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Secularism Versus the South

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SUZANNE U. CLARK ON HE STILL HAUNTS: CONTEMPORARY SOUTHERN WRITERS AND BIBLICAL FAITH

PLUS . . . R. J. RUSHDOONY ON CHRISTMAS · P. ANDREW SANDLIN ON INTOLERANCE

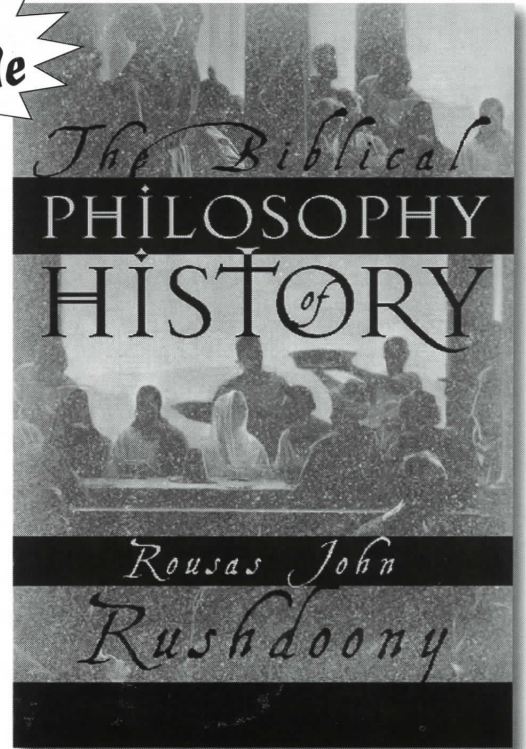
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The Civil War Revived: Secularism Versus the South

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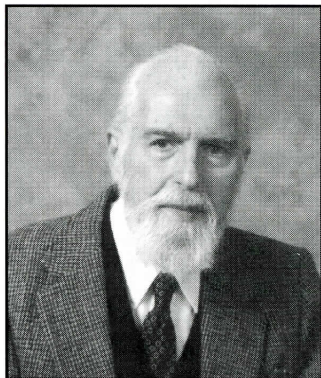
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Christmas

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony

I have vivid memories of my very early Christmases, before I ever entered school. The Biblical account was read to us by my father, sometimes in Armenian, at other times in English. I was told that the incarnation was necessary to save this fallen, sinful world. As an Armenian boy, very familiar with the horror stories of the massacres, I knew it was fallen indeed. I also recall vividly one winter night, when my father and mother were at a church meeting, an incident, not the first nor last. My sister, my young aunt, and uncle (more like brother and sister to me) were already in bed, and my grandmother was putting me to bed when young hoodlums, hating foreigners, broke the windows of the bedroom and fled. My grandmother, knowing the horrors of the Turkish massacres and fresh from the evils of the Russian Bolshevik-made famine, quietly hugged me and prayed with me. Then, despite my pleas, she left for the kitchen and some dishes, saying that our persecuted Lord could and would take care of me.

As soon as I could read, both in the Bible and my Bible storybook, I read and re-read the

Biblical account of the incarnation. At Christmas, my father had us help with the Christmas tree, in those days ornamented with candles and fruit such as oranges, apples, and pomegranates because Revelation spoke of Christ as the tree of life, bearing all manner of fruit in all seasons. I was taught the meaning of Christmas as the beginning of the destruction of sin — Christmas, thus, was a season of joy.

Now, at 84, with few Christmases left to me, I feel the same joy, and the same assurance of victory. We are the ordained people of victory, and nothing can change that fact. I recall vividly my father's readings of the Christmas story, and my confidence in God's victory. He is the Lord, and none other. Men and rulers forget this to their peril. He is our Savior, or our Judge.

Christmas is thus a season of holy joy to us, a celebration of a coming and inevitable victory. With the incarnation, Christ began His invasion of history. We are a part of His army of victory. Therefore, rejoice!

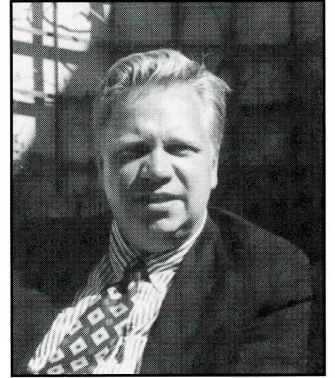
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A Conflict of Apologetic Visions

By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin



I will mention here briefly a few disagreements with Gary Crampton's review of Greg Bahnsen's posthumously published *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis*, a survey and defense of Van Til's thought. Crampton's review is (or was) available at the Trinity Foundation website, www.trinityfoundation.org, and was published in the July 2000 issue of *The Trinity Review*. Crampton is a follower of the late Presbyterian philosopher Gordon Clark and makes most of the same criticisms of Bahnsen that Clark made of Van Til. I myself stand with Van Til. However, unlike some other Van Tilians, I am not on a crusade against Clark. I read a number of Clark's writings closely in my early 20s and benefited greatly from them. His work on education (which Rushdoony first helped get into print) is outstanding, and his *Religion, Reason, and Revelation* is a classic. His foundational work is *A Christian View of Men and Things*, and I highly recommend it, though with some reservations.

I believe Clark's position enjoys a particular kind of appeal: to bright but youthful Christian minds (though I do not wish to be understood as condescending when I suggest this). In the postmodern world, there is a craving for a simple rational certainty that Clark's epistemology offers, though if consistently held it subverts a consistent Christian epistemology, in my view. I believe that this quest for rational certainty becomes less important as one matures in the Faith (I am not thereby suggesting most Clarkians are immature in the Faith). While, therefore, I applaud Clark's commitment to historic, Reformed orthodoxy; intelligible, propositional revelation; and a distinctively Christian worldview, I dissent from his criticism of Van Til, which Crampton's critique generally follows. Let me mention just a few main points relating to the latter.

Will the Real Presuppositionalist Please Stand Up?

Crampton argues that Van Til is not a genuine presuppositionalist because Van Til believes there are proofs for God's existence. Van Til, unlike Clark, was no opponent of the theistic proofs, only of the

idea that those proofs could be shorn of the Christian system or context (see Thom Notaro's *Van Til and the Use of Evidence*). At the outset, we encounter Crampton's (and Gordon Clark's) defect in addressing Van Til's use of evidence: they are still operating within the old foundationalist ("classical") paradigm. As an epistemological school, foundationalism holds that knowledge is possible by means of a particular unprovable but indubitable axiom (Clark also called it a "first principle"). One posits this axiom and builds upward to gain knowledge from it. Foundationalism lost popularity in the twentieth century and has been gradually replaced by a school known variously as *contextualism* or *coherentism*. This is the notion that knowledge is *systemic*: you "get inside" a "system" or web of beliefs in order to gain knowledge. Actually, modern contextualism is largely a secularization of the Christian theory of knowledge. To the Christian, knowledge is what it is because every aspect of the universe is created and conditioned by the sovereign, Triune God and every fact is what it is because it is a God-ordained fact. Within this Christian system or context, there are not merely theistic "proofs" for the existence of God; *there is nothing but proof for the existence of God*. Every aspect of reality is revelational of God and proves His existence. Christian contextualism does not permit — rather, it *demand*s — absolute proof for the existence of God in our wholly God-conditioned universe. The apologetic error is not in appealing to these proofs; it is in appealing to these proofs while trying to ignore the God-created and -conditioned universe that displays them.

Crampton argues against Van Til's so-called "transcendental argument," the idea that the system of Christianity is valid on the grounds that one must assume it in order to believe or understand anything at all. To Crampton, disproof of one theory or worldview is not proof of another. This objection is possible only within a foundationalist paradigm. It has no force in terms of Christian contextualism.

Within the Christian system — and it is the only valid one — the proofs for God’s existence have, in the words of Van Til, “absolute probative force.” How could they have anything less? Every aspect of created reality, even sinful reality, cries out to the existence of the sovereign, Triune God. It is certainly true, therefore, that Van Til is not a presuppositionalist of the *foundationalist* kind; he is rather a presuppositionalist of the *contextualist* kind, just as everybody else is. Everybody is an *operational* contextualist.

Clark’s foundationalist epistemology leads to some strange conclusions with regard to natural revelation. For one thing, he claimed that ordinary science cannot furnish truth. No Van Tilian would be caught making that assertion. Is not the all-conditioning God the God of creation no less than of Scripture? True, man’s *conclusions* with regard to creation are subject to God’s revelation in the Bible, but this is equally true of his conclusions relating to the exegesis of the Bible itself. It is true that creation is under God’s curse, but so is the mind of man, which is a part of creation. Any argument against the possibility of deriving truth from God’s creation is equally an argument against deriving truth from Sacred Scripture, because we need to employ human and therefore potentially fallible reasoning to arrive at knowledge imparted in either. If we can derive truth from the Bible, we can also derive it from creation. Both are God’s revelation: necessary, authoritative, sufficient, and perspicuous.

***Sola Scriptura* and Apologetics**

The Clarkians are not comfortable with this. Crampton, for instance, holds that Van Tilians who argue this way embrace a fallacious “two-source” theory of truth and thus undermine *sola Scriptura*. Crampton follows his mentor, Gordon Clark, in positing Scripture as “the axiom of revelation” (see Clark’s *An Introduction to Christian Philosophy*). Crampton and Clark make the reductionist epistemic error of denying that Christianity as a system is the presupposition of all thought and instead suspend everything on the accurate exegesis of the Scriptures. This sounds God-honoring, but as a matter of fact, it is not. The Scriptures are not given in a vacuum. *They are given within a God-*

created universe, which includes man himself. *The Triune God Whom the Scriptures reveal conditions the reception of the Sacred Scriptures*. This is another way of saying that God’s revelation in creation is no less significant than His revelation in Scripture. One is not the substitute for the other — they are complementary, not competing, always meant to be mutually reinforcing (see Van Til’s masterful essay “Nature and Scripture” in the Westminster Seminary symposium, *The Infallible Word*; contrast this with Gordon Clark’s lukewarm and grudging assessment of natural revelation in his essay “Special Divine Revelation as Rational” appearing in Carl Henry’s symposium *Revelation and the Bible*). If Scripture is the “axiom of revelation” from which we *alone* can obtain knowledge, what about the trustworthiness of our senses by which we read it? Is this Book in our hands real? Do our eyes actually see words on a page? Does our mind actually put those propositions together properly so that we can understand? If knowledge is limited to Biblical revelation, we have an impoverished — not to mention impossible — epistemology. This is why, as Van Til asserts, “It is the actual existence of the God of Christian theism and the infallible word of the Scripture which speaks to sinners of this God that must be taken as the presupposition of the intelligibility of any fact in the world” (*The Defense of the Faith*, 2nd ed., p. 118). The Bible as an “axiom of revelation” must never be a rationalistic presupposition shorn of the all-conditioning Christian system of which it is a part. The infallible Scripture is an essential part of the system. *You get the Scriptures by affirming the system which is revealed in the Scriptures*. By “system,” Van Til does not mean “a logically penetrable system.” He means Christian truth expressed in divine revelation — Christ, the Bible, and creation, all interdependent (Van Til was no advocate of Thomistic “natural theology”). This system is adapted to man’s human condition and “is not an exhaustive replica of the truth as it is in God himself.” It is an analogical, not an univocal, system. Man’s own systems of theology — even the best, like the Westminster Confession of Faith — are derivative of the truth set forth in the Bible’s system, which is itself analogical in relation to the

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truth in the mind of God. In other words, good systematic theology is derivative of, but twice removed from, the mind of God (Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 37-38).

