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# Chalcedon report

428

FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE



## The Day the Music Died

R. J. Rushdoony **on** My Last Days **and** The Dark Ages Defined

P. Andrew Sandlin **on** Mysticism

Mark R. Rushdoony **on** "Let Men Their Songs Employ"

Martin G. Selbrede **on** The Day the Music Died

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

## The Day the Music Died

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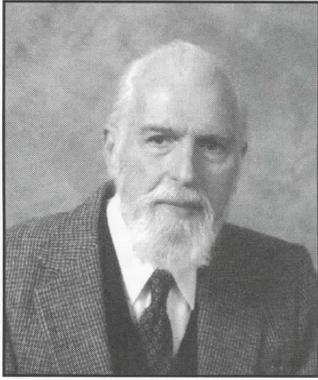
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# My Last Days

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony

**I** am now 84 years of age, feeling somewhat venerable and dignified with my white hair and beard. I don't enjoy hobbling poorly, with a cane, but I have taken it as a part of my age. Well, a year ago, during my weekly two hours with my physical therapist, I saw the previous patient walk out. She is a woman in her mid-nineties. She had fallen down a flight of stairs and broken thirteen bones. Now she was well and walking normally! I felt like a weak young punk by comparison!

Well, compared to the rest of the world, we routinely come out badly, but in Jesus Christ, we are always with God, as high as possible.

I have never doubted the Bible or the Holy Trinity since I was a child. Any other faith is absurd and is madness. As a result, I have always "known my place" as His servant and a child by grace.

*I have never doubted the Bible or the Holy Trinity since I was a child. Any other faith is absurd and is madness. As a result, I have always "known my place" as His servant and a child by grace.*

Old age is His ordination and a part of my preparation for eternity, which is very real to me. I hope to do a little more writing, but otherwise I am ready for heaven. I look forward to all that it means, including reunions with loved ones and fellow believers already there. Death is the greatest adventure.

I don't enjoy my hobbling and sometimes attendant pains, but I know that the best is yet to come. God's grace is an amazing thing. I have known it and will know yet far more.

Dying is a part of the Fall, and yet it places us forever beyond the Fall. The life of faith is truly

life. I have been blessed with a godly family and with a calling. I am also blessed by you, our supporters, and you are daily in my prayers.

My present condition is difficult and sometimes painful, but it has a happy ending. May you all be similarly blessed.

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# The Dark Ages Defined

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony

**T**he term “Dark Ages” or “Dark Age” is of recent usage. Not long after the French Revolution, it was used by historians to define the period after the fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance. They soon realized that the centuries that produced the cathedrals, the universities, scholasticism, and more could hardly be called “dark,” and so the terms “middle ages” or “medieval era” were invented. “Middle” meant between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance. For these men any kind of Christian era was a lapse between Roman and modern humanistic statism. “Dark Ages” was used for a time to refer to the time immediately after the fall of Rome. Those times were “dark” because Christianity had succeeded.

For Christians, the term “Dark Ages” is wrong, and “medieval” not too much better. A *dark age* is an age without Christ, and we must say that we are drifting into such an era all over the world. Most revelatory of that have been public schools, films, television, *and* the impeachment trial of President Clinton in early 1999. In the trial, only one Senator referred to the Biblical law against adultery, and that citation was brief and cautious. Any examination of current events shows that we are drifting from a Christian culture to a humanistic, statist one.

Imposing structures are no evidence of faith or freedom. The pyramids of Egypt, the imposing buildings of Rome, and the same emphasis on power in other cultures gave more evidence of tyranny than light. The world of our day gives more evidence of the vainglory of the taxing state than anything else.

This means that the church cannot be the chaplain to an anti-Christian order. The United States has a chaplain for Congress, but its Supreme Court has virtually outlawed the influence and application of Christianity in national life. England has a state church, but the least percentage of Christians, and is the world’s lowest in the percentage of practicing believers of any religion. Sweden, Germany, and other countries have state churches and no prevailing Christianity. And so it goes everywhere.

We are now moving into a dark age the world over, and few seem concerned. All too many

churches that claim to believe the Bible reject its law, which constitutes much of the Bible. Sinning public officials have cited the belief that the law is dead as justification for adultery.

The heart of any culture is its law. The law defines what is right and wrong, and where ultimate authority rests. The modern state sees itself as the definer, not God. The church, in the process of its modernism and its antinomianism, has in effect conceded to the state the power to make law. In the U.S., the Ten Commandments have been barred from state schools, and moral and social authority have been reserved to the state. The church is too often better at teaching good citizenship than Biblical Faith. The marks of a dark age are appearing all around us.

Basic to any society is *faith and obedience*. The two are inseparable; we cannot speak of a consistently lawless man as a man of faith. His contempt for law is a mark of his contempt for the Lawgiver, God. Present day culture is marked by a contempt for law, and in the churches this contempt is called faith. Churches, as a result, increasingly see their youth imitating the world. The practical cathedrals of the modern era are not only its public schools and state buildings, but also its huge prisons.

Christians must live under God’s law, and they must apply it to every area of life and thought. Some churches reject God’s law until the millennium, which is to say that they reject Christ as King. In fact, in some “Bible believing” churches it is held to be wrong to see Christ as King. Is it any wonder that we are losing? To say that Jesus Christ is our Savior but not our King is to say that He and His law do not command us, which means that the state’s plan of salvation does.

Perhaps you want to live in a Dark Age; you find God’s law distasteful, and want Jesus Christ as your Savior, not your Lord. If so, be content with the world around you. But, if not, believe in and apply God’s law. For to see the Lord as our Savior and Lawgiver is truly to believe in Him. It means that we are not a part of the realm of darkness, but the people of Light.



# Mysticism

By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin

The heresy of *mysticism*, heavily indebted to the ancient pagan Greek philosopher Plato,<sup>1</sup> emerged near the end of the patristic era, and it has been a recurrent plague ever since. Before defining it, we should understand what it is *not*. It surely is not the recognition that certain aspects of the Bible and the Christian Faith are *mysterious* — that is, hard to understand or beyond creaturely logic. The Trinity, the two natures of Christ, the sovereignty of God as it relates to the will of man, and other central doctrines of the Bible are mysterious, and not easily reducible to human reason; and the attempt to demystify them usually ends up in heresy.<sup>2</sup> Mystery is not mysticism.

Mysticism, rather, is *the attempt to secure an unmediated relationship to God*. Mystics believe that man (or, more specifically, certain men) can have an inexplicable, but certain, knowledge of and relationship to God unencumbered by God's specifically chosen vehicles of special revelation — notably, Jesus Christ and the Sacred Scriptures. Almost all mystics devalue or ignore the instrumental role of reason in relating to God and His revelation; but what they deny they can know rationally, they affirm they can experience irrationally. This almost always entails the notion that man can somehow share in God's *being*. Man, in other words, becomes ontologically one with God. Man has an intimate knowledge of God because he shares in God's *existence*.

Naturally, if one shares in God's existence, he need not concern himself with God's *revelation*. To Thomas, our Lord made abundantly clear:

*Thomas saith unto him, Lord we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. (Jn. 14:5-6)*

The Bible, in addition, declares that in Jesus Christ “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (*Col. 2:9*). While each member of the Trinity is a discrete

Person, it is nonetheless the case that Christ Himself is the “express image of his [God's] person” (*Heb. 1:3*). In other words, while our Lord in no way *substitutes* for God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, neither is He a *mode* or *expression* of God, He surely *mediates* the Godhead to mankind, God's rational creation. The attempt to gain a relationship with or knowledge of God the Father while circumventing Jesus Christ is to secure one's own destruction and condemnation. Jesus Christ is the Appointed Mediator between God and man (*1 Tim. 2:5*). He is the Mediator of creation (*Heb. 1:2*), the Mediator of providence (*Col. 1:17*), the Mediator of redemption (*Heb. 8*), and the Mediator of revelation (*Jn. 14:10*). Modern “devotional” writers, no less than medieval mystics, speak gushingly of “knowing God”; but if they teach or imply that one can know God without approaching Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, they subvert the Faith.<sup>3</sup> We cannot be saved apart from faith in Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. It is not enough, however, to say this. We must also assert that we cannot approach God *subsequently* to our regeneration apart from Jesus Christ. He is our only hope of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (*1 Cor. 1:30*).

Just as many mystics circumvent Jesus Christ as God's Mediator to man, so they circumvent His mediating Word in the Bible. God does not now speak an immediate word, but the Bible remains immediately with us as God's revelation to man. The Bible mediates God's *verbal* revelation. Mystics, because they feel a unity with God, do not believe it necessary to recognize or submit to this Word. In fact, they sometimes hold that the true mystic is “beyond good and evil,”<sup>4</sup> a theme the nineteenth-century madman Nietzsche took up and secularized: “We sail right *over* morality, we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to take our voyage there ....”<sup>5</sup>

Even mystics who do not consider themselves “beyond good and evil” believe they have access to some “higher” revelation from or relationship to

God. This is a sub-Christian attitude. God's entire, objective will for man is set out in the Sacred Scriptures. Mystics go beyond even the erroneous idea of "private" revelation ("God told me to do such-and-such last night"). Because they are in some sense (they believe) ontologically united to God, they know His will, not so much by revelation, as by *participation* — He moves and motivates them as aspects of His own being. Mystics must claim (implicitly, of course) to be little gods, extensions of God's being.

In trying to circumvent God's revelation and in an attempt to have an immediate relationship to Him, mystics are really denying their creaturehood. They do not recognize — or else they deny — that man needs God's revelation *because man is not God*. Though made in God's image, he is a qualitatively different kind of being. Man's knowledge is not God's knowledge, and man's being is not God's being. Man cannot participate in God's being any more than he can participate in God's knowledge.

*Mystics are not content with their creaturehood; and with their attempt to become God, they become less than men.*

Mystics are not content with their creaturehood; and with their attempt to become God, they become less than men.



<sup>1</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 344. See also Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> As Harold O. J. Brown asserts, orthodoxy gives priority to history, and heresy gives priority to speculation. See his *Heresies* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 28-

29.

<sup>3</sup> Even the evangelical mystic A. W. Tozer seems to fall into this trap. See his "Following Hard After God," in *The Best of A. W. Tozer*, ed., Warren Wiersbe (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1981), 13-19.

<sup>4</sup> Pelikan, *op. cit.*, 348.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), 221.

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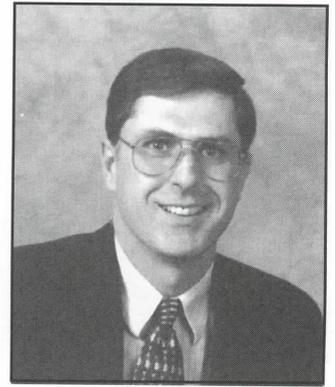
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# “Let Men Their Songs Employ”

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony



I was pleased recently when I learned that the favorite hymn of the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen was “Joy to the World” by Isaac Watts. I am also very fond of that carol. The majesty of its lyrics, in combination with its uplifting and assertive tune, combine to present the claims of Christ to the world in a magnificent way. It is truly a moving sermon in an unforgettable presentation.

