

## ny Swanson's REVIEW OF *The Matrix*

Jeremy Swanson's **REVIEW OF** *The Matrix*



# CHALCEDON Report

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

## THE LIBERTY OF BIBLICAL LAW

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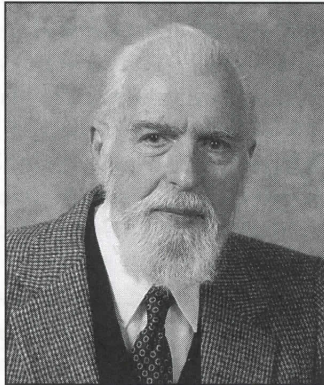
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# Can We Legislate Morality?

*By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony*

*(Reprinted from Law and Liberty, Ross House Books, 1984)*



A n oft-quoted statement has it that we can't legislate morality. We are told that it is useless and even wrong to enact certain kinds of legislation because they involve trying to make people moral by law, and this, it is insisted, is an impossibility. Whenever various groups try to effect reforms, they are met with

the words, "You can't legislate morality."

Now it must be granted that there is a measure of truth to this statement. If people could be made moral by law, it would be a simple matter for the board of supervisors or for Congress to pass laws making all Americans moral. This would be salvation by law. Men and nations have often resorted to salvation by law, but the only consequence has been greater problems and social chaos.

We can agree, therefore, that people cannot be *saved* by law, but it is one thing to try to *save* people by law, another to have moral legislation, that is, laws concerned with morality. The statement, "You can't legislate morality," is a dangerous half-truth and even a lie, because *all* legislation is concerned with morality. Every law on the statute books of every civil government is either an example of enacted morality or it is procedural thereto. Our laws are all moral laws, representing a system of morality. Laws against manslaughter and murder are moral laws; they echo the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Laws against theft are commandments against stealing. Slander and libel laws, perjury laws, enact the moral requirement, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Traffic laws are moral laws also: their purpose is to protect life and property; again, they reflect the Ten Commandments. Laws concerning police and court procedures have a moral purpose also, to further justice and to protect law and order. Every law on the statute books is concerned with morality or with the procedures for the enforcement of law, and all law is concerned with morality. We may disagree with the morality of a law, but we cannot deny the moral concern of law. Law is concerned with right and wrong; it punishes and restrains evil and protects the good, and this is exactly what morality is about. It is impossible to have law without having morality behind that law, because all law is simply enacted morality.

There are, however, different kinds of morality. Biblical morality is one thing, and Buddhist, Hindu, and Moslem morality radically different moral systems. Some moral laws forbid the eating of meats as sinful, as for example, Hinduism; and others declare that the killing of unbelievers can be a virtue, as in Moslem morality. For Plato's morality, some acts of perversion were noble forms of love, whereas for the Bible the same acts are deserving of capital punishment.

The point is this: all law is enacted morality and presupposes a moral system, a moral law, *and* all morality presupposes a religion as its foundation. Law rests on morality, and morality on religion. Whenever and wherever you weaken the religious foundations of a country or people, you then weaken the morality also, and you take away the foundations of its law. The result is the progressive collapse of law and order, and the breakdown of society.

This is what we are experiencing today. Law and order are deteriorating, because the religious foundations, the Biblical foundations, are being denied by the courts and by the people. Our American system of laws has rested on a Biblical foundation of law, on Biblical morality, and we are now denying that Biblical foundation for a humanistic one. From colonial days to the present, American law has represented Biblical faith and morality. Because it has been Biblical, our laws have not tried to *save* men by law, but they have sought to establish and maintain that system of law and order which is most conducive to a godly society.

Now, our increasingly humanistic laws, courts, and legislators are giving us a new morality. They tell us, as they strike down laws resting upon Biblical foundations, that morality cannot be legislated, but what they offer is not only legislated morality but *salvation by law*, and no Christian can accept this. Wherever we look now, whether with respect to poverty, education, civil rights, human rights, peace, and all things else, we see laws passed designed to *save* man. Supposedly, these laws are going to give us a society free of prejudice, ignorance, disease, poverty, crime, war, and all other things considered to be evil. These legislative programs add up to one thing: salvation by law.

This brings us to the crucial difference between Biblical law and humanistic law. Laws grounded on the Bible do not attempt to save man or to usher in a brave new world, a great society, world peace, a poverty-free world, or any other such ideal. The purpose of Biblical law, and all laws grounded on a Biblical faith, is to punish and restrain evil, and to protect life and property, to provide justice for all people. It is *not*



the purpose of the state and its law to change or reform men: this is a spiritual matter and a task for religion. Man can be changed only by the grace of God through the ministry of His Word. Man cannot be changed by statist legislation; he cannot be legislated into a new character. The evil will or heart of a man can be restrained by law, in that man can be afraid of the consequences of disobedience. We all slow down a bit on the freeway when we see a patrol car and we are always mindful of speed regulations. The fact of law and the strict enforcement of law are restraints upon man's sinful inclinations. But, while a man can be *restrained* by strict law and order, he cannot be *changed* by law; he cannot be saved by law. Man can be saved only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Now humanistic law has a different purpose. Humanistic law aims at saving man and remaking society. For humanism, salvation is an act of state. It is civil government which regenerates man and society and brings man into a paradise on earth. As a result, for the humanist, social action is everything. Man must work to pass the right set of laws, because his salvation depends upon it. Any who oppose the humanist in his plan of salvation by law—salvation by acts of civil government—is by definition an evil man conspiring against the good of society. The majority of men in office today are intensely moral and religious men, deeply concerned with saving men by law. From the Biblical perspective, from the Christian perspective, their program is immoral and ungodly; but these men are, from their humanistic perspective, not only men of great dedication but men of earnestly humanistic faith and morality.

As a result, our basic problem today is that we have two religions in conflict, humanism and Christianity, each with its own morality and the laws of that morality. When the humanist tells us therefore that "You can't legislate morality," what he actually means is that we must not legislate Biblical morality, because he means to have humanistic morality legislated. The Bible is religiously barred from the schools, because the schools have another established religion, humanism. The courts will not recognize Christianity as the

common law foundation of American life and civil government, because the courts have already established humanism as the religious foundation of American life. For humanism *is* a religion, even though it does not believe in God. It is not necessary for a religion to believe in God to be a religion; as a matter of fact, most of the world's religions are essentially humanistic and anti-theistic.

The new America taking shape around us is a very religious America, but its religion is humanism, not Christianity. It is a very morally minded America, but its ethics is the new morality, which for Christianity is simply the old sin. This new, revolutionary, humanistic America is also very missionary-minded. Humanism believes in salvation by works of law and, as a result, we are trying, as a nation, to save the world by law. By vast appropriations of money and dedicated labor, we are trying to save all nations and races, all men from all problems, in the hopes of creating a paradise on earth. We are trying to bring peace on earth and good will among men by acts of state and works of law, not by Jesus Christ. But St. Paul wrote, in Galatians 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Law is good, proper, and essential in its place, but law can save no man, nor can laws remake man and society. The basic function of law is *to restrain* (Rom. 13:1-4), not to regenerate, and when the function of law is changed from the restraint of evil to the regeneration and reformation of man and society, law itself begins to break down, because an impossible burden is being placed upon it. Today, because too much is expected from law, we get less and less results from law, because law is put to improper uses. Only as we return to a Biblical foundation for law shall we again have a return to justice and order under law. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 127:1).

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Cover design by Chris Ortiz/The Creation Group. Call (919)844-3688.



# Conversion or Coercion?

By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin



A fundamental truth of the Bible is that the nature of man can be changed only supernaturally. (By "nature," I mean ethical nature, in the sphere of right and wrong, not metaphysical nature, in the sphere of his constitution as a man made in God's image.)

The Bible flatly denies that man's nature can be changed by purely natural means (*Jn. 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 2:14*). Men are converted (turned around ethically) by regeneration. At regeneration, the Holy Spirit implants in man the holy disposition lost in the Fall into which all men are born (*2 Cor. 5:17*). This is the only way that man's nature can be changed. *If man is to change ethically, he must be converted.*

When men give up hope in the Bible, they must find other ways to attempt to change man's nature. The most frequent way is through coercion. The most consistent example of this is in modern communistic states. They believe in exposing man to certain external stimuli by which his internal nature can be altered. By pounding into him by means of propaganda the idea that the profit motive is evil for individuals (though not, apparently, for the state), they hope to create a New Man who will work for the good of the commune and the state rather than himself and his family. If men oppose and undermine this statism, they are to be reshaped in hellish gulags by being violently broken physically, emotionally, and psychologically, and then pieced back together to be good statist citizens. This is a reasonable assumption to anyone

who has abandoned hope in the miraculous work of regeneration. Mark it down: *any state, church, family, or other institutional authority that opts for coercion as a means to alter man's nature has given up hope in the God of the Bible.* This applies no less to fundamentalist legalists than to materialistic statist.

The Bible permits coercion in only a few, limited cases. The state may employ the sword (*Rom. 13:1-7*) to protect life, liberty, and property. (By implication, the state may use coercion to protect its citizens from foreign invasion.) The individual may use coercion to protect life and property (*Ex. 22:1-2*). Godly parents may employ limited corporal punishment to regulate children's external behavior (*Pr. 23:13-14*). None of this is designed to alter man's nature. Fines and restitution do not change a thief's nature any more than spanking changes a child's nature. Coercion can protect, at best, external order; it cannot alter man's nature. Only the Spirit of God can alter a man's nature.

It is not for inconsequential reason that the gospel of Jesus Christ is called the "gospel of peace" (*Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15*). It creates peace with God, peace within the individual, and peace between individuals and their fellows. Escalation of coercion and violence in the family, school, media, and the state is a mark of a godless, reprobate culture. When men are converted, only a minimum of coercion is required to hold their sinful impulses in check. The solution to widespread sin and apostasy is not widespread coercion, but rather widespread conversion.

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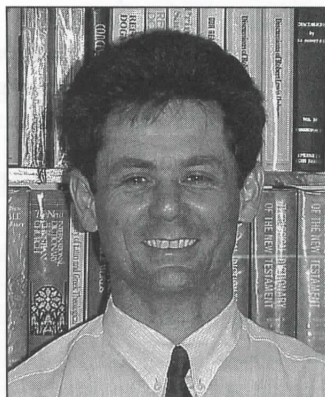
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# Boundaries and Liberty

By Derek Carlsen



A great hindrance in our thinking has been to equate the term “government” with the state, believing that all government falls under the jurisdiction of the state. Government, however, is a very broad concept and relates to the individual, the family, the church, business, and other areas, as well as to

the state. The state is only one small aspect within the whole picture of governmental authority. It is God and not the state Who is sovereign over all things; and God has set the boundaries for the legitimate functioning of the state—just as He has set the boundaries for everything else. We cannot ignore these boundaries without destroying our own liberty.

