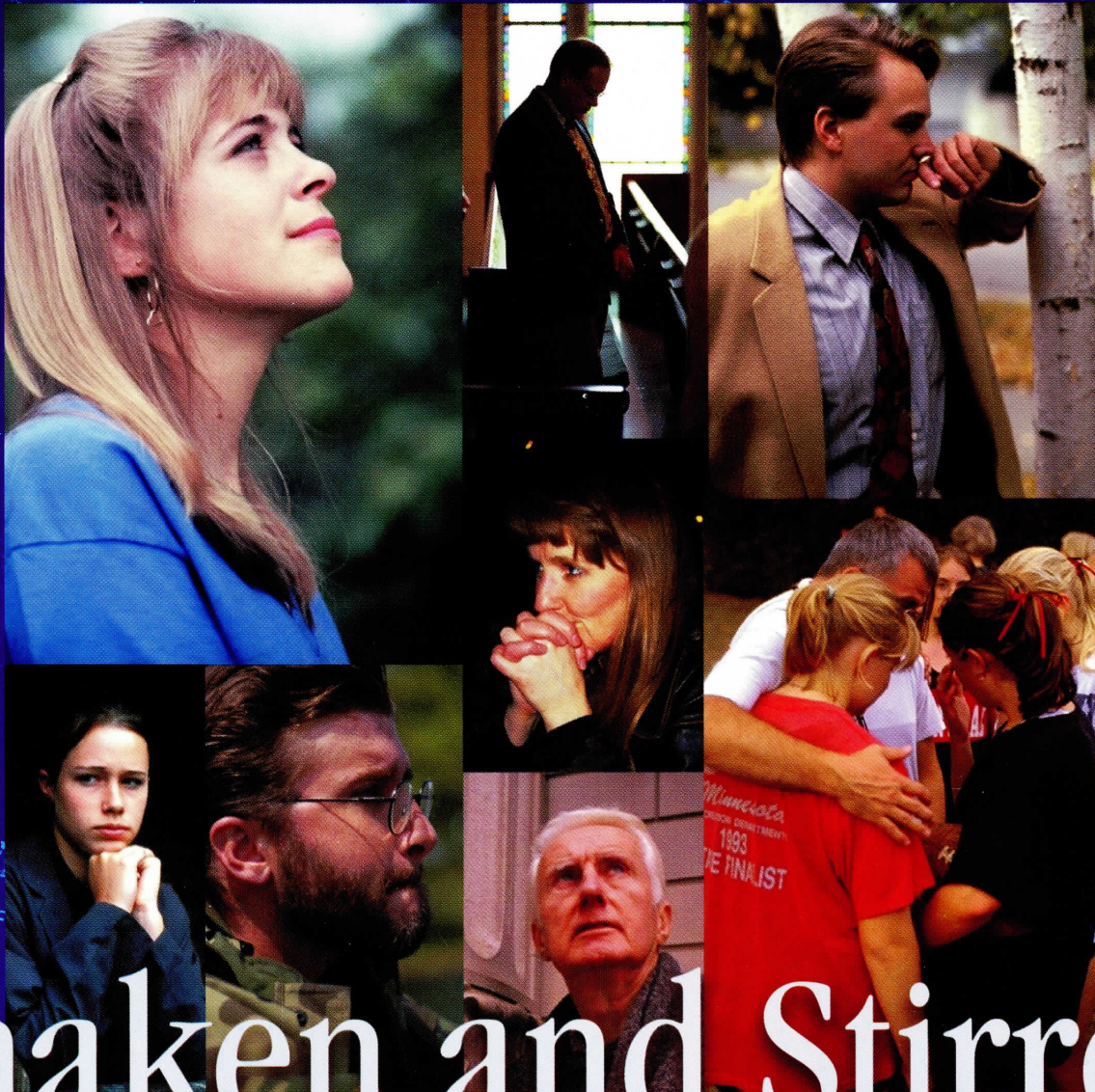


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Chalcedon report

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



Shaken and Stirred

FAITH IN TRAGEDY

R. J. Rushdoony on *Biblical Faith and American History* P. Andrew Sandlin on *Balancing Liberty and Justice* Mark R. Rushdoony on *Thanksgiving to God* Samuel L. Blumenfeld on *The New York Holocaust* Larry E. Ball on *The New Christian Counterculture: Separating or Non-Separating?* John M. Frame on *Sola Scriptura* . . . and more

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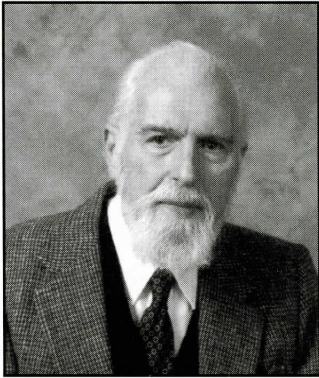
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Biblical Faith and American History

Part 1: The Past

By. Rev. R. J. Rushdoony

Biblical faith, *first* of all, begins with the sovereign God Who, in His grace and mercy, redeems man through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Because God is sovereign, His work of salvation is an act of sovereign grace. Anything short of this is not scriptural: it is another religion, whatever its ostensibly Christian form. Jesus Christ cannot be our Savior if He is not Lord.

Second, because God is the total and sovereign God, our faith cannot be only a spiritual concern. The totally sovereign God is Lord over every aspect of life. All things are created, predestined, governed, and judged by Him. As a result, the Bible legislates concerning every area of life, church, state, school, family, science, the arts, economics, vocations, things spiritual, and things material. Neoplatonism, however, regarded the material world as low and irrelevant to religion. As a result, wherever neoplatonism is in evidence, Christian faith is reduced to a spiritual religion.

Neoplatonism in the Church

St. Augustine, to whom the church owes so much for his emphasis on God's predestination, was inconsistent as he turned from God to the world. His neoplatonism took over, and he surrendered the world and history to the enemy. The work of the Christian

was substantially reduced to soul-saving. As Tuveson wrote of Augustine, "He viewed religion as essentially an individual experience, an immediate transforming contact of the soul with divine truth and grace."¹ This emphasis, in Augustine and in all his successors to the present, led to a re-reading of the Bible as a book of spiritual comfort for the soul. Whether interpreting the laws of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, or the Book of Revelation, everything was spiritualized and made a message for the soul. The colors used in the tabernacle, and the numbers cited in prophecies, came to have spiritual messages of great import, whereas the very obvious meanings were by-passed as carnal, and intended for a carnal generation.

Augustine, by his emphasis on God's predestination, was a major influence on the Reformation and a father thereof. However, because of his neoplatonic elements, he was also the father of the Roman Catholic Church, and of fundamentalism, Lutheranism, and amillennial Calvinism. Because the material world was only a vale of darkness for the soul to pass through, the church came to be the only truly Christian institution and was exalted even as the state, family, and much else were downgraded. We fail to remember that very early the church, under the influence of neoplatonism, came to regard the family with distrust as a low and carnal domain.

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Augustine's influence on eschatology prevailed for a thousand years, and is again with us. With the decline of neoplatonism, there was a revival of postmillennialism. One of its consequences was the great age of exploration. There are many indications that the Americas were repeatedly "discovered" over the centuries, by Europeans and Asiatics, by Phoenicians and Arabs from the Middle East, by Chinese, Norsemen, and perhaps other Europeans. Nothing came of these "discoveries." The thinking of the times did not make a new land significant. Only as postmillennialism began to emerge, and with it a new sense of the Great Commission, did men set out to explore and to exercise dominion. Most of the explorers, from Columbus on, whatever their faults, did have a postmillennial and missionary motivation as well as an economic one. The economic concern, in fact, was an aspect of a renewed sense of the creation mandate to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth.