We must never relegate music to anything less than a central part of life and worship. The Scriptures repeatedly tell us that we are to sing unto the Lord. We are told that the creation itself rejoices and sings out at the presence of the Lord (*1 Chr. 16:32-33*). When I was in high school, my church often sang Psalm 150 which commands the praising of God with trumpet, psaltery, harp, stringed instruments, timbrels, dance, cymbals, and organs. It concludes, “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.” To the psalmist, music was not a form of abstract expression. This robs it of the clear context of praise that Scripture puts it in. God does not want our abstract praise. Neither is

music to be seen as merely a technical procedure or it loses its vitality and relevance for most people.

Scripture sees music as a necessary response of joy to God’s majesty and grace. Not only the angels and the creation, but we His creatures must sing His praises. “Joy to the earth! the Savoir reigns. Let men their songs employ,” Isaac Watts wrote. But if praise is an inevitable part of music, it must also be a necessary part of all life. Our response to God in worship must not be isolated to the worship service itself. The redeemed’s response to God must display itself in all of life, for the totality of our life and being finds its meaning in Him. When Isaac Watts wrote, “Joy to the World,” he expressed the glory of the incarnation, and gave a testimony of the person and work of Jesus Christ that reaches millions still.

We tend to like the music we grew up with. It became part of us in our youth. It is a form of self-identification as well as a form of communication and expression. If God demands music in His worship and there is music before the throne of God, certainly its value to man and his life cannot be legitimately marginalized.

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# The Chalcedon Signature Conquering Culture for Christ

By Rev. C. L. "Smoky" Stover

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

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

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

## Where There Is A Will, There Is A \_\_\_\_\_?

You've heard it said, "Where there is a will, there is a way." I propose this: "Where there is a will, there is a BETTER way."

My father was a godly, conservative Mid-western farmer. He was of the old school — encouraging hard work, long hours, thrift, and tithing. He had hardly started his farming career when the great depression challenged our nation's economy. He was an independent thinker. Being a strong advocate of self-support, he would never accept a government subsidy. He and his family worked hard and of necessity lived frugally for a couple of decades before there was any measure of economic ease for the family. That background shaped him into a man of caution regarding financial instruments.

Because of that background, several years of attempted persuasion by my brother and me fell on deaf ears as we tried to persuade him to establish a living trust. His usual response was in the order of, "But I have a will. That is all I need." It was a voice from outside his family, the voice of his banker one day asking him, "Mr. Stover, do you have a living trust?" that finally caught his attention. My brother

placed our Father in contact with a credible and knowledgeable Christian attorney who designed a living trust for our father.

He was then past eighty years of age. He almost waited too long. But he did take the necessary action. When he and my mother went to be with their Lord, it took my brother and me only a few hours around the kitchen table to settle the estate. True, it wasn't a large estate, but the benefits of proper planning affect every estate, large or small. Because of the living trust, there were none of the usually large attorney fees, no probate costs, no waiting, no public disclosure of family assets which there would have been had there been only a will. Where there is only a will, the cost of probate procedures can consume a significant portion of an estate and delay transfer of assets to heirs for many, many months. My Father's living trust made assets immediately available to us. Yes, my Father previously had a will, but the living trust was a better way, and is one of several financial instruments available for fast, safe, equitable, wealth transfer done in a way that preserves family wealth.

We encourage every covenant head of household, regardless of age, regardless of the size of your estate, to seek credible professional assistance regarding a tailor-made plan for the securing of your assets for transfer to your heirs. Do it now. Do it without waiting. Godly stewardship demands it.

And please, do consider including Chalcedon in the distribution of your estate.

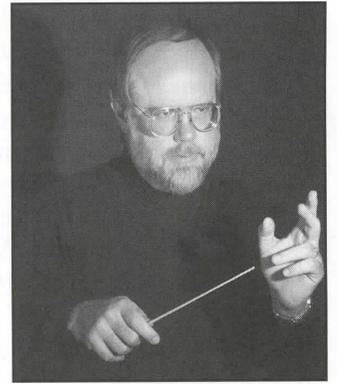
Yes, where there is a will there is a better way.



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

# The Day the Music Died

By Martin G. Selbrede



When Andrew Sandlin asked me to write on the topic, “The Day the Music Died,” I realized that matters musical had worsened significantly since I last published material on the topic, between 1982 and 1985. Back then, I documented the extent to which humanism dominated music, *contra* James Jordan’s opposing viewpoint that music had emerged relatively unscathed by humanist influence in comparison to the other arts. Now, standing on the edge of the new millennium, one can survey how completely the intervening fifteen years of humanist domination has altered the landscape. The easy part is compiling the evidence; the hard part is wresting control from the kingdom of man.

I write from the standpoint of one immersed in the musical enterprise at many levels. I’ve had many of my symphonic compositions performed by orchestras, and currently hold a paid post as the assistant conductor of the New Valley Symphony Orchestra, a 65-piece Los Angeles-based orchestra. I’ve also cast my critical eye on the educational scene *vis-à-vis* music, sometimes to the discomfort of my subjects (see my article in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* X:1 [1983], pp. 40-41). I can speak with some authority (garnered from first-hand experience) on the current state of classical composition as taught in our conservatories and universities, having created the computerized score and electronic performance of a work by Cesar Mateus-Chavez that constituted the final requirement of his doctoral work in music composition at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1998.

In my view, the overall prognosis is grim — grim outside of Christ, that is. And grim within the prison walls of an ever-intensifying humanistic culture.

## Feminist Revisionism

At the tail end of the Christmas 2000 issue of *Newsweek*, columnist George Will concatenated a litany of memorable news items, among which his citation of the current Bowdoin College catalog’s description of a women’s study course stood out: “Is Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony a marvel of abstract architecture, culminating in a gender-free hymn to

human solidarity, or does it model the process of rape?” This “news” provoked so universally outrageous a response that otherwise mortal enemies (*e.g.*, Jews and White Racists) published nearly identical denunciations of it. But, as often is the case in such matters, Will’s “news,” echoed in the *Washington Times* Higher Education’s Dirty Dozen List for 2000, wasn’t really new. Take the red pill, and I’ll show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.

Robert Bork opened the eleventh chapter of his 1996 book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, with a reference to this feminist attack on Beethoven, citing it in conjunction with a feminist condemnation of Isaac Newton’s *Principia*. From the opposite sides of the ideological track, Madeline Wald presented a paper on April 18, 1998 to the Humanist Association of Ottawa presenting the same two facts, in the same order that Bork presented them. Wald quoted from *Who Stole Feminism* by Christine Hoff Sommers, while Bork cites *U.S. News & World Report* columnist John Leo as his source. Leo wrote in December of 1994, while Sommers’ book appeared in 1995. But the strand goes back farther yet, and involves the feminist musicologist Dr. Susan McClary (cited by Bork and Wald), who propagated her phallogocentric interpretation of Beethoven’s work even earlier.

Lest one think that McClary might be misrepresented here, consider her following comment concerning Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony: “The point of recapitulation in the first movement of the Ninth is one of the most horrifying in music, as the carefully prepared cadence is frustrated, drumming up energy which finally explodes in the throttling murderous rage of a rapist incapable of attaining release.”

When did this idea germinate? At least as far back as her 1991 book, *Feminine Endings*? Actually, earlier yet. In 1996, author Robert Anton Wilson quoted McClary’s statement above and wrote, “I didn’t make this up. You can find McClary’s analysis in *Minnesota Composers’ Forum Newsletter*, January 1987.” Wilson averred that even feminist Camille Paglia denounced such revisionism inasmuch as it crosses the line “to an idiot caricature of Feminism.” Notwithstanding critiques from fellow feminists like Wald and Paglia,

McClary's ideas have actually gained considerable academic standing since 1987. She even received a (reported) six-figure grant from the MacArthur Foundation in 1995 to further her revisionist research.

For our purposes here, it is enough to trace the thread to 1987. Significantly, McClary attacked Bach that same year, albeit using a different strategy, one characterized by *The New Criterion's* Samuel Lipman in September of 1991 as "explaining away the achievement of Bach." Lipman quotes from McClary's article, "The Blasphemy of Talking Politics during Bach Year," published in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), edited by McClary and Richard Leppert, as follows:

*[A]t the same time that [Bach's] music shapes itself in terms of bourgeois ideology (its goal orientation, obsessive control of greater and greater spans of time, its willful striving, delayed gratification and defiance of norms), it often cloaks that ideology by putting it at the service of an explicit theology. The tonal procedures developed by the emerging bourgeoisie to articulate their sense of the world here become presented as what we, in fact, want to believe they are: eternal, universal truths. It is no accident that the dynasty of Great (bourgeois) Composers begins with Bach, for he gives the impression that our way of representing the world musically is God-given. Thereafter, tonality can retain its aura of absolute perfection ("the way music goes") in its native secular habitat. This sleight of hand earned Bach the name "the fifth evangelist"... I would propose the age-old strategy of rewriting the tradition in such a way as to appropriate Bach to our own political ends.*

I want to return to the matter of Bach later in this article. For the moment, it is enough to appreciate the death grip that consistent (dare we say epistemologically self-conscious?) humanism ultimately applies to every conceivable target, living or dead.

What of responses to McClary? If you're unaware of how far back and how deep those revisionist roots go, you might deceive yourself into thinking this a passing fad. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Richard Wernick thought so. Interviewed by Thor Halvorssen in the March 1996 issue of *The Red & Blue*, Wernick, a then-retiring professor at the University of Pennsylvania, said of McClary, "She is crazy. McClary wrote several articles in which she views Western art music as being phallogocentric. In one article she says that the recapitulation in the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth symphony was the musical equivalent of rape."

That sounded reassuring — even more so when Halvorssen asks Wernick, "What is your view of articles like that and of professors who use their

academic positions to state such things?" and Wernick replies, "I laugh at it." But then, Wernick lets the other shoe drop: "And she is not the only one. If you look down the lists of the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation you see a lot of gender stuff." Yes, Wernick finds McClaryesque revisionism to be "comical," but notice the tragic bail-out that ensues when Wernick closes the interview:

*I am a firm believer in the canon. I am a firm believer in Western culture being one of the great glories of the world. I am not willing to see this watered down. I am not willing to see standards watered down. I don't want to participate in this anymore. I have been given the opportunity and I am taking the opportunity. I am retiring. Hasta la vista!*

Still feel encouraged and reassured? Someone retiring from the battle, who alerts you to a growing legion of fresh enemy troops being financed by Guggenheim capital, is hardly in a position to instill confidence that things will somehow work out. We're at least fourteen years into McClary's trajectory, and the juggernaut is stronger than ever. We haven't even considered other manifestations of humanism yet in this overview — only the radical feminist variety.

## Other Humanist Encroachments

What of other humanist encroachments? What could be worse than equating Beethoven with rape, and Western music with phallogocentric male hegemony? The 1994 compendium, *Queering The Pitch*, edited by Wood and Thomas, surely gives one possible answer. Not surprisingly, McClary contributed an article marshalling "proof" of the homosexual aspects of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony. Handel isn't exempted from attempts by musicologists to "out" him posthumously, either.

Standing back a bit, it is possible to discern the common root of *moral inversion*. Sometimes, this is explicit enough to be denounced by critics of the "new musicology." Alex Ross, in the July/August 1994 edition of *Lingua Franca*, points out that McClary "declares the symphonies of Beethoven to be more violent, bar for bar, than heavy metal is." To which Ross replies, "Are we seriously to believe that Axl Rose is innocent of malevolent cultural influence while Ludwig van Beethoven, dead these many years, commits acts tantamount to rape?" As a matter of fact, yes: we are being asked to believe exactly that, which is why George Will, six years later, is still aghast at this entrenched phenomenon.