Contrary to Crampton, none of this is a denial of *sola Scriptura*. *Sola Scriptura* is possible only within the Christian system. The affirmation of *sola Scriptura* apart from the presupposition of Christianity as a whole produces cults and heresies like Unitarianism. There is only one source of truth — the Triune God, but His truth is not limited to the Bible. Psalm 19 and Romans 1 make this abundantly clear. To argue that the Bible and not the Christian system is the correct epistemic presupposition in that we learn the Christian system from the Bible ignores the fact that the universe within which we confront the Bible must be seen in terms of the Christian system in order to make sense of the Bible. This surely constitutes circular reasoning, and we need not shrink from it. Creation testifies to the God of the Bible, and the Bible reveals more comprehensively and clearly than creation the God to Whom creation testifies even before we come to the Bible. Creation and the Bible are complementary, not competing.

Knowledge and Skepticism

Crampton asserts that Van Til's analogical view of knowledge "if carried to its logical conclusion, would lead to complete skepticism." Why? Crampton suggests that an analogy of the truth cannot be the truth itself. Analogy produces skepticism. What he fails to recognize is that what he calls "an analogy of truth" *within the Christian system* is in fact the truth. The fact that man's knowledge is analogical and not univocal as it relates to God's knowledge does not mean that it is analogical and not univocal as it relates to the Christian system of which man himself is a part. The fact that man is neither God nor shares God's knowledge does not mean man cannot know truth.

Further, Bahnsen has rightly pointed out that when Van Til asserted that God's knowledge and man's knowledge do not coincide at a single point, what he means is that "it is man doing the thinking and not God — which introduces a discontinuity between the two *acts* of knowing, a discontinuity that is greater and more profound than the discontinuity between one person's act of knowing something and another person's act of knowing it" (Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis*, p. 226). Van Til is not arguing that God and man do not know the same things; he is arguing that

because every act of man's knowing is dependent on and a reflection of God's previous knowing, his knowing is never identical with God's. *The fact that they share the same objects of knowledge is not tantamount to saying that they share the same content of knowledge.* Only if you give epistemology and not ontology the priority will you think otherwise. God as a Being is qualitatively different from man; therefore, His knowledge is qualitatively different from man's. Knowledge springs from ontology; ontology does not spring from knowledge. God knows differently because He is a different *kind* of being. Does this lead to skepticism? Of course not. Man's being, including his mind and his entire universe, is created and constructed by the sovereign, Triune God revealing Himself truthfully in Christ, Scripture, and creation. We can be confident of the basic validity of our senses and reasoning processes because of this God. Man is an analog, not an extension, of God. He is made in God's image. Because he does not share in God's being, he cannot share in God's knowledge. If he could share in God's knowledge, he could equally share in God's *being*. This is where a consistent view of univocal knowledge between God and man must lead.

The Logos Is a Person, Not a Principle

We subsequently confront what is perhaps the most damaging aspect of Crampton's thesis. He and Clark hold that a generally good translation of John 1:1 may be, "In the beginning was the *logic*." The implications of this view are spelled out quite clearly in Carl Henry's massive *God, Revelation, and Authority*, in which he posits that the *logos* of John 1, Jesus Christ, guarantees a rational, universal epistemology. This, in my view, is a serious distortion of John 1, and is, in fact, the very sort of reasoning John was attempting to refute. His whole point is that the *logos* of the ancient Greeks is *not* the *logos* of the Christian God. *His logos* is a *Person*, Jesus Christ. Men are not saved by a unifying, rational principle; they are saved by Jesus Christ. The issue is not, as in neo-orthodox parlance, personal versus propositional revelation. Biblical revelation is surely propositional, and it is the truth. However, men gain eternal life by means of *union* with Christ (*Jn. 6*). Men are saved not by contemplation, but by appropriation. (John Calvin makes this point most powerfully in his chapter on "The Lord's Supper and Its Advantages" in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.) Rational communication between men is possible not because of the Greek idea of a rational, universal, abstract principle, but because all men are made in the image of God and reflect that

image in every iota of their being. God's revelation to man is religiously holistic, not reductionistically rational. We are not saved by ideas; we are saved by *union with Christ* — communicated, to be sure, in the propositional ideas of the Bible.

Van Til's is an intensely *personalistic* epistemology; it is not a *logos*-epistemology, whether that of the patristic apologists or the Enlightenment or Gordon Clark. Clark needs a *logos*-epistemology to guarantee rational certainty because he does not recognize the exhaustively personal relation between God and His creation. For Van Til, the personalism of the Triune God, not an impersonal rational principle, secures epistemological certainty. Clark's *logos*-epistemology, like that of many of the church fathers, introduces an impersonal abstraction into the realm of the Faith (see Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 84-89). Van Til could never abide this. It denies the all-conditioning, Triune God. Clarkians do not buy this. Clark's main disciple John Robbins, for instance, attacks Van Til for teaching that not only are the three members of the Trinity discrete Persons, but the entire Godhead is a Person (*Cornelius Van Til: The Man and the Myth*, pp. 18-21). But to Van Til, the suggestion that God is not a Person but merely an "essence" is a concession to Greek abstractionism that introduces a pagan impersonalism into the Trinity. For Van Til, the introduction of

impersonalism into epistemology assaults the God of the Bible.

Conclusion

Between Van Til's and Clark's apologetic methodologies we detect what Thomas Sowell would term a "conflict of visions." The disagreement is not on this particular point or that. There is a deep, almost instinctual difference over the nature of reality itself. Both hold firmly to Reformed doctrine; both are thoroughly orthodox. The difference is not over discursive doctrine, but in the approach to the doctrine. **Christian contextualism reflects a different ethos and orientation than Christian foundationalism.** Van Til presupposes the Christian system and does not attempt to verify it at the bar of man's reason or logic, an act he considers sinfully autonomous. Clark presupposes the Sacred Scriptures, which, he surely believes, teach the Christian system, which in turn meets the criterion of logical consistency in that it conforms to the law of contradiction (*A Christian View of Men and Things*, pp. 32-34). Van Til's presuppositionalism is systemic; Clark's is axiomatic. Van Til's is contextual; Clark's is foundationalist. Van Til's is personal; Clark's is impersonal.

Van Til and Clark were both doughty defenders of Calvinism, but their conflict of apologetic visions will not soon abate.

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Intolerance



By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin

very society and its institutions are intolerant of some sort of behavior. Unqualified toleration is not only nonsensical; it is impossible and lethal. A society's toleration can be either coercive or non-coercive. Since coercion is the exclusive province of the state, the state's intolerance is necessarily coercive. There is, of course — and there must be — a non-coercive intolerance: society can shun or frown on certain behavior or attitudes that it deems sinful, unjust or in some way inappropriate. Intolerance, whether coercive or non-coercive, always occurs in terms of a society's or its institutions' religious premises. A Christian society, for example, coercively refuses the toleration of murder, rape, and theft. To tolerate these acts would be culturally suicidal. A Christian society will, in addition, use non-coercive measures — by means of its families, churches, and other institutions — to express intolerance by frowning on and shunning liars, immoralists, con men, and so on.

Humanistic Intolerance

Conversely, a humanistic society like our own will establish its own unique standards of intolerance. A humanistic society will not merely tolerate, but actively encourage sodomy, abortion, and racism, while creating a coercive, statist intolerance for vocal, public opposition to sodomy, abortion, and racism. A prime example of this is how Jerry Falwell's Biblically warranted opposition to homosexuality was considered to have incited "hate crimes" against homosexuals. Such crimes are truly evil and criminal, but the answer to that problem is intolerance of crime against homosexuals, not intolerance against godly, non-coercive opposition to homosexuals. It is highly likely that, unless the religious premises of the United States' society changes soon, within a few years it will be illegal to declare publicly what the Bible says about homosexuality. Meanwhile, the society's non-coercive, as well as coercive, tolerance for homosexuality will increase as homosexuals will be given superior rights and privileges, quotas, and so forth. It will be a crime to criticize homosexuals, but not a crime to persecute Christians.

There is tolerance on America's secular campuses today for almost any belief or practice besides historic Christianity. Professors are forced into humiliating "sensitivity training" sessions if they criticize homosexual behavior, but they may mercilessly ridicule Christianity. The rationale for the prohibition of non-coercive intolerance against homosexuals and other egregious sinners is the desire to avoid offending members of, for example, a particular sexual orientation. There is, of course, no interest at all in wanting to avoid offending members of a different *religious* orientation — if that orientation is orthodox Christianity.

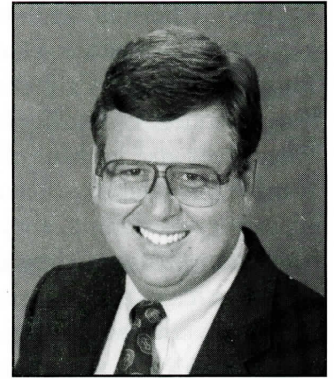
The New Immoral Majority

Much the same is true in the non-coercive sphere of the modern church. In most denominations, vocal Biblical teaching against apostasy, liberalism, Biblical criticism, radical feminism, euthanasia, aborticide, and homosexuality is simply not tolerated. These practices themselves, of course, are widely tolerated and encouraged. The modern "liberal" agents of ecclesiastical intolerance are quick to point in horror to the medieval church's unhealthy collaboration with the state by which the former coercively enforced standards with which the state should be unconcerned. We Christian lovers of liberty do not defend this collaboration. However, we should expect that these same modern "liberals" horrified at the sinful collaboration of church and state in past Christian eras will invite the arm of a godless, secular state today to coercively enforce intolerance against those who cry out against depravity in the modern church and society. It's not intolerance they oppose, you see, just intolerance of sin.

Intolerance is an inescapable concept. If Christ's church does not employ non-coercive means of intolerance to suppress apostasy, unbelief, homosexualism, abortion, racism, and feminism, secularists and liberals will employ the arm of the state to *coercively* suppress (at the end of a gun barrel, if necessary) non-coercive intolerance against these sins.

