Center at Raymond Boulevard,
Newark, NJ 07102
Direct dial (973)622-5000

For more information, please contact Chalcedon's Administrative Assistant, Susan Burns at (209)532-7674 or sburns@goldrush.com.

Toward a Biblical Agenda for Cultural Transformation

From the Chalcedon Roundtable

Recently in sun-splashed (and wine-enriched!) Napa Valley, Andrew Sandlin, executive director of Chalcedon; Colonel Doner, chairman of the Samaritan Group and architect of the “Old” Religious Right; and Monte Wilson, president of Global Impact, engaged in an informal roundtable discussion on the past and the prospects of the Religious Right. Below are excerpts of that discussion.



AS: Colonel, because of your history with the Christian Right in the 70s and 80s, can you give us background information about Paul Weyrich and the controversial letter he released in February (quoted in part on pp. 3,4)?

CD: It is ironic that it took Paul Weyrich, who has never been a leader of the Evangelical Right, to sound the death knell of the political salvationism the Christian Right has been desperately clinging to for the last several decades.

Paul is the pre-eminent political strategist in Washington, D.C. for the conservative movement. He has been the conservative “godfather” for the last 30 years. He more or less founded the so-called New Right. He gave Jerry Falwell the name “Moral Majority” for the movement that bore that name, and he is still considered *the* major conservative player in Washington. Many congressmen and senators regard him as the foremost conservative leader. So he has tremendous prestige.

This communiqué that he issued seemed to be based on several premises. I think Paul has been an ultimate pragmatist and it took a pragmatist to note that thirty years of labor in the political vineyards had not produced the results that were expected. Paul identified two faulty premises that the conservative movement had been operating on. The first was that if Christian conservatives elected a Republican or even a conservative majority, they would enact a Christian agenda. Clearly that did not happen. The Republican majority failed to pass our agenda.

What we are here to discuss today is Paul’s second premise: The Christian Right has been operating under the assumption that a majority of Americans agreed with our values, *i.e.*, that we are the Moral Majority. Paul is saying that this assumption is wrong—that the majority of voters do not agree with our values. He bases this on the fact that the public gave Bill Clinton such a high (66%) approval rating in the polls, in effect giving him a “pass” on the impeachment process. Paul also points to several other examples from states where the Christian Right has worked for a long time. In Colorado and Washington, for example, we can’t seem to pass a ban on partial birth abortions. He uses these and other examples to say it is hopeless, we have lost the culture wars, and the people no longer share our values. That is his premise. He went on to suggest that we should basically drop out of the political process. We could expect a dispensationalist to come to that conclusion. But for Paul Weyrich, America’s number one conservative political activist for the last thirty years, to say it is quite a shock.

AS: Monte, Paul coined the term Moral Majority. He says that conservative Christians now have only a moral minority. In fact, that was the title of his *Washington Post* article: “The Moral Minority.” Do you think he has given a fair assessment about the sentiments of the American people? Do you think he has read the polls accurately and interpreted them properly for his audience?

MW: I do not believe that his assessment is or was sufficiently nuanced. The surveys and polls that I have read recently, while they don’t say that we are having a spiritual revival, would give a different slant than Paul has. In fact, only a few months ago pundits and personalities like Tony Snow and Rush Limbaugh were touting numerous surveys noting the progress conservatives have made on the cultural front since the

early 70s until now, twenty-five years later. There is great progress among those who would say, "Abortion should not be practiced, adultery is wrong, illicit drugs are wrong, etc."

"How can you win a war that you never fought?"
It is my observation that we never seriously engaged in the culture wars.

I think Paul has made his assessment based on the whole debacle with the President and Monica Lewinski: people did not seem to want the President to be impeached. The surveys and polls were clear that the people believed that what Clinton did was morally reprehensible and wrong. They did not believe, however, that his conduct was impeachable. Now, however much we may disagree or agree with those sentiments, it still says that the majority of Americans do not agree with libertarians or libertines who say that there are no morals or absolutes, or that fidelity does not matter.

What we have today is a privatization of morals, where moral issues are just between the individual and God, etc. That's problematic, to say the least. However, I do not believe that we have lost the cultural wars. I think we are making incredible progress.

CD: Not just in the President's case, but in others, people are separating "private" conduct from "public" office. The theory seems to be that you can be basically a disgusting person privately, and it does not harm your public performance. Of course, having no connection between personal character and public performance of duties represents an extremely dangerous breakdown of our moral and social fabric. It stems from the relativism of modern society that the evangelical world has also bought into. Some recent studies have shown that 70% of evangelicals say that what is true for one person may not be true for another—that truth is essentially relative. Maybe in those terms, Paul Weyrich is correct that we have lost a cultural war because previously in our society the majority would have held that if a man's convictions are that loosely moored to any moral standard, he is not fit to serve.

Paul Weyrich and Monte are at odds as to whether we are gaining or losing ground in the cultural wars. I think an important question is where you date the process. If Paul is saying we have gone terribly downhill and he is using the 40s or the 50s as an example, then he is probably correct. We have lost a tremendous amount of

ground. If Monte is using the 60s or 70s as his beginning point and says that we have captured ground since then, I believe that both positions would be correct.

Cultural Retreatism

AS: What we are seeing in this idea of the privatization of religion is the revival of an aspect of the ancient Anabaptist heresy which teaches that religion is essentially a matter of one's private individual conscience. The Anabaptists were the consummate cultural retreatists. That is one reason they were persecuted by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. We don't want to get into that historical background, but the point is that the Anabaptists' and Roger Williams' idea that religion is essentially a private affair has become the dominant cultural motif in modern Western democracies.

Weyrich also says that conservatives have actually lost the cultural war. I don't agree with that. I agree that we have lost a *battle* in that war. Conservatives historically are not long-term thinkers, which is ironic because conservatism is all about history and the processes of history. We have lost recent battles in culture, but we have not, I believe, lost the final war. The term "culture war" is interesting. Henry Van Til in *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture* pointed out that culture is religion externalized. So when people like Bob Bennett use the term "culture war," what they are really saying is a religious war. But conservatives, Colonel, don't really want to speak in terms of a religious war. They want to speak in terms of a cultural war because speaking of a religious war gets too close to the heart of an issue that they do not want to address.

CD: That's right. I think perhaps in a strict sense, much of what Paul says is correct: we have won political battles but lost the cultural wars. I think the larger question is "*How can you win a war that you never fought?*" It is my observation that we never seriously engaged in the culture wars. Let's put it this way: there was certainly a conflict of "cultures," but conservative Christians by and large did not intelligently enter with any forethought or strategy into the battle.

Conservatives haven't really tried to fight the culture wars in arts, entertainment, media, or education. Conservatives have been handicapped by their own temperament, which is usually to be very independent and to have a kind of "leave me alone" attitude. So they are not naturally driven to deal with many social issues or to become culturally involved. Their area of preference seems to be business, but business really has nothing to do with the formation of culture. To influence the culture, you have to understand the culture; you have to appreciate the culture; and you have to be engaged with it. I question whether conservatives, let alone Christians, have ever done that on a significant scale since the end of the Puritan influence in the eighteenth century.

AS: Interestingly, this cultural disengagement is the

very thing that Weyrich is now suggesting. That irony was not lost on you, was it? It is fascinating.

Monte made an interesting point that we addressed more fully at the Chalcedon conference in Atlanta: Conservatives, and especially conservative Christians, in training their children, and in their own lives do not strive for positions of cultural leadership. Colonel, you told me about a leading Christian conservative figure who was interviewed on TV a few weeks ago. His blind spot became apparent when the issue of elites in culture was discussed; he felt that simply by influencing the mass of people, in the long-term things would work out well. Thus, Christians could avoid areas of cultural leadership. I think that is a fundamental error and it is that idea that has put us in this situation in the first place.

Cultural Illiteracy

CD: It has always been conservative strategy (and the Christian Right just inherited strategies from the conservatives) to educate the average voter—if you had enough of middle America with you would eventually prevail.

The leader we are talking about made the point that although we may have lost the media elites, we have the blue-collar workers with us. Of course, he is missing the point, because the media and educational elites influence the blue-collar workers. What are the blue-collar workers doing most of the evening? They and their children are watching television. Their children are going to public schools. If they are with us now, and I think it is apparent that they are not as much with us as they would have been in the 40s or 50s, they are with us less and less daily on fundamental issues. They may not like homosexuals, they may not like pornography, they may not even like abortion. But we are losing them because they are buying into the whole postmodern *zeitgeist* that is being sold to them by the elite.