Conservative columnists aren't alone in their reaction. "Old school" musicologists have become apoplectic over the new musicology, but, as Ross

noted in 1994, they've been unable to dislodge it: "[I]t shows no signs of flagging, despite stolid opposition from the musicological old guard." The situation has only worsened since then.

Ironically, Ross' historical survey shows that this ideological shift in musicology arose after 1985, after I had last published on the subject, and after my last published exchanges with theologians more optimistic about music's relationship to humanism. In my view, the humanistic advent of manifesto-like agendas in the musical arts was primarily fueled by a Christian-created vacuum in these disciplines. My 1983 citations from the prescient works of Rushdoony have been fulfilled to the letter: "...true religion is a total concern; any area vacated by a religion is only occupied by another religion." This tendency to "infect every sphere" corresponds to the fact that "the more faithful the Church, the greater its visibility." We have a predominantly invisible, forfeit-happy church to blame for this.

Past Chalcedon staff writers have prophetically "popped the hood" on these trends even further back than their putative birth in 1987. In 1991, McClary singled out Theodor Adorno as a dominant guide in her work, but Adorno was the object of prophetic warnings in several *Chalcedon Report* articles by Otto Scott nearly a decade earlier.

(To appreciate how Adorno, who died in 1969, served as guide to McClary, consider that Adorno singled out for analysis the exact passage in Beethoven over which she cries "Rape!" Adorno, a composer in his own right and student of Alban Berg, proposed the following in *Music and Language*: "In the supreme moments of great music, and they are often the most violent moments — one instance is the beginning of the recapitulation in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony — this intention becomes eloquently unambiguous by virtue of the sheer power of its context." His dialectic allows that music "contains a theological dimension," but he sees this as amounting to "demythologized prayer" and little more.)

I, for one, am astonished how dull of understanding we've become, how unappreciative we are of the truism that ideas have consequences. And it's not because we haven't had advance warning on any of this! Otto Scott put it this way in the June 1993 *Chalcedon Report*, explaining why he had submitted his March, 1982 article on Adorno for republication: Adorno's work [on fascism in this context] "was largely unknown to Christians when it appeared, remained unknown ten years ago when I mentioned it here, and is still largely unknown.... It is more than time that these threats to the faith be recognized and their authors named and read.... Perhaps [my essay's] relevance will be more easily recognized, this time around." Prophetically, Otto Scott's origi-

nal article began, "It is not enough to agree with Richard Weaver that 'ideas have consequences...'" He was surely right — and that inadequacy has us on the ropes today.

We are reaping what we have sown, but we are not interested in changing how and what we sow. Inertia has gutted our resolve as Christian men and women, and inadequate half-way measures have been hailed as good solutions to the problem when, in fact, they are not. My published recommendations were regarded as extremist by many in 1985; now, it seems, those "extremist" views of our Christian responsibility appear barely adequate to stem the rising humanist tide. Our ghetto is too comfortable, apparently.

Some dismissed my 1983 documentation of the interrelationship of statism to music (Marxist statism in particular). Lo, the Marxists have since advanced a more thoroughly-developed ethos of music than Christians have ever imagined possible. An organization called Ultra-red, founded in 1994, explicitly "radicalizes the conventions of electro-acoustic and ambient music to explore acoustic space as enunciative of social relations." As their mission statement declares, "Ultra-red has developed projects around a variety of urban ambiances including needle exchange (*Soundtrax*, 1996), public sex (*Second Nature*, 1999), public housing (*Structural Adjustments*, 2000), issues around globalization (*Value System*, work in progress) and labor." Feminist McClary isn't the only scholar issuing radical manifestos.

Ultra-red's founders concede, "Our starting point, as it has been for many contemporary artists and thinkers of sound, was Jacques Attali's seminal text, *Noise: the Political Economy of Music*. And yet our interest in Attali, unlike new musicologists like Susan McClary, John Mowitt, Stephen Leppert, Rosa Subotnik, and Jeffery Walser, did not lead us toward a reformulation of Theodor Adorno's sociology of music as an end in itself. Consonant with Marx's call to change the world, Adorno felt the true task for music, its radical potential was its capacity to transform history." In thick, academic prose, the Ultra-red scholar-musicians laud Marx and Lenin, explain how music can crush capital, develop a post-Cagean "materialism of music," and codify an impressively elaborate activist programme for realizing "revolution on the edge of music." No current Christian alternative to this is in evidence.

## Evolution, Anyone?

What does the work of Harvard naturalist and noted neo-Darwinian Dr. Stephen Jay Gould have to do with music? Does this aspect of humanism also impinge on the musical enterprise and its analysis? Professor Jeffrey Perry at Louisiana State University fears it does, as his

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article “Music, Evolution, and the Ladder of Progress” in the November 2000 edition of *Music Theory Online* suggests. Individual composers who have written about themselves have often placed themselves at the top rung of a supposed ladder of musical development. Wagner, Schoenberg, Webern, and Boulez have all done precisely that, in keeping with Gould’s evolutionary “Cone of Increasing Diversity,” in which simple archetypes give rise to complex, refined descendents. Boulez bolstered his self-conceived position at the top rung by belittling other contenders for the slot (most notably Schoenberg).

My 1998 labors in notating the doctoral work of composer Cesar Mateus-Chavez, a Boulez proponent and sympathizer, corroborated this perspective of modern musical thinking: the tendency to look down on works less complex in construction as evolutionarily backwards. From a Darwinian perspective, this conceit is justified, and Perry cites only three composers who even partially bucked the trend (Debussy, Busoni, and Partch). As Perry notes, the evolutionary perspective has even found its way onto “the cover of the *Indiana Theory Review*, a respected journal published by the Graduate Theory Association of the Indiana University School of Music, on which one may see a Ladder-of-Progress consisting of (from left to right) medieval neumes, fifteenth-century white mensural notation, Baroque figured bass, and so on, right up to graphic notation *a la* Berio or Crumb!”

Another musicological implication of the evolutionary mindset has cropped up, although it is not generally recognized as such. Dr. Nicholas Cook, writing in the May 1999 *BBC Music Magazine*, points out in passing that, “[H]istories of music tend to over-emphasize innovation at the expense of the many musicians who work within established styles.” The shift to the next evolutionary level is regarded as more important than craftsmanship within a level.

Every time I’ve published documentation of the music-humanism link, I’ve had to severely abbreviate the compiled data: there’s just too much of it. Today, that data would constitute a massive deluge. Let’s shift gears, then, and turn to pedagogical issues.

## Education Reform and Reformation

In *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 19, 1989), Dartmouth professor and composer Jon Appleton wrote an article entitled “The College Music Curriculum Is in Pressing Need of Reform.” John Lofton brought this material to my attention a decade ago, and its significance has become easier to evaluate with the passing of time. Appleton bemoans the current state of music theory education in terms that seem to have come back to haunt us: “It is meaningless to teach skills such as counterpoint and four-part harmony based on a literature few people know.”

Further on, he adds, “if we don’t change the way we teach composition, we will soon have very few students. The significant decline in applications for graduate degrees in composition testifies to the need for reform.” Does the “reap what you sow” principle hold? Yes. Professor Gary Karpinski of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, writing in the August 2000 issue of *Music Theory Online*, revealed that, “[A]s a reader for the GRE music test I must tell you that ... counterpoint lags dismally far behind other bodies of knowledge and skill among our students (at least among those applying to graduate school).” If you disdain to teach a skill, it’s no surprise that the skill has atrophied among musicians ten years later. Yale’s Professor Allen Forte, replying to Karpinski, also acknowledges the problem, but probes a step further, “Why, then, is counterpoint instruction in decline?” Forte guesses that incompetent instruction is to blame, never hinting that Appleton’s agenda may simply have hit the ground running.

My previous articles on music published by Chalcedon in 1983 documented the fact of musical elitism and its deadening effects on musical pedagogy. Some critics then disputed my research and conclusions, but today even secular music pedagogues acknowledge the rampant elitism inherent in the current system.

Unfortunately, solutions to the problem have taken divergent routes. On the one hand, we have a complicated notational system in Western music, and on the other hand, we have students who don’t understand it. Ray Lindsey, who shares my opposition to musical elitism, has taken an approach akin to bringing the mountain to Mohammad, creating a simplified notational system to bridge this gap. Because the system doesn’t cover all the chromatic pitches of Western scales, it lends itself better to instruction using Lindsey’s cleverly modified steel drum design (patent pending, so I’m informed). No doubt, these are more “fun” to play than traditional flutophones/recorders, and the notation is kid-friendly. But are lowered expectations the proper foundation for a Christian reformation of musical pedagogy? Should we address the gap between goal and student by lowering the goal, or by elevating the student? Or have we given up on raising a new generation of Mozarts and Beethovens (which accusation I made, without apology, in 1983)?

I have long hailed Bach as the proper starting point for music instruction. We should embrace Bach for the same reasons McClary assails him (just re-read her comments quoted earlier to see that everything she opposes in Bach, we would heartily affirm). Bach remains the nexus for reconstructive efforts in music pedagogy, theory, and practice. In Bach, the vertical and horizontal (harmonic and linear melodic) aspects of music are simultaneously maximized while extend-

ing dominion over the entire tonal domain. Nothing short of this starting point will suffice.

In addition to Bach, I remain unapologetically convinced that we must add the foundational music theory of Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) to complete the picture. Hindemith alone erects a comprehensive tonal theory based on essentially creationist presuppositions. On such foundations, the premise of Genesis 1:26-28 finds firm ground. That the dominion mandate of Genesis is explicitly under attack by modern musicologists was established during my 1989 lecture at the Chicago Christian Worldview Conference, where I read revealing passages from Christopher Small's 1977 volume, *Music — Society — Education*. Small decries "the emphasis laid on the subduing of the sound materials" by composers, and mentions the Genesis passage in particular as leading to a faulty musical ethos (comprised of polyphony *a la* Bach) that distorts the essential reality of music. Small's pantheistic affectations mar his whole presentation. Yet, where are the opposing volumes by Christian musicologists?

When I publicly recommended the study of Hindemith's work within the reconstructionist community nearly 19 years ago, few took up the challenge. Sadly, Hindemith (arguably the greatest all-around musician who ever lived) has yet to make theoretical in-roads, for reasons I've long ago documented (his comprehensive theory excludes autonomy from the entire musical enterprise). Although he was the last individual without a formal degree to ever chair an entire department at Yale University, Hindemith has had to tolerate ungracious contempt for sticking to his convictions and having the temerity to share them. After delivering a lecture in Zurich, Hindemith asked the audience if there were any questions. As the late Georg Solti reports in his *Memoirs*, the distinguished conductor Otto Klemperer stood up and asked, "Herr Hindemith, wo sind hier die Toiletten?" Mr. Hindemith, where are the toilets? Solti admits this question reflected Klemperer's opinion of the lecture, and from our vantage point it is easy to feel sympathetically indignant. But remember: at least Klemperer was in the audience, listening. Can today's Christians say that much? Or does the beam in our eye speak for us?