Christianity, the South, and the Culture War

By Rev. Steve Wilkins



Culture implies far more than common food, dress, or accent. The root of our English word “culture” is the Latin “*cultus*,” which to the Romans signified worship of the divine. This reminds us of the foundation of culture which is so often forgotten in our day. As Russell Kirk has noted, “[C]ulture arises from the cult; that is, people are joined together in worship, and out of their religious association grows the organized human community.”¹

Culture implies a common way of life, common standards, a common worldview, if you will. But this commonality is founded ultimately not upon economic status, race, or nationality, but, as the word indicates, a common faith. Christopher Dawson puts it this way, “It is clear that a common way of life involves a common view of life, common standards of behavior, and common standards of value, and consequently a culture is a spiritual community which owes its unity to common beliefs and common ways of thought far more than to any unanimity of physical type.... Therefore from the beginning the social way of life which is culture has been deliberately ordered and directed in accordance with the higher laws of life which are religion.”²

Thus the most important factor in the formation of a culture is the predominant faith of the people. The foundation of Western culture is Christianity and, in this country, Protestant Christianity of the Reformation type. This was true throughout this country, generally speaking, up through the early nineteenth century. Increasingly, however, as the nineteenth century wore on, the Northern section of the country slid away from historic Christianity to embrace the heresies of Deism, Unitarianism, and Transcendentalism.³

This, coupled with the influence of the aberrant (actually heretical) theology of Charles Finney, drove the majority of the North away from the historic foundations of Biblical Calvinism. The doctrines of God’s sovereignty and man’s depravity were dis-

carded. Men were left with an irrelevant God (or none at all) and a sovereign, perfectible man. Harriet Beecher Stowe observed that in Boston during the mid-nineteenth century, “the only thing worse than an atheist was a Calvinist.” The Biblical teaching of human depravity was offensive to the modern Northern sensibilities. Man was basically good, they believed. “Sin,” so-called, was the consequence of inadequate education and unseemly surroundings, not some defect in man himself. Thus, man’s problem was not seen as a problem *inside* of him but something *external* to him, in society. There was no need for a new birth in the Biblical sense. Man was not saved by grace but by social and political reform.

The South observed this drift into semi-paganism with a mixture of fear and amazement, for while the North was experiencing a general apostasy, the South was seeing a revival of the old Faith. While the North drifted more and more from the Bible, the South was becoming more and more attached to the Bible.

The relatively high level of faithfulness that had existed in the early seventeenth century because of the Christians who founded many of the Southern colonies, and which was revived through the Great Awakening, was lost by the 1790s. Thus, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the South was one of the most “unchurched” sections of the country. In 1800 only one Southerner in ten was a church member. Religious apathy and spiritual declension characterized the region.

But this all changed as the nineteenth century progressed. God revived the true Faith so that by the 1830s the South had become the most strongly evangelical section of the country. The Second Great Awakening was not noted for its orthodoxy in the Midwest and Northeast (and in some sections of the upper South as well), but it took on a different character in the South as a whole.

Charles Finney’s humanistic revivalism never found ready reception in the South at large. The

Southern Christian leaders were of a different persuasion altogether. Daniel Baker, J. H. Thornwell, B. M. Palmer, R. L. Dabney, John Holt Rice, Thomas Peck, Moses Drury Hoge, and many other great and faithful men kept the reins of the Southern revival. By their sound instruction and expository preaching, they prevented the movement from being corrupted by the unscriptural practices and fanaticism that dominated the Northern revivals. It was the belief of these men that true revivals were God-made, not man-produced as Finney and his followers insisted. Revivals could not be planned or scheduled, nor could they be prolonged by artificial means. They were the sovereign gift of God and could only be gratefully received and rejoiced over.

These two contrasting views ought not to be dismissed as insignificant or irrelevant. The one focused on man's ability to manipulate God and thus produce reform by his own efforts. The other insisted on man's utter dependence on God and faithful adherence to His Word, and recognized that nothing could be accomplished apart from His blessing. These two contrasting perspectives would bear quite different fruit for each region. Dependence on God and strict adherence to God's means as set forth in His Word became characteristic of Southern Christianity. Political coercion in the name of God more and more became the hallmark of the North.⁴

The orthodoxy of the South contrasted in quite a few other ways from the prevailing spirit of the North. The rationalism of Northern Unitarianism with its detached, Stoic propriety and the polite, lecture-like quality of the sermons was quite different from the warm-blooded preaching and affection for the Savior that this preaching produced across the South.

The contrast was manifest to travelers in both regions. A writer in the *Presbyterian Advocate* in 1830 gave this comparison between the preaching in New England and that of the Southern states:

*There [i.e., in New England] the preachers write their sermons and read them to their audience;... [the style] is chaste, argumentative, but wanting in animation. The style [in the South] is unequal, often incorrect, but animated, vehement and powerful... Which on the whole are the most useful it is difficult to decide. For instruction the former excel; for delight we would listen to the latter.*⁵

William Plummer, pastor for many years at the First Presbyterian Church at Richmond, was re-

placed after his departure by a Northerner. The Northern replacement, we are told, had a good and highly cultivated mind and his sermons instructed and pleased, but, says Moses Hoge, "they were not Southern sermons." There were no "bursts of passion, no involuntary emotion, no sudden and splendid inspiration, bearing a man away from his manuscript and from his commonplaces as in a chariot of fire." "Yankees," said Hoge, "seem to say good things because they have studied them. Southern men say good things as if they could not help it."⁶

The passion of these men often made Northerners feel out of place. William Henry Foote wrote of George Baxter, who was President of Washington College at the time, "I have never known any minister of the gospel who so often shed tears in the pulpit. It was very common for his voice to falter, and become tremulous from the swelling tide of his strong emotions, especially when speaking of the suffering of Christ, or when warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come."⁷ The truth of God so gripped the soul that it could not be spoken as if it were bare statistics or a report of some business that had been carried out in a foreign land. They were dealing with issues of life and death and they preached with a passion that indicated they truly believed this to be true.

Moses Hoge, having listened to a number of Northern sermons, longed for the good old fire of Southern preachers. In the same letter previously quoted, he went on to say that he longed to hear Dr. Plummer preach again, "I am hungry to hear him roar once more. I want to see his eyes glare and his hair stand up on end. It will refresh me to see him foam at the mouth again."⁸

Sermons in the South were not dry, abstract disquisitions on the latest philosophical speculations, but "cataracts of holy fire" that moved men to the foundation of their beings. Southern sermons sought to change the heart and move the soul. Not that Southerners ignored the intellect, they didn't; but they realized that unless a man's heart is changed, he will ignore even what his mind is convinced is true. One historian has noted, "Every sermon, whether Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist, preached both doctrines and duties and was addressed not only to the understandings but to the hearts and consciences of the congregation."⁹

The preaching of the Word was viewed as the "chief means" God uses to change the hearts of men. The chief instrument of reform was not legislation or social movements but the truths of God faithfully

proclaimed to the consciences of men. Reform always began from within man by the grace of God, not from without by force.

The predominant view in the South was that the Bible is the very Word of God written. It is infallible, inspired, inerrant, and authoritative in all areas of life and thought. The content of the sermons was overwhelmingly Biblical. Benjamin Morgan Palmer (long-time pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans) echoed the widely accepted notion that the minister is a “messenger from God” whose duty, said Palmer, was “to speak only the word that is put into his mouth.” That is, the job of the minister is not to tell us of his latest dreams and imaginations, or of his opinions of world events, nor is it to display his grasp of current problems. He has but one job — to expound and apply the Word God has given to us. “His sole care,” said Palmer, “must be to inquire what God the Lord will say.” He is “to study God’s Book, to expound its doctrines, to enforce its precepts, to urge its motives, to present its promises, to recite its warnings, to declare its judgments.”¹⁰ Southern ministers spent their energies explaining and applying the great truths of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, the depravity of man, the divine election of grace, the atoning death of Christ, the call to repentance and justification by faith.

The South, influenced more and more by the old orthodoxy, believed that God was sovereign. He alone possesses unlimited authority and He alone can be trusted with such authority since He is spotlessly holy, just, and good. They believed, therefore, that God had ordained all human institutions with strictly limited authority and that, if society was to prosper, each institution (family, church, and state) must abide within the limitations set forth by God.

Further, the South believed that man was basically sinful. Thus, his greatest need was the grace of God, not political and social reform. Salvation was achieved not by man’s efforts but was mercifully and freely given by God on the basis of Christ’s work in atonement for sinners.

Trinitarian orthodoxy produced a society where both unity and diversity could coexist. It is only within God Himself that we find the solution to the ancient question of the one and the many. God is both one and three. Both unity and diversity are equally ultimate in Him. Christian cultures have always had a place for both “oneness” (unity, structure, form) and “manyness” (individualism and diversity). Only in the Triune God and in His covenant can we find unity that does not annihilate legitimate diversity and vice versa.

Thus, only in Christian culture can you have unity *and* diversity, unity and freedom. In imitation of the Triune God, there is a unity of faith and purpose and yet there is no demand for uniformity of personality. There is a unity without the assimilation of the individual into the whole.

The general theological consensus that existed in the South gave rise to a prevailing tolerance among the populace. Sincere men were respected (even though they might be wrong in their choice of denominations!). Convictions were held strongly; but for those who sincerely sought to be faithful, the judgment of charity prevailed.

Men learned the importance of minding their own business. The officious, reformist, busybody attitude of New England was not tolerated. Men sought in a scriptural and neighborly way to see after one another. But they knew there are certain things that are none of your business and you had best resist the temptation to run other people’s lives for them.

In unitarian and atheistic cultures, you find just the opposite. There is usually a demand for a stifling egalitarian conformity in order to preserve unity. Unitarianism views God not as a Person, but as an impersonal force. There is and can be no “love” in God (since His monism makes it impossible to express love within Himself), and thus the culture, reflecting this view of God, becomes cruel and heartless. A culture that refuses to recognize the loving Trinity seeks unity by force (totalitarianism and statist egalitarianism), and thus tends to be characterized by harshness, bitterness, and cruelty (as Islamic and communistic cultures are and ever have been).

True unity is founded not upon impersonal or bureaucratic force but upon the love and grace (the personableness) of the Triune God. Where this is lacking, there can never be freedom, peace, or prosperity.

The general orthodoxy which pervaded the South prior to the War was the reason for the political views which dominated the region as well. The concepts of limited constitutional government, a union composed of free and independent states, a hearty distrust of democracy, strict adherence to the Constitution, the doctrine of the separation of powers, the rules of justice — all these distinctives, and many more which marked our nation in its founding, are rooted in Biblical Christianity.

But even more important than Christianity’s influence upon our political theory is the fact that it molded a citizenry that was willing and able to

preserve this system of liberty. There were a number of dominant characteristics of the South in the middle eighteenth century, all of which are fruits of Christianity.

1. Reverence for God and the Scriptures. The two most influential books in the early part of this country's history were the *King James Bible* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.¹¹ They shaped the South in particular. After its refusal to follow the pied pipers of Transcendentalism in order to remain faithful to the Bible, the South became known derisively as "The Bible Belt."

2. Marriage and family held in high esteem. Tocqueville noted, "Certainly of all countries in the world America is the one in which the marriage tie is most respected and where the highest and truest conception of conjugal happiness has been conceived." This gave a stability to our society lacking elsewhere. "When the American returns from the turmoil of politics to the bosom of the family, he immediately finds a perfect picture of order and peace. There all his pleasures are simple and natural and his joys innocent and quiet, and as the regularity of life brings him happiness, he easily forms the habit of regulating his opinions as well as his tastes."