Every area of life began to be viewed in Biblical terms. Early in church history, the very strongly Hellenic Origen had castrated himself to escape the flesh, only to find that lust begins in the mind and heart of man. In the Middle Ages, the Song of Solomon was spiritualized and turned into nonsense. Puritan divines like William Gouge and others referred to it as a source of instruction in perfect married love. A favorite Puritan text was Genesis 26:8, which tells of Isaac "sporting" with his wife Rebekah. The Puritans used this text to attack stoical abstinence and sacerdotal celibacy, of which Gouge said that it was, "A disposition no way warranted by the Word." Thomas Gataker, in a marriage sermon of 1620, attacked the idea that Biblical faith is indifferent to things physical or disinterested in marital joys. This false picture of Biblical faith, he declared is:

An illusion of Sathan, whereby he usually persuades the merry Greekes of the world; That if they should once devote themselves to the Service of Jesus Christ, that then they must bid an everlasting farewell to all mirth and delight; that then all their merry dayes are gone; that in the kingdome of Christ, there is nothing, but sighing and groning, and fasting and prayer. But see here the contrary: even in the kingdome of Christ, and in his House, there is marrying and giving in marriage, drinking of wine, feasting, and rejoicing even in the very face of Christ.²

Erasmus had spoken of marriage as being perfected in abstinence from sexual intercourse. The prominent Elizabethan Puritan Henry Smith declared that 1 Corinthians 7:3 is "[A] commandment to yield this duty [sexual intercourse], that which is commanded is lawful; and not to doe it, is a breach of the commandment." William Whately said that neither husband

nor wife can "without grievous sinne deny it" when the other wishes intercourse. Gouge spoke of marital sex as "one of the most proper and essential acts of marriage." In Massachusetts, in the Middlesex County Court in 1666, Edmund Pinson complained that Richard Dexter had slandered him by stating that Pinson had broken his wife's heart with grief because "that he wold be absent from her 3 weeks together when he was at home, and wold never come nere her, and such like."³

Only a few generations previously, it was a mark of saintliness to be abstinent in marriage; now it was slander to be charged with it! The change was great and dramatic. The change, however, was not limited to marriage. In every area of life, man was to delight himself in God's salvation, the joys of covenant life, physical and spiritual, and to move forward confidently to exercise dominion and to subdue the earth. The material world was now important because God created it, and because God required man to subdue it, exercise dominion over it, and to rejoice therein before the Lord.

The Mission of American Puritans

American Puritanism thus self-consciously set out to establish God's New Zion on earth, and to make America the base from whence the world was to be conquered. The great missionary movement of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was one result. In 1654, Captain Edward Johnson published in London his *A History of New England, or Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour* in order to enlist Christians to colonize the new world, declaring:

Christ Jesus intending to manifest his Kingly Office toward his Churches far more fully than every yet the Sons of men saw . . . stirs up his servants as the Heralds of a King to make this Proclamation for Voluntiers as followeth.

Oh yes! Oh yes! All you the people of Christ that are here Oppressed, imprisoned and scurrilously derided, gather yourselves together, your wives and little ones, in answer to your severall Names as you shall be shipped for his service, in the Westerne World, and more especially for planting the united Collonies of new England; Where you are to attend the service of the King of Kings, upon the divulging of this Proclamation by his Heralds at Armes....

Could Casar so suddenly fetch over fresh forces from Europe to Asia, Pumpy to foyle? How much more shall Christ who created all power, call over this 900 league Ocean at his pleasure, such instruments as he thinks meete to make use of this place....

*Know this is the place where the Lord will create a new Heaven, and a new Earth, in new Churches, and a new Commonwealth together.*⁴

The Puritans had a blueprint for the “new Heaven, and a New Earth, in new Churches, and a new Commonwealth” which the Lord planned to build in America. This blueprint was the Bible. Tuveson has observed:

*The English, it has been truly said, are the people of a book — the Bible. Not the least important result of their pre-occupation with the Word was that they, as well as their fellow Protestants in other countries, came into close contact with a philosophy of history far more sophisticated, far more universal and yet more flexible than any the great classical tradition provided.*⁵

Even more, Americans became the people of the book, and the tremendous expansive energy of both English and Americans. The eschatological vitality of both came from the postmillennial faith which for a time dominated thinking in both countries.

The New Model

It was not surprising, therefore, in view of the Puritan dedication to Scripture, that they looked to the Bible not only for a new model for the church but also for the state. From the very beginning, the colonies, especially in New England, looked to the Bible for their laws. Because of the royal over-lordship where colonial charters were concerned, a certain amount of English royal law was also retained to avoid conflicts with the crown. But the Puritans essentially wanted a new model, one based on Scripture, for every area of life; we have Cromwell’s New Model Army; we have new model churches; in one case after another, things were refashioned in terms of Scripture.

According to a modern fallacy, begotten of antinomianism, Scripture is only partially law, and that law can be divided into ceremonial, civil, and moral. Such a distinction, *first* of all, leaves very little of the Bible as law. *Second*, the division is artificial. The so-called ceremonial law is intensely moral: it deals with the fact of sin and God’s plan of atonement; civil law is as moral as any law can be, since it deals with theft, murder, false witness, adultery, crime, and punishment in every form.

This fallacy does have roots in some antinomian Puritans, but the more common view of the Puritans was to view all of Scripture as the law of God. The *only* kind of word the sovereign God can speak, they assumed rightly, is a sovereign word, a law-word because it is a binding word. A sovereign God cannot speak an uncertain or a tentative word. As a result, Puritans searched Scripture for guidance

in every area of life, because Scripture to them was indeed God’s binding and infallible word.

It should thus not surprise us that they turned to and used Biblical law. Not until the Cambridge Platonists introduced neoplatonism into Puritanism, and thereby hamstrung it, did they cease to show an interest in Biblical law. It was God’s ordained means of building His New Zion in America and using America as a means of conquering the whole world.

The medieval preacher looked for allegories in Scripture and for non-historical and spiritual meanings. The Puritan looked for laws of living, for mandates in personal, family, church, school, state, vocational, and social living. His purpose was both practical and theological, to establish God’s New Zion in America.

As a result, a characteristic complaint began to mark the American pulpit from the second generation in New England to all of America today, the jeremiad. The jeremiad is a lamentation that the nation is faithless to its covenant God. It assumes a particular responsibility by the American people to be faithful to the Lord because they have been particularly blessed by Him. Whereas in France the appeal to national renewal is humanistic and cites “the glory of France” as the impetus, in America the impetus is religious very commonly, and is theological in its concern and emphasis.

The framework of American life, thus, has been theological. We may find fault with the developments of that theology, and the departures from it, but America’s theological context is very real. Thus, whatever else we may say about *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, it clearly sees America’s mission, even with, if not emphatically with, its armies to be a manifestation of God’s justice and judgment. The coming of the Armies is identified with the coming of the Lord in judgment. Its chorus is a triumphant hymn of praise, a doxology: “Glory, glory, Hallelujah, Our God is marching on!” In the twentieth century, even non-Christians spoke readily and freely on “the mission of America.” The Puritan current is still strong, even among those who reject it.

¹ Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith [1964], 1972), 15.

² Thomas Gataker and William Bradshaw, *Two Marriage Sermons* (London, 1620), 14, cited by Roland M. Frye, “The Teaching of Classical Puritanism on Conjugal Love,” in Arnold Stein, ed., *On Milton’s Poetry* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1970), 104.

³ *ibid.*, 105f.

⁴ Albert Bushnell Hart, *American History Told by Contemporaries*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1897), 366f.

⁵ Tuveson, *op. cit.*, 4.

Balancing Justice and Liberty

By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin © 2001 WorldNetDaily.com

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Genesis 9:6)



I am a "Christian libertarian." I believe in maximum individual liberty under God's law. As a result of this, I am a "liberal conservative." I support constitutional democracy (a "republic"), democratic processes hedged in by constitutions that protect minorities and peaceful dissent.

I place the highest value on human liberty — and just as much value on liberty for peaceful human institutions like the family, the church, and businesses as I do on individual liberty. I execrate the illegitimate deprivation of liberty, whether spearheaded by kings, oligarchs, presidents, petty thieves, militarists — or Islamic terrorists.