Yale's Prof. Kofi Agawu, writing for *Music Theory Online* in 1996, held that neglect of music theory by the new musicologists "testifies to a willed amnesia on their part, a necessary strategy, perhaps, for redrawing the boundaries of the musical disciplines." That phrase, "willed amnesia," and its purported goal, "redrawing of boundaries," sadly explain the contemporary reception of Hindemith's work. With Hindemith, as with B. B. Warfield, it can be truly said that the only way to deal with so strong a protagonist is to ignore him. This bares the humanist strategy towards Hindemith, but fails to illuminate the reasons

Christians ignore Hindemith's work: willful ignorance with no Christian strategy surely yields worse results than willed amnesia with a humanist strategy.

Reformed thinker Alex Hammer describes Christian forfeiture and default even more pointedly:

*To my pagan acquaintances I may boast of the music of Bach and Haydn [sic], the classic novels and poetry of some few nominal Christians (mostly heretics), the paintings of Rembrandt, and so forth. But what have we done lately? [e.a.] If the "world is the schoolhouse of the Christian," as Calvin said, I am sure we have been playing hookey for several generations.*

Hammer likewise rebukes miserable Christian achievement in the musical arts, issuing a warning that parallels Rushdoony's earliest pronouncements: "So long as we allow the godless to keep for themselves all the territory they invade, we will consign ourselves to an ever-shrinking aesthetic ghetto..." (cf. [www.reformers.org](http://www.reformers.org)).

The worst thing Christians can do is nothing. But the second worst thing is to adopt a crisis mentality (even if there is a crisis). "Crisis" is the great humanist crowbar, and articles with labels like "The American Symphony Orchestra in Crisis" (Joseph Hurwitz in *Classical Pulse*, Dec. 1993) are calculated to serve as calls to arms and pretexts for new agendas that will never truly lead to reformation. Healing of music's mortal wound will take twenty years *from the point in time when Christians take seriously their obligation to raise a generation that self-consciously takes every thought captive to the obedience of Christ*.

The outlines of this obligation presented in my earlier Chalcedon articles on reconstruction of music, once regarded as extremist, now barely serve as a minimum platform for long-term victory. Solutions short of this are the equivalent of salt that has lost its savor, posing no threat to the humanists, who will only too gladly tread it underfoot with derision.

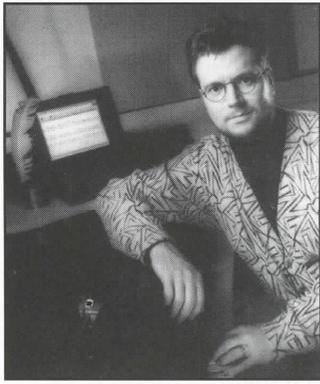
But give Christ the preeminence in all things, and even the demons tremble.



Would you like to participate in remedying the problems documented in Martin Selbrede's article? See the website "Reformation of the Arts and Music" at [ArtsReformation.com](http://ArtsReformation.com).



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# The Biblical View of Music, Part II: Some Errors Considered

By Calvin Jones

## Introduction

In a previous article, “The Biblical View Of Music,”<sup>1</sup> I discussed the key Biblical requirements for good music. Art, by its very nature, is enjoyed by being reflected upon. It occupies our thoughts through the stimulation of our senses. It must be experienced to be enjoyed and to bring pleasure to man. God has given us specific qualifications for the objects of our thoughts and reflections. Paul in Philippians 4:8 gives us by divine revelation this brief but comprehensive list for God-honoring art: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think [or meditate] on such things.”

In this article, I want to focus on some of man’s erroneous standards for judging music and the consequences of these standards.

## A Gothard Fallacy

In an effort to critique the flood of contemporary music being produced, many evangelicals have come up with their own standards for music rather than apply God’s standards. Just as many legislators rely on their own sinful minds to come up with their ideas of right law, so also many Christians mistakenly substitute their own judgements for God’s in the area of art and music.

One of the mistaken ideas heard often in the evangelical world is Bill Gothard’s comparison of music with other disciplines such as chemistry, language, math, and art. In his book *Research in Principles of Life Advanced Seminar Textbook* (p. 124), Gothard makes the following comparisons and analogies:<sup>2</sup>

CHEMISTRY	LANGUAGE	MATH
H <sub>2</sub> O + CN	Truth + Lie	Solution + 1
= Poison	= Untruth	= Incorrect

Then Gothard gives the analogy to art and music on the next page (p. 125).<sup>3</sup>

ART	MUSIC
Figure + Nudity	Rhythm + Imbalance
= Pornography	= Acid Rock

As Dr. Gregg Strawbridge has pointed out:

*It assumes what must be proven. Namely, no one has shown that “acid rock” music style (whatever it is) is evil. Further, the implied argument rests on an analogy between the different disciplines. “Accurate evaluation of music is only possible as we integrate it with the related disciplines of mathematics, science, history and medicine. The laws of these disciplines act as an authoritative reference to confirm that the musical expression is either following or violating established principles...Just as there is balance of power in the three branches of United States government, so the laws of related disciplines provide checks and balances for music.” (p. 123). The perceptive reader will see quickly that until one can prove that a music style is analogous to poison, falsehood, mathematical inaccuracy, or pornography, the indicting conclusion is fallacious. The fallacy is the called the fallacy of false analogy.<sup>4</sup>*

The analogies do not have the impact intended when scrutinized. For example, what is poison in large quantities may be medicines in small quantities; mathematical inaccuracies are quantitative measures, not qualitative measures (as music is). Further, “Imbalance” in the last of the series (rhythm + imbalance = acid rock) must be defined. If “imbalance” essentially means modern popular music, the argument has not advanced beyond circularity; if it can be defined so as to prove that a particular style is morally evil, then it must rest on a Biblical definition of “imbalance” in music. Gothard does not show it Biblically.<sup>5</sup>

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## WAITing for the Cows...

Another false argument for judging music is the so-called bad physical effects argument. A popular idea is that music with a drumbeat (actually all music has a rhythm or beat) causes certain undesirable effects in animals or plants and that soft relaxing music produces desirable effects. A sample of this type of argument follows:

*In Chicago a very unusual experiment was performed by radio station WAIT to verify that rock music actually does trigger adverse physical reactions. This station broadcasts the type of gentle, soothing music heard in doctor's offices, and the radio station wanted to demonstrate that this music could even tame the savage beast. In a display area of a large department store, a miniature cow barn was erected into which two cows were placed. Both cows had an earphone attached through which music was piped into their ears. One cow was treated to the music of WAIT, whereas the other cow had the "privilege" of listening to a local rock station. After 13 days, the cow listening to WAIT produced 617 lbs. of milk, whereas the cow listening to rock music only produced 511 lbs. Furthermore, the cow listening to rock music also chewed up the earphones and became very ill. A very unusual experiment indeed, but I do believe it drives home a point: Rock music is harmful to living organisms.<sup>6</sup>*

Now this is all very interesting (and even somewhat amusing). However, it begs the question. Does music affect man? Certainly. What type of effect are you trying to produce? Who defines what are desirable and what are undesirable effects? If relaxation or sleep is the desired effect, then don't listen to exciting music. However, just because some type of music does not produce sleep or relaxation does not prove by any stretch of the imagination that it is bad. The argument here is that some kinds of music do not relax you while others do. So what's new? The purpose of different kinds of music is different. If you want to go to sleep you may want to listen to relaxing music. If you're driving truck at 3 a.m., it would be detrimental to your health and the health of others to be listening to relaxing music. If you want your cows to produce lots of milk, then find the kind of music that helps them do this. However, if you are trying to signal the cavalry to charge, don't play Brahms' Lullaby.

There is a time for everything under the sun (*Ecc. 3:1-8*). There is a time for many different styles of music that reflect the different activities of man. A steady diet of one type of music is not necessarily a good thing. Variety is the spice of life.

This specific kind of argumentation does nothing to encourage good music and even less to guide our

analysis of what is good music. Rather it promotes unjustified restraints on composition, restraints that haven't been authorized by Scripture.

There is indeed legitimate criticism for certain songs that contain percussion, electric and bass guitar, just as there is legitimate criticism for certain songs that do not contain these instruments. These instruments in and of themselves are good. God made them good. He commanded His people to praise Him with *loud* percussive instruments. "Praise him upon the loud cymbals..." (*Ps. 150:5*).<sup>7</sup> (I wonder if crashing cymbals are good for milk production.) He commanded them also to praise Him with stringed instruments (of which guitars are one).<sup>8</sup> There is a time and place for all these instruments. Psalm 150:5 commands the use of loud cymbals while 1 Corinthians 13:1 compares speaking in tongues without love to "clanging cymbals." Which is it? Is the playing of loud cymbals good or bad? The answer is both. In one situation they are good, in another they are not.

The standard for good music is the principles God gives in His Word, not the fallacious ideas of men. If God's requirements are not met, then it is not good music, with or without these instruments.

One of the most common problems with contemporary music is that it majors on the minor. Next, we shall examine the music from a contemporary band which fails this scriptural test.

## In the Name of Evangelism – Majoring on the Minor

Another myth used to justify or condemn music is the myth of evangelistic worth. In my previous article, I discussed the fact that before the Fall, perfect music could not have been evangelistic since there was no sin and no need of evangelism. Further, God's requirements for the objects of our thoughts and meditations in Philippians 4:8 do not include evangelistic content. Certainly, evangelistic content is fine and good, but it is not necessary for good music. Further, evangelistic content cannot be used to justify music that does not meet God's standards of good music.

Take for example the music of the group "Saviour Machine." Their style is what is known as Christian Gothic. Goths in general are enamored with darkness. Their clothing is most often black. Black eyeliner and lace commonly adorn both sexes. Images of blood stained articles abound at their websites. The Christian Goths attempt to add Christ to the dark despair of the unbelieving Goths to come

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up with an evangelistic ministry to these disaffected youth. As such, they embrace the darkness of the unbelieving Goths in an effort to reach them for Christ. According to Joseph J. Kopnick, "There really is no single sentence that can sum up in complete the tie between Gothic and Christianity. But if I was forced to try, I suppose this is what I would come up with: Christian Gothica is a physical manifestation of the fact that only through death can life be gained, only by knowing what darkness is can we fully enjoy the light, only by understanding suffering can we completely appreciate salvation."<sup>9</sup>

While it is true that only through Christ's death may we have life, it is not true that Christ has called us to walk in darkness in order to appreciate the light. He has called us, rather, to "walk as children of light" (*Eph. 5:8*). "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light" (*Eph. 5:11-13*).

Notice first that Scripture commands us to have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness. To be part of a subculture that embraces darkness is not an option for Christians. Second, instead of walking in *darkness* to appreciate the *light*, Scripture commands us to live in the *light* which exposes the *darkness*. Further, attempting to wrap up the light of the gospel in the darkness of the Goth subculture is not the message of the gospel. In Matthew 5:14-15 our Lord commands us, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house." God's people should not be cloaked, but rather be as a light set on a hill which cannot be hidden, but shines for all to see. Whether this method appeals to unbelievers who loathe to have their evil works made manifest by the light is not important. This is the means God uses to change irresistibly the hearts of those He has chosen to be His own. Unlike the Arminian who is always trying to make the gospel palatable to the unbeliever, Jesus and the apostles boldly preached against men's sinfulness, never adopting their sinful practices in order to be heard (*Lk. 5:27-32; 6:6-11*).