This was especially so in the South. Large families were the norm, with the result that the entire culture was pervaded by a sense of kinship, family history, and family-centered thinking. It was not uncommon to find churches of several hundred members with only five or six surnames. In the South it was often of more consequence to be kin to certain people than it was to be wealthy.

This emphasis on families had a great influence in the practical management of slaves as well. Douglas Kelly has noted, "Southerners held to a view of domestic servitude in which they felt that the slave was in some sense a member of the larger family circle, with commensurate duties and privileges."¹² Slaves were, in most places, viewed and treated as members of the family.

3. Generosity and hospitality. The Southerner, often because of his isolated or semi-isolated condition, fairly craved visitors (both of strangers as well as family and friends). If you were privileged to keep an honorable traveler, his visit was regarded as a great benefit to your house. It was the equivalent of "entertaining angels unaware."

Christianity also laid the foundation for courtesy and respect. The Bible teaches that all men are created after God's image and that we are to esteem others better than ourselves. It was viewed a mark of an extreme lack of grace to be discourteous without

just cause. The oil of society was courtesy and deference to one another.

4. Household independence (personal responsibility). Southerners did not expect others to take care of them nor would they have allowed such a thing as long as they had the capability of caring for themselves. God expected each to use his strength and gifts to provide for himself and his own. And the man who refused to do that was "worse than an infidel." The irresponsible welfare mentality simply did not exist.

5. Honesty and integrity. You always will have scoundrels, but in general, Southerners had habits of fair dealings ingrained in them from both pulpit and hearthstone. Your word and good name were most important. Nothing was more despised than a swindler and thief. Nothing more scorned than a man who would sell principle for advantage. Henry Laurens of South Carolina once said to a British advocate, "God knows I am a poor man; but your king is not rich enough to buy me!"¹³

6. Respect for law and lawful order. Christianity produced both a fierce determination to defend liberty as well as a deep respect for godly law and order. This was the basis for the respect which prevailed in the South for common law which had been the foundation of England's judicial structure. The common law is based (from a Christian perspective) upon the fact that there are principles of justice ultimately established by God Himself which overrule the laws of men and under which all men are subject regardless of who they are. No king or legislature can enact a law that supersedes or sets aside the common law. Nor is there any need for kings or legislatures to ratify common law. No law of men may contradict or contravene the common law.

It was this that molded the South's view of tyranny. When the North sought to combine against the South and by pure majority overthrow the Constitution, the South felt itself duty-bound to defend the old ways. Secession was not driven by a desire to rebel but by a zeal to preserve the old order. A. H. Stephens made this very point: "The real object of those who resorted to Secession, as well as those who sustained it, was not to overthrow the Government of the United States; but to perpetuate the principles upon which it was founded. The object in quitting the Union was not to destroy, but to save the principles of the Constitution."¹⁴

Robert E. Lee stated the matter similarly: "All that the South has ever desired was that the Union — as established by our forefathers — should be preserved, and that the government — as originally

organized — should be administered in purity and truth.”

7. **Southerners, a people of “holy memory.”**

Practical intelligence and common sense were widespread, of course, but here I refer to the fact that they understood the importance of liberty and the dangers of the abstract ideas of statist

With the defeat at the hands of the North in 1865 and the ravages of Reconstruction, far more was lost than the old Confederate States. The defeat of the South marked the end of the old order which had prevailed since the founding of the country. It was the beginning of a new era such as had not been seen in this country.

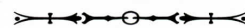
utopianism. While the North took pains to obliterate the past, the South refused to forget. They remembered the dangers their grandsires faced from a government which tried to control all areas of life and thought. They remembered the persecution and injustice their ancestors suffered, and knew the dangers of men who thought they knew what was best for the rest of the people. There was an ingrained aversion to anything that smelled of centralism and hinted at the infringements of basic, God-given liberties.

The presence of these traits made the South the last bastion of Christendom. With the defeat at the hands of the North in 1865 and the ravages of Reconstruction, far more was lost than the old Confederate States. The defeat of the South marked the end of the old order which had prevailed since the founding of the country. It was the beginning of a new era such as had not been seen in this country.

Thus, these things which once marked the South are no longer present. The erosion of Biblical Christianity that has occurred over the last century has left the South a bare shadow of its former self. Many Southerners are now realizing what has been lost in cultural terms but fail to realize the true cause for this loss. It has not been caused by the opposition of the liberals, the silly lawsuits of the ACLU, the screaming meemies on MTV, or the droves of Yankees moving down every other week. It has been caused by the rejection of the historic Christian Faith of the Reformation. A culture cannot retain the fruits of Christendom without the Faith which alone is able to produce those fruits. The frantic grasping for political power (through a revived Republican Party and the “conservative” movement) is a poor substitute for the water of life. When the Faith has

been destroyed, there is little point in engaging in political tinkering.

The only hope for the South (and, of course, for our country as a whole) lies in rejecting the false gods of humanism both of the radical and the conservative type and returning to the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. Reformation can come only when we cease to rely on revolutionary faith and tactics. Liberty and true blessedness cannot exist where the Spirit of the Lord is dishonored. This is the indispensable prerequisite for godly culture.



¹ Russell Kirk, *America's British Culture* (Transaction Publishers, 1994), 1.

² *ibid.*, 2.

³ Obviously, when I speak of the regions (“The North was this way” or “the South was that way”) I am speaking in generalities. I am aware there were many exceptions in each region to the dominant characteristics I am noting.

⁴ There were, of course many imperfections in Southern society. Pride and arrogance (which led to the problem of dueling) and the institution of slavery with its attendant abuses and injustices were only a couple of the more prominent sins of the South. The adherence to Biblical standards, however, insured that these sins were viewed as *sins* and not as acceptable or approved behavior. They were consistently denounced by faithful preachers. (See in regard to opposition to dueling, Clayton E. Cramer, “Duels & Deliverance in the Old South,” *The Shotgun News*, vol. 54, issue 15. For the opposition to slavery's abuses see Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* [University of Georgia Press, 1998]).

⁵ Ernest T. Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* (John Knox Press, 1963), vol. I, 221.

⁶ Quoted by Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order* (Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 41.

⁷ Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, 220.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *America's British Culture*, 22-23.

¹² *Preachers With Power*, xv, xvi.

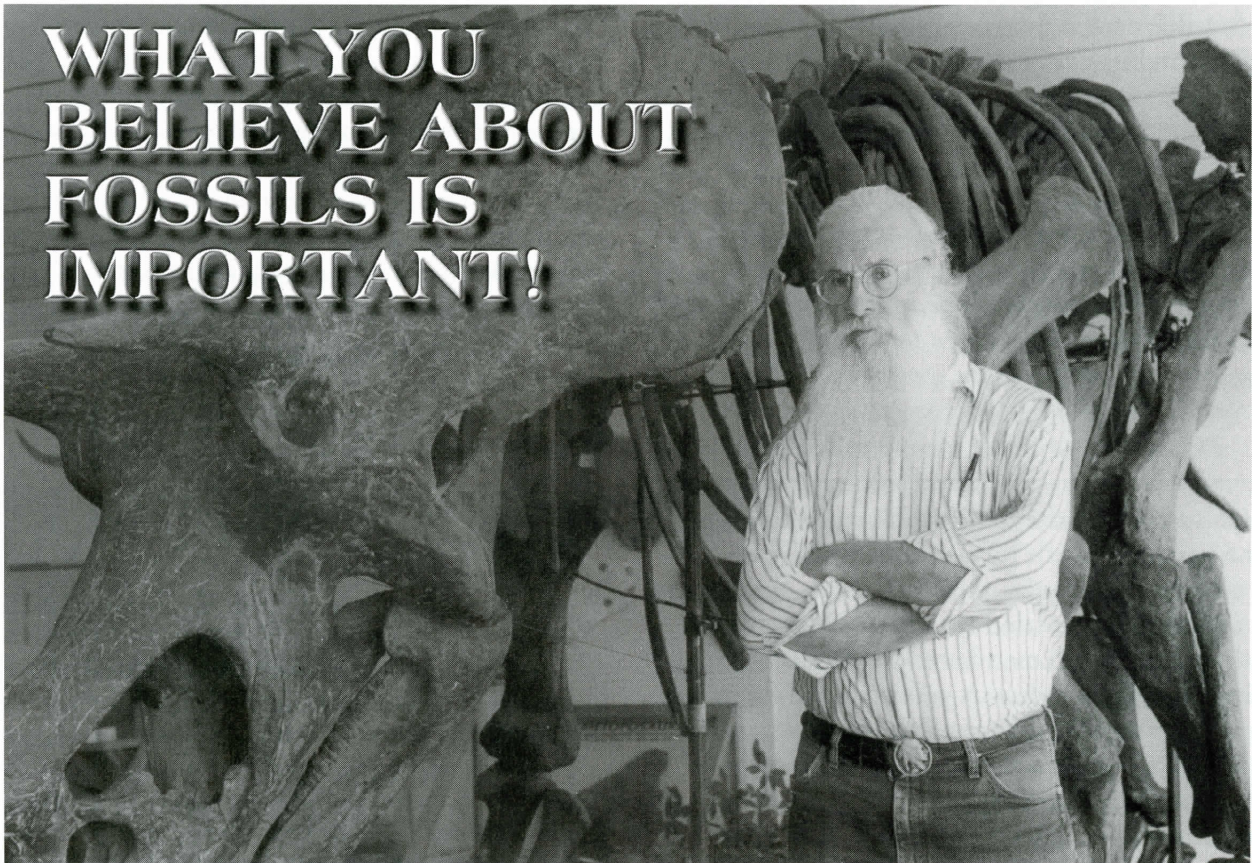
¹³ Thomas N. Page, *The Old South*, 48.

¹⁴ A. H. Stephens, *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States*, vol. I, 31.



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He Still Haunts: Contemporary Southern Writers and Biblical Faith

By Suzanne U. Clark



Defining the South and Southernness is a favorite pastime of literary critics. Consider a sampling of terms: “calm grace and raw hatred,” “guilt-stricken,” “shared values,” “bone-gnawing poverty and endless defeat.” But I like the sense of the South conveyed in a reported conversation between Katherine Anne Porter and William Faulkner. Both writers were away from home and attending a social function. They looked at each other knowingly and, at the same time, said, “Blackberries.” They knew instinctively what time it was down South.

Indeed, the sense of place is strong in Southern writing; likewise, notions of honor, devotion to kin, awareness of evil, and love of story. Violence, poverty, and good manners also figure in the mix, often grotesquely. H. L. Mencken derisively called the South the Bible Belt, pointing to the pervasive religious fundamentalism of the people. Flannery O’Connor had deeper insight. “[I]n the South,” she said to a gathering at Wesleyan College for Women in 1960, “the general concept of man is still, in the main, theological ... from the standpoint of the writer, I think it is safe to say that while the South is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted.” Finally, we have Robert Coles’ assessment of Southern faith as “the hard, hard religion” of Calvinism.