The solutions to most of the problems in our nation are not political because the authority and responsibilities that God has given to the political sphere are very limited. The modern state claims authority over everything—sport, culture, education, health, economics, welfare, private associations, business, individuals, information, technology, etc.—and wants to regulate all the details, saying that without their intense involvement such things would cease to have a meaningful existence. The state sees itself as god walking on earth. However, there is only one LORD of heaven and earth and the True LORD has not made the state the savior of mankind—God alone is the savior. The state’s authority has nothing to do with salvation; rather, it is restricted to the area of justice (*Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2:14*); and justice is actually a very narrow area of responsibility. In God’s system, many other areas of government exist that are beyond the limits of the state and are thus free from its regulation and control—self-government being the primary and essential form of government in God’s eyes.

Since God made all things (*Col. 1:16*), everything in the earth belongs to Him (*Ps. 24:1*). The creature cannot claim priority over the Creator and exalt his ideas about government above the One who owns and is the supreme governor of all things (*Isa. 9:6; Mt. 28:18-20*). All authority comes from God and, therefore, no person or institution has any *rightful* authority over other people unless it has been delegated by God (*Rom. 13:1*). God doesn’t just give power or authority without also specifying the boundaries for that power. The modern

state has taken the authority God has given it with respect to justice and has expanded it so that it now regulates and controls practically every area of life. The authority the modern state wields in any area other than justice and protection does not come from God and its claims to have a legitimate role in these areas are immoral.

The megastate claims absolute freedom and liberty for itself and is ultimately concerned only about its own freedom. While talking about its efforts to secure the freedom of others, it, in fact, ruthlessly deals with anyone who opposes its absolute claims of freedom—freedom to control and regulate every area of life, to make laws according to its own definition of right and wrong, and to tax anything it desires.

## The Source of Law and Authority

The most basic struggle we face as a nation is essentially religious, for it has to do with determining what/who is the source of law and authority. Who is able to define the boundaries that make liberty possible? The question is never, “Are we going to have boundaries and laws or not?” but always, “Whose boundaries and laws are going to have the final say?” Our answer to this question sets us upon a path of either liberty or oppression. It is vital that civil government rest upon an underlying sound and just moral structure, but who can provide such a structure?

We don’t want a fickle moral standard that changes with each new fad. It is neither the will of the “elite” planners nor the will of the 51% that is to determine what justice is. The standard of justice must be independent of and equally applicable to both the governors and the governed. Justice must rest upon an unchanging standard or else there is no basis for security and progress. Arbitrary and manipulative standards of justice make a mockery of the very term “justice.” If what is right can be overturned in a moment by the “elite” planners or by a 51% majority, a nation will be shaped by the principles of power, fear, and greed. The issue in justice is not trying to determine who is the underdog, but who is right (*Lev. 19:15*). Thus, justice ought to have one standard of right and wrong that is equally applicable to all people, no matter what their standing in society. God alone is able to supply a just standard whereby we can build a truly just social order. His standards and principles are designed to bring liberty and prosperity to people living in community, giving them genuine freedom, stability, and a basis for long-term progress.

## The Ungodliness of Centralization

Now, God, from the very beginning, has been opposed



to mankind establishing a big, centralized controlling agency. Babel was a project designed to unite everyone under one central governmental system, with the tower serving as the focus of their political and religious lives. God's swift judgment shows us that this whole system was the source of confusion rather than of godly development (*Gen. 11:9*). God broke up this centralized structure for the *benefit* of mankind, revealing that liberty and progress arise from a decentralized concept of authority and responsibility. This same principle of decentralization is seen in the nation of Israel. Though being a relatively small nation, God still divided its land among twelve tribes so no one tribe could dominate the whole nation.

God, in His wisdom, has limited the authority of the state to the area of justice and shown that judgment should essentially be carried out within small groups by locally known people who are recognised by those they judge as being just and honest. God's structure has judges who have responsibility over ten families, others who are responsible over fifty families, others over one hundred families, and still others over one thousand families (*Ex. 18:21, 22*). Here we have true representation and an appeals system. These elected leaders are to administer *justice* and not interfere in the many other areas of life. There are clear guidelines showing what kind of character these leaders are to have and, since it's all very localized, it is possible to know what kind of lives they are actually living. According to God, if a person's private life is immoral, he is incapable of holding a public office. God's structure works from the lowest level up to the higher ones. This means that commands and controls are not coming from higher up and being imposed upon the lower structures. The lower structures are where most of the judging is done and it is only when they are unable to resolve an issue that they refer the case up the chain. There is to be no dictating, controlling, or manipulating coming down the line from the top to the lower levels, as is so prevalent and accepted in modern politics. This is possible only when authority and responsibility are limited and leaders are truly accountable and known at the local level.

The present constitutional "discussions" start from a foundation that presupposes the legitimacy of the megastate. They then seek to make a few superficial modifications with the "help" of the rest of the nation. It is like telling someone that he is going to be involved in deciding what will be eaten today, when all he is really going to do is decide on which side of the plate the food is to be placed.

### **Individual Responsibility**

The constitutional route of my country, as it is, doesn't supply us with any real hope for the future because it is a document that rejects God's authority, ignoring His wisdom with respect to having a decentralized and limited civil government. Our only hope is to submit to the Lordship of Christ, bringing our every thought and

action into line with His revealed truth. Unless we are prepared to bring our own desires and ambitions into submission to Him, we will never be able to control the civil government. If we are not going to assume our own responsibilities and look to God to supply all our needs, we will look to the state for these things. Looking to the state appears to provide a quick fix to our problems; however, it has no real workable solutions and its involvement only exacerbates the situation. It is because *we* think the state is responsible to provide all our needs and change all that is wrong, that *it* can demand excessive taxes and paperwork and have excessive interference in our lives and activities. It is greed and a lack of self-government that leads people to justify the existence of the megastate. The prevalent mindset in our nation is that people believe that they are owed something and the state has the responsibility to make sure they receive what they are owed. Too many people are irresponsible and expect great rewards for little or no effort. Greedy and self-seeking politicians perceive this in people and use it to attain their own political ends. They buy votes with other people's money (taxes) by promising cradle-to-grave security for irresponsibility.

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We should challenge the legitimacy of the state's involvement in those areas that God has not specified and start the slow process of pushing back its encroachments by getting involved in the voting process. We must seek to publicize our desire for a small civil government that concerns itself with protection, providing justice, and allowing us to pursue our callings to the glory of God. Practically, we should encourage those who are disgruntled to vote and thus help bring about the changes they long for, discussing the principles of civil government with them so they can vote wisely. We need to take advantage of the channels that are available for getting our views heard—writing to the editors of newspapers and magazines and expressing our views at every opportunity, for example, on radio phone-in shows. At the same time, we need to be challenging the legitimacy of the megastate. We can even write to those in authority, telling them that we will not vote for a constitution that supports the



existence of the megastate. We should encourage God-fearing, capable people in our nation to run for political office, and we should support those who call for a very small civil government and who desire to reduce the state to being God's "minister of justice" alone. We must make it known that we do not trust people who want public office but who also support the megastate. Anyone who is *truly concerned* about justice and wants to *serve* the nation, rather than his own lusts, will reject the power and controls the modern state has amassed. We can make a difference if we cast ourselves upon the Lord and His wisdom. If we truly love justice, we will recognize our responsibility to be involved in bringing about a change in the political realm. This realm belongs to Christ and is under His authority just as much as any other area of His creation. To deny we have a responsibility to be involved in applying God's truth and justice in the

political realm is a denial of His Lordship. We are not to think that the solutions to our problems lie in the realm of politics—they do not! *All solutions are ultimately sourced in our relationship with Christ, i.e., submitting to His truth.* Shining the light of Christ into the political realm is only one aspect of our responsibilities; however, it is a very real aspect and one that has been woefully neglected by the church in our day. May we rise up and labor for true justice, peace, and prosperity, calling on the name of the Lord and bowing to His Lordship!

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## Chalcedon Vision Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

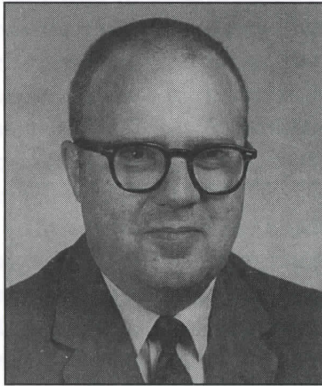


# The Spiritual Basis of Romanticism

By Forrest W. Schultz

(A brief examination of the motivation which led Rousseau to launch the romantic movement, based on the discussion in Allan Bloom's *Love and Friendship* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993])

## Romanticism Needs to Be Defined in Terms of Its Spiritual Basis



A clear understanding and accurate definition of romanticism is possible only in terms of its spiritual basis. Romanticism exists in a bewildering array of manifestations. If we focus our attention upon the manifestations and ignore the spiritual motivation underlying them, we will not be able

to grasp the real meaning of romanticism.

The best discussion of the spiritual basis of romanticism I have ever read is the one provided by Allan Bloom in his book *Love and Friendship* written in 1992 just prior to his death. (All page references below will be to his work.)

## Rousseau's Response to the Enlightenment

To understand the significance of romanticism we need to know how its founder, Jean Jacques Rousseau, responded to the movement known as the Enlightenment. Unlike Protestantism, which revolted against the distortions of Christianity by trying to recover real Christianity, the so-called Enlightenment rejected real Christianity as well as distorted Christianity and developed a philosophy of mechanistic materialism in which God was either wholly absent or, at best, assigned a minimal role. Now Rousseau also rejected Christianity and accepted the Enlightenment's philosophy, but he wanted to avoid the consequences of doing so. That is, Rousseau did not want a "disenchanted" world: he did not want a world consisting only of randomly moving atoms, and he did not want a world devoid of poetry and purpose and love (88f.). Rousseau rejected Christianity but he could not accept the barrenness of no religion at all; so he invented his own religion (62f.). That religion was

romanticism, which sought to reinject into life the religiosity which the Enlightenment was suppressing (74).