Thomas Woodroffe, another member of the Christian Goths, describes his subculture as follows: "I equate it with having a darker, and perhaps more serious view of life and the world."<sup>10</sup> In other words, if you have a serious understanding of reality, you won't be an optimistic, joyful person, but rather a

melancholy, pessimistic person obsessed with a dark outlook and aesthetic. According to Christian Goths, the Christian who is joyful must be hiding something or ignoring the reality of the darkness of our existence. He must be wearing a mask. Saviour Machine wrote a song called "The Mask." Here are the lyrics:

*Sounds in the attic  
See inside the show  
Watch as you go  
Watch as you go  
Trapped in some place  
The entity fades*

*Watch them crawl on me  
Claiming redemption  
They're coming to your town  
There's nothing inside  
There's nowhere to hide*

*Assassination  
When the mask came off  
Lurking in the doorway  
I saw him hang by the power  
Covered in scabs  
Covered in scabs  
Covered in faceless masks of men  
Assassination  
When the mask came off*

Now you begin to get a picture of the darkness of the Christian Goths. When you hear the song's very ominous foreboding music with the vocalist wailing "Watch them crawl on me," "They're coming to your town" and "Assassination" you certainly get the message of darkness here.

Another Saviour Machine song is called "Killer." Here are some of the lyrics:

*Killer lies in frightened eyes  
Obsessed with words that terrorize the earth*

*Killer hides inside of the dead  
Killer walks in fear of his own  
Killer judges all that is said  
Killer doesn't see what is shown*

*Killer is dying within  
Killer is taking the soul from the man  
Killer is stalking again  
Killer is breaking the heart of his plan....*

As with all Gothic music, the tune is foreboding and desperate. The lyrics here focus on the "killer." It is not clear just what exactly this "killer" is. However, it is certain that this song, like the previous, does not major on the major theme of life, but rather on the minor theme of life.

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In my previous article, I discussed the fact that for a song to be admirable and praiseworthy, it must be centered on God and reflect the Christian worldview. Francis Schaeffer rightly divides the Christian worldview into a major and minor theme. The minor theme is the abnormality of the world in revolt against God. This consists of the unregenerate who have revolted against God and who self-consciously convey the meaninglessness of their worldview in their art. There is, of course, another aspect of the minor theme, namely, the Christian's defeated and sinful side.<sup>11</sup> Schaeffer explains:

*The major theme is the opposite of the minor; it is the meaningfulness and purposefulness of life.... God is there. He exists. Therefore all is not absurd.... Man being made in the image of God gives man significance.... The major theme is optimism in the area of being.... Man's dilemma is not just that he is finite and God is infinite, but that he is a sinner guilty before a holy God. But then he recognizes that God has given him a solution to this in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Man is fallen and flawed, but he is redeemable on the basis of Christ's work. This is beautiful. This is optimism. And this optimism has a sufficient base.<sup>12</sup>*

There is certainly a place for both the minor and major themes in the Christian worldview. Good art must not leave out the defeated aspect to even the Christian life. If our art only emphasizes the major theme, then it is not true to the Christian worldview and is simply romantic art. On the other hand it is possible for a Christian to so major on the minor theme, emphasizing the lostness of man and the abnormality of the universe, that he is equally flawed in his communication of the Christian worldview. In general, good art must be dominated by the major theme.<sup>13</sup> For music to be excellent and praiseworthy it must have this balance. It must major on the major theme and minor on the minor. Music which majors on the minor is not worthy of our praise and admiration. It is not in proper perspective. It does not have the proper balance.

This is the fundamental problem with the music of Saviour Machine as well as other composers who major on the minor theme of life. But, some will object, they are a Christian band trying to reach others with the gospel. Since when did evangelization become a criterion for good music? Fathers, this is a crucial point in judging the music your family purchases and listens to. Let me repeat this: Nowhere in God's standards for good art given by divine revelation in Philippians 4:8 is there any mention of being evangelistic. This has no bearing on whether a song is judged to be good or bad, worthy or unworthy of

your thoughts and reflection. *It makes no difference.* Music can be good with evangelistic content or without it. Don't be fooled into thinking that all music by Christians is good and all music by unbelievers is bad. This is simply not the case.

## **Autonomy and the Death of Excellence**

Autonomy (that is, substituting your law for God's law) in music has resulted in the derailing of good music among Christian artists. Because of the expectation of evangelicals, many musicians have been sidetracked into being evangelists instead of being great musicians. The pressure to preach when you've been called to play is very common. For example, churches, when considering musicians to come and perform for them, are always looking for some kind of evangelistic message or, at the very minimum, some testimony to justify bringing in an artist to perform for their congregation. Artists who have more exciting testimonies ("I used to be a drug addict, but now I'm a Jesus addict") have more appeal than those who offer great music without the big conversion stories.

In the bigger picture, the goal of evangelism in music has caused an entire industry to evolve. The gospel music industry is driven by this goal of evangelism, resulting in mediocrity in the name of evangelism. The standard of excellence in music is subordinate to evangelistic merit. Worse yet, bad music is excused or even promoted as good music because of its supposed evangelistic worth.

Speaking where the Bible has not spoken, others wish to condemn the music they don't like by other erroneous criteria, including Gothard's fallacious analogy and arguments based on a song's beat or rhythm.

Only when we come back to God's standards of good music will we again be liberated from these false ideas and produce an environment that fosters true creativity within the bounds of the Christian worldview.

## **Be a Good Patron**

Have you ever purchased a recording of music or gone to a ticketed concert? If so, you have been a patron to some musician. In times past, wealthy nobles, kings, and other dignitaries would support musicians, leaving them free from earthly cares to focus their attention on composing and performing for them. To a large measure, this has been replaced in modern days by the free market and the ability to mass-produce recorded music. The record companies and consumers now have become the patrons of music. Everyone can be a good patron by searching out and supporting

artists who create and perform music according to God's standards. There are many ways today to do this. The Internet is full of music samples so you can listen to almost any artist before you purchase a recording. Many stores have demos of different artists where you can listen to an entire release before purchasing it. Word of mouth is still one of the best ways of finding good music. Be a wise patron and share your findings with your friends. Purchasing good music is the best way today to support it.



<sup>1</sup> The reader can review this article online in the August 1999 issue of the *Chalcedon Report* by going to <http://www.chalcedon.edu/report/99aug/music.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Bill Gothard, *Research in Principles of Life Advanced Seminar Textbook* (Oak Brook, IL, 1986), 124.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Gregg Strawbridge, *Toward a Biblical Philosophy of Music: An Analysis and Critique of Music in the Balance* by Frank Garlock and Kurt Woetzel, (unpublished article), 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Bartel Elshout, *Rock Music — Innocent Entertainment or Deadly Poison?* online at <http://www.hnrc.org/html/rock.html>

<sup>7</sup> See also Nehemiah 12:27 and 1 Chronicles 13:8.

<sup>8</sup> See 1 Chronicles 13:8, Psalm 150:4, Isaiah 38:20, and Habakkuk 3:19.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph J. Kopnick, quoted from an article excerpted from *What is Christian Goth* online at <http://www.christiangoth.com/gothview.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Woodroffe, quoted from an article excerpted from *What is Christian Goth* online at <http://www.christiangoth.com/gothview.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL, 1973), 56-57.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* 56-57.

<sup>13</sup> There are many references to the fact that as Christians we are overcomers, even of death, which for the believer is the entrance into complete victory. The major theme of taking dominion over all creation while living on earth and then reigning with Christ in heaven is the focus of the Christian life (*Gen. 1:28; Is. 25:8; 1 Cor. 15:54-57; 1 Jn. 5:4*).



Calvin Jones is a concert and recording artist and a member of the Emmaus Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Fort Collins, Colorado. Calvin has four piano albums released internationally as well as many soundtrack credits. Hear his music at his web site: [www.calvinjones.net](http://www.calvinjones.net). He can be contacted through e-mail: [calvin@calvinjones.net](mailto:calvin@calvinjones.net) or phone (888) 561-2094.

## Seventh Annual

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**JOHN HODGES** is a professor and the Director of the Institute for the Arts Cultural Apologetics at Crichton College in Memphis, Tennessee. He conducts the ARS NOVA Chamber Orchestra and has conducted the Kharkov Philharmonic in the Ukraine. He has been a regular lecturer at L'Abri conferences since 1994. He will be speaking on a Christian worldview of music.

**PETER LEITHART** teaches at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho. He is the author of numerous books including *Wise Words, Brightest Heaven of Invention: A Christian Guide to Six Shakespeare Plays* and *Heroes of the City of Man: A Christian Guide to Select Ancient Literature*. He will be speaking on reading literature from a Christian perspective, focusing on Greek classics, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen.

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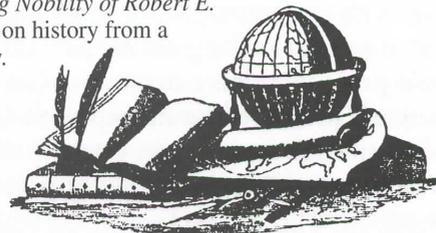
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**JOE MORECRAFT** is pastor of Chalcedon Presbyterian Church in Cumming, Georgia. He has preached and lectured throughout the United States and in numerous foreign countries. He has authored *With Liberty and Justice for All* and contributed to a number of other books. He will be lecturing on how to interpret Scripture and preaching each evening on the Holy Spirit.

**HERB TITUS** is a former law school dean at Regent University. He is currently a practicing attorney, specializing in constitutional litigation and strategy. He has lectured throughout the United States, hosted a radio program, and authored the book, *God, Man and Law: The Biblical Principles*. He will speak on the first amendment from a Christian worldview.

**STEVE WILKINS** pastors in Monroe, Louisiana. He is author of the tape series, *America: The First 350 Years* and a book, *Call of Duty: The Sterling Nobility of Robert E. Lee*. He will lecture on history from a Christian worldview.



# Music and Impacting Culture for Christ

By David L. Bahnsen



**F**or those of us who support the creed and basic manifesto of Chalcedon, seeing Christendom impact all of culture should be the driving force in our lives. Indeed, God Himself mandated that Christians take the message of the gospel (the entire message), to all parts of the world (*Mt. 28:18-20*). Perhaps the very most relevant expression in culture today takes place in modern music, certainly as it pertains to the younger generations (ages 10 - 25). I have been privileged to work in the contemporary Christian music industry since I began my professional career nearly eight years ago. It is my firm conviction that those of us who seek dominion need to become aware of what Christians are doing in modern music, the problems that exist that impede the success of such an industry, and the goals and objectives Christians must have as they move forward.

Contemporary Christian music has been the fastest growing genre of music in terms of certified sales for nearly five years now (replacing country music) on Billboard's official sales charts. Artists such as Sixpence None the Richer, P.O.D., Jars of Clay, etc., have achieved remarkable success in the real world of commercial radio and video airplay. Artists who used to sell from 10,000 to 20,000 albums in Christian bookstores are now able to move over 150,000, and even 300,000 albums, all in the tiny world of Christian bookstores. Between concert ticket revenues and album sales, the Christian music industry is a \$1 billion industry and still growing.