MW: It fascinates me that Weyrich says we have lost the culture wars when what he means is that we have lost the political wars. We are not losing the cultural wars; at least, we are making progress. The way conservatives have failed to engage culture on any significant level has retarded any progress that we could have made in the last 20 years. As I travel around the country and speak in various settings, either to businessmen or homeschoolers, or at conventions or churches, the thing that fascinates me is that parents with high school or middle school age children believe that if their children are to be dominionists and bring reconstruction to the country, the kids must be either missionaries or mechanics down at the Ford plant. Don't misunderstand me, I am involved in missions, there is nothing inherently wrong with missions; and it can be a noble pursuit to be a mechanic. But why aren't we talking to our children about being the next Stephen Spielberg? Why aren't we talking to our children about painting? I don't mean explicitly Christian movies or art. I mean producing wonderful works of art

in the marketplace and on a popular level, like cinematography, or in music, or engineering, etc. We are not doing that at all. We complain, argue, shoot down, and condemn all psychobabble, but how many Christian psychiatrists are we producing who have a Biblical understanding of human nature? We are just not putting out top-notch people. It is not because our kids do not have the capacity, the talent, or the intelligence. It is because we are somehow afraid, I believe, for our children to be engaged in that war because we think they will become casualties.

AS: There are other theological presuppositions—many of them Anabaptistic—that underlie that notion. One thing is certain: we will never recapture the culture until we are engaged in the culture. Ironically, I believe that what Chalcedon and those who agree with us have been saying for many years is really the alternative to this problem. First of all, culture is a religious phenomenon. But conservatives, even Christian conservatives, are very afraid of that. I just read a speech by Robert Bork, not known historically for any dedication to Christianity, who said, "I don't believe that there can be any return to the right kind of American culture apart from Biblical law and the Biblical Faith." This is a remarkable statement. Culture is a religious phenomenon. Second, culture has changed when its religion has changed. This is the point that Paul Weyrich is finally sort of admitting and that he acknowledges he did not understand before. We have to change the religion of a culture before we can expect any political change. Third, what we have been saying is that Biblical law and the Christian Faith are the standards of cultural change. But conservatives, Colonel as you have pointed out a number of times, do not have any pattern of cultural change or cultural transformation. They know what they don't like, but they don't know what they would like to have if they could.

CD: There is a visceral aversion in conservatives and, perhaps even more so, in Christians to things cultural. I would like to ask two questions. First, what are we saying really when we talk about culture? Andrew, I believe you are saying it's religion externalized. But when people think of culture, they think of going to the opera, the ballet. That's not what we are talking about. What makes up the components of culture, and why do we have such an aversion for engaging it?

AS: Culture is formed of the institutional areas of society that tend to influence society and, also, the arts. In modern culture, the media is a preeminent and perhaps the preeminent cultural phenomenon because of its vast influence. Education, in all realms, and especially in institutionalized forms, is a cultural phenomenon. The church is a cultural phenomenon. In the modern world, technology is a cultural phenomenon, no question about it. We live in the midst of a remarkable so-called information revolution. All of these are aspects of culture. If Christians cannot capture and influence these particular areas, they will lose, at least in this century, the so-called

cultural religious wars because these are the framers of culture.

MW: Fundamentally I agree with you, Andrew. One reason I think conservatives are somewhat afraid of culture and the concept of culture is that they have never been educated into appreciating or enjoying culture. I think there is a basic fear that “culture” is beyond them. It is something that someone else controls. They are not on an equal playing field because all these people are better read and more finely tuned. We can’t fight them on that high cultural level, so we will fight them at the abortion clinic. We will fight them on levels where we feel that we are competent.

A famous Christian leader once said of the statute of David, “This is evidence of Michalengo’s humanism—making man so God-like in his size.” That was hooey. Michaelango made David that big because that was the size rock he was working with. We make fools of ourselves because we don’t study. We see that happening and say, “I don’t want to be foolish and I don’t know that I could beat these guys at their own game” instead of saying, “How do I educate my children, how do I arm myself, how do I cultivate myself so that I can give expression to who I am and my faith in those various media?”

AS: Many times the pagans are much more qualified, a fact that Van Til and others acknowledge. But the root problem is the ancient error of pietism which says that these cultural areas are less important, less Christian, and thus inherently inferior. It is an ancient Hellenic and Platonic heresy translated into the modern world. There is a denial of the need for the Christianization of all of life.

CD: I agree, Andrew. As I was listening to Monte, I was thinking that we in the evangelical world have been raised to believe, “This is of the world; these things are worldly. We are not of the world. The culture is fleshly. It is worldly.” Now we realize this attitude is reflective of a Gnostic, Platonic, pagan dualism which has been with us for 2,000 years—infesting and now dominating the church and evangelicals, in particular. If we do talk about the Christianization of the world, it is not in the arena of transforming the culture, but in a very narrow sense “soul-winning,” with no afterthought of how these souls might change their world. What we have seen is that you can plausibly have a majority of Christians and the elite would still dominate the culture because we don’t even believe in training ourselves in the avenues necessary to transform the culture.

AS: So the issue is not a moral majority or a moral minority. Even if we did have a majority, if we are pietists, a minority would still control the culture.

CD: I think that is exactly what we had in the 50s. The majority of the country would have identified themselves as Christians. Yet, look at Eisenhower and the Congress back then. While they certainly aren’t as bad as what we have today, these men were in no sense

Christians. They were straight-out humanists. They brought evolution into the schools. So we had a Christian public and men that were anything but Christian ran the government and culture. Those in charge simply weren’t as obvious in their anti-Christian agenda as they are today.

If we get down to it, evangelicals have not had “permission” to transform the culture because we were supposed to lose; we are living in a dispensational paradigm, the Devil is going to win. We have to pluck a few souls out before he does. So, we did not have theological permission to win. Even the many activists out there fighting, conservative, Christian or both, lacked what I call (and this is what Paul Weyrich has put his finger on) a model for cultural transformation. We had a model that Weyrich helped engineer, very successfully, for political victories and maybe even political transformation. We transformed the House of Representatives from liberal Democrat to Republican. But it wasn’t enough, because we lacked a model of cultural transformation. And it should be obvious why we’re devoid of such a model: Why would you have a model for cultural transformation if (a) you don’t believe you can transform the culture, or (b) you don’t believe you are supposed to win, or (c) you believe that the culture is so ungodly that even to touch it is to get sucked into the tar baby.

One reason I think conservatives are somewhat afraid of culture and the concept of culture is that they have never been educated into appreciating or enjoying culture.

AS: Again, I must emphasize that people at Chalcedon and people who tend to agree with our position do believe they have an answer, which is Christian culture, Christian civilization with a pattern of the Biblical Faith and Biblical law. Again, it is ironic that we see Robert Bork making such even slight admissions to that point. But conservatives have never been willing to adopt that position. Why? Because it is too explicitly Biblical. It is too Calvinistic and, for some reason from a pragmatic standpoint, they think that won’t win. The problem is not that we lack a pattern. The problem is that Christians, for too long, don’t want to adopt the pattern of the Word

of God. But I think with Paul Weyrich's letter, conservatives are going to be forced to start reconsidering this issue because everything else has failed.

CD: I think that is exactly right.

Cultural Isolationism

AS: Let's explore further the idea of why Christians have been so culturally inept. Why is it historically that Christians have been essentially disenfranchised? I think there are a number of good reasons here. I will mention one: They have a theological justification for their disenfranchisement in nineteenth-century dispensationalism, the notion that the end of the world is coming and only the truly elect, the very few, the remnant, will be saved, and Christians need to prepare for the rapture. That is one angle of it. But there are various other angles.

MW: In part, an incredible lack of education, or the wrong kind of education. Over all, in American culture, conservative and liberal education has gone to almost an exclusive emphasis on technological studies so that in undergraduate studies, you get a degree in math, or computer science, or whatever. Up until twenty years ago, you got a liberal arts degree and you were trained in the history of who we are as a people, the arts and literature and philosophy that were the underpinnings of Western Civilization.

AS: In every aspect of culture.

MW: Exactly, so you were familiar with culture in its diverse elements. The hopes, of course, were that this type of education would cultivate the individual. Today, as conservative Christians, we send our kids to Bible colleges to get an education that tells them there is no need to be involved in culture. Culture is horrible and wicked. Or perhaps we give them an education that is a-cultural: We send them to state schools where they get a technical education. But we are totally ignoring that part of the soul that makes a life well-lived.