## Sublimation

If, as the Enlightenment philosophers thought, the only reality is matter in motion, then there is nothing sublime about reality. Rousseau believed this, but he also wanted to have a realm of the sublime. Therefore, he launched the romantic movement in order to *create* the sublime. The sublime was to be *produced* by the poetic imagination as it set forth lofty goals toward which men could strive. This is Rousseau's version of sublimation. (By the way, according to Bloom, it was Rousseau, not Freud, who was the founder of sublimation theory and the one who coined the term.) Rousseau recognized that men were naturally selfish, but he did not accept the Christian doctrine of sin and salvation. Therefore, he thought that through the right kind of education into the sublimated goals a new man and a new Paradise could be created (51ff., 61-63, 137). The Enlightenment had destroyed belief in the reality of an eternal transcendent world. Rousseau tried to recreate a transcendent world through imagination (138). Sublimation would loft the ideal and freedom would reach it (137).

Perhaps the best example, and the one most stressed by Rousseau himself to illustrate this point, pertains to his romantic view of sex and marriage. Rousseau wanted to do away with God and the Biblical commandments, yet he also wanted to preserve the sacred character of sexuality (64), marital love and fidelity (43), and the exalted character of the family with its traditional male/female role distinctions (108, 123). Some of early romanticism's ideals, such as this one, were borrowed from Christianity. However, they were chosen, not because they were authorized by God, but because they happened to suit the person choosing them. Romanticism in its later, decadent stage, turned away from this ideal of sex, love, and marriage.

## Romanticism as a Religion to Replace Christianity

To really understand romanticism requires that we recognize it, as Rousseau did, as a religion to replace Christianity. Rousseau wanted some of the fruits of Christianity, but not its Root, Jesus Christ. He did not want to be a branch grafted onto the True Vine. Rather, he wanted himself and his romantic movement to be the vine, believing that they could bring forth fruit without abiding in Christ.



According to Bloom, Rousseau understood himself to be a rival of Jesus and his writings to be a rival of the Bible (158). Rousseau wanted a “natural” religion, meaning one accessible to all men using their own natural faculties unassisted by revelation (75). Rousseau’s God is not the real self-existent God, Jehovah, revealed in the Bible, but a God *postulated* by man, similar to the God in Kant’s philosophy, which is a postulate of the practical reason. In fact, according to Bloom, Kant’s conception of God’s being a postulate of man was strongly influenced by Rousseau (83n). Kant’s “postulation” is really just Rousseau’s sublimation clothed in rationalistic garb. It sounds very sophisticated and very rational, but it is actually just as subjectivistic as sublimation. Indeed it *is* sublimation expressed as a philosophy.

In the Christian Faith, one believes in God, Who exists objectively; one focuses one’s attention upon God, not upon himself; and one humbles himself before God in recognition of the dignity of God. But for Rousseau, the focus is upon the sincerity of the believer, and upon the dignity, subjective certainty, and legislative power of the believer and upon his personal feelings (75, 79). In Christianity, sincerity means being faithful to God, but for Rousseau sincerity means being true to yourself. Rousseau’s religion, according to Bloom, is the religion of “the godless subjective self” (165). From this developed the “cult of sincerity,” in which the sincerity with which one held a belief was regarded as more important than the content of the belief.

Rousseau’s cult of sincerity explains his ambiguous attitude toward the Enlightenment conception of religious tolerance. On the one hand, Rousseau is impressed with the Enlightenment belief in religious tolerance and its concern over the horrors produced by the intolerance of the medieval period. But, on the other hand, he also *praises* the intolerance of fanaticism for its sincerity, its self-forgetting character, and its devotion to a cause, which appear as admirable qualities in contrast to the selfish indifference of Enlightenment toleration. In short, Rousseau preferred fanatics, because at least they care about something and are sincere. This cult of sincerity became prominent among the nineteenth-century romantics, such as Stendhal (85f., 166, 175).

Pascal had said, based on his Christian faith, that boredom was the result of a life lived without God. But the romantics attributed boredom to ordinary daily living, and they sought relief from this boredom in the excitement of drama peopled with characters willing to die for a cause or to die for their beloved (183f.). As the romantic movement progressed, the boredom of daily life came to be identified with morality, so that eventually it was believed that the good thing, the exciting thing, to do was to revolt against morality. In short, the exciting person, the interesting person had become the immoral person (167f.).

In the religion of romanticism, one experiences ennui if he lacks a dramatic devotion to a lover or to a cause.

In this romantic religion it is regarded as the heroic thing to do to gain your “true love” at all costs, even if this requires violating morality—for instance, committing adultery, as Emma Bovary did in the novel by the famous romantic author, Flaubert. The contrast between this romantic theology and the Christian theology is stark indeed. Emma Bovary thought her ennui was caused by the absence of a man, not by the absence of God (211).

Bloom notes that Flaubert’s novel contains no counterpoising figure to show that Emma’s choice was wrong. Thus, he makes it appear that Emma’s decision was the only possible alternative to the conventional order. By depicting vice as attractive, the book undermines public morals and religion. Now, to be sure, there is indeed a crisis in society. But writers like Flaubert have no answer for it, no positive example of what to do about it. All they can do is condemn modern society for its failures; they know of no alternative with which to replace it (227f.). The only kind of Christianity they depict in their books is a debilitated version. They do not show real Christianity as having an answer (218). So, they end up with no answer.

And not only do these later romantics end up with no answer; they even undermine the ideal of marital fidelity, with which Rousseau began the romantic movement. Indeed, as romanticism developed, it degenerated into ever more sexual decadence, as Camille Paglia showed in her excellent study, *Sexual Personae*. (See the author’s review in *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1994.)

## The Failure of Romanticism

Bloom aptly summarizes and contrasts the failures of both the Enlightenment and of romanticism. He says that the Enlightenment was a dull materialism—it had no uplift. In contract, romanticism was a vapid spirituality—it had no foundation (216). Romanticism failed because its goals were imaginary and illusory objects formed by poets who tried to make something out of nothing. The rope they made to pull men up was not attached to anything (61f.).

This rope analogy is reminiscent of Cornelius Van Til’s analogy of the futility of trying to climb out of water using a ladder made out of water. And Rousseau’s sublimation of a higher imaginary realm is reminiscent of Francis Schaeffer’s depiction of Kantian and existentialist thought as an “escape from reason” by means of a “leap of faith” into an “upper story.” By showing that romanticism was a rival, anti-Christian religion and that it strongly influenced Kant’s philosophy, Bloom has done us a great service. What he has shown us about Rousseau strengthens Schaeffer’s proof that Kantian philosophy is radically unbiblical. It now should be crystal clear that Kantian philosophy is really an anti-Biblical theology: no longer can anyone maintain that it is simply a rational disinterested attempt to relate science and theology or



that it is a means of protecting Christianity from attacks by science. By showing that the Kantian postulation of God is actually a romantic religious sublimation, Bloom has unmasked the pretentiousness and pseudo-sophistication of Kantian philosophy. And it is now even clearer than before that the Kantian scheme, like the romantic scheme, was bound to fail, since it was not founded on God, but on the vain imaginations of men.

Although romanticism glorified the artistic imagination, it is interesting to observe that as the movement unfolded, it seemed to be less and less able to imagine what a truly good person—a true hero—would be like. Consequently it began more and more to make heroes out of criminals and immoral people, thereby preparing the way for its replacement by the debased twentieth-century aesthetical scene: “Modern Art” and the “naturalistic” novel. But, even when romanticism was at its peak in its pristine beginnings, the very best its writers could do, as Bloom says of Flaubert’s character, M. Homais, was to look back at history and take the best out of its actors; that is, they themselves could make no

original contribution to history nor could they in their own lives imitate these heroes, as the saints imitated Jesus (217). As Schaeffer has said of humanists generally, they were living off the capital accumulated during the Christian past.

This capital—this momentum—has now just about run out. This is the reason for the popularity of deconstructionism. As Bloom puts it, “contemporary high cultural life . . . can only deconstruct—it cannot construct or reconstruct” (24).

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*Mr. Schultz is a Biblical world-and-life researcher who has been a Reconstructionist since 1977. He has a B.S. in Chemical Engineering (Drexel University) and a Th.M in Systematic Theology (Westminster Theological Seminary). He recently began one of his most ambitious projects: a history of the contemporary Christian Reconstruction movement, for which he would appreciate any input from anyone having pertinent information. He can be reached at 703 West Grantville Road, Grantville, GA 30220. Tel. No. 770-583-3258.*

## Report on the 1999 Chalcedon National Conference in Dallas, Texas

The conference was held at Christ Covenant Church in Dallas, Texas on November 5-6, 1999. The conference was entitled “The Defense of Historic Christian Orthodoxy: Why the Church Must Contend for the Faith.” The speakers were Andrew Sandlin, Monte Wilson, Steve Schlissel, and Colonel Doner.

If you did not attend the 1999 Chalcedon National Conference, the question is, why? I will have to admit that I was not sure what to expect. Being a reader of the *Chalcedon Report*, I was familiar with the writings of the conference speakers. However, I was somewhat expecting a rather dry reading from a number of academic papers. But this was not the case. Take Colonel Doner’s presentation, for instance—anything but dull. Quick-witted, spontaneous, extremely funny (he could sub for Jay Leno!)—and yet, he still was able to present the many facets (and dangers) of gnosticism. Steve Schlissel’s style could not have been more different—his speech on the need for the restoration of fatherly authority was laced with a very dry wit. Andrew Sandlin gave a straightforward presentation on the dangers of theological primitivism (*i.e.*, wanting to be a “New Testament” church, viewing the history of the church as “one vast corruption”). Monte Wilson presented the need for a return to a Classical Christianity, a faith that is all-encompassing, orthodox, and “catholic” (universal).

Best of all, there was plenty of time to actually meet and converse with the speakers, and with fellow attendees, many who were from Texas, but who were also from surrounding states, and California—even Canada was represented.

If you were not able to make it to the conference, you missed an opportunity to be challenged and motivated by four excellent Reformed Christian speakers. However, all is not lost. There will be audiocassette tapes of the conference, and there is now available the book *Keeping Our Sacred Trust* which contains all of the papers presented at the conference (available from Chalcedon—email [sburns@goldrush.com](mailto:sburns@goldrush.com) for more information). And please make plans to attend future Chalcedon conferences. I hope to see you there!

Matt Bynum  
San Antonio, Texas



# The Importance of Old-Fashioned Worship

## ... the Whole Family Worshipping Together at Church

By Paul D. Lindstrom



At the Church of Christian Liberty, we believe in the whole family worshipping together at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. That's old fashioned, I know, but it is important. We have an age-graded Sunday school hour, with classes for young and old alike. Other activities of the week are especially

designed with the children and young people in mind—especially our K-12<sup>th</sup> grade Christian day school program. But for Sunday worship, we want the whole family together.