Libertarians of whatever stripe deplore war ("Son, war is hell," my liberty-loving father taught me). More accurately, we deplore the initiation of force and coercion. A few recent conservative-libertarian columns have stated or implied that the horrific attack in New York and Washington, D. C., September 11, 2001, is a sort of comeuppance for an imperialistic United States. What is sometimes lost (or obscured) in this wholly understandable charge of U. S. culpability in its messianic globe-trotting is that *justice is a prerequisite of liberty*. Let's not get so lathered up in anti-war sentiment that we succumb to anti-justice sentiment. We need to be anti-war *and* pro-justice.

You must be both if you really believe in liberty. No libertarian supports absolute liberty. We do not advocate the liberty to deprive liberty (or life, or property, for that matter, and all three were forfeited in spades on September 11, 2001): murder, mayhem, madness. Just because we hold liberty in the highest regard, we cannot grant the liberty to deprive it. There was no liberty for the thousands who died within — or at the base of — the World Trade Center towers. There was no liberty for the hundreds who perished in the other plane-bomb explosion at the Pentagon. There was no liberty for the over two hundred passengers who unwillingly rode those plane-bombs to fiery graves, including the brave passengers who apparently brought their hijacked plane down in western Pennsylvania. There is no joy of liberty for the bereaved families and friends of the victims scarred by this murderous depravity.

It is tempting for some libertarians to argue that America should take its medicinal comeuppance

"like a man," learn its anti-imperialistic lesson, and henceforth stay the heck out of everybody else's business. There's only one minor but irritating detail that belies the full validity of this theory. *Justice*.

Justice

What is justice? Justice is *giving somebody what he deserves*. If you promise an employee \$5,000 and then give him \$4,000, you are treating him unjustly. If a college threatens expulsion for cheating and then reneges on its threat when it discovers the offender is the daughter of a prominent donor, it is acting unjustly. (Acting properly on what you threatened in the latter case is called *retributive justice*.) The same people who pine for leniency when proper threats are about to be carried out often oddly stage an uproar when promises are not fulfilled. But justice is a two-sided coin, and you must have it both ways. In a just society, people get what they deserve.

Liberty, Justice, and the Founding

Some libertarians are not entirely comfortable with this language as it relates to the events of last week. But retributive justice is an essential component of liberty, the very thing we all are supposed to be endorsing. You can't have liberty without the security for liberty. In fact, Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "[civil] governments are instituted among men" to secure liberty. This was a dramatic new experiment in theoretical politics. Governments do not exist to "maintain law and order" as ends in themselves, but to secure liberty for their citizens. If they don't do this, we don't need them anymore; and we need to get rid of them (or so taught Jefferson).

Most libertarians see the U. S. Constitution as a basically sound document, despite our sympathy for the cause of the antifederalists, whose liberty-loving clamor gave us the Bill of Rights. The genius of the Constitution in the preservation of liberty is, of course, the separation of powers. There are, in addition, several great objectives the framers explicitly offered for creating this Union. Three especially pertinent to us after September of 2001 are to "establish justice," "provide for the common defense," and "secure the blessings of liberty."

We believe in “liberty and justice for all,” and the Constitution provides for a “common defense” to secure this liberty and justice. That common defense (however funded and assembled) executes justice against those who deprive liberty within its borders. Those liberty-deprivers who deprive liberty and who come from afar are not less subject to retributive justice than those who commit their depraved deeds while residing here in the good old U.S. of A. The latter are ordinarily called criminals; the former are called either foreign invaders or terrorists. There is no justice — and ultimately no liberty — as long as they are allowed to roam around unmolested.

Now one may make a plausible argument that the Constitution is itself a deprivation of liberty (I mostly disagree with this), or that it has been perverted into a deprivation of liberty by politicians and judges (I agree wholly with this). The fact is, however, that this country is a *legal* confederation of territorial states bound together by a Constitution designed to, among other things, “provide for the common defense.” It could possibly have been more wisely otherwise, but the fact is that it was not. If we want retributive justice for a foreign invasion threatening all the states collectively, we’ll have to get it from the United States; and this is precisely one reason the United States was (were!) created in the first place.

“Common Defense” Entails Justice

I hold that 95 percent of what the federal government does today is gratuitous and unwarranted — and often a deprivation of liberty. Among the remaining 5 percent, “provid[ing] for the common defense” is (in my view) a legitimate task of the United States. The founders — liberty-lovers all — thought so too. This was part of the rationale for scrapping the Articles of Confederation (see the *Federalist Papers*). Part of this defense is making sure that murderers from abroad don’t murder over here; and if they do, they are punished for their murder. It is not simply a matter of deterrence, though this too is valid (no lawfully executed murderer has ever murdered again).

More importantly, it is a matter of justice. *You give people what they deserve.* The civil government has one legitimate role — to protect life, liberty, and property. It protects life, liberty, and property when it executes vengeance (*Rom. 13:4*) on those who deprive the innocent of life, liberty, and property. Now, maybe some other arrangement can do a better job of providing a “common defense” for life, liberty, and property (privatizing the police department, for example). But until we adopt a new Constitution, the United States itself will just have to furnish that “common defense.”

The Bible makes clear what is justly required of those who shed man’s (innocent) blood — death. The Bible is pro-capital punishment. Nobody who takes human life seriously could support anything less for premeditated murder — and whatever the 9-11 attacks were, they

were certainly premeditated. If human life is precious, it is worth protecting; and if it is worth protecting, it is worth executing justice against those who violate it. Thus the Bible teaches, and thus the founders believed.

The War Wagon

Hitching up the War Wagon, George W. Bush and the Congress called the despicable murders of September 11, “an act of war.” Wrong. This is to dignify these acts. No matter how much we may hate war (and we should), we must acknowledge that true warriors fight soldiers, not civilians. These terrorists intentionally murdered civilians. There is a just penalty for premeditated murders. It is death.

I cringed when I heard Bush declare during his National Day of Prayer and Remembrance that he intended to “rid the world of evil.” This sounds as though the War Wagon (to which both conservatives and liberals have hitched their votes) will soon be rolling its way into the Middle East. This is deplorable, because it is not the prerogative of the United States to “rid the world of evil,” an objective as arrogant as it is impossible.

Justice Is a Beautiful Thing

But it is the prerogative (no, the *obligation*) of the United States to assure justice within its borders, as this pertains to foreign invasion or attacks on citizens travelling abroad. The terrorists did not attack New Yorkers and Washingtonians. They attacked Americans. The response does not call for a federalization of law enforcement (our highly polished FBI and CIA to the rescue!). It calls for an execution of justice. Well-trained state militias as authorized avengers would be a more constitutional means of executing justice, but execute it the nation must.

We don’t execute it mainly because we want to deter terrorism; we execute it because *liberty demands justice.* If we are willing to abandon justice, we may as well abandon liberty.

It will not suffice to argue that the United States in the past has unjustly killed (*i.e.*, murdered) civilians and to execute justice on the Islamic terrorists is an act of hypocrisy. The solution to hypocrisy is justice, not injustice and a depraved consistency. The United States needs to quit policing the world, and it also needs to execute justice on people who come over here and murder our innocent civilians. To say that our imperialism is an excuse for our miscarriage of justice is akin to the judge who pardons a murderer because the man he murdered happened to be his wife’s illicit lover.

Freedom isn’t free. It costs the pains of justice, and justice is often painful indeed. If you love liberty, fight for justice — and vengeance is a component of justice. We should not be bloodthirsty. But we should be *justice*-thirsty. Don’t talk about loving liberty if you refuse to talk about preserving justice.

Justice in defense of liberty is a beautiful thing.

Dogmatism: Peaceful vs. Murderous

By Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin © 2001 WorldNetDaily.com

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment (justice) unto victory. (Matthew 12:18-20)

He orthodox Christians are nothing if not dogmatic. To us, certain matters are beyond dispute — the creation of the universe by the Triune God; the atoning death, bodily resurrection, and second coming of Jesus Christ; the divine inspiration of the Bible; and so on. They are cornerstones of our Faith — and life. We are quite dogmatic about all of this.