CD: Let's look at where the evangelical movement came from. Obviously the Christian Right sprang out of the evangelical movement. The evangelical movement sprang up in 40s and 50s from the fundamentalist movement. The three of us essentially grew up in the fundamentalist movement, or we were trained by parents who grew up in it. The fundamentalist movement was an assiduously isolated subculture, totally alienated from the culture and the elite. The religious or political heroes of this subculture ranged from Billy James Hargis (whom I worked for), to George Wallace (for some in the South), or Jerry Falwell to Ronald Reagan, or a man whom I admire greatly, Pat Buchanan. What they all have in common is that they all railed at the elite: the cultural elite is bad and we are going to change it. That's fine and I would support them in that and agree with them. But it is obviously not enough. It is not enough just to rail against the elite and replace them, as we saw with Ronald Reagan or Newt Gingrich. Once you have replaced the top fringe of political leaders or bureaucrats,

you have to have a comprehensive, multi-layered mechanism to transform the culture. It is not enough to kick them out, but the key is what you replace them with. Unfortunately, you don't design that in ninety days. Once someone wins in November, you can't replace a culture in ninety days. That takes one or two or three generations of training young people and getting them educated as Monte was just talking about. That is where we have missed the boat.

AS: Several years ago, the three of us were talking with a leading Christian conservative whom we all respect. We asked him what his objective was and he said to bring down the establishment. That really jarred me and I disagreed with it totally. For too long conservatives have been inherently anti-establishment. As I wrote an article in the *Chalcedon Report* not long ago, Christians must be inherently establishmentarian. Not with the union of church and state, but the establishment of a particular religion. That requires capturing the cultural centers of influence. Colonel, as you have indicated, this is not part of the psyche of conservatism.

There is another problem that is endemic to the Right. It leads to this cultural disenfranchisement: conservatives' horrid vulnerability to conspiracy thinking—whether it is the so-called Jewish bankers, or the black helicopters. This mindset leads people to think that these areas of influence are inherently evil and that they are under the control of a very vast, secret conspiracy and that they are not the proper objects of godly dominion. I think that is a severe problem on the Right.

Interestingly enough, I read an article by Gertrude Himmelfarb, a leading conservative author. She pointed out the fundamental incongruity between the character of conservatism and the notion of revolution. She basically said that we conservatives don't know what to do when we are in power because we are not wired to understand power. We are anti-establishment. Those of us who agree with Chalcedon and are identified broadly with the message of Christian reconstruction must totally resist that idea. We must be inherently pro-establishment. It is just that we want to replace the present evil establishment with a godly establishment. Establishment is an inescapable concept, to use Rush's language.

Cultural Transformation

CD: Andrew, the question then is: how do you do that? What is the answer in terms of finding a model for cultural transformation?

AS: I think it is pretty clear. The only answer is in the Bible. The Bible gives us the pattern for applying the Faith in all of life. This does not mean that every specific cultural answer is found in the Bible—and none of us at Chalcedon holds that. But the Bible is the foundation on which we build particular cultural transformation, whether it is in the arts, education, technology, the sciences, the media, the church, the family, or anywhere

else. One of the fundamental errors is to think that cultural transformation occurs principally by political means. That is essentially one of the great illusions of the political Left and that many people on the Right have picked up. They think that if we can just elect somebody to the presidency, then we can have in short time a godly Christian culture. To his credit, Paul Weyrich recognizes that is a fallacious idea.

We need to start in the family by training godly children and by having godly families. But not just godly families in abstraction, but godly children designed to be cultural warriors. I am tending to use that expression more and more. I notice, Colonel, it is one that you have used in a number of the men's seminars that you and Monte have had—the idea of men as warriors. We need to train children up as warriors in the Faith, so that we can get them on the right track. Education essentially begins in the first 20 to 25 years of your life. And we need to recognize that the church itself must be an agent of cultural transformation. Monte, can you comment on the church's role in this?

The Church and Cultural Transformation

MW: It fascinates and also grieves me when I look at what we call good, solid, evangelical churches. There is absolutely no discussion, and therefore no demonstration, of any understanding of the nature of God when it comes to beauty and goodness in the realm of culture. There is no desire, much less programs, for what can we do for budding young artists, or what can we do to help motivate parents and their children towards more cultural involvement.

*Part of our problem today
is that Christians and
conservatives don't like
things that take a long
time.*

AS: They think it would be better if they were missionaries, for example.

MW: We have to change that attitude and replace it, not only by cultivating the person, but showing how the person can cultivate society around him. The churches should be taking a leading role. At the churches I pastored, we started artist support groups. In the schools we started, we were constantly bringing in different kinds of people who were having an impact because of their excellent skill—whether it was in law, or art, or politics. We wanted to show the children role models who were

in the world and actually accomplishing something. During the Renaissance, it was the church that was supporting the artist; because of that commitment, we have some great art that enriches our lives today. I am using art as just one form of culture. I hope no one hears me saying that's the only field. But it would be very easy for the church to start inspiring and encouraging people in this particular arena.

AS: Colonel, we have talked about the family as an agent of cultural change, and the church as an agent of cultural change. Now let's talk about the state. Weyrich acknowledges that conservatives in general have been failures when it comes to long-term cultural change as a result of politics, not the short term—he recognizes that we have gotten political victories, but those political victories have not been translated into cultural or social victories. What have our problems been there, and what are we to do about them?

The State and Cultural Transformation

CD: As we talk about goals and training warriors for long-term cultural change, I think a key concept is service. As you are well aware, I wrote about this in *The Samaritan Strategy—a New Agenda for Christian Activism*. In our communities, people follow those who serve them. Therefore, the best way to become a leader is to first become a servant—whether that involves civic clubs, volunteering within different city or county commissions, or ministry to the urban poor, etc. There are literally hundreds of opportunities for service. They are there for the taking. Most of them have been filled by the humanist state because churches have not been interested in service. A hundred years ago the church was doing all of that sort of work. Part of our problem today is that Christians and conservatives don't like things that take a long time. We don't like the idea of waiting a generation or two while we train our children for service, because we may not see the fruit from that. We want to have some results right now. It is much easier to say there is an election in three months and we are going to win that, rather than saying if I spend the next ten years training my kids, or serving my community—or both—I *may* see some positive results.

As far as the political world goes, I think the question to all of our political activist friends is what can we do in the meantime? Do we just drop out, as Weyrich suggests, or do we continue to struggle on? I believe we should continue the struggle—as long as we don't have the illusion that we are going to change the culture. We can still do a lot by at least blocking the advance of the opposition in the political world. To do that, we have to recognize that some things have shifted. Paul Weyrich and other conservatives are reeling from the fact that things have shifted and they hadn't quite realized it.

The first thing that we need to realize is that the Christian Right is not a majority. We may have a hard

core of twenty percent in the country. That is not a majority, but it certainly is a huge block. So for us to win in elections, as Ronald Reagan demonstrated, we have to be able to reach out and form an alliance. For instance, with Southern populists or conservative Democrats, obviously Roman Catholics, and other people who may agree with us on what I would call generic traditional values issues. If we can reach out to them, then we can form, in many cases, a winning alliance. But it means that we most likely will not get our core issues adopted. For example, we won't get abortion outlawed, but can we stop homosexual marriages? Can we outlaw some pornography? Can we get tougher on crime to save our families? Yes!

AS: Christians are going to have to learn to accept that in the political sphere, change occurs incrementally. Those people who operate in the political sphere and who want immediate solutions must realize that there *are no immediate solutions in the political sphere*. We have to get things back one chunk at the time, and not all at once.

CD: Right. We became a little spoiled by thinking we won control of the Republican Party. We thought, "Now we control this big party so we can get our way." That has proved to be false. Realizing that we are a smaller piece of the pie than we imagined—that reality check—will help us adopt a more realistic strategy.

If you look at the conservative movement, you will see a tremendous shift. First let's start with the Republican Party. I wrote about what happened in the GOP in my monograph (available through Chalcedon) *The Late Great GOP and the Coming Realignment*. I discussed the realignment between centrist Republicans and centrist Democrats, which is really the elite of both parties. The elite of both parties are basically for free enterprise; they are conservative economically and they are liberal socially. They are the business elite, the power elite. With the fall of communism, there are no longer issues about socialism and communism or capitalism. Everyone is basically agreeing on capitalism; everyone is agreeing that we should have a more efficient way of running the civil government. Perhaps I shouldn't say everybody, but in the main, the people who are funding both the Republicans and the Democrats agree on these premises. They are also liberal on social issues. So, these people are coming together in what I call a Remocrat, a Republican-Democrat centrist paradigm.