For the purposes of this article, I am not referring to such traditional adult contemporary artists as Sandi Patty and Amy Grant, and I am not referring to the long-established industry of Black gospel and Southern gospel music. In terms of the musical genre that kids often embrace on their local "secular" radio station or on MTV, the "cutting edge" genre of music is exploding in the Christian world. For those of us who seek cultural dominion in classrooms, hospitals, politics, science labs, financial markets, and the arts, this should be seen as an exciting

prospect. My late father, Dr. Greg Bahnsen, used to refer to rock n' roll music as a "rite of passage" for the youth culture. Indeed, having been a teenager less than ten years ago myself, and now working with bands that sell in excess of 1 million records, I can certainly testify to the validity of the claim that music has a tremendous impact on the thinking and lifestyles of teenage and college-age audiences. Idolatry is sinful no matter what form it takes, and I certainly do not advocate kids replacing their spiritual lives or their personal education with a sinful obsession in the culture and lifestyle of rock music. However, music is a part of this society, and Christians are remiss to ignore their responsibility to use it as a tool in our dominion calling and as a means of glorifying our Heavenly Father.

What holds back the growth of the Christian music industry? Why has it taken so long for some of these highly talented groups to gain the exposure and success they have deserved? I list several concerns below, and I hope that the readers of the *Report* will not be guilty of any of these.

## Poor Theology

There is a general attitude in the Christian music world that also permeates the thinking of a good portion of retailers, radio stations, and concert promoters. It is the age-old Arminian fallacy that unless the message and purpose of the music and the musicians are *specifically* evangelical and geared towards what they call "soul-winning," it is not worthy of the label "Christian music." I have managed several groups over the years that were outlawed from performing at certain events because they did not do altar calls. The idea that any Christian person who writes songs or plays an instrument has a further obligation to deliver a John 3:16 message each night is preposterous, yet I assure you that it is a *common* attitude in the Christian music industry. Some retailers will base their product order of new releases on how many times the word "Jesus" appears

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in the album lyric sheets. The reality is that a Christian person writing a song about his parents' divorce, or about the love he has for his wife, or about a confusing predicament he is dealing with in his life is just as legitimate as one who chooses to write a more evangelistic song. Thank God that David and Solomon were not inhibited by the standards set in today's Christian music industry. Furthermore, there is a general fundamentalist attitude that all rock n'roll and all dancing were prescribed by Satan and, thus, are not appropriate for Christians. Although this attitude is shrinking, it still exists far more than it should, particularly in certain parts of the country, and is a destructive and naive attitude that eliminates Christians from a chance to permeate culture with good music. The theological shortcomings within the industry are frightening.

### Poor Music

Quite frankly, for years and years, the music being produced by Christian artists has been so substandard that it has not been worthy of attention within culture. I believe that is changing, but some of the theological fallacies I mentioned above have severely cramped the quality and talent that should exist in Christian music. Just as God requires doctors who are believers to be the very best in their profession; and just as God expects pastors to be very thorough, precise, and articulate in their preaching; God calls musicians who are believers to write good music and to perform it in a way that glorifies Him. I read articles constantly from other Christians who claim that "all Christian music is terrible." This stereotype was well deserved in the past, so I am moderate in my criticism, but I am confident that the landscape is changing, and I encourage the readers of the *Report* to evaluate some of the music that is now available. It is a constant battle, but the talent levels are higher than ever before, and there is unbridled opportunity for Christian dominance in the fields of songwriting and performing.

### Poor Business

In addition to poor theology, I believe the industry has suffered immensely from incompetence in the business aspect of this trade. Poor decision-making, bad allocation of resources, staff mismanagement, incomplete marketing plans, etc., are common in this business. Unfortunately, the poor business practices I refer to are often justified by claims that "this is just a ministry any way" or "I am not in this for the money." The underlying assumption being, "I am doing this for God, so it does not matter how well I do it" — the very antithesis of what the Bible teaches. As the Christian music industry improves its caliber of

executives, its wisdom in financial investing, and its sophistication in production, marketing, and distribution, more doors will open for those who are serious about seeing music impact culture for Christ.

### Poor Ethics

Last, but not least — and certainly the most depressing of all the categories — I believe the industry is massively impeded by poor ethics in the lives of many of the business figures and musical celebrities that make up the industry. Personal scandals, terrible family lives, financial fraud, etc. are all too common in the industry that carries the name "Christian" in its title. As is often the case, Christians can be the worst at practicing what they preach and there is certainly massive need for reform and piety in the personal lives of all those in the Christian music business who profess the name of Christ.

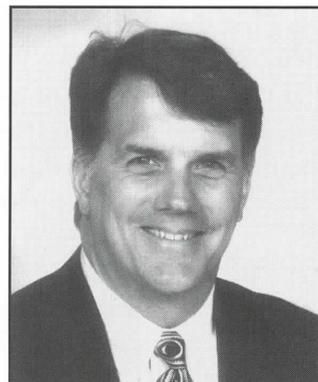
For myself as a Christian man and as an executive in the Christian music industry, I believe that in order to move forward in the industry, we must remedy each of the above problems. For a "would-be" consumer who is skeptical about Christian music, I encourage you to reevaluate what is available in Christian music today. The Internet has gone a long way toward increasing the national exposure of select Christian artists and this will only increase in years to come. This is by no means a perfect business, but any one who really does desire to see their community impacted for Christ, let alone society at-large, music is going to be a massive tool in that regard. If Christians do not use music to make a statement, someone else will. By the grace of God, may Christian songwriters improve their craft, may Christian music businesses improve their skills and savvy, and may consumers of Christian music open their minds to the good material out there. Most importantly, may all of those in and out of the industry desire to live sanctified lives, so that when the message does hit the hearts of our culture, it will not be perceived as empty. Music as entertainment, music as a message, and music as creative expression, are all valid goals — may it be the Christians who dominate in all of these categories for generations to come.



*David Bahnsen currently owns and operates the Davdon Artist Agency and DLB Management, music representation companies serving the Christian music industry with offices in Newport Beach, CA, Nashville, TN, and Belfast, Ireland. David serves on the board of the Southern California Center for Christian Studies and the Covenant Media Foundation. He is the middle son of the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen, a renowned Reformed author and pastor. He can be reached at DavidB@daviddon-dlb.com.*

# “The Least of These” Is Worth More Than You May Think

By Rev. Monte E. Wilson III



**I**n the early days of my ministry, my Dad and I had a running argument regarding how to relate to churches, especially concerning financial matters. Dad, a Southern Baptist pastor, thought my love and honor for the brethren commendable but also thought it void of discernment and wisdom. I then would accuse him of cynicism (which was not true) and would lament how sad it was that he had never met the sort of people that I was serving.

Little did I know.

I remember one time I had just agreed to pastor a particular church and was asking Dad for counsel. He told me that I needed a written contract with the elders that would spell out financial agreements, job requirements and such things. I was shocked. These were covenant friends whose “word was their bond.” These “friends” orally agreed to a severance package that they later decided to not give to me. “Hey, it wasn’t written down so we are not going to pay you. Can’t afford it anyway.” While my Dad was no longer living by the time this occurred, I could still hear him telling me, “I told you so.”

There was one occasion when I was deeply hurt by a church. I began wondering where God had been, why He had not defended me and cared for my family. His wisdom came to me through the metaphor of a joke.

Have you heard the one about the guy who refused to leave his house, even though his neighborhood was sinking beneath a flood? There were warnings over the television and radio telling everyone to head for shelters and higher ground. He thought to himself, “God will take care of me.” Then there were the police who went door to door telling people to run and seeing if anyone needed help doing so. He told them that God would take care of him. Hours later a man in a boat came by, saw our guy on his roof, and offered to whisk him away, but the man shook his head no and said, “God will take care of me.” Finally, still sitting on his roof with the water lapping up around his feet, a helicopter came,

let down a rope and the pilot yelled, “Grab on, we’ll save you!”

A few moments later, standing before St. Peter, the man was shocked. “Where was God?” He had trusted God to save him and here he was standing before the pearly gates. St. Peter said, “Hey, listen to me, we tried to save you. We sent police, we sent a man in a boat... we finally sent a helicopter but you refused all of the help!”

God continually sent me men and circumstances to teach me to be wiser, but I was hard-headed and immensely naïve. “The church will act honorably. God will take care of me.” After being run over by more boards and committees than I care to remember, I began listening to the police and helicopter pilots that God had been sending my way all those years.

Yes, God will take care of me. He will send me experiences that give me wisdom. He will give me opportunities to make wise financial arrangements. He will give me the boldness to tell people what I am worth and if they disagree we do not have to work together. He will give me the needed understanding and patience in teaching people what God expects of them regarding how they are to care for His servants. He will remind me of my obligation to provide for my family — which includes college education for my children, savings for future needs, retirement and other concerns — and that to knowingly allow people to rob my family was *not* virtuous on my part, but sinful.

Our churches are made up of people of various degrees of maturity. Even with the best of intentions, these people are often ignorant as to how to properly care for a minister. If the minister doesn’t show them how to do this and graciously insist that these people appropriately honor the office and care for the man whom God has sent, then they will continue to abuse ministers. Consequently, they will also continue to displease the Lord of the Church.

Understandably, most of the lightning and thunder today is all about Rogue Reverends: Jimmy

Swaggart this, Jim Baker that. As Paul said, teachers incur stricter judgment. Fine. But the fact remains that the vast majority of ministers are good men who love God and are doing their best to care for their charges. Sadly, those whom they are serving are abusing many of these good men.

## Sinful Neglect

Most often the abuse comes in the form of neglect. For example, how often do we genuinely *praise* our ministers? This is especially so in the case of those leaders who exude great confidence. People either think, “He certainly doesn’t need any encouragement” or, worse, “We had better remind this guy of his frailties or he’ll get the big head.” This may come as a shock to some of you; but believe me, the typical minister is ridiculed and condemned on a daily basis: he doesn’t need anyone to *purposefully* “keep him humble.” What he does need are people who inspire him toward deeper love and great works.

Another form of neglect is when the church fails to see to it that their pastor is not putting on too many hats, *seeking to fill too many roles*. How often is the pastor, the associate pastor, the youth director, the counselor, the Bible teacher, the maker of disciples, the Sunday School director, Sunday School teacher, head of missions, plumber, lawn boy, and taxi cab driver — and all for the low, low salary of one employee! Of course, this doesn’t include all the roles his wife is expected to fulfill for free.

Along these same lines, there is also the abuse of unspoken and, most often, *unrealistic expectations*. (Thus, the need for written job descriptions.) Such expectations run the gamut from what ministry-model he should adopt, to how he should or shouldn’t dress, from how many new members he should bring in every year, to whom he must speak to after church services every Sunday. Most every member has expectations of his pastor that the pastor is unaware of and yet is constantly expected to fulfill. The leaders of the church should make it clear from the beginning of the pastor’s tenure: this is what he *will* do, this is what he will *not* do...until further notice.

I have been in the ministry for 30 years. I have known and worked with hundreds of ministers from about every evangelical tradition there is. After all these years, I can name three men who went to their boards and asked them to *stop* giving pay raises because they were being paid far more than what was appropriate. *Almost every other minister I know struggles financially from month to month to survive.*

Amazingly, many of these men could easily make three times more money in another profession, but they are utterly committed to serving their charges. Tragically, rather than churches rewarding such devotion, they take advantage of it. And this may be one of the cruelest yet most common forms of abuse throughout the church.

Let’s just look at one of the minister’s responsibilities: Do you know how much effort goes into constructing a sermon? No, it is not hours or even hours upon hours. It is months and years. It wasn’t merely ten hours your minister studied for this week’s sermon. He has been studying for weeks, months, and years; and this is what made it possible for him to spend *only* ten hours on this message. Further, did you know that the amount of energy it takes to deliver one sermon is often the equivalent of eight hours of digging ditches? And how many sermons does your minister deliver each week? Your pastor expends far more energy for far less financial reward than you have realized.