Now there are times, of course, when infants and younger children need special nursery attention. Perhaps sleep is necessary. A child that continues to cry surely requires help. Perhaps diapers need to be changed. Visitors regularly attend who are accustomed to a nursery. We have a nursery for these very reasons. However, we like to see the whole family together for worship—babies and all. If the children make a little noise from time to time, so be it. The family is together in God's presence, and the children are learning.

### How Churches Undermine the Family

Families today spend so little time together. The churches of our land have greatly contributed to this problem over the past 30 years. Church calendars are filled with too many activities that separate the family all during the week. On Sunday mornings, that separation continues with children's church, junior church, teen church, etc. No wonder our families are having problems!

In C. S. Dobbins' book, *The Church Book*, the author states: "A mark of the decadence of our civilization is the decline of family worship. Its revival would be one of the most significant signs of spiritual recovery." Yes, how very important it is to have family worship—at home and at church. The church down through the ages realized this, including America's founding fathers, and it is only within recent years that the worship service has been "compartmentalized." As a young child I sat with Mom and Dad in church and, although there were many things I did not understand at that early age, the impressions received and lessons learned will never be forgotten. I am

convinced that these important lessons could not have been duplicated in any other way.

In 1923, Dr. Newton Hall stated: "On Sunday let the entire family unite. A finer home atmosphere will be found where this custom is kept." Today, as we see so many pressures applied to divide our families, may we as Christians do all we can to keep the family together for Sunday worship. It truly leads to a finer home atmosphere, especially as the parents take the time to discuss the worship service, songs, and messages with the children during the week.

A Baker Book House publication (1960), *The Minister in Christian Education*, has these words by its author, Peter Person:

The fact that three generations sleep under the same roof and eat at the same table does not mean that they constitute a homogenous group. Grandparents and grandchildren may be at the opposite ground of coexistence. Modern Christian education has been guilty of dividing and subdividing our churches and our families until we have become as strangers to one another.

Such is truly the case. And worship is one key area of subdivision that must be brought together.

*Our Church Plans for Children* is the title of a manual on administration by Lois Blankenship, printed by the Judson Press of Valley Forge. She says:

There also are common needs and interests of children, youth and adults, which should be shared in experiences of corporate worship. It is good for children to experience the fellowship of the entire church family at worship, of sitting as a family in the church sanctuary, of standing with heads bowed in prayer beside the men and women of the congregation.

Yes, this is an experience of infinite value.

Lois E. LeBar, a professor of Christian Education, has written as follows in her book, *Children in the Bible School*:

There is one scene which shall never be erased from my memory. It is as vivid today as it was in the days when I sat in the little country church by my grandmother's side. For a brief two years of my childhood, I lived near by grandmother and attended the same church. For the most part it was a community of devout Christians.



There seemed to be nothing short of death that could keep grandmother from attending services on Sunday. Not only was she there, but always among the very first few to arrive. She had her pew, as was the custom, and immediately on entering she went to her accustomed place. No, she didn't sit down and look around or visit with others who happened in early. She sat with head bowed and two little old wrinkled hands over her eyes. I can see her yet. There she sat pouring out her heart to God and preparing herself for the message which was to follow. It seemed so long as I waited for her to raise her head, that I might talk to her. But even then, somehow, without words she made me understand that church was a place to worship in quietness and not to converse.

Miss LeBar continues, "Children are especially sensitive to feelings. They often understand feelings in an adult worship service although they may comprehend little of the terms used and the underlying facts."

### What Children Remember

For more than twenty years, Robbie Trent served as a Sunday school teacher. She has come to some very definite conclusions as they relate to young children and, in her book, *Your Child and God*, she shares many of her thoughts. Listed below are several ideas which result from her years of experience:

But the church service proper—is that for the child? Often he cannot understand the sermon. Sometimes he likes to listen to the preacher, sometimes he does not. So run the objections. Yet usually these are not the child's objections, but the objections of some adult. Honestly, now, have you ever heard a criticism like that from a child, unless he had caught it from an adult?

From his experiences in church the child gets a sense of something big, something worthwhile, a feeling of Somebody so great, so powerful, so loving that people come together to think about Him and talk about Him and to speak with Him. God is important. Grownups think so, too.

The child absorbs easily certain attitudes and concepts both from the things he hears and from the things he feels as he sits with his father and mother in the church service. Even though he may not understand the words of the hymns, for instance, he gets a very real sense of well-being from the music and from the worship of those who meet together.

Sitting by mother and father in church where people speak often of God, the child comes to associate them with the thought of God and to feel that they have a relationship with God. "My mother and father know God," he feels. "I want to know Him, too."

From the hymns of the church the little child catches a feeling. I grew up in a church that used stately old hymns, many of them with words and concepts that I could not understand. But I got a very real feeling from some of those hymns, a feeling that grew into a conviction.

The child hears Bible-reading at church—quite often beautiful Bible-reading. This is no small thing. There is music and strength and power in the words of the Bible. There is wisdom and gentleness and love. I shall always remember with gratitude one old minister under whom I sat for some months. I have forgotten his sermons, but I shall never forget the way he repeated the words of the Psalmist.

From a group of worshipping people deep in the experience of God's presence, the sensitive soul of a child catches something. He is influenced by that atmosphere. He, too, may feel that presence.

I stopped in a little chapel one day with three children. We were driving by and they wanted to see the inside. It was quiet, and the simple beauty of the little room spoke of men and women who had been very near God there. We tiptoed about and came out silently. When we got home, the mother inquired, "Whom did you see?"

"Nobody," said the oldest boy.

"Mrs. Jones," replied the twelve-year-old girl who had waved to a friend across the street.

"Jesus," said three-year-old Virginia. When we stared at her in amazement she explained, "Don't you remember? There in the little church."

Silently I recalled every word spoken during the drive. There had been no mention of Jesus. The symbols of that little chapel were unfamiliar to the child, but there had been a spirit there. Virginia had caught it.

We who covet for every child an increasing knowledge of God would do well to heed Robbie Trent's words. I do believe that "united" worship will be used of God to bring young boys and girls of our church to an early entrance into a personal, saving relationship with God through grace by faith. It will also greatly strengthen our families.

Dwight L. Moody wrote:

I have just come from the house of mourning, and my heart was touched as I saw the mother lying in her coffin, and her oldest little girl, about twelve years old, that she has been trying to lead to Christ; and a few months ago, she wrote back from Chicago to her friends in this city that she thought she had found peace in the Savior. She was rejoicing in her children's salvation. Little did she think that day she would soon be laid away in the grave. Do you think she regretted her faithfulness with those children?

There are many of us who think our children are too little to be blessed. To me there is no more beautiful sight than a father and mother coming into a meeting with their children, and lifting up their hearts silently in prayer that the blessing may come on their children.

Yes, the promises of God are to us and to our children. May we parents take advantage of every opportunity to see our children grow in grace, including family worship on Sundays.



There is a time and a place, as already noted, for using the church nursery. However, I would agree, generally speaking, with the words of Colleen Dedrick, as found in *The Little Book of Christian Character and Manners*:

Church nurseries are a detriment to training little children. Let's face it, babies and children are put in nurseries because they are noisy and do not sit still. How will a child ever learn if he is not made to learn quietness and practice it in public? Teach your babies to observe periods of quietness during the week, train them to respond to your commands to be still and quiet and they will be able to sit in the worship service with you on Sunday. Also, the courtesy of quietness is needed in many everyday situations, whether at grocery stores, Aunt Sally's house, doctor's offices, etc. This is showing respect for other people.

I praise the Lord for the special concern for children that He has laid upon our hearts. May God bless each of the little and precious ones He has given to our church family.

---

*Recognized as one of the pioneers of Christian home education, Dr. Paul Lindstrom serves as Co-pastor of the Church of Christian Liberty and Superintendent of Schools of the Christian Liberty Academy Satellite Schools system. Many know him best as the former National Chairman of the Remember The Pueblo Committee and for his efforts to secure the release of missionaries, POWs, and MIAs in Southeast Asia.*

*After graduating from the University of Illinois and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, "Pastor Paul," as his students call him, taught in the Chicago public schools. Dr. Lindstrom founded the Christian Liberty Academy in 1968 and began to organize the Satellite Schools system in 1970.*

*Continuing with his own studies, Rev. Lindstrom received his Doctor of Education degree in 1985, and his Doctor of Law degree in 1994. He has been honored by the Governor of Illinois, the Illinois House of Representatives, the Republic of Free China, and the Romanian-American National Congress.*

*He has traveled extensively in the Middle East and has authored the book Armageddon: The Middle East Muddle. His most recent book, Four Days in May . . . Storming the Gates of Hell, is a Biblical defense of the pro-life movement. He has written articles which have appeared nationally.*

*Paul Lindstrom is a frequent public speaker and has been a guest on many TV and radio programs throughout the nation. His series "No Place Like Home" can be heard daily on the nationwide Family Radio. He has also conducted his own daily radio broadcasts in Chicago and nationwide.*

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# Letters on the Regulative Principle of Worship and Post-Secondary Government Education

Dear Rev. Sandlin:

After an absence of several years, I am back on the mailing list for the *Chalcedon Report* and received my first copy this month. It was with great sadness I discovered Rev. Schlissel's articles against the Regulative Principle were being published there.

I was aware of Rev. Schlissel's writings, having been sent copies by a friend who also considers himself a reconstructionist. But it is Chalcedon's publishing of these articles that deepens my concern.

Being a reconstructionist within the \_\_\_\_\_ was always a challenge. We who would have emphasized Van Til's apologetics and the theonomy that they lead to were always faced with a more basic problem—at least I was. It is pointless to attempt moving forward in emphasizing theological consequences of a theology that no one cares about in the first place. Reconstructionists in Presbyterianism always find themselves first emphasizing the Confession and enforcing the oaths taken by pastors to uphold it because only with honest men can a forward-looking theology take hold.

Confessional subscription is thus basic to the reconstruction movement in Presbyterianism and, to a greater and lesser extent, it has been reconstructionists who are attempting to hold the denomination to its standards. The inside cover of the *Chalcedon Report* declares that a reconstructionist "holds to . . . the great Reformed confessions." It is in this sense that I always understood the first two of the five points of reconstruction—Calvinistic soteriology and covenant theology.