So the questions that are left on the table have more to do with sexual issues. By this I mean the results of sex, for instance, abortion, pornography, homosexuality, promiscuity, and adultery. Moral issues are perhaps the last thing that truly divides the nation.

The conservative movement stood on four legs. One was a broadly based anti-communist coalition which included everyone from the neo-conservatives to conservative Democrats to paleoconservatives. Second there was the Christian Right, and, third, the economic conservatives, who, as I just explained, are moving to a more centrist position. Finally there were the libertarians. The economic conservatives discovered they can't stand being with the Christian Right, and that they have more in common with centrist business-types in the Democratic Party. The anti-communist coalition disbanded when communism fell. The old conservative coalition effectively has only two legs left: the Christian Right and the Libertarians—who can't stand each other because we are totally divided on sexual issues. So the Christian Right has been isolated. We either have to find ways to reach out to a more populist base, for example to people who are attracted to Pat Buchanan's nationalistic issues, or people who will unite with us on crime or very basic pro-family issues. That is our only hope to win some political victories. I think that is very possible. But again, this will not transform culture. What it will do, perhaps, is serve as a defensive action to keep the enemy off our back for another generation so that we can train people who will eventually transform the culture.

AS: I am glad Colonel concluded by saying, in essence, that there are not fundamental political solutions. That, as we have indicated, has been the great error of the Christian Right in the last twenty years or so. What Christians must do to produce cultural change is to train up an entire generation of young people who are culturally literate and culturally dominant—culturally dominionists. That is going to have to occur in the family and, as Monte has pointed out, it must occur in the church. The church must recognize its cultural responsibilities. That goes beyond the four walls of the church, though it begins within the four walls of the church. There won't be any cultural change until those things happen.

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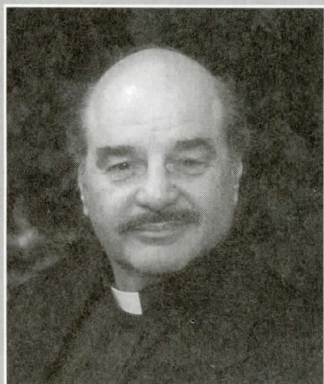
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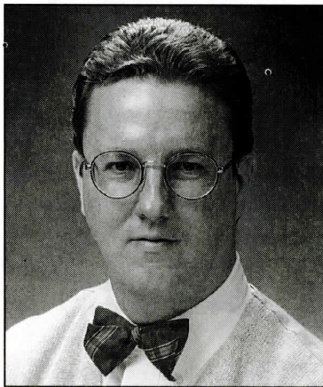
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A Cultural Caveat: The Southern Agrarians

By George Grant

There is no place like home. Of joy, of peace, of plenty, where supporting and supported, dear souls mingle into the blissful hubbub of daily life. No matter how benevolent, no matter how philanthropic, and no matter how altruistic some social or cultural alternative may be, it can never hope to match the personal intimacy of domestic relations. Except in the rare and extreme cases where strife and bitterness have completely disintegrated familial identity, there is no replacement for the close ties of brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, parents and children, aunts and uncles, kith and kin. Though under siege in our day, domesticity has always been recognized as the glue that holds nations together—and ever it shall be. Upon this ought we, like the Agrarians of yore, take our stand.

Tristan Gylberd



In 1930 an extraordinary group of Southern historians, poets, political scientists, novelists, and journalists published a prophetic collection of essays warning against the looming loss of the Founding Fathers' original vision. Including contributions from such literary luminaries as

Robert Penn Warren, Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, Andrew Nelson Lytle, Stark Young, and John Crowe Ransom, the symposium—entitled “I’ll Take My Stand”—poignantly voiced the complex intellectual, emotional, and spiritual consternation of men standing on the precipice of catastrophic cultural change.

The men were alarmed by what they perceived to be a steady erosion of the rule of law in modern American life. They feared that—as was the case in the eighteenth century—our liberties were facing a fearsome challenge from the almost omnipresent and omnipotent forces of monolithic civil government. They said:

When we remember the high expectations held universally by the founders of the American union for a more perfect order of society, and then consider the state of life in this country today, it is bound to appear to reasonable people that somehow the experiment has very nearly proved abortive, and that in some way a great commonwealth has gone wrong.

They were determined to warn against the creeping

dehumanization of an ideological secularism that they believed was already beginning to dominate American life:

There is evidently a kind of thinking that rejoices in setting up a social objective which has no relation to the individual. Men are prepared to sacrifice their private dignity and happiness to an abstract social ideal, and without asking whether the social ideal produces the welfare of any individual man whatsoever.

Standing Against Modernity

They knew full well that they were essentially standing; against the rising tide of industrial modernity, nevertheless they were convinced that ordinary Americans would ultimately hear and heed their warning—otherwise, the nation would collapse under the weight of corruption: “If the republic is to live up to its ideals and be what it could be, then it had better look long and hard at what it is in danger of becoming and devote conscious effort to controlling its own destiny, rather than continuing to drift along on the tides of economic materialism.”

Clearly, the contributors were old-line conservatives in the tradition of Americans like Patrick Henry, Fisher Ames, John Randolph, and John C. Calhoun. But they also drew on the rich European conservative tradition of men like Edmund Burke, Walter Bagehot, Robert Southey, and Thomas Macaulay. As political scientist Louis Rubin later commented:

They were writing squarely out of an old American tradition, one that we find imbedded in American thought almost from the earliest days. The tradition was that of the pastorate; they were invoking the humane virtues of a simpler, more elemental, non-acquisitive existence, as a needed rebuke to the acquisitive, essentially materialistic compulsions of a society that from the outset was very much engaged in seeking wealth, power, and plenty on a continent whose prolific natural resources and vast acres of usable land, forests, and rivers were there for the taking.

Short-term pessimists but long-term optimists, they believed that eventually a grassroots movement would restore the principles of the rule of law and that the American dream could be preserved for future generations. Though they were not economists or sociologists or activists, their vision was a comprehensive blueprint for a genuinely principle-based conservative renewal.

Thus, they believed in an extremely limited form of

civil government and took a dim view of government intervention. They went so far as to assert that communities should “ask practically nothing of the federal government in domestic legislation.” Further, they believed that this limited governmental structure should be predicated primarily on the tenets of “local self-government” and “decentralization.”

They were not minimalists or libertarians. Instead they were realists who envisioned a society which called “only for enough government to prevent men from injuring one another.” It was by its very nature, a “non-ideological” and “laissez faire society.” It was an “individualistic society” that “only asked to be let alone.”

A Wholesome Skepticism

Not surprisingly then, the contributors to the symposium opposed the idea that “the government should set up an economic super organization, which in turn would become the government.” They regarded socialism, democratic liberalism, communism, and republican cooperationism with equal disdain. In fact, they professed an ingrained “suspicion of all schemes that propose to coerce our people to their alleged benefit.”

They believed that it was necessary “to employ a certain skepticism even at the expense of the Cult of Science, and to say it is an Americanism, which looks innocent and disinterested, but really is not either.” They were not resistant to technological progress so much as they were resistant to the crass and inhuman humanism that often accompanies industrial advance. They believed that “a way of life that omits or de-emphasizes the more spiritual side of existence is necessarily disastrous to all phases of life.”

Clearly then, the men who contributed to “I’ll Take My Stand” believed that society ought to be defined by its moral and cultural values. They yearned for return to that early American ethic of freedom and liberty which was “for the most part stable, religious, and agrarian; where the goodness of life was measured by a scale of values having little to do with material values.”

In essence, they believed in humanizing the scale of modern life: “. . . restoring such practices as manners, conversation, hospitality, sympathy, family life, romantic love—the social exchanges which reveal and develop sensibility in human affairs.” They believed in a “realistic, stable, and hereditary life.” Thus, they favored continuity and tradition over change for the sake of change: “The past is always a rebuke to the present; it’s a better rebuke than any dream of the future. It’s a better rebuke because you can see what some of the costs were, what frail virtues were achieved in the past by frail men.”

After all, they said: “Affections, and long memories, attach to the ancient bowers of life in the provinces; but they will not attach to what is always changing.”

Although they believed that all of these foundational truths were “self-evident” in the sense that they are written on the fleshly tablet of every man’s heart, they were not so idealistic as to believe that the truths would

be universally accepted. In fact, they knew that such reasoning would inevitably be a stumbling block to some and mere foolishness to others. All too often men suppress reality in one way, shape, form, or another.