The religion embraced by the men who murderously decimated the World Trade Center and assaulted the Pentagon on September 11 is also dogmatic. But there is a huge chasm between these two dogmatisms.

Rightly or wrongly, President Bush, Congress, and the vast majority of the American people are willing to go to war to mete out justice for the acts committed on 9-11. This willingness reflects a dogmatism every bit as dogmatic as that of the Islamic hijackers.

We live in a Western democratic society whose highest values, so it is asserted, are freedom, tolerance, and openness. To some, dogmatism is often considered the great enemy of this society (evidenced horrifically by the dogmatism of the 9-11 suicide hijackers). The alternative to this dogmatism is moderation, usually thought to best be evidenced in tolerance. The theory is that people who avoid strong beliefs, that is, dogmatists, are less likely to try to upset other people's beliefs. The less dogmatically one holds a belief (it is held), the less likely he is to attempt to convert others to his belief, and the less likely he is to attack others who hold differing beliefs.

Of course, it is hard to combat the logic behind the terrorist attacks ("America is the Great Satan that is corrupting the world and must be destroyed") employing such anti-dogmatic thinking. After all, opposition to these staggering attacks requires a conviction that they are evil, horribly, dreadfully, monstrously, unspeakably, evil. This conviction cannot exist without a healthy dogmatism.

Ironically, Western democracies hold as a conviction the danger of dogmatism as dogmatically as the most fanatical fundamentalist Muslim. This is why they are willing to bomb entire countries to protect and defend it. The West is dogmatic about its opposition to dogmatism.

Inescapable Dogmatism

Dogmatism is inescapable. It is only *what one is dogmatic about* that varies. The Islamic fundamentalists are dogmatic about a worldwide Islamic theocracy. Western liberals are dogmatic about a worldwide constitutional democracy. These two visions are on a collision course — and quite literally at the late World Trade Center and soon on the ground in Afghanistan.

The dogmatism of the United States is a residue of our Christian heritage. Our dogmatism insists that dogma be propagated and embraced by peaceful means. Orthodox Christians believe in persuasion by evangelism, the gospel of Jesus Christ. The vast majority of non-Christian Americans agree with the Christian tenet that one comes to faith by peaceful persuasion, not by violent coercion. The vision of the founders did not exclude dogmatism (the Constitution is quite dogmatic), but it did exclude *coercive* dogmatism. Hold your beliefs dogmatically, but always remember that other people are free to hold differing, and equally dogmatic, beliefs. If you can't persuade peacefully, don't persuade at all. Jesus told His disciples: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (*Mt. 10:14*).

Mr. bin Laden, in contrast to Jesus Christ, feels obliged to use the tactics of murderous atrocity because he has failed in the tactic of peaceful persuasion by which the Christian gospel is spread. We believe in a peaceful dogmatism; he believes in a murderous dogmatism.

The Death of Postmodern Dogmatism

The inescapability of dogmatism has come to the forefront in a staggering way as a result of the atrocities of 9-11. The West, to that point, was dominated by a "postmodern" outlook. This is the idea that meaning is an "individual construction," that there is no universal truth, that no particular morality is "privileged," that there are only "private realities." It is simply relativism: There are no absolutes — except, presumably, the absolute that there are no absolutes.

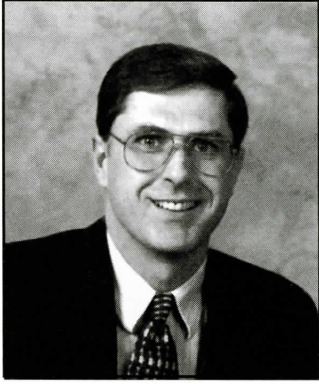
That monstrous fiction came crashing down forever with the twin towers of the World Trade Center, though it may take trendy, secular academics a few years to discover this.

We have been searingly reminded that there is great evil and great good in the world. Evil is not a matter of "private preference," or, worse yet, individual dogmatism. The postmodernists seemed to believe that the only real evil is a dogmatism that believes there is a universal right and wrong. All of them know better after 9-11.

Let us recover a dogmatism that despises evil, including the sort of evil so piteously and graphically displayed 9-11, the murderous dogmatism of Islamic terrorists.

The solution to the evils of murderous dogmatism is not to abandon dogmatism altogether, but to recover a steely dogmatism so dogmatic about its validity that it demands the peaceful exchange of the ideas that underlie it.

This is a dogmatism worth defending to the death.



Thanks Be to God

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

Thanksgiving to God cannot operate in a vacuum as an isolated act of duty. We cannot thank God without at the same time acknowledging Who He is and that other forms of devotion are due Him. If we thank God for something, we acknowledge it as part of His providential care; we acknowledge Him as our Sustainer and Provider. If we thank God for what we see as good, we must praise Him for His goodness. If we thank Him for His salvation, we must recognize His grace to us. The more we recognize what God does for us, the more we see Who God is. Praise then naturally accompanies thanksgiving.

Proclaiming the goodness of God with a concurrent recognition of the magnitude of our own sin causes us to see the great gulf that His love has bridged and to be thankful in all things. We learn that we cannot pick and choose that for which we are grateful. Thankfulness is about acknowledging the goodness of God and our dependence on Him. Thus, to view thanksgiving in Scripture, we must not look merely for the giving of thanks but at the many ways and instances men testified to the goodness of God. If we do this, we see acts of thanksgiving take many forms: worship, praise, memorials, feasts, music, proclamations, rejoicing, and dedications.

It is worthwhile to reflect on some of the many scriptural teachings about the giving of thanks and the acknowledgement of God's goodness:

- Jacob built an altar for a memorial to what God had done for him in his time of need (*Gen. 35:1*).
- The feast of unleavened bread was to remind future generations of God's salvation from the land of bondage (*Ex. 12:14, 17, 42*). It was also used as an opportunity to explain the broad scope of God's grace and providence. Thus, the history of God's salvation, the teaching of the law, sacrifices and offerings, and the training of children were properly part of the celebration (*Ex. 13:3, 8-10, 14-16*).
- Artifacts and relics are acceptable if properly used to remind God's people of His providential care. Thus, a sample of manna was placed in the Ark of the Covenant (*Ex. 16:32*) and Moses' brass serpent was kept for generations until it became an object of superstition (*2 Kin. 18:4*).
- The offering of first fruits (*Ex. 34:26; Lev. 19:24; 23:14*) taught men that thanksgiving was not to be an afterthought. The giving of the first harvest to God acknowledged in a physical act that all belonged to Him. It was to be offered before future harvests were sold. Financially, this represented a significant value that was to be given to God. This form of thanksgiving did not come without great cost, but God's people were commanded to "[R]ejoice in the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto" (*Dt. 12:18*).
- Rejoicing over God's providence was to be used as a vehicle to teach God's goodness to all "within the gates," that is, all within our household and employ (*Dt. 16:14*).
- True thanksgiving involves more than just being grateful *for* what we have. It necessitates personal gratitude *to* God because all comes *from* Him (*Dt. 26:10*).
- Thanksgiving involves rehearsing "the righteous act of the Lord "to future generations" (*Jud. 5:11*).
- Thanksgiving must not be a selective acknowledgment of what we perceive to be blessings, but must be for all God's judgments (*Ps. 48:11*).
- God said that if we show thanksgiving and fulfill our duties to Him, He will remember us when we call upon Him in the day of trouble (*Ps. 50:14*).
- We must remember that God's goodness to us is because we are "his people" and therefore it is our duty to "observe his statutes, and keep his laws" (*Ps. 105:43-45*).