However, if these two points did not stand for fidelity to one of the Reformed confessions, then I have badly understood the movement. I assumed that we were building upon a Reformed foundation when, in fact, these two points were meant to be reductionary. The appearance of Rev. Schlissel's articles not only contradicts Chalcedon's published position (all of the Reformed confessions share the Regulative Principle), but gives great occasion for the enemies of God to blaspheme as they mock the confessional fidelity of the "reconstructionists."

Furthermore, if Christian reconstruction is theonomic only in terms of the second table of the law, and antinomian in terms of the first table, it is a kingdom divided against itself.

Rev. Rushdoony's writings have obviously been very influential. I have heard that his health is not good, and for that I am truly sorry. Every movement has its heirs, and the heirs are not always faithful to the first principles. Luther had his Melancthon and what bears his name was changed in important ways.

I ask you therefore to resolve this conflict within the doctrinal testimony of Chalcedon. Is Rev. Rushdoony's position anti-regulative? If it is not, is this now Chalcedon's position? How else can you justify publishing Rev. Schlissel's articles?

I would call Rev. Rushdoony's attention to the text of 1 Kings 1:18-20: "And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king. . . . And thou my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him."

The Biblical refutation of Rev. Schlissel's writings I will leave to others, only commending Brian M. Schwertley's "critique" to your attention, as well as John Knox's sermon published in pamphlet form: *True and False Worship*, by Presbyterian Heritage Publications, P. O. Box 180922, Dallas, Texas 75218.

Because of the public nature of this debate, I intend to share this letter with several friends who have written me, or with whom I have otherwise discussed the situation. I hope you won't mind.

Sincerely in Christ,

---

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks so much for your letter. First, I want to express appreciation for your faithfulness within the \_\_\_\_\_. We at Chalcedon are deeply grateful for all of the men in conservative Presbyterian and other Reformed denominations holding high the banner of historic, confessional Calvinism. I preached at Bridwell Heights in Kingsport, Tennessee a couple of months ago. This is one of the many exemplary Reformed churches dotting the land. They and others like them—and individuals like you—are powerfully defending and disseminating the Faith, and we here at Chalcedon are truly grateful.

I don't want to turn this letter into a debate over the Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW) or strict confessional subscription. Rather, I want to correct what I consider to be some evident misunderstanding about Chalcedon's views. You expressed concern that a movement's "heirs are not always faithful to the first principles." This is a concern we all share, but I can assure you that on these issues, your concern is unfounded. Rushdoony is no strict confessional subscriptionist, having for decades argued that WCF 19:4 undercuts theonomy. In other words, he has held that it is not possible to affirm theonomy and the WCF at 19:4. Further, he has been no devotee of a strict practice of the RPW. Indeed, in his recent interview on the Ten Commandments he expressed his view that the Second Commandment does not forbid pictures of Christ. Several gold crosses adorn the Chalcedon Chapel; in



our worship, we sing not only Psalms, but also hymns that are accompanied by a piano and sometimes an organ; and, further, we have often published a Christmas issue of the *Chalcedon Report*.

You quote 1 Kings 1:18-20 with the implication that Rushdoony is unaware of the position of those of us presently leading the organization. This is far, far from the truth. He has read, thoroughly enjoyed, and agrees with Schlissel's viewpoint—as I do.

You state, "The appearance of Rev. Schlissel's articles . . . contradicts Chalcedon's published position." This is incorrect. We hold to the form of doctrine expressed in the great Reformed confessions. This does not mean that we hold that the Reformation confessions are infallible. I myself have sometimes been charged as a "closet Catholic," so strongly do I hold to the tradition expressed in the Reformation confessions. Whether the WCF, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Savoy Declaration, or the Thirty-Nine Articles, we believe in the form of doctrine they articulate. To assert, however, that historically conditioned confessions are beyond any criticism of any kind is to ascribe to them an authority that their framers would never permit. We agree wholly that the call to confessional subscription in the Reformed and Presbyterian denominations is a valid and necessary call. I myself have argued this point frequently and forcefully. But we must be willing to cautiously consider the notion that our forebears were not infallible at every point.

One thing that has always impressed me about Rushdoony's outlook has been his catholicity not only of spirit, but also of theology. He has an appreciation for all sectors of conservative, orthodox Christianity. In the first chapter of his book, *The Foundations of Social Order*, is a masterly defense of the inescapability of confessionalism. It is not, therefore, correct to speak of a "conflict within the doctrinal testimony of Chalcedon." Indeed, to argue for a strict interpretation of the RPW or of confessional subscription would be to depart from Rushdoony's and Chalcedon's decades-long course.

I don't mind at all your having shared your letter with a number of people, but I simply request that you send to each of them a copy of this present letter.

Again, I am deeply grateful for you and all of those other brethren that have stood staunchly for the Faith. We want to stand with you and work shoulder to shoulder in advancing the kingdom of God.

Sincerely yours,  
P. Andrew Sandlin  
Executive Director

P. S. I neglected to mention something about the implication of our being antinomian with respect to the first table of the law. This is simply incorrect. The fact that we do not hold to certain interpretations of the RPW does not imply that we do not support the godly enforcement of the first table. Rushdoony's Institutes of Biblical Law (all three volumes) makes this abundantly clear.

Dear Sirs:

As you will be able to see, I am just now catching up on my *Chalcedon Report* reading, which I thoroughly enjoy as always. I would like to briefly editorialize *generally* on your "Christian Education" issue (April 1999). I agree with the articles and hope they reach the widest audience among Christians. Why, in the midst of all the "conservative" and Christian commentary on the Colorado school murders, did no one ask (assuming that a few of the victims were indeed Christians, as reported): What were Christians doing in that (or any) government school and why were parents putting them there? This is surely one reason why modern Christendom is weak. But let me ask a further question, an issue not raised in (and not the immediate subject matter of) your education issue: Why do Christians have such apparent faith in modern higher education (modern colleges and universities)? Perhaps in our not yet reconstructed world there are a few more legitimate reasons to send our kids to public/private-secular/false Christian colleges than to public enemy elementary/secondary schools. But not many. Therein lies a problem. We are developing a theology of education but *not* applying it to *higher* education. I know that there will be situations for a while where the public college is the only alternative for such studies as engineering or nursing or some such area. (By the way, I also readily acknowledge that college is not and should not be for everyone—on-the-job training, apprenticeships, etc. being excellent alternative methods for a vast array of callings. However, can we say this about the study of philosophy, or history, or literature, for example, setting aside for the moment the kind of college we may advocate?) The problem is plain and simple: Too many Christians, including so-called Reconstructionists, are sending their children to "Egyptian" or "Greek" universities, rather than the schools of "Israel" *even when they do not have to*—that is, to say, even when the field of study is within the scope of a *true Biblical* college. We will not gain victory this way. If someone argues that this is a self-serving statement for the "advertisement" of Christ College, I would respond that it is only in part; I would advocate all true Biblical colleges (although they are exceedingly few because Christians bypass them for a mess of government-approved accreditation pottage, which, by the way, is one of the biggest modern lies undergirding modern higher education). My point? Let's start applying our correct philosophy of Christian education to *all* levels, including higher education. We need to build alternative colleges and universities *and* then use them. Will this take time? Of course. No Biblically-thinking Christian would ever use lame (that is, unjustified) excuses for the legitimacy of public high schools. Why should such excuses be used to legitimize public/secular/not-really Biblical-so-called-Christian colleges/universities? The reconstruction of higher education is no less a worthy task than the reconstruction of other levels of education; it's time to stop talking about how good it would be to do that and to start doing it, beginning with every Christian parent and college-bound child.

Sincerely for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom,  
Kevin L. Clauson, M.A., J.D., President, Christ College  
(Lynchburg, VA)



# Letter to the Editor on James Dobson and Public Education

Dear Rev. Sandlin,

Thank you for teaching on the issue of Christian education—you are one of the Elijahs mentioned in the letter to Dr. Dobson below. Praise God for leaders who are courageous enough to teach truth about the education of our children. I worry that I do not always express an adequate measure of Christian charity or humility but this is an issue in the church today that totally breaks my heart.

*In Him,  
Roxanne Sitler*

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August 8, 1999

Dr. James C. Dobson  
Focus on the Family  
Colorado Springs, CO 80995

Dear Mr. Dobson:

Please remove us from your mailing list for the *Focus on the Family Magazine*. We have been receiving your magazine for a number of years, but after receiving the last issue with the article, "Rebuilding Hope for Public Schools," we have concluded that we no longer desire to have this kind of "milktoast" Christianity coming into our home. The article on charter schools was equally offensive to the informed. You have done a disservice to all by holding out to your readers a false sense of hope that public schools can be "rebuilt."

Mr. Dobson, when is the church in America going to wake up and realize that we are sending our children off to a pagan institution which is steeped in humanism and espouses a total worldview which is the very antithesis of Christianity? We are so far removed from a Christian understanding of education that we justify this public school "choice" as simply a matter of Christian liberty—as if education could ever be considered neutral territory. Whatever happened to "he who is not for me is against me," "do all to the glory of God," and "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"?

The church dares to preach to the world about the state of our ungodly culture. Christianity today seems blind to the fact that we participate in building that ungodly culture by justifying participation in its main

indoctrination center. We contribute our most precious possessions to *the* ungodly (in this case, the State—to which God never gave the duty nor the authority to educate. This is not the civil magistrate's job).

We need more Elijahs today—those who are courageous enough to call God's people back to Him. "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." In the area of education, the church has indulged in syncretism at best—we have followed after other gods thinking we could mix it up with the true God. And, we are reaping the consequences the *true* God has always promised for such behavior.

The Littleton tragedy seldom prompted the question, "What are they teaching our children?" As Christians we ought to know what it is that they are *not* teaching our children—we ought to know, as the founders of Harvard did, that Christ is to be laid at the foundation of all knowledge and wisdom—all else dishonors Him. We cannot claim to follow Him and then go chasing after our own false gods.

With the advent of education reform and the continued bankruptcy of government education, I have patiently waited to see if you would take a stand. You have not. Enough is enough—we want more from our Christian publications—especially those whose focus is the family. Thankfully there are more and more Christian publications that are once again teaching and espousing doctrine and an application of God's Word to *all* of life and living—including education. The Lord is raising up Christian leaders who are refusing to compromise—a few Elijahs. Amen.

*Praying,  
Dave & Roxanne Sitler  
Colville, WA*

P.S. I have invested over six years in researching the government school system, Goals 2000, STW etc., and have been very politically active in the local level and the state legislature; written legislation and reports; done public awareness through radio, seminars, lectures, published articles etc. Public education is bankrupt—rebuilding (?) is a wrong-headed idea—please encourage Christians to protect their children by getting them *out*—encourage the Christian community to develop a truly Biblical philosophy of education! R.S.