As a matter of fact, though “I’ll Take My Stand” caused quite a stir when it was first released, very few critics gave it much chance of actually affecting the course of events or the destiny of the nation. It was assumed that “the wheels of progress could not possibly be redirected.” The contributors were chided for their “naivete,” “impracticality,” and “idealism.” They were written off as “merely nostalgic,” “hopelessly utopian,” and “enthusiasts for an epochal past that can never again be recaptured.”

For some fifty years it looked as if the critics might be right. The course of the twentieth century appeared to be a stern rebuke to the basic principles of the symposium. Like the English Distributists and the Continental Christian Democrats, with whom they shared so many basic presuppositions, the contributors seemed tragically out of step with the times.

Prophetic Words

But now all that has changed. Recent turns of events have vindicated their emphasis on less government, lower taxes, family values, minimal regulation, and localism. Their innate distrust of professional politicians, propagandizing media, and commercial tomfoolery have suddenly been translated by a spontaneous grassroots advent into populist megatrends. The fulfillment of their improbable prophetic caveat is even now unfolding as we race toward the end of the century.

But however they may ultimately align themselves in a party apparatus, it is apparent that the majority of Americans have solidly conservative credentials. Gallup and Wirthlin polls following the seemingly disastrous last election found that more than 54 percent of all Americans want “less government and less taxes.” A full 68 percent would prefer “a government that encouraged traditional values.” Nearly 87 percent favored legal restrictions on abortion-on-demand. An overwhelming 89 percent oppose relaxing the behavioral restrictions on homosexuals in the military. And some 62 percent oppose conferring on them preferential minority status. When asked to identify the most important issues facing the nation today, “reducing taxes and government spending” was selected by more than a 2-to-1 ratio over any other concern. Reinforcing “traditional family values” came in close behind, followed by “prohibiting abortion,” “promoting freedom and democracy,” and “eliminating government regulations.”

Despite strong opposition by the politics-as-usual establishment of both major political parties as well as the uniformitarian national media, the moral principles that seemed so passé just a short time ago now actually dominate the social scene. The notions espoused by the contributors to “I’ll Take My Stand” have gone from the political backwater to the cultural mainstream almost

overnight. A kind of American glasnost and perestroika are beginning to have their effect on the entrenched structures of ideological power.

A new day has dawned.

Senator Ted Kennedy recently asserted that, "The ballot box is the place where change begins in America." Although he has been fiercely and vehemently wrong in the past, Kennedy has never been more wrong than this. As George Will has argued: "There is hardly a page of American history that does not refute that insistence, so characteristic of the political class, on the primacy of politics in the making of history." In fact, he says, "In a good society, politics is peripheral to much of the pulsing life of the society."

That is what makes the emergence of the grassroots conservative consensus such a threat to the politics-as-usual agenda of the Washington insiders in both major parties. That is why the dominant media recoils with fear and loathing to any and all grassroots efforts by ordinary Americans to make their communities cleaner, safer, and better. That is why the pundits, the prognosticators, and the politicians are so terribly out of sorts just now. They are suddenly discovering that the brutal imposition of fashion and fancy by a few privileged interlopers makes for an inherently unstable societal structure—one that is certain to be short-lived.

What they are witnessing—to their obvious horror—is the implementation of an extraordinary conservative strategy for the restoration of our republic: it is ordinary people doing ordinary things in an ordinary fashion in order to achieve ordinary ends.

This is the great lesson of history: it is ordinary people who are ultimately the ones who determine the outcome

of human events—not kings and princes, not masters and tyrants. It is laborers and workmen, cousins and acquaintances that upend the expectations of the brilliant and the glamorous, the expert and the meticulous. It is plain folks, simple people, who literally change the course of history—because they are the stuff of which history is made. They are the ones who make the world go round. For, as G. K. Chesterton said, "The most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and an ordinary woman and their ordinary children."

What we are seeing then may very well be precisely what the Agrarians were calling for. It is simply a new grassroots majoritarian emphasis on things that really matter: hearth and home, community and culture, accountability and availability, service and substance, morality and magnanimity, responsibility and restoration. It is a movement that may be stymied, obstructed, and hampered—but ultimately it cannot fail.

As the famed journalist-curmudgeon H. L. Mencken once said: "The man who invents a new imbecility is hailed gladly, and bidden to make himself at home; he is to the great masses of men, the beau ideal of mankind. His madness must necessarily give way to right, sooner or later, though—usually later."

Or as the poet F. W. Faber wrote: "For right is right, since God is God; And right the day must win; To doubt would be disloyalty; To falter would be sin."

George Grant is Professor of Moral Philosophy at Bannockburn College and author of more than fifty books including The Micah Mandate and the upcoming Agrarian-influenced novel Going Somewhere. He can be reached at ArxAxiom@aol.com.

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Oaths and Religion

By Byron Snapp



If there were ever any doubt that politics and religion do mix, such thinking evaporates as a result of examining oaths taken by elected officials, such as the President, when they enter into their official duties. The central issue in the impeachment trial earlier this year was: Did the President lie under oath?

The word “oath” is religious, because it is a promise to God. Breaking an oath is a breaking of the Third Commandment: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (*Ex. 20:7*).

In taking an oath, the individual recognizes a number of God’s attributes. God is ever present. The One who has planned all events is always present in the working out of those events. He sees all things. He knows impartially and perfectly what exactly occurred. Thus, the oath taker is reminding himself that he will faithfully recount the events to God.

God is impartial. In a court of law there is one oath for young and old, rich and poor, presidents and the unemployed. The oath reminds us that we are all equal under God’s law in terms of telling the truth.

God is truth. He is the standard of truth. Thus we call on Him to measure the words we say by His standard, not ours. For example, on the first day of creation, God defined His creation as good (*Gen. 1:4*). It was good because God declared it as such.

In Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira sold some property. They brought a portion of the proceeds to the apostles for use in the ministry of the church. That portion appeared to be the total price of the land. At least that was the truth that the two conspirators conveyed. Whereas, others who had sold land, brought the total sale price and laid the money at the apostles’ feet (*Ac. 4:37*), Ananias and Sapphira kept back a portion of the money for their use while pretending to give all to the church. In essence they sought to redefine, on their terms, the sale price. Their action cost them their lives (*Ac. 5:5, 10*). As far as I know they had taken no oath to give all their land sale proceeds to the church. An oath adds greater gravity to the situation.

Being under oath, the individual should be particularly reminded to tell the truth as God defines it, not as man

might redefine it. The redefinition of truth makes the promise given under an oath of no consequence because such promises can also be assumed to be redefined. To tell the truth and only the truth causes us to focus on the words we will say from God’s perspective of those words. The oath taker will be held accountable accordingly.

Years ago Robert L. Dabney, a Southern Presbyterian theologian, penned these words: “Wherein an oath is falsely taken it is a heaven-daring attempt to enlist the Almighty in the sanction of the creature’s lie; and is thus, either the most outrageous levity, or the most outrageous impiety, of which he can be guilty” (*Lectures in the Systematic Theology*, p. 364).

The discussions of oaths in Washington, D.C. during the recent impeachment process should be a sobering one for the American people. It is a reminder that religion and politics do mix. Sadly, there is much evidence that the current discussion has been in the context of humanistic religion, not Biblical. If words given under oath can be acceptable only by the definition given by the oath taker, then truth is relative. Eternal truth is non-existent.

God, no doubt, will be similarly defined. God, to Whom the oath is made, will not hold man accountable if man is declared innocent, no matter that truth is not honored. Under this scenario, stonewalling and not being convicted is more important than the actual truth.

During the impeachment trials, the Senate had the responsibility to judge in regard to the truth presented as evidence was evaluated. Judgement was to be rendered neither in terms of political parties nor polling percentages. The use of these as standards reveals a humanistic religion, not a godly one. In depending on polls or politics as truth, and denying existing evidence, an individual declares truth to be relative and as changeable as the most recent poll. In such cases evidence and faithful witnesses—real truth—do not matter.

In the current events I believe God has provided a real opportunity for our society to see how it defines truth. The answer given has great consequences on which religion undergirds not only politics but the judicial system for years to come.