- God's people should not only themselves declare His goodness (*Ps. 107:1-2*), but they should desire that others do likewise (*v.15*).
- Thankfulness involves honoring God by the giving of our substance (*Pr. 3:9*).
- Thankfulness should not be limited to times of prosperity, because God teaches us in times of want to depend on Him (*Ecc. 7:14*).
- Thanksgiving should be to the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Eph. 5:4*).
- Prayer and thanksgiving, both of which are admissions of dependence on God, are the alternative to anxiety (*Phil. 4:6*).
- Thanksgiving must always be made in the context that God is our Savior (*Col. 1:12*).
- Acknowledging God's goodness to us in thanksgiving brings peace and confidence to all we do (*Col. 3:15-17*).
- We should pray for and give thanks for all sorts of men (*1 Tim. 2:1*).
- Unbiblical restrictions, such as those imposed by false piety, deny us the gifts which God

expects us to receive with thanksgiving (*1 Tim. 4:3-5*). Paul said that acknowledging God's gifts to us was more important than imposing ideas on others (*Rom. 14:6*).

- We should offer praise to God continually, with our words constantly giving Him thanks and praising His name (*Heb. 13:15*). Thanksgiving may rightly be an annual celebration, but it remains a daily duty.

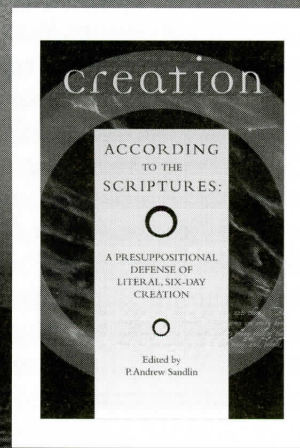
One of the most amazing examples of thanksgiving in all of Scripture is that of Paul, who told Timothy, "I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (*1 Tim. 1:12*). Paul, the privileged Pharisee turned itinerant preacher and convict, the man who suffered beatings, assassination attempts, and shipwreck for Christ, the man who was eventually beheaded by the Roman state, understood thanksgiving because he understood the goodness of God. Paul could weigh the advantages of his life before conversion and afterwards and say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (*Phil. 1:21*). The Christian must view life as service to God and His Christ, and death as entrance into reward. Until we are thankful in all things God brings our way we do not understand what it is to give thanks.

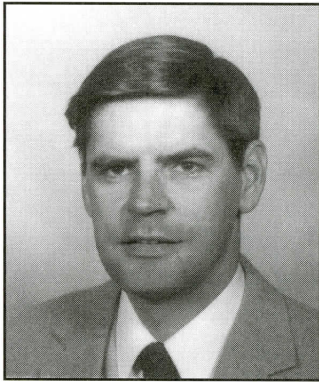
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The New Christian Counterculture: Separating or Non-Separating?

By Rev. Larry E. Ball

Henry Van Til said that culture is religion externalized and made explicit. There has always been a dominant culture in every society that results from the dominant religion of that society. The religion that rules the hearts and minds of the people in any society is the religion that forms the basis of the laws and values of that society.

The first culture began with Adam and Eve. As Adam and Eve obeyed God, they established in the Garden of Eden a dominant righteous culture based upon submission to God. The devil challenged (or countered) the godly culture in the Garden of Eden, being the source of the first counterculture. Since the Fall in the Garden of Eden, there has always been a culture and a counterculture. Sometimes these two cultures (dominant culture and counterculture) are more visible than at other times (especially when men become epistemologically self-conscious as Dr. Cornelius Van Til taught us). These opposites are always in battle (antithesis) against one another. When Christianity gains dominance, it becomes the reigning culture of a particular society. As Christianity wanes and the devil gains more control, Christianity becomes the counterculture of a particular society.

Ultimately, God will rule His kingdom and He will establish a true godly culture. We know this will happen because Christ has crushed the head of Satan under His feet on the cross, and He has directed us to pray that His “will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The devil with all his followers eventually will be cast into Hell and his counterculture will never again threaten God’s righteous culture. However, until that time, every generation will have to fight the battle of the culture wars.

It has been interesting to watch what I have termed the “Christian Counterculture” movement in America (See the *Chalcedon Report*, September 1999) during the latter part of the last century into the new millennium. It is clear that Christianity had influenced American culture greatly since the days of the Puritans. A shift in power has occurred, and we lost our influence in the public square. We now live in a society that has unofficially declared Christianity irrelevant (and may soon declare us wicked).

In reaction to the rise of this pagan culture in America (essentially the same as the counterculture in the Garden of Eden), there is a growing New Christian Counterculture movement. It can be identified by a return to the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. This movement is being led by those who have chosen to home school their children or put them into quality Christian schools. These Christians are the new pioneers in America, and are to be admired for their courage and steadfastness.

This New Christian Counterculture goes beyond the spiritual pietism that restricts religion to a mere internal experience. It goes beyond the sectarian view that divides life into different categories, where religion is just one part of the whole of life. It is not to be misconstrued with the liberal gospel that identified mere social change with the gospel of grace. It is the belief that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, everything under heaven must be brought captive to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our guide in all areas of life as it speaks to the church, politics, education, and science — to everything. There is no neutrality, only antithesis. There is a war going on which began in the Garden of Eden, and all of us are actively engaged in that war whether we know it or not. Eventually, Christ will put all His and our enemies under His feet. It is our privilege as Christians to pursue the goal of victory as God rules a justified people by the power of the Holy Spirit speaking through the Holy Scriptures. His law sets the standards for a righteous culture, and we are the vessels He has chosen to establish His kingdom through our believing and living out the gospel of grace. Incrementally Christ will establish a kingdom on earth where the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (*Is. 11:9*).

Engaging the Antithesis

Those who read the *Chalcedon Report* commonly accept what I have said up to this point. I need not convince such readers about the existence of the war. However, those who are at the forefront of this war must learn how to fight the war. We agree on the existence of the war, but we don’t always agree on the best method to engage the enemy, if at all. We don’t

have many generals. We don't have a track record. We don't have much experience. We are treading through deep waters where few have tread before us. We live in a post-Christian America. The techniques of those in other cultures in days past who fought the same war may not suffice for our particular time in history. Obviously, many things are the same in any war, but because of the times and the characteristics of our particular enemies in America, many things are different.

We must think through our strategy, and pray that God will prevent us from major mistakes before we make them. Just because we have the courage to be in the battle, and just because we believe in a sovereign God, does not mean that we are immune to major errors and tactical blunders. It may take several generations of Christians to learn from the mistakes of their parents before this New Christian Counterculture can develop acceptable Biblical tactics.

We must make sure that our tactics in fighting this war are not merely a reaction to the culture of our day, but reliable deductions from the Scriptures. It is easy for pure emotional reactionism rather than careful Biblical exegesis to determine our tactics. As a pastor, I have often seen zealous new converts (not only to the Christian Faith, but also to Christian Reconstructionism) almost destroy themselves and everyone around them. In their reactionism, they over-reacted to the extremes, and became just one more problem for the church. I fear this reactionism may do great harm to many among those in the New Christian Counterculture movement. Paul said in Romans 10 that zeal without knowledge is a dangerous thing. Most of us while growing up in America were taught lies from the school of humanism, sometimes in our own churches. Now that we have rediscovered old truths, some of us are angry because we learned so late in life. Some of us are disillusioned. However, we must be careful that our emotional backlash does not blind us to clear Biblical principles.

Christian Separatists

One of the most dangerous errors that we face in the days ahead is what I perceive as an unbalanced *Separatist* Christian Counterculture as opposed to a more balanced *Non-Separatist* Christian Counterculture. Separatism has the tendency to leave the world that God made for us, and to go off and create its own world. Sometimes, this is achieved by strict limitations on associations, and at other times in more extreme cases, it results in geographical citadels. It is often a world with no contact, or at least minimal contact, with those who are unbelievers. It does not rub shoulders with those who disagree with us. It has a tendency to develop a communal mental-

ity that serves as a fortress to protect us from being in the presence of our enemies. It tends to be a communal retreatism rather than the establishment of a covenant community that serves as a boot-camp to prepare us to aggressively confront the enemy in a world where God has called us to live and in a world that God has called us to recapture.