# What Difference Can One Person Make?

*By Dr. Peter Hammond*



It's impossible! It can't be done! Don't be ridiculous—what difference can one person make?

Have you ever encountered those kinds of reactions? Anyone who embarks on a challenging enterprise—especially those determined to end legal abortions, eradicate pornography,

establish a Christian school or Christian teacher training college, stop the ongoing slave trade in Sudan or work for national reformation and revival—will encounter those people who seem to believe that they have *"the gift of criticism"* and *"a ministry of discouragement!"*

## Should Christians be Involved in Social Issues?

Of course, there are those who maintain that Christians shouldn't be involved in social issues at all! When you tell them of the abortion holocaust or the pornography plague, they mutter that *"all we can do is pray," "just preach the gospel,"* and *"it's a sign of the last days!"*

We often suspect that such attitudes are motivated more by laziness and cowardice or a selfish desire to shirk responsibility and hard work than anything else. Certainly those people who resort to such superficial excuses are being disobedient to the clear commands of Scripture: *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Lk. 10:27); *"Go and do likewise"* (Lk. 10:37); *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves"* (Pr. 31:8); *"Rescue those being led away to death"* (Pr. 24:11); *"Make disciples of all nations"* (Mt. 28:19); *"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins"* (Jas. 4:17).

Those who maintain that Christians shouldn't be involved in social or political issues display their ignorance of both the Bible and church history.

Over 70% of the Bible deals with social, political, and national issues. Abraham used military force to rescue Lot and his family from the four kings (Gen. 14). God raised up Joseph to be Prime Minister of Egypt (Gen. 41). Samuel, Nathan, Elisha, Isaiah, Ezra—in fact, almost all of the prophets—were heavily involved in politics as advisors to kings and exerting a godly influence on national affairs. Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist publicly confronted and rebuked wicked rulers. King David was described as *"a man after God's heart"* (Ac. 13:22). Daniel and Mordecai became prime ministers

in pagan Babylonian and Persian governments—yet without compromise. God raised up Deborah and Queen Esther to national leadership positions. Joshua, Gideon, and Nehemiah also held senior political positions.

"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before Me in the gap on behalf of the land so that I would not have to destroy it . . ." (Ez. 22:30)

Those who maintain that Christians shouldn't be involved in political and social issues are not only ignoring the Word of God, they are also showing their ignorance of church history.

## Slavery and Human Sacrifice

Before the advent of Christianity, every culture practiced slavery and human sacrifice. In the Roman Empire, abortion, infanticide, and the abandonment of unwanted babies were legal and commonplace. The Aztec Empire in Mexico and the Inca Empire in Peru engaged in slavery, ritual rapes, and mass human sacrifices. Slaves were marched up the stairs of the pyramid-type Inca temples. At the top a priest would rip out their beating hearts—one by one. There were over 80,000 human skulls on the skull racks of just one of Montezuma's many temples. Only the advent of Christianity introduced a respect for the sanctity of life and ended the rampant infanticide and human sacrifice.

Similarly, slavery was eradicated as a result of the tireless efforts of Christians such as William Wilberforce and David Livingstone. The whole concept of charity was a Christian innovation, as were hospitals (hence the universal healing symbol of a cross to represent hospitals). But these monumental achievements were not easily attained. Every victory for life and liberty was accomplished only by much sacrifice and over many, many years of ingenuity and hard work.

If you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the immensity of the task before you or discouraged by a seemingly never-ending series of obstacles and opposition, frustrations and failures—take heart! The man whom God used to launch the modern missionary movement faced all this and much, much more.

## Launching a Reformation

Undereducated, underfunded, and underestimated, William Carey seemed to have everything against him. He was brought up in abject poverty and never had the benefit of high school. Carey's formal education ended in junior school. Yet, at age twelve, Carey taught himself Latin. He went on to master—on his own—Greek,



Hebrew, French, and Dutch! He became professor of Bengali, Sanskrit, and Marathi at the prestigious Fort William College in Calcutta (where the civil servants were trained). Carey and his co-workers started over 100 Christian schools for over 8,000 Indian children of all castes and he launched the first Christian college in Asia—at Serampore, which continues to this day! Carey finally succeeded in translating the Bible into six languages and New Testaments and gospels into 29 other languages!

### Mission Impossible

Carey's achievements are all the more astounding when you consider that his bold project to plant the gospel among the Hindus in India was completely illegal! By an act of the British Parliament, it was illegal for any missionary to work in India. For the first 20 years, Carey's mission to India had to be carried out with ingenuity and circumspection, until at last the British Parliament—under pressure from evangelical Members of Parliament such as William Wilberforce—reversed its policy and compelled the British East India Company to allow missionaries in India.

Carey was considered a radical in his day. He boycotted sugar because he was so intensely opposed to slavery and sugar from the West Indies was produced with slave labor. Carey also took the extremely unpopular stand of supporting the American War of Independence against Britain.

He was subjected to vicious criticism and gossip. Under the extreme Indian heat and in abject poverty, initially with daily dangers from snakes, crocodiles, and tigers in a remote and mosquito-ridden jungle house, Carey's wife, Dorothy, went insane. She would rant and rave about the imaginary unfaithfulness of her husband and on several occasions attacked him with a knife. She was diagnosed insane and had to be physically restrained with chains for the last twelve years of her life. The Careys also lost their five-year-old son, Peter, who died of dysentery in 1794. Every family member suffered frequently from malaria, dysentery, and other tropical diseases.

Carey's first co-worker squandered all their money and bankrupted the mission, forcing William to work on a plantation to provide for his malnourished family. In their first seven months in India, the Careys had to move five times! And although Carey wrote home frequently to his family and mission society, it was 17 months before they received their first letters! One of these first letters from the Society criticized Carey for being "*swallowed up in the pursuits of a merchant*"!

Somehow, while often sick, holding down a full-time secular job, surrounded by domestic turmoil, with an insane wife screaming from the next room, Carey mastered Bengali and Sanskrit and by 1797 the New Testament was translated into Bengali and ready for printing. Carey had also established several schools and was preaching regularly in Bengali. However, after seven years of tireless toil in India, Carey still did not have a

single convert! How did William Carey manage to maintain such a productive schedule while having to endure all these crushing disappointments, the endless distractions, the undeserved criticisms, the physical ailments, and the heart-breaking tragedies? How did he manage to persevere and to keep on keeping on without even the encouragement of a single convert to justify all his effort and sacrifice? To understand what motivated this most remarkable man, we need to look back at what inspired him in the first place.

### A Vision of Victory

One of the most influential sermons in world history was preached on May 31, 1792 by William Carey in Northampton, England. Carey's sermon literally sparked the greatest century of Christian advance. It marked the entry of the English-speaking world into missions. Since that time, English speakers have made up 80% of the Protestant missionary work force.

The text of this historic sermon was Isaiah 54:2-3:

*Enlarge the place of your tent and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings. Do not spare, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes! For you shall expand to the right and to the left and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make desolate cities inhabited.*

The theme of his sermon was summarized as:

*Expect great things from God! Attempt great things for God!*

Yet, riveting as the sermon was, the result was initially indecision. Carey was considered "*an enthusiast*" (a fanatic) and an embarrassment—because "*he had a bee in his bonnet about missions.*" But Carey persisted until, five months later, twelve Reformed Baptist ministers formed the "*Particular (Calvinist) Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathens.*"

What inspired Carey's landmark book, *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* and this prototype pioneer missionary society was his eschatology of victory. William Carey was a postmillennialist who believed that God, Who commanded His church to "*make disciples of all nations,*" would ensure that the Great Commission would ultimately be fulfilled:

*The work, to which God has set His hands, will infallibly prosper . . . We only want men and money to fill this country with the knowledge of Christ. We are neither working at uncertainty nor afraid for the result . . . He must reign until Satan has not an inch of territory!*

Time and again, in the face of crushing defeats, disappointments, diseases, and disasters, Carey reiterated his unwavering optimistic eschatology:



*Though the superstitions of the heathen were a thousand times stronger than they are, and the example of the Europeans a thousand times worse; though I were deserted by all and persecuted by all, yet my faith, fixed on that sure Word, would rise above all obstructions and overcome every trial. God's cause will triumph!*

And Carey's faith was most certainly vindicated. The years of hard work and wholehearted sacrifice were graciously rewarded by God. Carey's ministry literally transformed India.

### Transforming a Nation

When Carey stepped ashore at Calcutta in 1793, India was in a terribly degraded state. If an infant was sick, it was assumed that he was under the influence of an evil spirit. The custom was to expose sick infants to the elements—perhaps hanging them up in a basket. Near Malda, Carey found the remains of a baby who had been offered as a sacrifice to be eaten alive by white ants. At the *Sagar Mela* where the Ganges River flows into the sea, Carey witnessed how mothers threw their babies into the sea to drown, or to be devoured by crocodiles. This the Hindus regarded as a holy sacrifice to the Mother Ganges!

Carey undertook a thorough research into the numbers, nature, and reasons for the infanticide and published his reports. He presented several petitions to the government until, in 1802, infanticide was outlawed. This marked the first time that the British government interfered directly with religious practice in India. It set a precedent for the abolition of other practices.

Hinduism had an extremely low view of women. It was often stated, "*In Hinduism there is no salvation for women until she be reborn a man.*" Her only hope lay in serving men in complete subjection. Many female babies were smothered at birth. Girls were married as young as four years old! Widows were perceived as bad omens who had brought about the deaths of their husbands. Widows were also seen as an economic liability. Bereaved widows had to shave off all their hair, remove all jewelry, and were forbidden to remarry—but were required to cohabit (*niyogo*) with the deceased husband's nearest male relative. Tremendous pressure was exerted on the widow to submit to *Sati* or immolation—to be burned alive on the funeral pyre of her husband. Amongst the Weaver (*Kories*) caste, widows were buried alive.

Because of the Hindu practice of *Sati*, children who had lost their father would also lose their mother and be orphaned at the same time.

The Hindu practice of polygamy compounded the problem. On one occasion, Carey documented thirty-three wives of one man burned alive at his funeral. On another occasion, an eleven-year-old widow was burned on the funeral pyre of her husband!