In offering a brief overview of contemporary Southern writing, I find the Christ-haunting perspective to be vastly helpful, for the Biblical influence is unmistakable in the major authors: Lee Smith, Robert Morgan, Fred Chappell, Reynolds Price, Denise Giardina, and others. Sometimes the sight through glass is very dark indeed, with distorted views of grace and God. Novelist Reynolds Price, for example, recognizes mercy alone, never divine wrath. But his prose is exquisite; his characters unforgettable. Robert Morgan, whose recent best-seller, *Gap Creek*, was chosen as an Oprah book-of-the-month selection, creates authentic characters

and treats faith and the church with dignity and respect, something seldom seen in modern literature, where preachers and church-goers are either deranged or entirely corrupt.

Before considering this patchwork further, it’s helpful to look at Southern literature in a historical context. Novelist Walker Percy was asked how the South differed from other regions of the U.S. He said it was because the South lost the Civil War and this defeat became a fall, “shaping its inhabitants as people of lost innocence, providing its writers with a context unlike any other in America.” O’Connor adds, “[W]e were doubly blessed, not only in our fall, but in having means to interpret it. Behind our own history, deepening it at every point, has been another history.”

Beginning in the Twenties, the South experienced a literary flowering, what the region’s leading historian, C. Vann Woodward, called “the Southern Renaissance.” The year 1929 marked the publication date of Thomas Wolfe’s *Look Homeward Angel* and William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*. Other major writers associated with the Renaissance included Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, Ralph Ellison, Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, Katherine Anne Porter, and Flannery O’Connor, to name a few. But by 1955, the flower had wilted. “Faulkner’s powers as a novelist had waned considerably,” according to literary critic Richard H. King in his book *A Southern Renaissance*, while Tate and Ransom had “all but ceased writing poetry.”

The Twenties also witnessed the rise of Agrarianism, an intellectual movement seeking to reclaim Southern tradition with its belief in virtue and agriculture, and challenging what historian Richard Weaver calls “a monolithic culture of unredeemed materialism.” Its fullest expression came with the publication of *I’ll Take My Stand*, a book of twelve essays written by Vanderbilt University professors and former students. An excellent treatment of Southern Agrarianism can be found in Weaver’s

book *The Southern Essays of Richard M. Weaver* (Liberty Press). His chapter on contemporary Southern literature offers this compelling insight: “A dominantly Christian point of view has preserved in the South the idea that man can fall. This is why Southern literature, within the context of Southern belief, has been able to recover the theme of the greatest literatures.”

Biblical influence continues to show up in contemporary authors, who represent a literary revival and continue to gain national recognition for their work. In contrast with the previous generation, the work of these authors contains “hardly anything of the antebellum South ... no magnolias, white columns, or darkies crooning,” writes Professor Richard K. Meeker. Their interest is more in the present. Jan Karon’s best-selling Mitford series (*At Home in Mitford*, *A Light in the Window*, etc.) is not high art, but Father Tim continues to charm and please readers with his gentle spirit and wit. There is always Good News in Mitford, because the author’s vision is redemptive.

Another popular writer is Sharyn McCrumb. Her mysteries, tautly-spun and woven deeply in landscape, are mostly staged in Appalachia. *The Hangman’s Beautiful Daughter* and *She Walks Those Hills* are two that absorbed me completely. *If Ever I Return*, *Pretty Peggy-O* was chosen as a New York Times Notable Book for 1990. It’s on my list of books to read.

Of Fred Chappell, Lee Smith writes, “Anybody who knows anything about Southern writing knows that [he] is our resident genius, our shining light, the one truly great writer we have among us.” A professor at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and the state’s poet laureate, Chappell has written eight novels, fourteen books of verse, two volumes of stories, and a book of criticism. I loved *I Am One of You Forever*, a funny, brilliant book about a boy growing up in North Carolina in the 1940s. One critic describes it as “magical realism set to fiddles.” A remarkable feature is the close ties among the males in the story — father and son and Johnson, whom the family adopted as one of their own — and the high comedy of the many “rusties” they pull on unsuspecting uncles. Though the men tend to be irreligious, the grandmother’s Christian faith is honored. Of his poetry, *Midquest* is one of Chappell’s most stunning achievements, which he describes as a novel in verse.

Saints and Villains, Denise Giardina’s latest book, is a work of historical fiction based on the life of Deitrich Bonhoeffer. While Bonhoeffer’s liberal

theology falls short, his courage in the face of Hitler’s take-over of the church is magnificently conveyed. The book is powerful — and painful. Giardina, an ordained Episcopalian minister, grew up in a West Virginia coal camp and is a person who acts on her convictions — through her writing, and most recently, through her current run for governor of the state. *Storming Heaven* is a gripping novel based on a historic battle between the U.S. Army and 10,000 pro-union coal miners. One may not agree entirely with her liberal views, but Giardina is without doubt a marvelous storyteller and passionate social critic.

Lee Smith shares the same gift for telling a story and creating memorable characters, but with a difference — she writes of hill people with “joy and laughing sensuality,” as one critic puts it. Here’s a portrayal of one Mrs. Eunice Merriman in Smith’s short story “Tongues of Fire”: “Mrs. Eunice Merriman was a large, imposing woman with her pale blond hair swept up in a beehive hairdo as smooth and hard as a helmet. She wore glasses with harlequin frames. Mrs. Merriman reminded me of some warlike figure from Norse mythology.”

Smith’s books are rather too sensuous for this reader’s taste: she serves up sex as handily as a platter of fried chicken, relating it to the “creative wholeness” of her female characters. According to Dorothy Hill, the core of her work lies in the “serious issues of female isolation and identity.” Even so, Smith’s characters are often Christ-haunted, and toward them she exhibits tenderness, as those torn inwardly by strange contradictions, like Ivy Rowe in *Fair and Tender Ladies* or Florida Grace Shepherd in *Saving Grace*. This is likely due to her own spiritual turbulence. “I still believe in God,” she affirms in an interview with Susan Ketchin in *The Christ-Haunted Landscape* (highly recommended). “I’ve just never been able to find a way to act on that without it taking me over. It’s something I struggle with all the time.” Smith, who, like Giardina, grew up in a coal-mining region (Grundy, Virginia), has taught writing at North Carolina State University and has written nine novels and a collection of short stories.

Poet Kathryn Stripling Byer’s *Wildwood Flower* (LSU Press) won the prestigious Lamont award for 1992. If you read no other contemporary Southern poet besides Chappell, read Byer. The poems in the book are written in the voice of a mountain woman named Alma and are set in the early twentieth century. Love and loss, hunger, harvest, beauty and belief figure into the tapestry of poems through exquisitely crafted imagery. “...I watch the gray sky/ through the eye of each needle/my fingers have ever

held up to the light/and I wait for the mousetrap to spring/in the pantry where peaches still cling/to their stone" (from "Extremity").

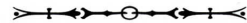
Earlier I recommended Robert Morgan's *Gap Creek*, whose protagonist is also a strong mountain woman, an authentic character who, in her hour of greatest trial, receives Christ as her Savior. Morgan is a fine poet as well as novelist. *Groundwork* (Gnomen Press) features such memorable poems as "Bricking the Church," "The Flying Snake," "Canning Time," and "Baptism of Fire." His lines are clear and true, often humorously rendered, as in "Slop Bucket":

*Spirits cook in the undercupboard there
Noticed only at night
At family altar when the odors
Scrimmage along the floor like ghosts of appetite.*

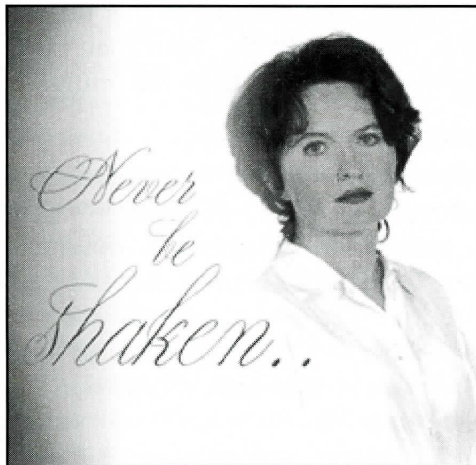
Finally, we come to Reynolds Price, distinguished author of twenty-five books and a professor at Duke University. His prose is beautiful in the way of Fitzgerald and Faulkner. Like them, Price is master of the sentence and of intense moments in his characters' lives, able to sound the depths of words and feeling. Susan Ketchin assesses Price's work,

saying, "Many of the most compelling characters in his works are essentially good-hearted people whose lives are bound up in ultimate matters of guilt and redemption." Price confesses Christ as his personal Savior, but his beliefs can hardly be considered orthodox, including an antipathy toward "organized churches" and sometimes skewed moral sense. *Blue Calhoun, A Generous Man, The Names and Faces of Heroes, and The Tongues of Angels* are titles of some of his novels.

C. S. Lewis believed that "books enlarge our being." I hope that some of the writers and books mentioned here will draw the readers' attention, revealing that words of life still shine in Southern stories.



Suzanne U. Clark lives in Bristol, TN with her husband Al and daughter Emily. (Two other children are in college — all have been home-schooled.) Suzanne has published five books of poetry and non-fiction, the most recent being The Roar on the Other Side, a textbook on writing poetry (Canon Press), and What a Light Thing, This Stone, a poetry collection published by the Sow's Ear Press. She teaches writing and literature part-time at area colleges. She can be contacted at capriole10@yahoo.com.



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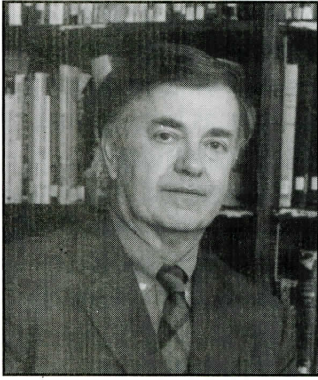
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The Continuing Virtues of the Southern Heritage

By Douglas Kelly

(Excerpted from "Our Southern Heritage," an address given at Minturn, SC in March, 2000)

Biblical Christianity and Good Manners

Bvangelical Protestantism has long been "established" (by custom, not law) in most of the South (except for South Louisiana). We are accurately called "the Bible Belt." I suspect that love for Christ and the Bible, a love historically increased by three great revivals, has been at the root of traditional Southern courtesy and politeness, and would explain why doors did not need to be locked in these parts until perhaps the 1970s. Community kindness and respect is something that comes from profound belief in the gospel. Good manners are a beautiful thing. They flow from the Golden Rule and from the grace of the gospel. The traditional South (at its best) can offer good manners to an increasingly discourteous, surly country. Terrible soap operas and so called "situation comedies" (with canned laughter, for they are seldom really funny) make bitter fun of parents and other authority figures, and falsely present America as a cynical, atheistic rat race. The South itself needs a new infusion of the old loving, courtly gospel spirit as does the wider world. Let us thank God for how much we have had of it, and for how much still remains.

The Extended Family

The Holy Bible, so revered in the South, teaches that the basic unit of society is the family, not the individual, and thus our people have looked at society in terms of family rather than the atomistic individual (unlike democracy theory which emphasizes the individual and the central government, and tends to cut out the mediating institutions of family, local region, and church). The plantation system in the South worked in a way that kept families together. Many workers were needed and until the technological and economic changes that occurred in the mid-twentieth century, a fair sized plantation could support several related families on it. My father was raised in such a context, where there were three related households living on the same ancestral

property in Moore County, North Carolina. (In today's economy, it would not be nearly enough land to support three large families.)