The Bible is clear that Christians, even those in the New Christian Counterculture movement, are to be "the salt of the earth" (*Mt. 5:13*). Salt left alone on the kitchen table is worthless. It taps into its potential only when it makes contact with food. It then becomes an agent to improve taste or to preserve quality. Likewise, it is my opinion that our Separatist brethren are failing to be used of God when they run off into their own little groups without engaging the world in which they live. They often build their own partitioned kingdoms that they think will be safe and sound from the evils of the world. Typically, no one outside of their detached kingdom knows anything about them. Their influence on the society in which they live is minimal at most, if not non-existent.

Jesus said in the high priestly prayer, "And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are *in the world...*" (*Jn. 17:11*). Paul wrote to the Corinthians, in his demand that they not associate with immoral people under church discipline, that he did not mean "the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world" (*1 Cor. 5:10*). Paul again wrote to the Corinthians, satisfied that he had been able to conduct himself in a Christian manner in the world outside the church, "For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves *in the world*, and especially toward you" (*2 Cor. 1:12*). To the Philippians Paul wrote, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach *in the midst of* a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world" (*Phil. 2:14-15*). It is very difficult to be lights in a world where you have no presence and in a world that cannot see you.

As a matter of fact, our ability to be in the world and not of the world is one of God's ways for us to be an encouragement to other believers. In 1 Peter 5:9, in the context of the dangerous attack by the schemes of the devil, Peter says, "But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are *in the world*." Peter is not talking about the world in us, but about us in the world. It is a means

to encourage others. That we are able to live in a world opposed to us and yet maintain our Christian testimony is a major test of our sanctification. I am afraid that too many of us enjoy watching movies like *Braveheart*, and then retreat back into our fainthearted communes.

Emptying the Nest

Another real issue challenging most covenant families is how to move their children from the covenant home into a world from which they have been sheltered most of their lives. This is especially true of the Separatists in the New Christian Counterculture movement. I don't buy into the argument that we are to throw our children to the lions at an early age to teach them how to live in the world (as is argued by some seeking to justify sending their children to government schools). Our covenant children are to be nurtured by covenant parents, and not by a host of government schoolteachers, most of whom have themselves been trained in anti-Christian philosophy.

However, what concerns me as I look at the landscape of the New Christian Counterculture movement is the inability of covenant parents to prepare their children to face a hostile world. Our children will not always be underage and at home. They need to be prepared to face not only a hostile world, but also a very competitive world. Especially with our sons, we must not raise wimps, but men of valor and courage. The question before the New Christian Counterculture is how to do this.

None of us want to raise children who are incapable of facing a world full of anti-Christian sentiment. Sheltering is good for our children, but eventually they must fly out of the nest and meet the enemy without Mom and Dad present. I fear that those I have termed "Separatists" may find themselves greatly disappointed, and may even eventually believe they have been betrayed by God, because their children as adults will not be able to handle living in a world outside of their communal safety net.

Let me suggest a few principles, not only to prevent such disappointments, but also to give some direction to enable your children to leave the nest and face the world.

First, while your children are young and still at home, you must be an example to them of one who is able to live in the world and yet not be of the world. Do not raise them in a communal cocoon. As parents, be what God expects you to be living in a hostile world. For example, show your children how you can attend the meeting of the local city government board of aldermen, and speak to the issues of the day (not to mention the possibility of holding a seat on the board). Show them how to play in a

tennis tournament at the local tennis association and maintain a Christian testimony (even when you lose). Show them how to handle the arrogance of the editor of the local humanistic newspaper, speaking the truth in love. Take them with you and let them sit quietly in a chair out of sight, and see how a man is supposed to live in the world and maintain his Christian testimony. This assumes, of course, that our men are living in the world and have not chosen to shun the world.

Let your children, especially boys, use their talents in the context of community events. For example, Little League Baseball provides a challenge for many young boys (and their parents too!). There is nothing sinful about it. Push them into contact sports. It won't harm them. It will not hurt a boy to get a bloody nose because he tried to steal third base. This is simply teaching him how to be a part of the world. He can still study his Latin when he gets home from the ball game.

Secondly, as your children get older, push them out incrementally. In their mid-teens, it would be good for them to work at Chick-Fil-A. Even more challenging, encourage them to wait tables at Pizza Hut. Let them see what it is to "be stiffed" by someone who does not leave a tip. Let them learn how to work under a manager who has been divorced three times and is carrying a chip on his or her shoulder. They also may have to work with another employee who has a mouth that spews forth nothing but foul language and invectives against God. What will they do? Guide them while they are still at home, so they can come to you for advice. They will need your guidance and help, and it will be wise to give it while they are still under your oversight. By guarding your children in their mid-teen years, you will not abdicate your responsibility as covenant parents. It will provide a controlled environment so that your children can leave home, engage the world, and then return home to the safety net provided by their parents — all in the same day. Don't wait until they leave their covenantally sheltered home. It may be too late! Once they have learned some skills in responding to a hostile world by using Biblical principles, you will not be afraid when the day arrives that they leave home as adults. Separatist communal societies do not provide such opportunities. Covenantal Christian communities do.

Before I conclude this article, I would like to mention one other item that may be highly controversial and raise a few hackles within the New Christian Counterculture. This is only what I perceive as a trend, and understandably there are many exceptions. Your child may be one of the exceptions.

It appears to me that typically most Christian schools and home schools are providing an excellent

education in the arts and humanities. We are learning to teach our children how to read and write well, and how to think Biblically. What I have noticed however, as a trend only, mind you, is that our children have slipped behind the children of the world, who have comparable intelligence, in the areas of mathematics and science (including the broad spectrum from engineering to medicine). This may be because most of our leaders and role models in the Reconstructionist movement are literary giants. Math and science disciplines (and their derivatives) are very demanding, and often it appears to me that our children (especially our young men) are far behind their intellectual counterparts who are being raised in humanistic homes.

It is interesting how many parents want their children to be part of a godly self-supporting covenant home. Yet because we are producing young male adults who have not learned to conquer the world of math and science (including such disciplines as the field of accounting), we are not raising potential heads of households who will be able to provide a living for our covenant daughters. Not only must we raise our young men to be true spiritual heads of our daughters (being able to answer their wives questions about the Bible, which will be a challenge in itself because we have taught our daughters so much theology), but we must raise them to provide adequate food and shelter for their own households. While recognizing that not everyone is called to conquer the fields of math and science, I fear that we are short-changing many of our children by not preparing them to pursue callings that will enable them to provide financially for a family. Accomplishment in the fields of math and science still pays a sufficient salary that will allow a man's wife to fulfill her calling (in raising a dozen children?), because her husband can afford to feed them.

For recent college graduates, *World* magazine, in the August 11, 2001 issue, reported that economics/finance majors commanded an average starting offer of \$40,577, and computer-science grads commanded an average starting offer of \$52,723. Many of our daughters are accustomed to fairly high lifestyles (nice homes, their own automobiles, annual vacations, quality health care, and designer clothes) that their fathers (many of whom are engineers, doctors, professors, etc.) can provide for them. We may not be producing sons who can provide what daughters are accustomed to. We may not be producing sons who can take care of the families they hope to have in order to continue the covenant blessings. Unless we change direction, we may have to prepare our daughters for a considerable reduction

in lifestyle, especially since most of them do not plan to work outside the home.

The agrarian society is gone for most of us. The idealism of the pioneer homestead is deceptive. We cannot retreat into a fantasy world of the past, but we must face the reality of the modern mobile society.

In conclusion, those leading the New Christian Counterculture movement are to be admired. Both those who lead and those who follow are to be commended for their willingness to break with the mainstream and be distinctively Christian. It is a blessing that they are once again discovering the Biblical concept of the covenant. Yet, being brave does not always make us wise. We must be aware of the pitfalls of our own zeal. Separatism that goes so far as to avoid the world goes too far. It will in the long run only damage our children. We must live in the world that God expects us to occupy, not vacate it. Unless we learn and teach our children how to occupy, we will handicap our children for generations to come.