Lepers were rejected by their families and society and burned alive. Hinduism taught that only a violent and

fiery end could purify the body and ensure transmigration into a healthy new existence. Euthanasia was also widely practiced with those afflicted by other sicknesses. The infirmed were regularly carried out to be left exposed to cold and heat, crocodiles or insects, by the riverside.

Carey fought against these and many other evils—including child prostitution, slavery, and the caste system. He publicly criticized the government for inaction and passivity in the face of murder. He organized public debates and spoke out and wrote often on these atrocities. At first, he met with official indifference. The Indian Supreme Court in 1805 ruled that *Sati* had religious sanction and could not be questioned.

### A Pioneer for Freedom

Carey established the first newspaper ever printed in an oriental language, the *Samachar Darpan*, and the English-language newspaper, *Friends of India*. Carey pioneered mass communications in India, launching the social reform movement, because he believed that "*Above all forms of truth and faith, Christianity seeks free discussion.*" Carey was the first man to stand up against the brutal murders and widespread oppression of women through female infanticide, child marriage, polygamy, enforced female illiteracy, widow burning, and forced euthanasia. He conducted systematic research and published his writings to raise public protest in both Bengal and England. He educated and influenced a whole generation of civil servants through his lectures at Fort William College. Carey fought against the idea that a woman's life ceases to be valuable after her husband's death. He undermined the oppression and exploitation of women by providing women with education. He opened the first schools for girls.

It was Carey's relentless battle against *Sati*—for 25 years—which finally led to the famous Edict in 1829 banning widow burning.

Carey was also the first man who led the campaign for a humane treatment for leprosy and ended the practice of burning them alive.

Carey certainly had a comprehensive view of the Great Commission. He ministered to body, mind, and spirit. Carey introduced the idea of savings banks to India and made investment, industry, commerce, and economic development possible. He founded the Agric-Horticultural Society in the 1820s (30 years before the Royal Agricultural Society was established in England). He introduced the steam engine to India. He pioneered the idea of lending libraries in India. He persuaded his friends in England to ship out tons of books to regenerate and reform India.

Carey also introduced the study of astronomy into India. He saw that the prevalent astrology with its fatalism, superstitious fears, and inability to manage time had terribly destructive consequences. Hinduism's astrology makes us subjects—with our lives determined by the stars. However, the Christian science of astronomy



sets us free to be rulers—to devise calendars, identify directions, to study geography, and to better plan our lives and work.

Carey was the first man in India to write essays on forestry. Fifty years *before* the government made its first attempts at forest conservation, Carey was already practicing conservation, planting and cultivating timber. He understood that God had made man responsible for the earth. Carey was also a botanist who cultivated beautiful gardens and frequently lectured on science, because he believed *"all Thy works praise Thee, O Lord."* He knew that nature is worthy of study. Carey pointed out that even the insects are worthy of attention—they are not souls in bondage, but creatures with a God-given purpose.

William Carey was also the father of print technology in India. He introduced the modern science of printing, built what was then the largest printing press in India, and devised the fonts. In 1812, a devastating fire destroyed Carey's warehouse with his printing presses, paper stock, and manuscripts representing many years of work. Even in the face of this catastrophe, Carey praised God that no lives had been lost and quoted Psalm 46: *"Be still and know that the Lord is God."* He resolved to do better translations than the ones that were now ashes and consoled himself: *"Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."*

*"However vexing it may be, a road the second time traveled is usually taken with more confidence and ease than at the first,"* declared Carey. He quoted Isaiah 61:1-4 and trusted God for better printing presses and more accurate translations—a *"phoenix rising out of the ashes."*

Not only was Carey hit by the fire, but deaths in each of the seven missionary families at Serampore. Carey himself had just buried a grandson. Carey also had to endure unjust and unbalanced criticisms from young new missionaries who actually split from the Serampore Mission and slanderous accusations from the Mission Society in England, as well as an earthquake and a flood. One of his sons, Felix, also caused much embarrassment when he backslid, adopted a lavish lifestyle, and began drinking heavily. Ultimately Felix came back to the Lord and became fully committed to the mission.

Yet, despite the controversies, calamities, and conflicts, William Carey's monumental achievements outshine all his critics. He was a dedicated Christian whom God used in extraordinary ways to launch the greatest century of missionary advance, to translate the Scriptures into more languages than any other translator in history, and to save literally millions of lives by his compassionate social action and tireless labors.

We need to follow his example by ministering to body, mind, and spirit and persevering through all disappointments and opposition with an unshakeable faith in God's sovereign power.

[This article is the second of an eight-part series on the nineteenth-century missionary movement, what inspired it, the people who transformed nations, and their legacy.]

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*Dr. Peter Hammond is a missionary who has pioneered evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Angola, Mozambique and Sudan. Peter is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship and the Director of United Christian Action. He has authored numerous publications, in particular he has written Holocaust in Rwanda, Faith Under Fire in Sudan, In the Killing Fields of Mozambique, Putting Feet to Your Faith and Renaissance or Reformation. He is the editor of both Frontline Fellowship News and UCANEWS. Peter is married to Lenora and they have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher, and Calvin.*

## MACEDONIAN CALL FROM PETER HAMMOND

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

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

Yours for Reformation and Revival,  
Peter Hammond

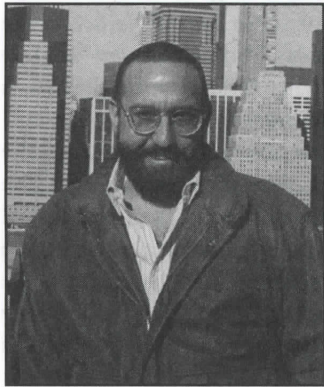
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# All I Really Need to Know About Worship ... I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle (Part VIII)

*By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel*

## Dance, Dance, Dance



I'll now risk getting myself into a lot of trouble for the sake of (one hopes!) making things clearer. Let me minimize that risk by stating that I am not, in what follows, calling for the introduction of dance as an element of the weekly worship service.

I've mentioned already the regulativist's habit of

simply assuming, in the face of whatever evidence there might be, that the RPW is "just true, period." This has often been made evident when, on a number of occasions, during a challenge to the RPW, we'll be told, "Why, then you'll have dancing in worship!" And that, it seems, settles the matter.

Is this what the RPW is all about? To save the church from dancing? Perhaps they should just call themselves Michalites. For when Michal, in the famous incident recorded in 2 Samuel 6:16-23 and 1 Chronicles 15:29, "saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart." The fact that the Lord cursed her with barrenness thenceforth doesn't seem to give anyone the slightest pause in condemning dance. It is, for us moderns, quite self-evident that it must be forbidden.

It is difficult to find someone willing to discuss this subject dispassionately. The difficulty, however, lies in culture rather than Scripture. And it is just here that the Informed Principle of Worship (IPW) can be very useful, while the RPW is not.

The reason regulativists utterly reject dancing before the Lord, without so much as "entertaining" the question, has more to do with 1) their Northern European heritage, 2) the failure of some Reformed to utterly break with a Roman overview of worship, and 3) our contemporary culture, than it does with God's express will revealed in Scripture. What I mean is this:

The knee-jerk reaction against dancing has a lot to do with its being linked to sensuality or entertainment. But David's dancing was not lascivious and it was not intentionally entertaining. The problem here seems to be a simple lack of proper dancing "models." We do have

such in the Jewish world. On special occasions, Jewish men can be found dancing in synagogues, especially around the Torah (the Word of God, written on scrolls); the dancing might even, on *very* special occasions, move out into the street. At these infrequent times of infectious, unrestrained *joy*, there is no thought of unseemliness. It is, at the moment, most normal. It is a *cultural* thing.

The IPW would say that dancing is not *ordinarily* warranted or desirable, but that it *might be appropriate* under certain circumstances. First, Biblical dancing, so far as I can tell, is never inter-gender. Second, Biblical dancing is not for *viewing* but for *doing*. Just these two considerations overthrow the legitimacy of virtually all the contested dancing that is discussed today, for such is usually practiced by misguided mainliners or wannabe mainliners looking to provide a greater thrill for the "audience."

The so-called "Davidic dance" which has spilled over from the Messianic movement even onto some Presbyterians, is (based on my personal observation) contrived, forced, phony, and inter-gender.

The so-called "liturgical dance" encountered too often in the PCA and church-growth-type "worship centers" is actually, in part, a radical outworking of a Roman Catholic—as opposed to synagogal—worship structure. Romanist worship consists of actors up front and an audience in the pew.

Against "Davidic" and "liturgical" dance is covenantal dance. If dancing ever takes place in a synagogue (and it doesn't in all), it is done by the worshippers, not by a troupe, and the genders are strictly separated.

My point in bringing this matter up is not to advocate dance. We do quite well without it, I think. I mention it only to say that it is by no means inconceivable that dance, under certain circumstances, may be regarded as proper *and acceptable before Jehovah* as an expression of unmitigated joy. Such circumstances are difficult, if not impossible, to reproduce in modern congregations of Northern European extraction, so one should not try. As I indicated, the contemporary efforts of "Davidic" and "liturgical" dance advocates reach no higher than the banal.

But there might well be occasions when dancing is most fitting: the end of a gruesome war comes to mind, or the provision of food after famine. Not your everyday events, but should they happen, don't let the regulative principle frighten you. "Praise his name with dancing and



make music to him with tambourine and harp.” Yes, “praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute.” Say to the Lord, “You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.” Because there is “a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance” (Ps. 30:11; 149:3; 150:4; Ecc. 3:4).

What we’ve written thus far in this installment has been written only to demonstrate the difficulty we encounter in having fruitful discussions with regulativists who make the RPW into the “indispensable presupposition of all intelligible predication” concerning worship. Can’t we let the *whole Bible* speak?

Were this matter part of our ecumenical creeds, perhaps such a truculent posture would be understandable. But in view of its place in the scheme of things, RPW adherents should be willing to discuss the matter. Unfortunately, its advocates too often look like those who were described by one author as having “backed up into their convictions.” We should remember the butcher who backed into his meat grinder and got a little behind in his work. Some regulativists, too, have backed up, “syllogized” themselves, into a position before considering it thoroughly and now they are afraid to admit that there’s a problem.

Well, there are *lots* of problems with the RPW. But if for no other reason than to humor a poor, misguided Jew, I appeal to you, allow me once again to explain my read on the Scripture’s teaching concerning the RPW. And after a brief brief, we’ll continue to show (perhaps in the next installment) why all is not lost if we yield to the Scriptures’ entire testimony on the subject. We will discover, I trust, that we have not been left adrift to do simply *anything* we might want in worship.