No part of the United States has ever been so family oriented as the South. That is probably one reason why we look less to the central government than does the North and West. Professor Zimmerman of Harvard University wrote three important volumes on the history of the family in the 1920s. He demonstrated that, historically, weak family structure and widespread individualism leads to powerful centralized governmental bureaucracy (for the rootless individuals look to the civil government for identity and help, rather than to the extended family or church). But strong family structure, especially the extended family, gives people a sense of belonging and security, so that they feel the support of a local network, rather than expecting (or even desiring) very much from the central state.

Anti-Materialism

One of the strong continuing virtues of the South is anti-materialism or — to put it positively — confidence in the primacy and ultimate importance of the spiritual realm. Professor Richard Weaver said that the American South was the last center of anti-materialism in the Western world, and this is still resented by our reigning, secularistic cultural elite. The solemn words of Jesus are still taken literally by millions of ordinary men and women in our Southern states: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (*Mt. 10:28*). The Southern people as a whole have acted upon a higher loyalty than material values or human institutions such as the state, knowing that if there is a conflict between God and Caesar: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (*Ac. 5:29*) and that ultimately, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (*Phil. 3:20*). The fairly large percentage of believers among Southerners have understood that, "...the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (*2 Cor. 4:18*). Higher

loyalty to the unseen has meant that (insofar as they are consistent) they are less likely than others to be under the control of material considerations and worldly praise or blame, for in the end of the day: "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3:13, 14).

These considerations have provided our people great inward freedom to be different from the contemporary culture, when they perceive it to be going in a materialistic and ungodly direction. We have still not completely lost this willingness to be different, and thus we are harder to whip into line than a culture that does not know any longer what it believes. This makes it much more difficult for the votaries of atheistic materialism to control our souls and bodies and to get our votes and loyalty.

The famous Dr. Robert L. Dabney, Presbyterian minister and professor of theology in Virginia (who served during the war as Stonewall Jackson's Chief of Staff), pleaded with the South to remain loyal to spiritual values and to disdain triumphant American materialism in a speech delivered to young men at Hampden Sydney College in Virginia in 1882. His address is entitled "The New South," and lays before the college students two options open to the defeated Southern leadership at that time. Either they could swallow the values of "the New South," namely the soulless materialism of the amoral Yankee capitalist spirit, and thus emulate their conquerors by becoming materialistic like them and, in doing so, jettison the Christian heritage of their fathers, who put God above money. Or, if they went against the direction in which the plutocrats of northern industry (protected by government-engineered monopolies) were taking the American culture, they could enthusiastically reaffirm their ancient, Christian foundations of love of God, loyalty to family, virtue rather than pragmatism, and devotion to region rather than the central state (if there is a conflict between the two). In the words of Christ, they were called to "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

Decentralization of Government

The last continuing virtue of the South to be mentioned is also one that is desperately needed by the contemporary world: decentralization of civil government. Two unusually perceptive Southern scholars who lived through the War Between the States soon afterwards wrote illuminating volumes

on this subject. One volume is by Dr. Robert L. Dabney, *A Defense of Virginia and Through Her of the South*, and the other by Alexander Hamilton Stephens of Georgia, a former United States Senator and the one and only Vice President of the Confederacy, *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States*.

Among much else, these careful discussions show what happens when basic Christian faith, constitutional integrity, and regional self-determination are lost by the people so that there occurs a transferring of massive and impersonal power to the central government and its bureaucracies. There were two different views of human happiness contending in nineteenth-century America. One came from the French Enlightenment and entailed great centralized power by which the state could define the structure and goal of human life and thus provide a sort of womb-to-tomb security. In the twentieth century, this has been carried out most consistently by Marxism, which created its own sort of paradise in Siberia and now has largely failed.

The other view of happiness came from the traditional Christianity of Catholic (and then, Reformation) Europe. In this view the Triune God is first; His Word is the true covenant charter, structuring man's life on earth and defining its true goal. Mankind is fallen so that he and all his institutions (including the state) need careful restraint; redemption is provided through humble faith in Christ, and life is most healthfully lived within a variety of mediating institutions, that serve as restraints on one another (church, family, regional and local governments; local schools controlled by the community or church; professional organizations and charitable agencies). These Biblically-based mediating institutions provide great liberty for the people who live in terms of them, for they are limited by one another and by Scriptural principles, and are most responsive to local conditions. In a word, they are personal, whereas faceless, centralized bureaucratic powers are impersonal.

With the military and political defeat of the South and with the cruel "Reconstruction" punishment by the Northern government afterwards, still all was not lost. Virtues are often refined in the fires, even while vices are purged away. We can be glad that some of our vices and sins are gone (even if not all of them), and can also be hopeful that some of the virtues graciously granted to our people may not only endure, but fruitfully increase as a blessing to other parts of the country the world.

It may be that several parts of our ever-changing world are in a position to benefit from some of these old Southern virtues. More than one sociologist has noted that the world today seems to be in the maelstrom of two conflicting currents: the one greater centralization and the other re-tribalization. Heavy centralization is the order of the day in multinational companies, various international trade agreements, growing socialistic governments, the United Nations, and so forth.

But at the very same time there is a quite contradictory trend; much of the world is breaking up from larger units into smaller (or "tribal") ones. We think of the unraveling of the Soviet Union after 1991 and the breaking into smaller, ethnic and religious-based sections of former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In July of 1999, I happened to be present at the opening of the new Scottish Parliament at New College in Edinburgh, almost three hundred years after it had been closed to merge with Westminster in London. Now the United Kingdom is experiencing regionalization, with parliaments in the ancient realms of Scotland, Wales, and Ulster.

No one knows what direction these conflicting currents will take, but perhaps some of the thoughts and aspirations of our Southern forefathers in their own faltering attempts to chart the way forward to liberty and truth will provide someone somewhere a glimmer of guidance. Flag or no flag, we, their descendants, may by gracious inheritance have some light to shine into a dark and confusing world.

With all of this in mind, we conclude with a poem by the late Archibald Rutledge, master of Hampton Plantation near Georgetown, and poet laureate of South Carolina from the 1930s until his death in 1973. It is entitled "The Confederate Dead":

*Although the Flag they died to save
Floats not o're any land or sea,
Over eternal years shall wave
The banner of their chivalry.*

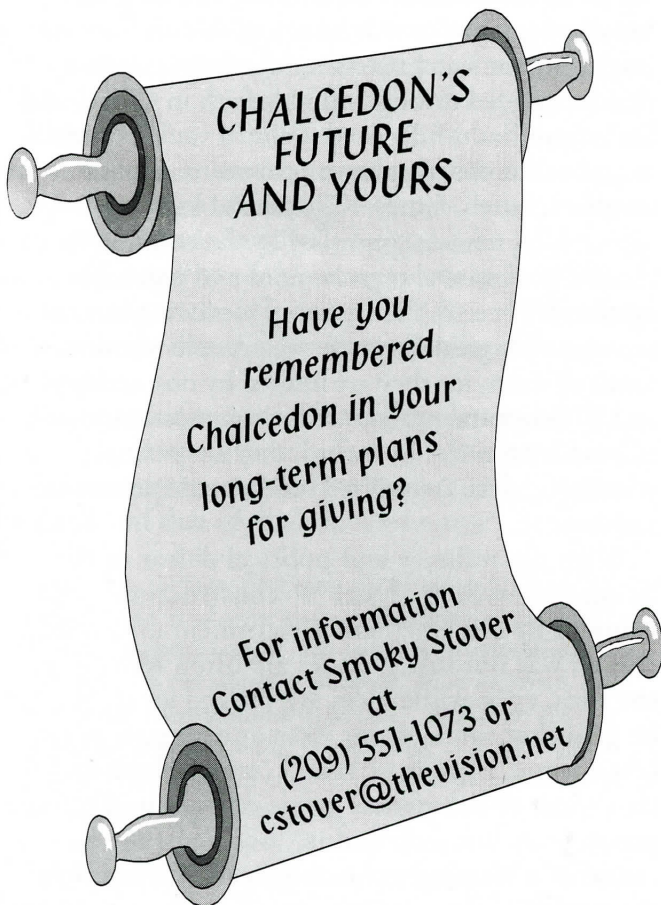
*Lost in the silent Past profound,
Their war-cries to the dead belong,
Yet poets shall their valor sound
In music of immortal song.*

*Save that for them I nobly live,
Bear life, as death they bravely bore,
They need no glory I can give
Whose fame abides forevermore;*

*Whose fame fades not in marble arts,
Nor sleeps within the Past's dim night;
Heroes who live in loving hearts
Are templed in Eternal Light.*

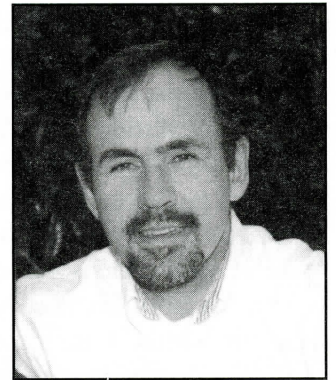


Douglas Kelly is a native of Lumberton, North Carolina, with deep roots in Moore County, where his father was born and raised. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill), Union Theological Seminary (Richmond, Virginia), and the University of Edinburgh (Scotland). He has served as a pastor and is currently Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, first at the campus in Jackson, Mississippi, and since 1994 at the campus in Charlotte. He is author of a number of books of both theological and also historical/genealogical interest. He and his wife Caroline have five children. He can be contacted at dkelly@rts.edu.



The Rage of the Abolitionists

By Rev. Ben House



Bven now, so long after the end of the War of Northern Aggression, the Abolitionists rage. The Abolitionists provoked that war; they sundered the confederated union that had existed since the 1770s; they divided the churches, political parties, and nation; they set brother against brother in the most horrific bloodsoaking this land has ever known. And they, like the monster Grendel from the Beowulf saga, delighted in the gore.

The Abolitionists were religious folk too. They were the sons and rebel heirs of the Puritan fathers of Old and New England. They trimmed the edges of the hearty Puritanism that was theirs to inherit, whittling away at such “trifles” of orthodox theology as the Trinity, original sin, the deity of Christ. They adorned themselves with the wolfishly fashionable theological idols of their times — theological liberalism, Unitarianism, Transcendentalism. They cursed the Constitution and the flag when it protected the slave-holding South; but they divinized (made a god of) the state and assumed that the tramping and pillaging of the Union army represented God’s truth marching on. (And to think that some Christians still sing their anthem!)

The Abolitionists, who largely consisted of apostate New England Puritan rebels, held, in typical heretical fashion, to certain Biblical doctrines with additional twists. At the center of their heresy was the idea of creating the perfect society inhabited by perfected men — perfected, of course, by adhering to the latest New England impulse. They spawned utopias; promoted free love and the feminist movement; and advanced the idea of secular government schools. The Abolitionists twisted the Biblical doctrines of sanctification and glorification and of the millennial kingdom to create a militant millenarianism.