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

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Letter to the Editor on Violence in the Schools

Introduction

Several years ago—before Littleton, Paducah, Pearl, etc.—I was talking with some friends who worked in a public elementary school. One was a teacher and the other a counselor. They were describing the last day of class that year. The graduating class was moving up to the local junior high. Both recounted how the last-day “festivities” turned into a sob-fest as the little boys who were graduating finally broke down and begged their teachers not to let them graduate. When I asked why the children reacted this way, the counselor said, “Because they are going to a junior high that is notorious for violence, gangs, and drugs. They know they will be the low men on the totem pole there, they will be the brunt of the older kids’ abuse, and they are frightened for their lives.” And those little boys were sent to that school by their parents and the teachers who knew the school’s reputation. This shocked me because I knew there were two Christian schools in that community—peaceful havens of love and learning.

In the years since that conversation, violence in public schools has mushroomed. A common refrain among the parents who have lost children in shootings at public schools is, “Be sure to tell your children each day that you love them before you send them to school, because you may never see your child alive again.”

Ironically, they never say, “Get your children out of the public schools.”

The following is a letter written to Annie Gabriel of Messiah’s Congregation from her friend, R., who has been teaching in government schools in a very rural area of Appalachia for decades. The letter, a response to Annie’s inquiry about how things fared in R.’s school in light of Littleton, gives us a glimpse how widespread and how deep is the rot eating at the fabric of America’s culture.

Susan Burns

The tragedy in Colorado only exacerbated the growing fear I have had all year. Kids, even here, are becoming increasingly violent, so much so that many of the students are fearful. We have had three major incidents this year, but the school officials and the courts are still blind.

I see the same blindness in the principal and the teachers at Littleton. This is not a fad; it is not a “phase that the kids are going through.” It is not yet another example of diversity that must be accepted. There is nothing normal about guys who wear makeup, love violence, and wear black trenchcoats! As you well know, it is a heart problem. As the old quote goes: “The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.”

I told you last year about students whom I had who dressed this way and who had the same violent thoughts. I was worried then and I’m worried now about students that I have who are the same. There are days that one of my male student’s eyeliner, lipstick, and fingernail polish are much better than mine! He also carries *Cat in the Hat* with him everywhere while his girlfriend carries a Teletubie! Is that normal? And does anyone really think I can teach them? Did any of the teachers in Colorado view this kind of thing as normal? Where were the teachers? I read that the boys turned in a video (as a class project) of their walking down the hall pretending to shoot athletes. Why was this accepted? I think possibly because their teachers and powers that be are asleep just like ours.

In November, a guy walked off the street into our school. He hid by the biology room and as the classes changed, he jumped a 9th grade student and almost choked him to death. There were no men around; I happened to be the closest teacher. I tried to grab the guy’s shirt and pull him off the kid, but I couldn’t move him. I grabbed another boy to help me and together we managed to pull him away. When he got to his feet, he turned to me (I was still holding onto his shirt) and threatened to beat me if I didn’t turn him loose. Since I thought he was a student and since I was mad as a wet hen, I was reluctant to do so. As he threatened me once again, I realized I was in trouble. I turned him loose, just as the principal finally arrived. Did they call the police? No. They didn’t call even after they realized he wasn’t a student. They didn’t call even though they knew he almost killed this little boy—even with the knowledge that he threatened to beat me, a teacher. No police! They let him go free, before I could get out of the office!!! They didn’t want any trouble or, I imagine, publicity.

A few weeks after this incident, one of our employees overheard a conversation on the first floor about a bomb. She ran upstairs and sure enough, there were two boys getting ready to light it! Thankfully, she got there in time. Yes, it was the homemade variety. Very secretly, the police and the BATF were called in. The boys were expelled, but they received only community service from the judge! Boy, I bet that made believers out of them! This incident was immediately hushed up so that the public would not know. The only reason I know of it in detail is that I questioned the employee myself. Since we are friends, she told me the truth.

Finally, last week a guy who is out of school bragged to his friends that he was going to our school to shoot up the place. This time the parents of the students called the police and reported it. Since the guy already had a

drug charge, they arrested him. I wouldn't ordinarily be that afraid but I have been waiting on this guy to do something like this for two years. Remember the guy I had who was totally delusional? He said that he had a condo in LA, a girlfriend who was a famous fighter, etc.? Well, anyway, Social Services informed us the year that I had him that, based on all his psychological tests, they were sure that he would probably bring a gun to school and blow us away. That's why they wanted me to document everything. I had been telling the school officials that this was going to happen, but no one wanted to believe it. Since he quit school two years ago, he has been in and out of jail and is extremely violent. When I saw him last year, he bragged to me that he was into Satanism. He knows I'm a Christian and he knew that would get a rise out of me. This threat last week scared me to death.

We have no security at our school, so as you can see, anyone can come inside. There are no metal detectors and we all know there are weapons inside the building on any given day. The school officials are flat-out lying to the public. In recent newspaper articles they boasted of new safety precautions.

None of us have ever heard of such precautions. We

just pretend: we don't want to believe that anything can happen here. Bottom line: We are too ignorant and apathetic to care.

I don't know how much longer I will be able to remain in this profession, but I can tell you this: We are approaching warp speed in our descent into hell. I am seeing things now I have never seen in 25 years of teaching. Time and space will not suffice to tell you all, but I don't know if you would believe it anyway. As I look at my colleagues, all I can figure is that God has surely blinded our eyes and deadened our hearts. How else is it that the teachers in Colorado and the teachers here cannot see the sea of lost, violent souls among us? How can this be labeled diversity? How can it be regarded as normal?

I'm sorry for rambling on, but your question cut to a heart that has agonized for a year over this dire situation. Our only hope is for God to humble our hearts and to bring us to Him. Please pray that the Lord would give me wisdom and show me what I can do as a Christian.

Please stay in touch, dear sister.

I love ya,
R.

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God's Law

By R. J. Rushdoony

The world is full of many people who are ready to believe in God and in the Bible from cover to cover except where it disagrees with them. They would favor a shorter and revised Bible which would leave out most of the "thou shalt nots," especially where such things as sexual misconduct are concerned. They want an "inspiring" Bible rather than a commanding one, and they are therefore in favor of shorter "Bibles" which omit the law but retain inspirational texts.

The reason is simple: man is a sinner, and he wants no control, least of all by God, over his "private life," especially where sex is concerned. The term "private life" is a curious one because, no matter how much sexual privacy is sought, sex in its ramifications is very public. The consequences of adultery and homosexuality are far-reaching in any society. Private acts have social consequences. A world order built on the family is challenged by sexual sins and man's choice is an obvious one. Either such offenses as adultery, and especially homosexuality, are opposed, or else society collapses.

Some churchmen oppose adultery, homosexuality, and other sexual offenses simply because the Bible condemns

them. (Too many are too cowardly to speak out.) We should condemn what God condemns, and we have no valid choice in the matter, but we need also to understand that a godly civilization requires godly living. Those whose opinion is simply, and they are many, let the world live its way and we Christians God's way are deadly wrong. *First*, God's law concerning sexuality is for all men. *Second*, a godly world order requires God's law. Since all men are created by God, all men are must be under God's law. To forget this fact is to believe in a world under man's law as the goal of history.

A brief glance at the Bible tells us that much space is given to the law and to salvation. The law tells us what the life of salvation is, one of obedience to our Lord. If we examine the literature of the sexual revolution, we see that it strikes against salvation, and it offers freedom from God's law as its way of salvation.

Take your choice, then. Antinomianism in the church, or in the sexual revolution, has as its goal the death of God. If God's law be dead, then God is dead for us. Is this what you want?

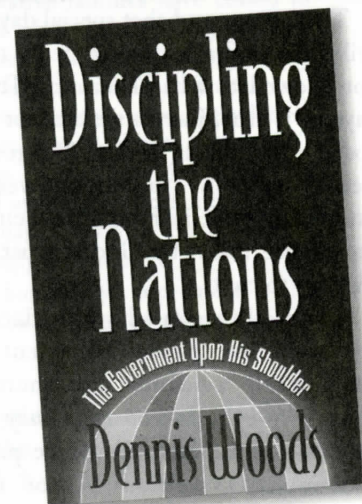
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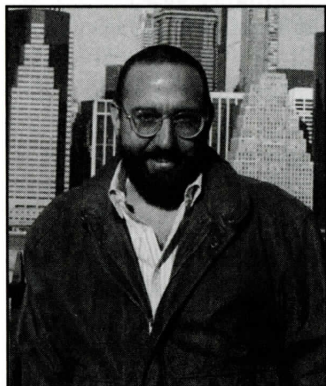
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All I Really Need to Know About Worship . . . I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle (Part IV)

By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel

Regulativists Stumble Over Themselves



Thus far we have sought to prove that the Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW) is untrue to Scripture. We have done this by demonstrating the regulativists' flawed appeal to texts wherein they imagine to find it when it simply isn't there.