When that guest speaker came and your church gave him \$150 for the morning, the amount of time it took for him to travel, prepare his message, pray for and counsel your lonely pastor, meant that he barely received \$5 an hour. How many other men with graduate degrees, who work the amount of hours this man does, do you know who earn so little money?

If Jesus Christ were the minister, these people would do everything in their power to lavish Him with care. Sadly, what these people haven’t remembered is the passage of Scripture that says, “Inasmuch as you did it *not* for the least of these, you did it *not* to me” (*Mt. 25:45*).

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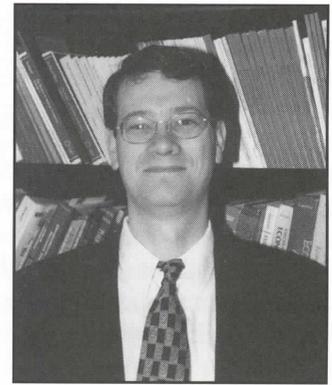
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# Cultural Rebellion Against God Risk, Knowledge, and Regulation

By Timothy D. Terrell



## God Takes No Risks

**G**hough Christians are quick to profess God's omniscience, we are slow to recognize the enormous consequences of this attribute. God has never learned *anything*.<sup>1</sup> He has always known everything that has been, is, and ever will be, in the minutest detail. He knows *everything*, from the number of electrons spinning in the atoms that make up our bodies to the thoughts you will be having five years from this moment.

Since there is nothing unknown to God, and since He is sovereign over all things, God does not take risks. He faces no uncertainties. We can have absolute confidence in Him that He will accomplish all His purposes.

Man, on the other hand, because he is finite in knowledge and power, faces uncertainty. There are ways to reduce risk, and a Christian will take steps to reduce unnecessary risk.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is impossible to eliminate all risks, and our culture's attempts to do so are ultimately pretences at the knowledge and power of God. Retreating from one small hazard, without humbly recognizing our limited knowledge, often results in our backing into another, more serious hazard. If we instead recognize that only God is able to act risklessly, then we will understand that *the surest way to reduce our overall risk is to obey God's Word*.

## The Scarcity of Economic Knowledge

Those who fail to recognize the scarcity of knowledge and of physical resources will self-confidently attempt the impossible. Among the offenders are economists, who have typically downplayed the scarcity of their own knowledge and refused to acknowledge an omniscient God.

In the 1930s, the British economist John Maynard Keynes gained international renown by giving an economic justification for what politicians had already begun doing — actively intervening in the economy to eliminate recessions. His well-timed work resulted in decades of data gathering, computer modeling, and bureaucrats' machinations. Yet all the activity was futile at best, and dreadfully injurious at worst. Political meddling could never succeed because it presupposed an omniscient state. As Keynes's contem-

poraries Ludwig von Mises and F. A. Hayek were to point out, the knowledge necessary to run an economy is not measurable or comprehensible by any government. Even if the Keynesian system "worked," Keynesians' attempts to reduce the risk of recessions introduced a far greater hazard — a vastly more powerful centralized civil government with practically unlimited authority to intervene for the sake of economic stabilization.

## Risky Regulation

This is precisely why it is dangerous to entrust civil government with the responsibility of attacking daily hazards with regulation. Perhaps because the civil magistrate cannot have the information about risks to make wise decisions, perhaps because of the fallen nature of those who would enforce the law, Biblical law bars the civil magistrate from most regulation. Attempts to eliminate safety hazards, health risks, or environmental destruction through regulation only tend to multiply problems.

A classic example is the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) regulation, which specifies the minimum average miles per gallon that each automobile manufacturer must achieve for its fleet. This may reduce Americans' gasoline consumption, but the cost is immense human suffering. One way to meet CAFE requirements is to reduce the weight of automobiles. However, lighter cars tend to be less crashworthy and many people have died in car accidents as an indirect result of the regulation. A 1989 Harvard/Brookings study estimated that CAFE standards have increased motor vehicle fatalities by 14 to 27 percent, which comes out to 2,000 to 4,000 deaths every year. Yet, far from retracting their support of the law, environmentalists have advocated raising the minimum MPG standard again to avoid global warming.<sup>3</sup>

Environmentalists are perhaps the worst contributors today to overall human risk. Promoting various regulations that purport to protect humanity from various highly speculative or minuscule risks, environmentalist groups frequently expose us to greater hazards. Not least among these increased risks is that of an intrusive civil state. Some environmentalists hold to the "precautionary principle": the idea that all technologies should be

rejected that *might* be harmful, whether or not they are actually proven to be harmful. What about precaution with respect to granting power to the civil magistrate? We know that government acting outside its Biblical limits is harmful, yet men seem willing to accept the risk of tyranny and massive physical suffering if only the civil government will take on the responsibility of eliminating a host of small risks.

Not only do environmental regulations often exchange a small risk for a much larger one, but some environmentalists seem to have abandoned the reduction of risk for humans as a major goal. Moving toward outright nature-worship, they pass up even enormous advances in human well-being to acquire a nugatory environmental benefit. Environmentalists have supported the EPA's 28-year-old ban on the wonder pesticide DDT because of its supposed risk to human health and to wild birds. The results of the law border on genocide. When used in moderation (and not dropped by the ton from WWII bombers, as was sometimes done), the human and environmental risks were slight. Because of worldwide bans on DDT, however, millions of people have suffered serious illnesses and died. In Sri Lanka, mosquitoes had been so effectively controlled by DDT that malaria declined from 2.8 million cases in 1946 to only 110 cases in 1961. In the early 1960s, the Sri Lankan government prohibited DDT, after which the number of malaria cases rose dramatically, to 2.5 million annually by the end of the decade. In developing nations worldwide, about 3 million children under five years of age die each year from malaria.

Environmentalists usually don't restrict their skepticism of Biblically limited government to matters regarding care of the Earth. Politicians like Ralph Nader, for example, combine visions of hazard-free living with clean-Earth rhetoric. Well-meaning "consumer advocates" and other groups can easily become enraptured with the fantasy of a risk-free world as they lobby for stricter product safety laws, workplace safety regulations, or the like.

The result is a riskier world, even in the short run. However, regulators, narrowly focused on reducing risk in their tiny area of relative expertise, cannot or will not see the destruction they cause in other areas. One health hazard may be reduced by a regulation that increases other types of health risks. Or, a lower rate of accidents is accompanied by a greater risk of government tyranny.

The examples are legion. Safety regulators who insisted that children's pajamas be made resistant to flame failed to note that the chemical used to treat the fabric may cause cancer. The regulation requiring child-resistant medicine bottle caps, one study shows, actually has resulted in 3500 additional poisonings of children under age five annually from aspirin-related drugs as consumers have been lulled into a less safety-conscious mode of behavior by the existence of the safety caps.<sup>4</sup> Restrictions on gun ownership intended to reduce the risk of accidental death or misuse now create two risks: 1) occasions arise in which the presence of a gun would have prevented death or

injury, or 2) the government becomes tyrannical, and a disarmed people are victimized. A law requiring infants to be strapped into safety seats while traveling by air may reduce children's deaths in airplane crashes, but because some parents cannot afford the additional ticket, more families will travel on the highways and incur a far more serious risk.

When it becomes obvious that many risks are associated with poverty, wealth redistribution inevitably becomes part of The Plan for health, safety, and environmental regulators. For many, it is a comfortable fit ideologically. As economist Walter Williams astutely noted, "Now that communism and socialism have lost all respectability, ... in general those people who have those inclinations have changed their agenda and call themselves environmentalists." And consumer product safety advocates, we might add.

## But God's Law—Today?

When we pretend omniscience, our concerns should include not only increased earthly hazards, but the certainty of God's judgment on those who reject the source of all knowledge. Increases in earthly risks are merely the downpayment on God's judgment on covenant-breakers.

Even Christians who have respect for Scripture sometimes second-guess God by asserting that His instructions for civil government can't be correct, because that would mean that the environment would be destroyed or that people would be hurt by defective products. If God had been aware of the risks of living on the Earth today, it is implied, surely He would have changed His law to allow civil government to intervene. The God of the Bible, however, has never changed, never learned. From before the beginning He knew not only His whole law, but every *actual* and every *possible* application of His law for all time. He laid it down perfectly, without need to wonder how it would be interpreted in A.D. 2001. Because God's law is perfectly suited for all time, obeying it is always the best policy.



<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 40:13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastes 11:2.

<sup>3</sup> See Ben Lieberman, "Deadly Light Cars," *The Freeman* (April 1999).

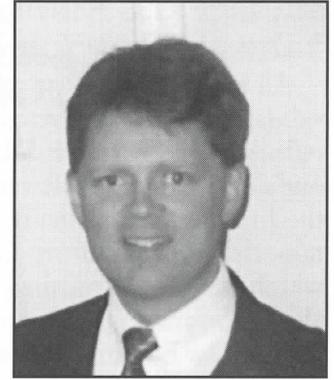
<sup>4</sup> See W. Kip Viscusi, "The Lulling Effect: The Impact of Child-Resistant Packaging on Aspirin and Analgesic Ingestions," *American Economic Review* (May, 1984): 324-327.



*Timothy Terrell is an assistant professor of economics at Wofford College. Dr. Terrell, who has written for several free-market publications, will be lecturing on several occasions this winter and spring at Christ College's new Atlanta-area campus. He can be contacted at [terrelltd@wofford.edu](mailto:terrelltd@wofford.edu).*

# The Knowledge of Yahweh: The Prize of Information Warfare

By Gerald Tittle



**A**n awesome aspect of the powerfully redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ was His binding of Satan (*Rev. 20:1-3*) from his deceiving, or leading astray, the nations during His continuing reign. This redemptive act launched the church's aggressive, yet patient, campaign to disseminate the knowledge of Yahweh (translated "LORD" in English Old Testament versions) throughout the earth via her discipleship ministries. The church's dissemination campaign continues, and although assured of victory, she finds herself in conflict, sometimes fiercely so, with the futile attempts of nations who oppose the knowledge of Christ and His kingdom. This is Information Warfare.

Information warfare in its ultimate sense becomes a battle for worldwide understanding of the knowledge of Yahweh. I am intrigued by how analogous the military definition of information warfare is to that of the church's warfare. In 1997, the Air Force Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence defined information warfare as "any action to deny, exploit, corrupt, or destroy the enemy's information and its functions; protecting ourselves against those actions [from the enemy]; and exploiting our own military information functions."<sup>1</sup> The church, similarly in her information warfare, works, through the preaching of the Word and the discipling of the nations, to destroy the cultural strongholds of Satan, to protect herself against heresy within and without, and to exploit contemporary technologies to accomplish these functions. Furthermore, the church anchors herself in the hope of Isaiah's prophecy that the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord to the extent that the waters cover the sea (*Is. 11:1-9*). To better understand how the true knowledge of Yahweh is the prize of ethical information warfare, we must define knowledge and technology. We must then consider some basic strategies for winning this information warfare in which we, as a church, are engaged.