This meant that they would inflict their version of the millennium — the golden age — upon all who disagreed with them. The standard stereotype of this was the self-righteous, hard-driven, old-maid New England school marm, armed with a hickory switch

and a copy of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essays. The reality was even more horrifying.

More could be said about Abolitionists and Abolitionism as a historical movement. It should be pointed out that the Abolitionist movement was not the same as the anti-slavery movement. The anti-slavery movement found supporters in the Northern states, but at one time had more societies in the Southern slave states than in the Northern free states. Many Southerners and Northerners were anti-slavery, but were not Abolitionists. The Abolitionists were extremists, radicals, and terrorists. Slavery was not to be merely opposed, but rather abolished — preferably with violence. By the end of the War of Abolitionism, they were tagged the Radical Republicans. During the Reconstruction Era, they sought to use the South as their political laboratory for devising their version of society.

William Faulkner’s novel, *The Unvanquished*, presents this story well. In that novel, Colonel John Sartoris fights to save his society, home, and land from, first, the invading Union army and, second, from the more dangerous carpetbagger government. Faulkner states our plight well through the mouth of Ringo, a slave in the *The Unvanquished*. Ringo comes home stating the Abolitionist position when he says, “I ain’t a nigger any more. I done been abolished.” Faulkner shows — through his powerful character Colonel Sartoris — that the end result of the millenarian, apostate Puritan, utopian Abolitionist scheme was to be the abolishing of the South, the Constitution, the American civilization, and the freedom and dignity of man. In exposing the designs of the Abolitionists, Otto Scott, Christian historian, created a lever that moved the intellectual world when he wrote his book *John Brown and the Secret Six*. The intellectual and academic world largely ignored the book. The elect found it and the rest were blinded.

The Abolitionists are still among us, raging as roaring lions. The goal is now to abolish history,

specifically, the history of the Southern Confederacy. Abolitionists, better than many Christians, understand the importance of symbols. So every symbol and vestige of heritage of the Old South must be abolished. Hence the Confederate battle flag must go, along with the statues of Confederate heroes, the street names honoring such heroes, and the memories of the Confederacy.

The Abolitionists tried to reeducate and reprogram the South. One hundred plus years of controlling government schools and imposing Yankee-fied textbooks on students has failed. Twelve bold Southern scholars and poets proclaimed that failure in the classic book, *I'll Take My Stand*. The high school boys who yearned for pickup trucks and deer season never read that book; but, thankfully, they didn't bother to read the textbooks either. Hank Williams, Jr.'s song "If the South Had Won, We'd Have Had It Made" and Charlie Daniel's "The South's Gonna Do It Again" did more to fortify Southern school boys in trusting the "fierce pull of blood" (to quote William Faulkner) than the schools did in erasing memory and heritage. The flags went on the license plates and baseball caps and the battle raged on.

The Abolitionists still insist on their religious superiority: The Confederate loss was the judgment of God (after all, they saw it in the watchfires of a hundred circling camps of Yankee marauders); Abraham Lincoln restored the Union and then died on Good Friday (and was resurrected in stone where he thoughtfully ponders current-day Washington); and most of all, the South was wrong because it was a slave society ruled by politically incorrect rich white male elitist racists. This last point is continually used to hammer the South. The Southerner bears the yoke of slavery like a dead and rotting albatross around his neck. Southerners who have never wronged a black man must feel guilty, the Abolitionists insist, because our ancestors owned slaves. The unforgivable sin of modernity is racism.

We cannot in this article begin the refutation of the Abolitionist creed. We will stand against slavery with the very same words that the Old and New Testaments used to attack "the sin of slavery." Let the hearer understand; the others can search their concordances. We will state our opposition to the enslavement of the black man, but will add to our opposition the enslaving of all Americans (via the IRS), drafting men for foreign police actions, and the imposition of government schools.

In the meantime, concerning the Confederate flag and other portions of the Confederate heritage, we

recommend the following: Fight for the cause — the flag, etc. — but not at the expense of the more important principles. Maintaining a godly family, having a doctrinally sound church, educating your children in a Christian day school or home school, spreading the gospel, and other aspects of the Christian life are more important than arguing over a flag waving over some small portion of Dixieland. Also, study the Confederacy and its Christian leaders — Robert E. Lee and Thomas Stonewall Jackson, in particular. Learn about the war — its causes, its battles, its results. As opportunity affords it, seek to win opponents over to the cause. Educate your fellow Southerners. Above all, remember that it is far more important that the Abolitionist embrace Christ than that he embraces the Confederacy. Having the truth, let's win them with love.



Ben House is Pastor of Grace Covenant Church and Administrator of Veritas School in Texarkana, Arkansas where he also teaches history and literature. He and his wife, Stephanie, have three children. He can be reached at jbhouse@txk.net.

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The Chalcedon Signature Conquering Culture For Christ

By Rev. C. L. "Smoky" Stover



SIGNATURE [Fr. From L. *signo*, to sign]: A distinctive identifying feature of the work of a particular entity.

CHALCEDON [*kal see don*, established 1964]: A Christian ministry working for godly cultural change across the entire spectrum of life.

Conquering Culture for Christ, that is our "The Chalcedon Signature," a distinctive identifying feature of Chalcedon's ministry. Scripture's mandate and Chalcedon's stated purpose require the perpetuation of that signature in the way of a continual conquering of culture for Christ.

A Multi-generation Task

Conquering culture for Christ is not the task of our generation alone nor any single generation. It is the work of every generation. Nor will any one generation complete the task. Yet each generation's work is foundational and preparatory for the next, as they inscribe "The Chalcedon Signature" upon their own time. That continuity of effectiveness is the beauty of an optimistic eschatology.

So, I write now, not of the tactics by which the mission is accomplished, but of the financing of the mission — an expected concern for Chalcedon's Treasurer. I write now, not just out of concern that immediate needs are met. I write because so many of us can, in the way of family wealth counseling, learn techniques which enable us in our own generation to lay the financial foundation by which the next generation in an even greater way can inscribe "The Chalcedon Signature" upon their own time.

They Just Didn't Know

Chalcedon's part in conquering culture for Christ is not limited by lack of opportunity. The opportunities are many. However, to move into these opportunities requires staff, facilities, equip-

ment, etc., which in turn requires financial resources. The generations before us could have helped supply these resources, but **they just didn't know**. They didn't know they could give to Chalcedon instead of the taxman. They didn't know they could employ financial vehicles to avoid capital gains taxes on appreciated stock and other assets or to see their investments grow tax free, or avoid estate taxes. They did not know about establishing family foundations with charitable ideals or how to pass the full value of their estate to their children without paying estate taxes or how to support numerous charitable organizations and causes while preserving wealth for their family in the process or that even simple preparations would have kept the state from receiving much of their assets. **They just did not know. Had they known**, Chalcedon could today be involved in many areas of effective ministry now untouched because of a lack of resources. *But now you do know.*

The Chalcedon Signature

That is why "The Chalcedon Signature." "The Chalcedon Signature" is an ongoing educational project designed to help you know, to know about covenant family wealth creation, preservation and transfer. We solicit your participation in "The Chalcedon Signature." Consider a referral for family wealth counseling to discuss your family's long-term financial goals. Participate in **Conquering Culture for Christ**.



C. L. "Smoky" Stover, long-time pastor of Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, CA, now interim pastor, also interim pastor of Reformed Heritage Church, San Jose, CA is a Trustee of the Chalcedon Foundation and the Foundation's Secretary-Treasurer. He can be reached at cstover@thevision.net.

Successful Wealth Transfer?

Trust and Communication: Why Heirs Lose Their Wealth

We have observed that 95% or more of wealthy families focus their wealth transfer planning almost exclusively on minimizing taxes and drafting appropriate documents. They think that by using the most sophisticated planning and tax reduction techniques and drafting airtight legal documents, they can insure the successful transfer of their wealth to their heirs. After such sophisticated planning, the wealthy must ask themselves this most important question, “Have we been truly successful in our wealth transfer plans if our heirs are not able to retain their inheritance?”

Recent studies have revealed some staggering statistics:

- 65% of the wealthy families have lost the family wealth by the end of the second generation
- 90% of these families will have lost their family wealth by the end of the third generation

It has been suggested that the primary culprit behind the disappearance of this wealth is the crippling estate taxes that are levied on wealthy American families.

However, Australia has almost exactly the same percentages as the U. S. Yet, Australia has one major difference: Australia has no estate taxes! Wealthy Australian families are still losing their wealth at virtually the same rate as wealthy American families. The United Kingdom has almost identical statistics as well.

Obviously, avoiding estate taxes does not insure the successful retention of wealth for the children or the grandchildren. So what is the reason for these pathetic results? The answer has nothing to do with how effectively you eliminate taxes or draft great legal documents. It has everything to do with *trust* and *communication* between parents and heirs. The following is an illustration of this point:

A father has never turned over the responsibility of managing the family’s multimillion-dollar investment portfolio to his sons.

“They could never manage money as successfully as I do,” the father thinks.

He’s correct. He’s correct now, and he’ll be correct after he’s dead. The sons will never learn to manage money because *Dad never trusted them to try or communicated* to them how to be effective money managers. So the first time the boys get their hands on the money, Dad, who could have been the best teacher and coach, is dead. He has left them adrift at sea with millions of dollars, no idea how to manage it and no one advising them. *No trust. No communication.* This is not an isolated example, unfortunately. It is almost routine among wealthy families.

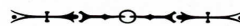
Another example is the Dad who never tells his children how much wealth the family has because he doesn’t trust them with that kind of sensitive information. They finally learn about the amount of wealth Mom and Dad have in the lawyer’s office after the last parent dies. They are completely ill prepared to manage the family’s wealth. *No trust. No communication.*

It is quite common among wealthy parents for their children to be resentful of that wealth. They see Dad as filled with greed, consumed with power, and living an opulent lifestyle. They see wealth as evil. They take the side of those who are down and out — the weak and the poor. They see their parents as the enemy. These children intentionally go to the other extreme in their lifestyles, rejecting this cursed disease of “affluenza.”

What they have never seen or understood is that their parents annually give over one million dollars away to help the poor in their community — a gift only made possible because of Dad’s brilliant business prowess. They do not know that Dad pays his employees very well and provides them with very generous benefits which give their families a better and happier life. The kids do not see any of this, and they just do not know. Why? They do not see, because there is *no trust, no communication.* Their parents have chosen not to include them in the charitable giving. The children do not understand how their family’s wealth can be used to help others.

If wealthy families are going to successfully keep their wealth in the family for future generations to enjoy and use for good, they must do more than simply implement financial techniques and strategies. This traditional approach to planning guarantees nothing except a 90% failure rate.