Larry Ball is pastor of Bridwell Heights Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee. He is also a CPA. He may be contacted at wppca@preferred.com.

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Traditionalism

Part 2 of 2: “The Results of Traditionalism”
and “The Antidote: Sola Scriptura”

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By Rev. John M. Frame

The Results of Traditionalism

As one committed heart and soul to the principle *sola Scriptura*, I find the trend toward traditionalism most unfortunate. It has, in my view, weakened the evangelical witness in our time. Note the following:

- It has bound the consciences of Christians in areas where Scripture gives freedom. Traditionalists have often insisted, for example, that popular music is entirely and always unfit for use in Christian worship. But where does Scripture say this? What Biblical principle implies it? How does this scruple stand up against Paul’s willingness to “become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (*1 Cor. 9:22*)? The argument against the use of “contemporary worship music” is based largely on a historical argument about the genesis of the genre and its incompatibility with certain traditions.¹
- It has thus led to unnecessary divisions and partisanship among churches and denominations. That displeases our Lord (*Jn. 17; 1 Cor. 1-3*).
- Traditionalism has weakened the rational basis of Christian theology insofar as it has replaced exegetical arguments with historical-traditional ones. In Christianity, only Scripture is ultimately authoritative. Arguments based only, or largely, on traditions (either evangelical or non-evangelical) will not be persuasive to Christian hearts.
- Many traditionalist arguments should be classified as genetic fallacies. For example, we sometimes hear the argument that something is good (e.g., Reformed liturgy) because it comes out of Reformed tradition.² That assumes that everything historically connected with the Reformed tradition is good. So, either the Reformed tradition itself is ultimately norma-

tive, or the argument is a fallacy. Or, negatively, we sometimes hear that a song comes from the tradition of pop culture and is therefore unsuitable to Christian worship. This is an antithetical argument, as the former was an argument from identification. It is valid only on the assumption that there is nothing at all that is good in pop culture, an assumption impossible to prove and unlikely on a Biblical view of common grace. It is hard for me to avoid the impression that traditionalism accounts for much of the poor quality of thought and argumentation one finds in evangelical writings today.³

- The traditionalist-historicist argument that the church must be completely separate from modern culture is hard to square with the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. The Biblical stance of Christians is not to hide from the world, but to go forth and win the world for Christ. We are not to be “of” the world, but we are to be “in” it. And, to carry out the evangelistic mandate, we are to become like the world, like the prevailing culture, in some ways. Paul says, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (*1 Cor. 9:22*).⁴

This raises the issue of communication, for as Christ’s ambassadors, we must proclaim the gospel in the languages of the world. The movement toward contemporary worship music is essentially an attempt to speak the musical language that many people are speaking today. The traditionalist would forbid this and require us to use antiquarian music. But has he considered adequately Paul’s emphasis on intelligible communication in worship (*1 Cor. 14*)?

- There are distressing signs that some are seeking to *define* the evangelical and Reformed movements in traditionalist ways. I have called attention to this danger in the “Cambridge Declaration” of the Association of Confessing Evangelicals (ACE).⁵ I have also heard recently

of a conference sponsored by that organization in which one speaker made a scathing attack on contemporary forms of worship and worship music. These issues, to be sure, are complex, and I certainly do not insist that all evangelicals agree with me. I have explored this issue in a book-length discussion,⁶ and I freely admit that there is far more to be said. I am happy to see these matters freely and vigorously discussed. However, I wish that ACE would see the value of presenting more than one view of these matters when, after all, they are not actually resolved by the confessions themselves.

This is a time of definition for evangelicals, especially for those who, like myself, genuinely wish to be known as “confessional.” And I fear that the message people are hearing in the ACE writings and conferences is that those who are motivated by the Great Commission to speak in God’s praise the languages of our time are not fit to bear the name of evangelical. That suggestion, I think, is unhistorical, divisive, and untrue.

- The same is true of the specifically Reformed confessional group in North America. The adoption of women’s ordination by the Christian Reformed Church has led to much rethinking of what it means to be Reformed.⁷ Among those who have taken a Biblical position on scriptural inerrancy and the roles of men and women, *Outlook* magazine has a unique ministry. The *Outlook* provides not only news, but also Biblical, doctrinal, and practical studies which inevitably serve to define the emerging nature of the orthodox Reformed community in North America. It has properly emphasized Biblical authority and Reformed confessional orthodoxy.

But the *Outlook’s* view of worship has been, in my opinion, governed more by traditionalism than by serious Biblical exegesis. It has featured articles by Mark Beach⁸ and a defense of the exclusive use of Psalm versions in worship by Robert Godfrey. More recently, the *Outlook’s* editor has asked Darryl Hart and John Muether to write what would appear to be the magazine’s definitive series of articles on the subject of worship. I have referred to Hart’s views in a footnote to this paper. He clearly fits my definition of a traditionalist,⁹ and he carries traditionalism to something of an extreme.

I am not opposed to Hart and Muether speaking their piece and being published in the *Outlook*. I do object to the fact that they (together with Beach and Godfrey) are presented without any alternative view or rebuttal.

Again, the impression we receive is that it is unorthodox to worship in contemporary ways, and that indeed it is just as important to maintain Reformed liturgical traditions as it is to believe in predestination. Again, this suggestion is false and divisive. The conservative Reformed movement should rather be reaching out at this time to all who embrace the sovereign Lord of Scripture. And in my view it desperately needs the help of those who are seeking to reach beyond the Reformed community, beyond those for whom Reformed traditions have meaning, to bring to them the whole gospel of God.

The Antidote: *Sola Scriptura*

In this situation, the Reformation (traditional!!) principle of *sola Scriptura*, the sufficiency of Scripture, needs to be heard anew. Scripture itself proclaims it:

Do not add to what I command you, and do not subtract from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I give you (Dt. 4:2; cf. Dt. 12:32; Jos. 1:7; Pr. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

These people draw near me with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men (Isa. 29:13; Jesus quotes this passage against Pharisaic traditionalists in Mt. 15:8-9).

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Scripture does not, of course, tell us everything we need to know about everything. We must look outside Scripture if we want specific directions on how to fix a sink or repair a car. But Scripture tells us everything that God wants us to know “concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1.6). Scripture doesn’t tell us how to repair a car, but it tells us how to glorify God in repairing a car, namely by doing whatever we do “in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (*Col. 3:17*), and by working at it with all our hearts “as working for the Lord, not for men” (*Col. 3:23*).

Even in worship there are some things that cannot be derived from Scripture, “some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general

rules of the Word, which are always to be obeyed" (*Westminster Confession*, 1.6). So there is room for tradition. But Scripture and Scripture alone has the final word. Nothing outside Scripture may be imposed as law on God's people. No mere historical argument, no critique of culture, no human tradition, not even a church confession, can be ultimate law in God's church.

Some would argue that the church preceded Scripture. In one sense this is true. From Adam to Moses, there is no clear record of any written revelation. But when God gives His written Word to Israel, that Word stands as His written covenant with them, the written constitution of the people of God. That covenant document is to be the highest authority for God's people, the word of the living God Himself. Thus the people are not to add or subtract; they are not to turn to the right or to the left. Open any page in Deuteronomy at random, and you are likely to find admonitions to obey all the commands, statutes, testimonies, words, judgments, etc. in God's law, the written law.

The New Covenant in Jesus is also subject to God's written Word (*2 Tim. 3:16-17*, again). No human wisdom must be allowed to take precedence over Scripture, either to allow what Scripture forbids, or to forbid what Scripture allows.

So when questions arise concerning worship, we must ask first of all, what does Scripture command? What are the things Scripture requires? What are the areas in which Scripture gives us freedom to make decisions within the bounds of its general principles?