We have also shown that regulativists miss the meaning of the principle where it *is* found—in the Tabernacle/Temple administration which terminated upon and in Christ.¹

We then noticed how regulativists (conveniently) fail to notice the synagogue. It is tough to miss an *entire institution* unless you're really trying.

Then we proved that special days are not *necessarily* the evil they are cracked up to be by regulativists. Israel was not allowed to add Tabernacle/Temple-dependent feast days, it is true, just as we are not allowed to add to the gospel. But outside of that "OT gospel" system, they were free to appoint for themselves days to remember extraordinary deliverances by their God. No harm done, no offense taken by God. Christ Himself gives us the "Amen" to that.

And lastly, we saw how regulativists blithely overlook an abundance of New Testament (not to mention Old Testament!) evidence that human tradition is not *necessarily* evil. It certainly *may* be evil—there is no shortage of historical evidence proving that possibility. But human tradition is not necessarily evil. The Regulative Principle of Worship itself serves as proof of that.

Now we would move on to challenge the arbitrariness in the regulativists' applications of their principle. But before we do, please permit a reiteration and clarification. I happily stand squarely in the tradition of RPW-style worship, but I stand here on grounds other than those advanced by regulativists. I propose that there is more consistency in worshipping in the RPW-style while rejecting its arguments than in paying lip-service to its

arguments but rejecting the style of worship to which it leads. Some who call themselves believers in the Regulative Principle of Worship, believe a version of it that is so elastic as to make it truly unrecognizable as the RPW to any *honest* observer.

A close colleague of mine, for example, a man I love and respect, proclaims, "All Protestants must believe in the Regulative Principle." But he defines "regulate" so broadly as to make his principle completely at odds with the historically received RPW.

"God regulates in different ways," he says, arriving at an understanding of "regulate" which makes his theory indistinguishable from those who reject the RPW outright. Why doesn't he just say he doesn't believe it?

No aureole is waiting to alight upon the heads of those who would turn their professed principle into a wax nose, twisting, distorting, reshaping it, then calling themselves its loyal sons. The RPW has a historic, discernible, commonly received meaning. It is passing strange that some who (quite properly) are at odds with deconstructionist methodology would then attempt to pass themselves off as regulativists when they have first divested the word of its historical meaning and injected it with an entirely opposite meaning. We would not take kindly to a man who tries to convince us that a cow is an animal with two legs, feathers and gills. He's describing something other than what we call a cow, no doubt about it. So also, true regulativists are those who at least *attempt* to apply a discrete principle—if it is *not commanded, it is forbidden*—even if their attempts include improvements. The key is that they own it in a way which leaves the principle recognizable as the one historically received.

It is better to confess up-front that the regulative principle, being unscriptural, ought to be rejected. We respect the earnest adherents of the RPW, and we treasure the sort of worship God has providentially allowed to flourish in their courts. We would adopt and maintain that worship—indeed, we'd even propagate it—we'd just do so on other premises.

Exclusive Psalmody

On to applications. Perhaps the favorite application of the principle by those who regard themselves as strict or consistent regulativists is exclusive Psalmody. We have no quarrel with singing Psalms exclusively, in corporate

worship, if the practice is defended on proper grounds and recognized as a tradition. Unfortunately, regulativists regard it as anything but.

Beginning with their “principle,” they go through the New Testament looking for commanded elements. And at Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, according to one RPW authority, “the difficulty begins.”² I don’t think they’ve even *begun* to consider the difficulty which, for them, begins there.

The texts in question, as you know, read as follows: “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*” and, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*”

The regulativists’ row³ over these verses typically revolves around the triple designation, “psalms and, hymns, and spiritual songs.” The “strict” regulativist argues, not without power, that these three words all refer to the Psalms, the Psalter as contained in our Christian Bibles. Their evidence for this is that the Septuagint Bible, in common use in the days of our Lord and His apostles, and known to the recipients of these letters, had these three Greek words variously serving as headers over respective psalms: some would say “A Psalm . . .,” others would say, “A Hymn . . .,” others might be denominated as a “Spiritual Song.”

We will grant, for argument’s sake, the regulativist’s contention here. What he hasn’t proved, however—whatever these songs might be—is that they are to be sung in Christian worship services at all, *on his principles*. For what we do *not* find in the Ephesians or Colossians passages is evidence to suggest that Paul is giving instructions for what is to take place in a Christian worship service. *The fact that a command is found in a letter to a church is no proof that its fulfillment was to take place in a worship service.* Paul wrote to the Corinthians that “The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.” However much we believe that, very few today would suggest that this is a command to be fulfilled in public worship (though the New Testament indicates that there were some at that time who were not beyond just such a suggestion: see Jude and 2 Peter).

The contexts of both the Ephesians and Colossians verses indicate that public worship was *not* in view. The contexts of both citations are *general* rules for covenant-keeping *in all of life*. They are found within “rules for God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” They include commands which aid in the maturation of Christian character, Christian graces, Christian virtues. In both Ephesians and Colossians the commands are immediately followed by sets of commands for domestic life and vocational life. Nothing suggests that these are rules governing worship services.

In those contexts where we do find Paul’s explicit, inspired will for what is to take place in worship, we find

no command to sing. See, for example, 1 Timothy 2-3 or Titus 1-3.

Yes, Jesus sang at Passover, but that was a) during the pre-Pentecost administration, b) in the home, not the synagogue, and c) after the required elements of service had been performed. (I’m not being any sillier in explaining things away here than regulativists ordinarily are; I just beg you to bear in mind, this is *not* my position!)

Paul and Silas sang in prison, not a church service. And even Paul’s dictum, “I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind,” though found in a context dictating worship order, is not normative because (it could be argued) it was regulating the *charismata*, gifts which most regulativists agree have run their ordained course. We are no more to sing (it could be said) than we are to speak in tongues.

That leaves us with *no clear command to sing in Christian worship services*. In fact, Conrad Grebel, in his “Letter to Thomas Muntzer,” Zurich, 5 September, 1524,⁴ argued along similar and other lines that singing may not be introduced into Christian worship. Behold! The consistent regulativist!

We understand that you have translated the Mass into German and composed new German Hymns. This cannot be good, because we find in the New Testament no teaching or example about singing. Paul scolds the Corinthian scholars more than he praises them for murmuring in the congregation, as though they were singing, just as Jews and Italians⁵ pronounce their liturgy in the manner of songs. Second, because singing in the Latin language arose without divine teaching and apostolic example, and has not brought about anything good, it will edify still less in German and will create an external, specious faith. Third [watch this one!—sms], Paul most clearly forbids singing in the fifth chapter to the Ephesians and in the third chapter of his letter to the Colossians. He does this by saying that people should talk and instruct one another with psalms and spiritual songs;⁶ and if one wants to sing, one should sing and give thanks in one’s heart. Fourth, what we are not taught with clear sayings and examples should be as forbidden to us as if it were written: “Do not do that; do not sing.” Fifth, Christ tells His messengers to preach only the word that is in the Old and New Testaments. Paul also says that the speech of Christ, not song, should dwell among us. Whoever sings poorly is frustrated; whoever sings well is arrogant. Sixth, we should not add to the word what we think good, nor should we subtract from it. Seventh....

So, on the regulativist’s professed principle, we would not say he has gone too far in advocating a *cappella* psalmody exclusively.⁷ Rather, we’d insist that he has not followed his professed principle far enough. He should insist upon no singing *at all* in corporate worship. *Then* he would approach consistency.

In all this we have let alone other weighty, oft-lodged arguments which point out the embarrassing twists regulativists put themselves in: 1) Their “Psalms-only” position results in the exclusion from worship of other divinely-inspired hymns (*1 Sam. 2:1-10; Ex. 15:1-18; Lk. 1:46-55*; not to mention *Dt. 32!*) and other singable Scripture portions. 2) They are opposed to hymns and so must ignore the presence of hymns or hymn-fragments in the New Testament itself (*e.g., Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:16*). 3) They are opposed to “man-made hymns” in worship but (most) allow them outside worship. Yet the passages they rely on to justify exclusive Psalmody, as we have seen, cover *life* outside of corporate worship. 4) They oppose “man-made hymns” but accept man-made prayers and sermons, an amazing tension! 5) They say, “Psalms alone are permitted in worship,” and so, if consistent, would ironically have Christian worship characterized as that where the words “Jesus Christ” would never be sung, for that matchless Name is not found in that form in the Psalter. We’ll leave it at five.