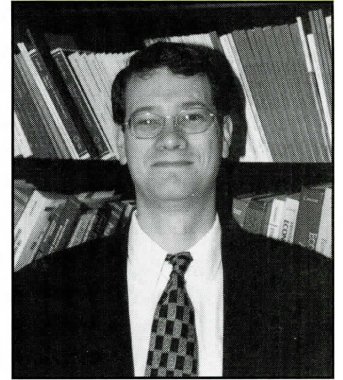
Family Wealth Counseling takes a radically different approach in helping wealthy families successfully pass on and retain their wealth for future generations. We do all the traditional kinds of planning as well. But what makes us unique is that we ask the “mission critical” questions that none of your other advisors have been trained to ask. This makes us an essential player on your planning team. If you haven’t gone through the Family Wealth Counseling process, there’s no time like the present.



Above item provided by Sells Financial Services, Inc., Family Wealth Counseling. Contact Chalcedon Treasurer C. L. “Smoky” Stover for further information. 209-551-1073 or cstover@thevision.net.

Recovering the “Family Wage”

By Timothy D. Terrell



Timothy 5:8 should be a sobering verse for husbands and fathers ruling over financially strapped households: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” In an age when the breadwinning function is most often shared by husband and wife, the thought of living entirely off the husband’s income sometimes seems a completely unattainable ideal. This is not entirely due to the irresponsibility of couch-potato husbands. Political, economic, and cultural pressures have combined to undermine the *family wage* — a wage high enough that a man earning it can provide adequately for himself and his immediate family.

There are two key contributors to the erosion of the family wage: 1) expansion of the state beyond its Biblical limits, and 2) the opening of market opportunities for women and children following industrialization. Here I will take each in turn, though state intervention into labor markets, corporate welfare, and other government-industry entanglements make it difficult to discuss the two independently.

The State vs. the Family Wage

Certainly the ever-larger slice of family income confiscated by the state has left many families wondering whether a single income can really provide for their needs. When the nation of Israel cried out for a king, the prophet Samuel warned that a high level of state taxation and spending was associated with the destruction of the family. “He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers ...,” he said, and an implied increase of military expenditures would result in men being taken from homes.

Indeed, a state operating outside its Biblical limits sees the family as a competitor to be suppressed. With a tax system based almost exclusively on taking a cut from visible market transactions (*e.g.*, a tax on payments from an employer, a tax on profits, a tax on sales receipts, etc.), the state has an incentive to increase the value of such transactions. Thus the state benefits in some sense from the destruction of

the home as a productive economic unit because what was once produced in the home is translated into market production, a more visible, quantifiable, and therefore more easily taxed form of production.

Home education, for example, has been replaced in large part by public schooling. Taxation to pay for this schooling requires families to generate dollars, which means that in-home, extra-market production must be replaced with a market wage. While in public schools, the state further undermines the family by teaching children that their parents are probably imbeciles, and the State Knows Best. Many statements from early public school advocates bear this out; perhaps one of the most blunt was that of John Swett, superintendent of the California public education system in the 1860s. Swett wrote, “[T]he child should be taught to consider his instructor ... superior to the parent in point of authority.... The vulgar impression that parents have a legal right to dictate to teachers is entirely erroneous.... Parents have no remedy as against the teacher.”¹

This view of parental incompetence typifies modern writing on education. Hillary Clinton’s *It Takes a Village* contains these overtones in several chapters, particularly those on child care and primary and secondary education. Guidance by the civil government is necessary, she suggests, to get inept parents back in line on education — meaning, of course, that the parents act in a subordinate and supportive role with respect to the public school. Instead of questioning the actions of teachers, parents should “back up school authority.” While teachers and principals are not always right, Mrs. Clinton confesses, they “deserve to be given back the presumption that they are.” What happened to the presumption that the parent was right, and that teachers and administrators should subordinate their actions to the preferences of the parents?

In response to this assault on the family, the home schooling movement has begun to reclaim education, and thereby part of the productive function of the family. As sociologist Allan Carlson notes, “Home education ... represents the return of a central func-

tion to the family.... [H]ome schooling families discover what it feels like to be 'reinstitutionalized.'"²

There are several other good examples of state encouragement of market labor for wives and mothers. A good case can be made that the U.S. government began to make concerted efforts to draw women into factories during World War II. Hence, it is not only the state that encourages women to be in the workforce now, but it was one of the main early causes as well.

The Feminization of Market Labor

Allan Carlson argues that women's entry into the labor force is a major reason the family wage has nearly disappeared in the last thirty years.³ Industrialization, with all its accompanying benefits, produced high-wage opportunities for women that tempted many families to compromise their home orientation. More women in the work force meant an increased supply of labor and lower wages for everyone. Husbands and fathers now found that supporting a family on one income was more difficult, because they were competing with their wives, daughters, and sisters.

Biblical cultural norms that placed a high value on child-rich families, and thus ordered a mother's priorities toward household production, gradually waned in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The final death throes of the family wage occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Until the late 1940s, businesses sometimes offered higher wages to men, or men who had families. This was not necessarily the result of a conscious effort by businesses to support families. Wage disparities between "career" women (who avoid family-building) and men are practically non-existent. Because of their consistent participation in the labor force, men may simply have been better able to develop their "human capital," or workplace skills, justifying a higher wage on economic grounds. Whatever the motivation of employers, this family-friendly policy was eliminated for good by the 1963 Federal Equal Pay Act, which made the practice illegal. Even so, from the 1940s through the 1960s, the family wage was still implicitly supported because men usually received the higher-paying jobs, while those women who entered the labor force became typists, clerks, nurses, and secretaries.

When the word *sex* was added to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this essentially destroyed one of the few remaining supports of the family wage. What was thought to be "gender-based job discrimination" was to be eliminated by the regulatory power of the federal government.⁴

Economists have contended that it is efficient to pay a wage that is equal to the contribution of labor to output *without eliminating any group from the population considered for the job*. If an employer discriminates,

that is, shows preference for some quality in employees other than those qualities that affect one's productivity, he will have to pay a higher wage for the privilege. So discrimination is inefficient for the firm, and a profit-minded employer will not practice it. An employer permitted to discriminate may wish to do so, but if all his competitors are drawing from a labor pool that includes women, he is placed at a competitive disadvantage if he selects from men only. Similarly, a man who wishes to support a family on his wage alone may find it difficult to do so because he is competing with women for his job, and his wages are consequently lowered. If his wife stays at home they may find themselves in poverty. So the individual employer and the individual employee have short-term incentives to contribute to the destruction of the family wage.

We cannot fault the market for these incentives. A market economy generates benefits by efficiently allocating resources toward consumer wants. If families resist the temptation to send women and children off to market work, the market is functioning well. If people do not resist this temptation, the market is still allocating resources towards consumer wants; *i.e.*, it still works well. In a market economy, wives and mothers may enter the workforce in great numbers. The *people* incur guilt by rejecting God's revealed law for families — the mechanism that allows them to achieve their goals does not.

It is worth noting that the entry of women into the workplace has contributed to a lower cost of market production and lower prices on many goods and services. The entry of women into the work force may have reduced prices, so that a family can enjoy a higher standard of living with a given income, but the cost may be steep: the removal of women from home-based occupations that are ultimately more productive.

Recovering the Family Wage

These concerns might lead some to advocate a federally mandated "living wage," or a minimum wage set at such a level that one earning it could feasibly provide basic necessities for a family. Politicians continue to cling to this "solution," though few economic policies are as demonstrably ruinous as wage and price controls. Rather than forcing employers to pay low-wage workers more than their labor is worth, employers simply refuse to keep workers on the payroll who cannot produce enough to justify their paycheck. Unemployment is the unambiguous result. Teenagers just entering the labor force are particularly hard-hit, so that their opportunities for building up a work history and savings for education and family are significantly reduced. Adults already

supporting families are denied the freedom to use even the few workplace skills they possess.

Recovering the family wage by resorting to state solutions is decidedly *not* the correct response. Apart from the fact that the state contributed so much to the problem in the first place, promoting a certain wage is not one of the state's Biblical responsibilities. Allan Carlson suggests tax credits for children, which is fine — any reduction in taxes would be nice. Also he suggests a return to income splitting for married couples. Again, on the same basis, that would be worthwhile. Certain federal, state, and local regulations should also be eliminated (such as zoning, which handicaps businesses that work out of the home).

However, Carlson also argues that we should “increase the progressivity of income tax rates, establishing five brackets, ranging from 10 to 50 percent.”⁵ The argument is that this would strengthen the family by encouraging families to produce things at home rather than earning income and purchasing those goods and services in the marketplace. This suggestion seems to me a failure to consider the broader issues at stake. Scripture clearly warns against high taxation,⁶ and though changing the structure of income tax may alter somewhat the incentives for an individual family in favor of home production, the real issue is the *level* of taxation. A large state operating outside its Biblical limits poses a real threat to the family. Carlson and others who want to buttress families through the state implicitly assume that strong families could not exist without the state in the first place. Families predate the state⁷ and are more fundamental to society.

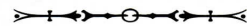
The most effective methods of recovering the family wage may be non-economic and non-political. Even after market opportunities for women opened up, the family wage was maintained for a time by commonly held cultural views grounded in a Biblical worldview. The prevailing view was that the father should be the breadwinner and head of the household, and the wife should look after the immediate needs of the children, manage the household, and minister to her husband. This idea meant that husbands discouraged their wives from working outside the home, wives didn't seek jobs outside the home, and businesses expressly preferred male candidates for most positions. The labor supply for market work was essentially limited to men, and the wage paid to men was enough to support their families.

Redeeming the Culture

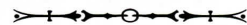
In conclusion, looking merely at the temporal pecuniary benefits to having women seek jobs (from

the family's point of view) and be hired (from the firm's point of view) neglects an important side effect of their entrance into the work force. If every family with children has both parents engaged in market labor, this will reduce the wage to the point where we may not see the strong families we would like to have in a society. In the presence of incentives for both employer and employee to bring women and children into the work force, it seems that the best approach is to work to redeem the culture and remove laws that give the state unbiblical power.

Ultimately, the solution lies outside of economics *per se* — in the spheres of social pressure, church exhortation and discipline, and family leadership. Business owners need to be told that it is morally OK to give unequal pay for equal work, or to prefer to hire family men (though it is advisable to refrain from acting on these preferences in the current legal climate). Men should be told, first, that they should wait until they are able to support a family before getting married, and second, that it is dishonorable to pressure the mother of their children to be a co-breadwinner. The church should remind mothers who feel such pressure that great rewards accrue to those who follow Biblical priorities.⁸ Finally, some families need to be encouraged to tolerate a lower standard of living on a father's income in order to preserve the integrity and purpose of the family.



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¹ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Messianic Character of American Education* (Philadelphia, 1963), 80, 81.

² Allan Carlson, “Will Family-Centered Education Strengthen Families?” *The Family in America*, 12:9 (September 1998), 6.

³ In passing over some of the destructive effects of high taxes and regulation, Carlson neglects the possibility that lower take-home pay due to taxation has produced dual-income households rather than the other way around. But Carlson's point is well-taken.

⁴ Allan Carlson, “Beyond the ‘Family Wage’ Quandary,” *The Family in America*, 8:12 (December 1994), p. 7.

⁵ *ibid.*, 10.

⁶ I Sam. 8:14-18.

⁷ Gen. 2:21-24.

⁸ Pr. 31:10-31; I Tim. 2:15.

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