On the contrary. We are here simply insisting that the Westminster Confession’s admission concerning “circumstances” of worship—*“that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed”*—is, in truth, a far more comprehensive statement of God’s will for New Order worship than is recognized in some quarters.

These “general rules”—or, as I’ve labeled them, the elements of the Informed Principle of Worship—are adequate guides precisely because the Confession is correct when it says that “under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected.” For the Regulative Principle of Worship, *as found in the Bible*, belongs to the ceremonial law.<sup>5</sup> Let me show you why I think so.

### Standing On Ceremony

The regulativist motto, taken from Deuteronomy 12:32,<sup>1</sup> “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it,” is a seriously abused text. In fact, it has been stretched by

some as badly as 12:21 has been stretched by the rabbis. The Jews have a very exact, elaborate, and strict method for the ritual slaughter of animals which are to be eaten. Yet, “[a]ll that R. Judah Hanasi could adduce in proof of this practice are the three words of Deuteronomy 12:21: *vezabachta . . . kaasher tzivitcha*, ‘and thou shalt slaughter . . . as I commanded thee.’”<sup>2</sup> From these three words it was *assumed* that God *must have* given numerous details to Moses, who would initiate their oral transmission. Then, through an unbroken succession, they would be codified in the Mishna.

That’s a lot to ask from Deuteronomy 12:21. But the Jews, at least, concede that their methods involve stretches. Listen to this heartening confession: “The Mishna frankly states that for some laws (*halachot*) there are but slender Scriptural proofs.” Some *halachot* “are like mountains suspended by a hair; their scriptural basis is scant and the *halachot* are abundant. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

“Strict” regulativists ask as much from 12:32 as the rabbis ask from 12:21, but they don’t admit it. The words of 12:32 are stretched way beyond their contextual meaning. The context (12:1-16:17) deals with the coming *centralization of worship* at the place where the LORD would cause His name to dwell. Consider how abundantly clear this context is as you read these verses from chapter 12:

*But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you. You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes—for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.*

### Give Me My Allowance

No reasonable reader could disagree that what we have



here is law for *centralized, sacrificial* worship. Israel was not permitted to *sacrificially* approach Jehovah except in the place where His name would dwell and then strictly according to His prescribed manner.

But God, in this passage, expressly allows Israelites to slaughter animals for private consumption if they follow *general rules*—blood could only be used for expiation and that only according to His prescriptions. Otherwise, the blood would be poured on the ground.

However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water.

One commentator noted: “12:20 allows for secular meat-eating anywhere; it’s only ritual sacrifices which must be offered at the central shrine.” By this allowance it is made even clearer that what was being *strictly* regulated in this passage was *ritual, sacrificial, soon-to-be centralized* worship. That, and that alone, is what God was here marking off and codifying—not worship *per se*. Anyone who thinks otherwise must still bring the firstborn of his flocks and herds to Jerusalem. Or put another way, anyone who is not bringing burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, heave offerings, vowed offerings, freewill, and other offerings *to Jerusalem* is implicitly acknowledging that this chapter is regulating things which do not obligate Christians, at least not in the same way they had once bound Israel.

Still, one regulativist, quite representatively, puts it plainly: “Verse 32 is an explicit statement of God’s regulative principle of worship.” But to isolate verse 32 from its context, and then make it an obligatory, governing principle for *all* worship, is just as arbitrary and unsound as saying that Christians who have a running sore must have it examined by an Aaronic priest. I hope no one has such a sore, but if you do, try finding an Aaronic priest!

Remember, a regulativist who pleads the normativity of 12:32 must, to be consistent, plead the normativity of what 12:32 was guarding, *in context*. Once he says that he is not obliged to bring all his offerings to a single earthly location, or to do this or to do that, he has violated his own principle: he has taken away something God had, *in that very context*, commanded.

### The New and Living Way

What *is* the message of Deuteronomy 12 for Christians? The message, in light of the New Testament, is very clear: reconciliation with God can *only* be had along the path of the God-provided atonement. Since the blood of bulls and goats merely bore witness to the blood of Christ, it is *that* blood with which Christians are concerned. For the New Covenant is in His blood (*Lk.*

*22:20*); He purchased us with His own blood (*Ac. 20:28*); Christ was set forth by God as a propitiation by His blood (*Rom. 3:25*); in Him we have redemption through His blood (*Eph. 1:7*); Gentiles, who once were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ (*Eph. 2:13*); we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (*Col. 1:14*); it was not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood that He entered the Most Holy Place once for all (*Heb. 9:12*); we may have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus (*10:19*); it is the blood of Jesus Christ His Son which cleanses us from all sin (*1 Jn. 1:7*); for He loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood (*Rev. 1:5*).

Therefore, if we believe in and guard the way opened up by Christ’s blood, we are fulfilling the so-called Regulative Principle of Worship. Deuteronomy 12:32—“*Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it*”—is properly understood only when seen as an insistence upon the exclusivity of God’s gospel. When a person is trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ for his salvation—not adding to His work or taking away from it—that person is obeying 12:32 in its fullness.

That is why you read *a great deal* about the blood of Christ in the New Testament but nothing about the need for Christians to continue to bring blood offerings and nothing about one *single* principle regulating worship. When we believe in His blood, His atoning sacrifice, His exclusive work, we are doing exactly what God requires of us in Deuteronomy 12:1 through 16:17.

If our thesis (that Deuteronomy 12:32 is given as a regulation governing only the centralized, sacrificial system) is correct—and it certainly appears to be!—then the implications for the matter under discussion are significant.

### Dominoes

For it would mean that regulativists may not, without qualification, appeal to texts dealing with the sacrificial system as support for their principle. Out goes Nadab and Abihu, out goes Uzzah and Uzziah. They don’t go “out of the canon,” and they don’t go out as sources of instruction. They go out as supposed “proofs” of a tortured principle, a principle which was *never* given to regulate worship in light of Christ’s historical accomplishments. The lengthy litanies of instances cited by regulativists, wherein God reproves His people for violations of the centralized worship system, are *at most* only indirectly germane to the matter at hand. Once they trim the explicit requirements of Deuteronomy 12, regulativists trim their own principle, too.

Some regulativists will attempt to broaden their appeal to the “principle” found in 12:32 by saying that it is found also in Deuteronomy 4:2. But this only further undoes their assertions. The passage reads, “*Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and*



*possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*" If the regulativist would bring this passage to bear on the question of *worship*, he has gone even further from the path leading to the light. *For this passage refers to all the law of God, not simply to laws governing worship.* Very few regulativists would seriously argue that God's intent here is to forbid Israel from doing *anything whatsoever in any area of life that is not specifically commanded in the law.* I suppose those Amish who eschew buttons for want of finding them mentioned in Scripture might look somewhat favorably on this interpretation, but they'd be mighty lonely in so doing.

Yet that is precisely the conclusion which cannot be evaded if 4:2 is cited as supportive of the regulativist's reading of 12:32. Deuteronomy 4:2 is a *general rule*, requiring a life that conforms to God's disclosed will *in its entirety*. The NIV Study Bible note is to the point: "The revelation the Lord gives is sufficient. All of it must be obeyed and anything that adulterates or contradicts it cannot be tolerated."

God did not intend that the recipients of this verse (4:2) would *literally* do nothing not mentioned therein (e.g., no skateboarding, using electricity, driving automobiles, or eating lemon ices). Thus, *4:2 as a parallel demonstrates that 12:32 is not to be taken in an absolute sense.* If you find a similar phrase used by the same author in the same book, you need to justify applying a radically different sense to each. If it is agreed that 4:2, referring to the whole law, was not to be taken absolutely when it forbids additions and subtractions, neither is 12:32 to be taken as an abstract and absolute rule. Both are to be interpreted in terms of *the whole Word of God*, a Word that simply does not teach: if it is not commanded, it is forbidden.

Listen, please, and be patient with me. Try to see what our regulativist friends have done. They've taken a "principle" and yanked it from its context wherein sacrificial worship—and that alone—was being regulated. Nevertheless, these same folks, recognizing that *the system* was to be observed only until the Christ, abstract *the principle* and then absolutize it. They themselves no longer practice the things the verse was (in context) given to guard, yet they continue to regard the verse as having an independent existence!

Regulativists don't have a human priesthood, which the verse protected—they believe in a priesthood of all believers. They don't have a human-constructed temple, made according to exact requirements, which the verse guarded—they make church buildings any way they please. They don't have daily, weekly, monthly, or annual blood offerings, which the verse oversaw—they use no blood at all in their rituals. They don't do pilgrimages, they don't honor the dietary restrictions, they don't refrain

from mixing cloths, they don't keep the same calendar, they don't do any of the things demanded in the verse's immediate context! And all this is well and good. They see in so many ways that all this must be interpreted in light of *the whole Word of God*. But when it comes to the principle which was part of the same package which terminated upon Christ's sacrificial work . . . Like men in a swoon and afraid of falling, they reach out to steady themselves with a principle rather than the Christ Who was therein honored. They are left embracing a verse when all the while the verse was given only so that we might embrace the Christ! Its meaning is found *in Him*. Careful now! We are not saying of this whole matter, "That was the Old Testament!" Rather, we are saying of the *sacrificial system*, "That was *gospel declaration* in the Sinaitic administration." The gospel declaration today is guarded precisely the way it was then: it is forbidden to add to it or take from it (Galatians 1:8 makes that reasonably clear!).

### Jesus Paid It All

Thus with one eye-opening truth—*viz.*, that the rigorous RPW of the Old Administration was unto Christ—by far the greatest amount of regulativist "evidence" becomes inadmissible because their citations become explicable on grounds other than those they advance. Their arsenal is neutralized once we see that the "principle" was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in *Thee* I find," not in an abstracted and tortured "principle." But then, strict regulativists are not permitted to corporately worship Christ by singing the words of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Their principle forbids it, regarding such an act as presumptuous impiety and a form of idolatry. Let them say this more loudly into the microphone. It is easy to see why nearly the entire Christian world for all of its history has not recognized the RPW as something taught by our Jesus. Imagine, forbidden by "a principle" to express our devotion to our Savior, by name, in corporate song. Yes, speak up into the microphone.

<sup>1</sup> Yet even there it was not as rigid as some of its modern advocates assert. More anon.

<sup>2</sup> In the Hebrew division it is 13:1. Thus it is seen by the Jews as a heading for the warnings against false prophets who might lead them to worship other gods.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel S. Cohon, *Essays in Jewish Theology*, (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. 1986), 63.

<sup>4</sup> Hag. 1.8, cited in above.

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