Ontology scientists, working in the information technology field, have defined knowledge as "information in context."<sup>2</sup> They make a useful distinction between *information* and *knowledge*. Most would agree that it is one thing to know some things about God (abstract and, perhaps, useful *information*), but it is another and more righteous thing to know God and to give Him obedience due to His Son's Lordship (true *knowledge*). The late Dr. C. Gregg Singer, my beloved church history professor, taught me that God created us to know and has placed us in a knowable world. The true knowledge of Yahweh, as derived from the ontolo-

gists' definition of knowledge, provides the *know-what*, *know-how*, and *know-why* necessary to theological truth.<sup>3</sup> True knowledge in a regenerate man captivates his intellect and motivates his behavior so that he becomes a true, culture-changing disciple of Christ. He is no longer impotently intoxicated with theological information, but he seeks opportunity to communicate and disseminate the knowledge of Yahweh through his godliness throughout a culture.<sup>4</sup> This is why the church must know and impart this true knowledge to the nations via her manifold ministries and through the auspices of technological innovations. As it stands written: God's people are in bondage for the lack of true knowledge (*Is. 5:13*) and are destroyed for lack of the same (*Hos. 4:6*).

The Christian church throughout history has harnessed technologies to disseminate the knowledge of Yahweh. Webster defines *technology* as a systematic treatment (*technologia*) of how a society provides its members with those things needed or desired.<sup>5</sup> Christ's church desires the knowledge of the Lord to reach her respective audiences (*e.g.*, church assemblies, theologians and educators, sinners, denominational headquarters, governments). Technologies in this context, therefore, must be seen as enablers of this knowledge-impartment and not as focus areas in and of themselves.

Bruce Metzger has documented how the church throughout history has embraced technologies to impart God's knowledge.<sup>6</sup> For example, in A.D. 331, Eusebius used the technology of professional scribes and portable and clean parchments to deliver fifty parchment manuscripts of the Scriptures to the Emperor Constantine. Metzger also has noted that the technology of a printing press with moveable type enabled faster, cheaper, and more accurate publications, the first being Jerome's *Vulgate* published between 1450 and 1456.<sup>7</sup> Today, churches are making investments in computer infrastructure and Internet-based technologies and software to produce World Wide Web pages that not only disseminate the knowledge of Yahweh, but also enable her to interact with her web page viewers.

We in the church have a multitude of technically innovative options that we can employ to improve any of the multifaceted ways we disciple the nations and influence their cultures. To start, we should employ these few basic strategies in preparing winning plans to incorporate technology in disseminating the knowledge of Yahweh:

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## Manage the Knowledge of Yahweh That You Possess

All knowledge is first captured, then analyzed, validated, stored, delivered, transferred, and finally refined.<sup>8</sup> One must be diligent to use technologies at one's disposal (e.g., software products, CD media, the Internet) to optimally identify, acquire, maintain, deliver, and reform the knowledge of God which we have. A ministry's web page will only be as alive, relevant, and accurate as the ministry it reflects. How a ministry stewards or fails to steward the knowledge of God it possesses is clearly revealed in its web page. One should be able to evaluate a ministry's web page and clearly assess its propensity to draw its intended audience into an enterprise replete with the knowledge of Yahweh. Does the page achieve its mission, or does evaluation reveal that the page has no mission?

## Focus Knowledge and Technology Toward Reaching Your Potential Discipleship Audience

Whom do you want to reach with the knowledge of God that you possess? Consider how to go about reaching them: If you want to reach sinners looking for Yahweh, then you should produce a web page that focuses on that mission. (Add, for instance, a "frequently asked questions" section to help your sinner audience learn.) If you are targeting your church's members, then you could post church events, elders' meeting minutes (password protected, of course), and sermon outlines and texts on your web site. Targeted theologians and educators demand websites with scholarly presentations and links to scholarly resources. (Recall that the Internet was built to enable document interchange among scientific research organizations.) If you want to address Reformed Christian audiences, then you should provide Reformed theology; include email addresses to ministerial contacts; and link viewers to Reformed ministries, seminaries, and chatrooms. In addition, keep a printer handy for printing sermon manuscripts for those unfamiliar with the Internet. Because none of the retirement community members to whom our congregation ministers are on-line, we freely give this particular audience large-print, paper-media, instructional materials, which are originally produced as digital documents.

## Always Incrementally Reform How You Impart the Knowledge of God

Few ministries can launch an interactive web site that offers a spectrum of discipleship resources all at once. With a web page for example, a church might at first use its web site for nothing more than a

digital billboard presenting its service times, location, and ministerial staff. Value can be added to that same site by offering digital sermon manuscripts, church-meeting minutes, service bulletins, and links to other theological and ecclesiastical web sites. As this particular church's site becomes more sophisticated, it can then become a digital portal (America Online and Yahoo are examples of Internet portals) from which its audience can access every type of information it desires — a one-stop web site into the knowledge of Yahweh. In addition, services can be broadcast via the Internet and piped to those audience members with Web-TV. As stated earlier, imparting the knowledge of Yahweh is key; technological strategies are secondary, varied, and supportive to that mission.

Twenty-five years ago, most Christians were concerned about barcode recognition technologies being used by the "beast" of the Revelation to tag and to track those not snatched in the Rapture. Today, we can all praise God that the church is not running from technologies but is, instead, evaluating them for use in discipling the nations. Three million pornography sites on-line today prove that the world uses technology to suppress the knowledge of God. Information warfare is now fierce. Nonetheless, ours is the ministry of filling the earth with the knowledge of Yahweh. Furthermore, God's Word ensures us the victory in this battle: "...the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea."



<sup>1</sup>Peter Grier, "At War With Sweepers, Sniffers, Trapdoors, And Worms," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1997, 22.

<sup>2</sup>Perakath Benjamin, instructor, *Fundamentals Of Knowledge Management*, Seminar presented at 2000 Enterprise Integration Conference in Albuquerque, NM, Knowledge Based Systems, Inc., Copyright 1998.

<sup>3</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>P. Andrew Sandlin, *We Must Create A New Kind Of Christian* (Vallecito, CA, 2000), 22.

<sup>5</sup>*Websters New World Dictionary*, Third College Edition, s.v. "technology."

<sup>6</sup>Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text Of The New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York, 1992), 7.

<sup>7</sup>*ibid.*, 95.

<sup>8</sup>Benjamin, *Fundamentals Of Knowledge Management*.



Gerald Tritle, his wife, Jennifer, and their three children reside in Springfield, Ohio where he pastors Springfield Reformed Presbyterian Church. He holds an MDiv. and an MBA and is a Senior Technology Analyst with an information technology firm in Dayton, Ohio. He can be contacted at [Tritle2000AD@aol.com](mailto:Tritle2000AD@aol.com). The Church website address is: [www.springfieldreformed.org](http://www.springfieldreformed.org).

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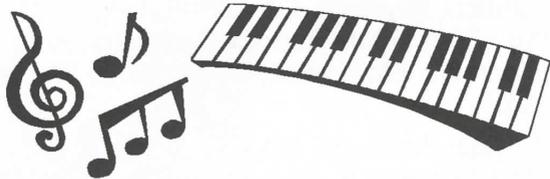
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- March 4 C.L. "Smoky" Stover at Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, CA (10:00 a.m.). For more information, contact Dave Turnbaugh at (209) 578-5362. P. Andrew Sandlin at Reformed Heritage Church, San Jose, CA (2:00 p.m.). For more information, contact Gary Wagner at (408) 866-5607.
- March 11 C.L. "Smoky" Stover at Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, CA (10:00 a.m.). For more information, contact Dave Turnbaugh at (209) 578-5362. P. Andrew Sandlin at Reformed Heritage Church, San Jose, CA (2:00 p.m.). For more information, contact Gary Wagner at (408) 866-5607.
- March 18 C.L. "Smoky" Stover at Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, CA (10:00 a.m.). For more information, contact Dave Turnbaugh at (209) 578-5362. P. Andrew Sandlin at Reformed Heritage Church, San Jose, CA (2:00 p.m.). For more information, contact Gary Wagner at (408) 866-5607.
- March 25 C.L. "Smoky" Stover at Reformed Heritage Church, Modesto, CA (10:00 a.m.). For more information, contact Dave Turnbaugh at (209) 578-5362. P. Andrew Sandlin at Reformed Heritage Church, San Jose, CA (2:00 p.m.). For more information, contact Gary Wagner at (408) 866-5607.
- April 8 P. Andrew Sandlin at Church of the King, Santa Cruz, CA (10:00 a.m.). For more information, contact Bill Garaway at (831) 477-7805 or (408) 482-4314.
- April 20-22 P. Andrew Sandlin in Arizona. Details to be announced.
- April 28 P. Andrew Sandlin and George Grant at the Eagle's Nest Academy in Franklin, TN. For more information, contact Perry Coghlan at perrycog2000@yahoo.com or (615) 599-5227.
- April 28-29 Steve Schlissel at Christ Church in Moscow, ID. For more information, contact Chris LaMoreaux at (208) 882-2034 or christkirk@moscow.com.
- May 2 P. Andrew Sandlin in Cleveland, OH. Details to be announced.
- May 6 P. Andrew Sandlin in Lansing, MI. Details to be announced. Also at Living Water Church of God and Grand Ledge Christian Center. For more information, call (800) 290-5711.
- May 20 P. Andrew Sandlin at Church of the King, Santa Cruz, CA (10:00 a.m.). For more information, contact Bill Garaway at (831) 477-7805 or (408) 482-4314.
- May 25-26 Steve Schlissel at the Illinois Christian Home Educator's Conference. For more information, contact the ICHE Office at (815) 943-7882.
- July 13-15 P. Andrew Sandlin in Portland, OR and Seattle, WA. Details to be announced.
- July 22-28 Chalcedon's Institute for Cultural Leadership. Details to be announced.
- August 6-11 P. Andrew Sandlin at the West Coast Worldview Conference. For more information, contact Zach Wagner at (408) 866-5607.
- Sept 27-Oct 3 P. Andrew Sandlin in Lansing, MI. For more information, call (800) 290-5711.
- October 26 Steve Schlissel at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. For more information, contact Pastor John Bouwers at (905) 688-3546.

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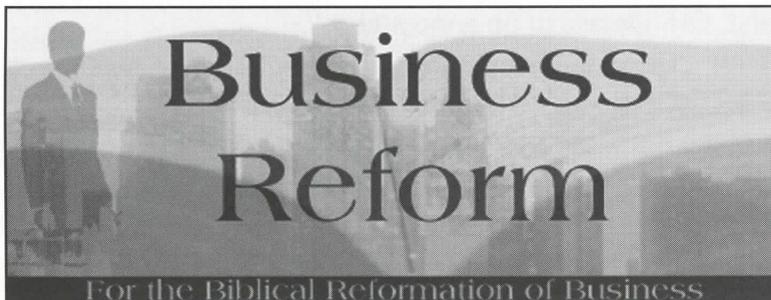
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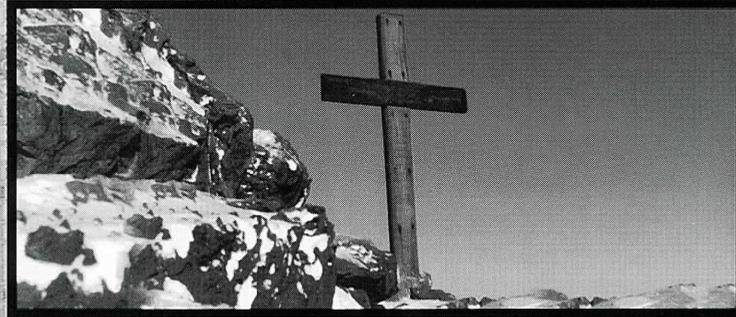
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