Good Intentions

It is not my intention, I remind you, to overthrow or even to challenge the legitimacy of worship as it is found in churches which adhere to the RPW. After all, that is the very sort of worship one finds in our church, Messiah’s Congregation. On the contrary, the two modest things I would hope to accomplish are, 1) to encourage the establishment of regulative-style worship on firmer principles, that is, on principles less vulnerable to exegetical overthrow, and 2) to take some of the arrogant wind out of the sails of RPW zealots who speak contemptuously of all non-RPW worship as, for that very reason, an “abomination” to God.

It is precisely because I believe that regulativist-style worship is the most God-glorifying and sheep-edifying worship that I want to see it more widely accepted, adopted, and, perhaps, improved. But if it is to be argued for, it must be argued for on the grounds that it is demonstrably *the best* sort of worship, not on the grounds that all other worship is, by definition, an abomination. We *must* get to the point where honesty prevails and we acknowledge that regulativist worship is a tradition. I happen to believe, and I believe I can demonstrate, that it is *the best* form of worship, and that for a variety of reasons; but I cannot, with good conscience, pretend that it can be established on the traditional premises, *viz.*, that God forbids in worship anything He has not expressly commanded. I trust we have seen that it is impossible to believe *that* and the whole Bible, too.

For we have shown that regulativists, in arguing for their particular shibboleth, bend the Bible to make it appear to say what they wish. They say they’ve found the RPW where, upon closer examination, it is not to be found. And they miss it where it is: in the sacrificial system which has been taken up in Christ in such a way as to void blood-administrations on earth. We now

approach God through the Gospel of the blood of the Messiah. It is the *Gospel* which is strictly “regulated” in the New administration of the covenant, for we have no blood rites and we have no orders dependent upon them. The blood that saves us is sprinkled upon the altar in heaven. Its shedding is not to be, cannot be, repeated upon earth, but is to be believed on and celebrated.

I do sympathize with the apprehension which grips some regulativists. They fear that if their principle is overturned, chaos will reign in worship, that “anything will go.” These fears should not govern our exegesis.

In fact, they are just the kind of fears we hear expressed in arguments against the Reformed doctrine of *sola gratia*. “If you tell people they are saved by grace through faith alone, and *not* by works of the law, chaos will ensue! People will be unrestrained! Sin will abound!”

Our fathers—thank God!—steam-rolled over such objections. First, they said, the Bible teaches that we are justified by grace through faith. Second, they insisted, good works *are* most necessary (Heidelberg Q&A, 86-87). We only insist that God is not put into our debt by them. Rather, they are ever-present evidences of thankful hearts set free.⁸ If we could be justified by what we do, Christ died for nothing.

Thus our fathers met the challenge of those who said that the Scripture doctrine of grace would lead to antinomian chaos. They followed Paul with a loud, “God forbid!” (*Rom. 6:1, 2ff.*). So, too, must we insist that if the Regulative Principle of Worship is not taught in Scripture, we serve no one well by pretending that it is. The solution that offset the fears of those alarmed over the proclamation of free grace was the proclamation of the whole counsel of God. The answer to the question of how, if we are delivered from the RPW, we are to order Christian services of worship, will be found along the same path: the whole counsel of God.

In our next article we will set forth (D.V.) what we call *The Informed Principle of Worship*⁹: If it is not forbidden, it *might* be permitted. Whether it is permitted depends on other Biblical requirements and considerations. None are esoteric. They are there lying right on the surface of Scripture for anyone to use. Each serves as a filter by which faithful churches may test proposed elements and aspects of a worship service.

It is our prayer that the Informed Principle of Worship will help in some small way to move us toward a Reformed consensus which honors Christ, orthodoxy *and* Reformed history, all in the light of, and according to, God’s whole Word. Just let us not so misidentify seventeenth-century Presbyterianism as to mistake it for the equivalent of God’s last Word spoken to or through the church!

The last word for this present article, however, *will* be given to a late seventeenth-century Presbyterian, a man widely regarded (from that day until this) as perhaps the greatest Presbyterian of the period: Richard Baxter. I came across these words of Baxter in a book by Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord*.¹⁰

Mr. Paul explains how Baxter “on the one hand, acknowledged the highest admiration for the [Westminster] assembly and its works, but he recognized the problems associated with synods such as Westminster and Dordt in trying to establish standards of orthodoxy for all time.”

Baxter left a record concerning the time he had been approached by a bookseller to write an introduction to the papers of the Assembly. The bookseller was keen to have Baxter stress how the fruits of the Assembly’s labors could be profitably used by families. Baxter accepted, with conditions. He asked that his introduction be examined by other theologians, then used or discarded, as they wished. Only, he insisted, print it in its entirety or not at all. He went on to relate that:

The bookseller gets Mr. Manton to put an Epistle before the book, who inserted mine in a different Character in his own, (as mine, but not naming me): But he leaveth out a part, which it seems, was not pleasing to all. When I had commended the Catechisms for the use of Families, I added, That *I hoped the Assembly intended not all in that long confession and those Catechisms, to be imposed as a Test of Christian Communion; nor to disown all that scrupled at any word in it; if they had I could not have commended it for any such use, though it be useful for the instruction of Families, &c.* All this is left out, which I thought meet to open, lest I be there misunderstood.¹¹

Brother Baxter, I pray we all understand your sentiment perfectly—and that we all agree. Amen to your words, amen to your exception, amen to the spirit in which it was written.

[Part V in August].

¹ It’s important to bear in mind that the Old Testament saints participated in Christ, by faith, through the means appointed for them precisely as we participate in Him through the means appointed for us in the New administration. We should also remember that errors of religious formalism may be committed just as easily today as before Christ’s advent. This is a danger in *all* Christian communions, whatever their principle of regulating worship.

² G.I. Williamson, *The Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God*; available at <http://www.lanceneeds.infi.net/~englandm/giwill.htm>.

³ Pronounced “rou,” this word means a big uproar; a brawl.

⁴ I am indebted to Mr. Timothy Wilder for bringing this to my attention.

⁵ My kids are Jewish Italians!

⁶ Grebel is accurate here.

⁷ Thomas Manton, near the top in my personal Puritan pantheon, author of the *Epistle to the Reader* which still graces the front of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland’s edition of the Westminster Standards, acknowledged that orthodoxy does not require exclusive psalmody. In his commentary on James, p. 442, Manton wrote: “I confess that we do not forbid other songs [beside Psalms]; if grave and pious, after good advice they may be received into the Church. Tertullian, in his apology, showeth that in primitive times they used this liberty, either to sing scripture psalms or such as were of a

private composure.” So much for the oft-heard claim that subscription to the Westminster Standards requires a commitment to exclusive psalmody.

⁸ “Good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness. . .” (WCF, XVI, ii). Q. “How many things are necessary for you to know, that in this comfort you may live and die happily? A: Three things: First, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption” (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A #2).

⁹ Feel free to call it something else.

¹⁰ Thank you, Rev. Jack Carter, for the book!

¹¹ p. 542; italics as in R. S. Paul’s book.

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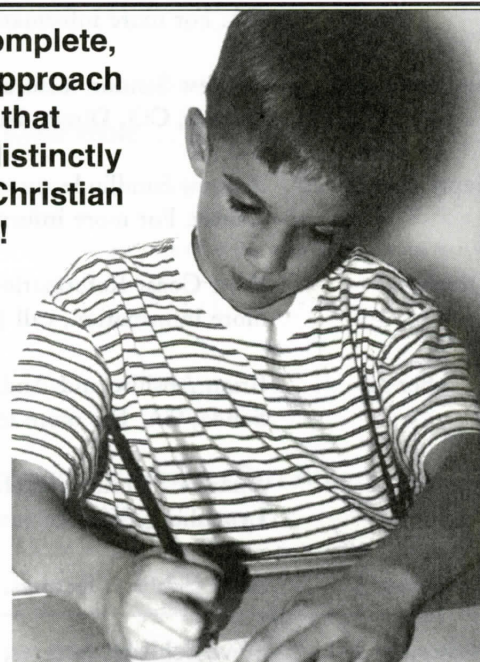
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- October 2 West Coast Reformation Conference, Covenant Reformed Church, **Sacramento, CA**. For more information, call (916)451-1190.
- October 10 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture, 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. 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.
- November 5-7 Chalcedon National Conference on "Biblical Authority, Confessionalism, and Heresy," **Dallas, TX**. For more information, contact Susan Burns (209)532-7674.