Where we have freedom to make our own choices (as, I believe, concerning music style), we still have to evaluate the possibilities. Are there contemporary styles of music that are incompatible with Biblical norms for worship? I think there are. But if someone wants to argue that a particular style is incompatible with Scripture, he will need to show that he has carefully understood what the Biblical principles are, and not just rely on genetic-fallacy historical arguments or arguments which assume that tradition should never be changed. And he will need to do justice to *all* the relevant Biblical principles: not just the transcendence and holiness of God, but also the Great Commission and the importance of edifying worshippers.

Sola Scriptura, therefore, forbids us to absolutize tradition or to put the conclusions of historical scholarship on the same level as Scripture. As such, it is a charter of freedom for the Christian, though, to be sure, Scripture restricts our freedom in a number of ways. Jesus' yoke is easy, and as we take that yoke upon us, we lose the tyrannical yokes of those who would impose their traditions as law. May God enable us to understand and celebrate His gentle bonds and His wonderful liberty.

¹There are also Biblical arguments, but rather shallow ones, based on the assumption that contemporary worship music does not emphasize, *e.g.* the transcendence of God. In my view, emphasis on divine transcendence (holiness, majesty, and power) is one of the strengths of this music. See my *Contemporary Worship Music*.

²This sort of thing is even worse, of course, when an idea is adopted because it "sounds" Reformed and another is rejected because it "sounds" Arminian. I have often encountered this kind of sloppy thinking among theological students.

³I speak, to be sure, as one who has been burned by reviewers who have attacked my writings without any meaningful argument, merely because I disagreed with traditions with which the reviewers identified. See, for example, the exchange between Mark Karlberg and myself concerning my *Cornelius Van Til* in *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 9:2 (Fall, 1993), 279-308.

⁴The argument that we must avoid any contamination of contemporary culture in our means of proclaiming the gospel seems to me also to be at odds with the exhortation of Abraham Kuyper to bring all of culture under the dominion of Christ. (Cf. Paul in *2 Cor. 10:5*). Some aspects of culture — its immorality and selfishness — should be avoided. Scripture tells us what to avoid. But for the most part Scripture calls us to conquer, not to hide.

⁵In my "Biblicism" paper, cited last month.

⁶*Contemporary Worship Music*.

⁷My own view is that the problems in the Christian Reformed Church arose in part because of confusion in that body over the distinction between traditionalism and *sola Scriptura*. The denomination has tended to see itself more as the heir of the Reformation and the daughter of the Dutch Gereformeerde tradition, than as a body determined to continual reformation according to the Word of God.

⁸I have criticized Beach's rather extreme positions in *Contemporary Worship Music*.

⁹I have sometimes worried that my descriptions of traditionalism might be thought by some to be caricatures. Hart's position, however, goes beyond anything I have ever charged traditionalists with saying.

For thirty-one years, John Frame served on the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. He was a founding faculty member of WTS, California. He has written many books and articles, including Van Til, the Theologian. He is now a Professor at RTS, Orlando. He can be reached at jframe@rts.edu.

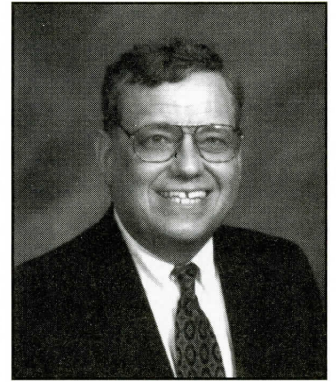
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Leaving a Legacy

By Rev. Byron Snapp



Here he alive, George Calhoun may have discouraged my writing these remarks for public consumption. George was the founder of Mt. Olive Tape Library (P.O. Box 422, Mt. Olive, Mississippi 39119). He did not care to be in the spotlight on life's stage. However, God raised him up and used him to be one of the most influential individuals in the revival of the Reformed Faith in the latter part of the twentieth century. The Lord called him home July 28, 2001 after a long battle with a number of illnesses. Yet his influence will, by God's grace, impact this new century and beyond.

Some years after God saved him, George began to understand and love the Reformed Faith. As a Sunday school teacher, he had a great desire to be properly prepared to teach his class and took time to listen to tapes. He began to collect tapes of sound doctrinal exposition and send out listings to friends. Over time, requests to borrow tapes began to come in from throughout the United States and overseas. This formed the basis for Mt. Olive Tape Library, which was established in 1969. It currently holds thousands of tapes that are available for monthly rental. I know of nowhere else that houses under one roof so many tapes by such men as R. J. Rushdoony, Greg Bahnsen, Nigel Lee, Al Martin, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and Morton Smith, just to name a few.

My first recollection of George was seeing him behind tape recorders taping speakers at conferences in the early 1970s. For years he spent many of his days off and vacation days immersed in listening to and cataloging tapes he had received. He also traveled to conferences to set up his recording system and be ready to tape the first lecture. While many others were having fellowship with each other, George, with his servant's heart, was busy making sure the microphones were working and all the wiring was properly connected.

Over the years, as our friendship grew, I saw that George was increasingly aware of his own sin. This made him more joyous and desirous of resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. In fact, his growing knowledge of God's attributes propelled him to constantly increase the library's inventory for the purpose of building up Christians throughout the world.

In his last letter, mailed to those on the Library mailing list earlier this year, he wrote the following:

And so, dear friends, I commit to you that sacred trust. "I have kept the faith." The same omnipotent God who raised up the Mt. Olive Tape Library to make widely accessible the teachings of the Reformed Faith, whereby many thousands all over the world have been instructed, strengthened and comforted, will carry us forward so long as it pleases Him to do so. All our trust is in Him and His gracious provision — without Him we can do nothing. May we all be found faithful in Him and zealous for His glory and truth, even as "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

These words typified George's desire for the Christian community.

Through the years he had an able helpmate, his wife of over fifty years, Gracie. She shared his vision and faithfully supported his labors.

There are a number of applications that we can make from George's life and ministry.

The work of local officers and laymen remains extremely important in God's plan for the advancement of His kingdom. Many of Paul's inspired letters concluded with greetings to various laymen who were local laborers for the gospel. Captured by the Reformed Faith, George then captured thousands of Reformed lectures on tape. He was committed to gospel advance in time and history. Using the gifts and time God gave him, he devoted himself to this task. His Reformed Faith reminded him that God gives the increase. He had no money to spend on flashy marketing or expensive advertising. His work spread rapidly by word of mouth.

He used the methods by which he had learned the Reformed Faith to help others. The Mt. Olive Tape Library was more than tapes. George also stocked the library with numerous books for readers to purchase. Just last year (in conjunction with Sprinkle Publications, P.O. Box 1094, Harrisonburg, VA 22801), he reprinted the very valuable *History of the*

Protestant Church in Hungary. This volume contains a wealth of information regarding the trials that accompanied the rooting and growth of the Reformed Faith in Hungary.

Like the sons of Issachar (*1 Chr. 12:32*), "he had an understanding of the times" in which we live. He realized the church's greatest problem is an ignorance of God's Word. He did not wait for someone else to do something, nor was he content that some were seeking to disseminate the Reformed Faith, as exemplified in the Reformed pastors and vocal laymen God has raised up. He knew that he, too, was responsible to instruct others. He gave himself to this task. He willingly held seminars at the library on aspects and applications of the Reformed Faith to all of life.

He knew there were many who knew nothing of the Reformed Faith and others who had no Reformed teachers in their locale. Many were unable to attend annual conferences. A number of people behind bars craved access to solid instruction. George's heart beat with a passion for these people. He realized that his spiritual growth had been hindered for years until it was remedied by an understanding of a Christian worldview through the lens of God's sovereignty.

Believing in the truth that God's Word is not bound, he sent tapes to whoever requested them. He received grateful testimonies from the imprisoned

and those who heard tapes overseas, on the seas, as well as close to his Mt. Olive, Mississippi office as to the effects of the taped messages in their lives.

George realized no Christian is completely Reformed until he reaches heaven. In this sense, George was aware, as we all should be, that we are not yet Reformed but reforming. Even in his last hours he was mindful of indwelling sin. When he was near death, he expressed his desire that the trials of his illnesses would be used by God to sanctify him and prepare him for heaven.

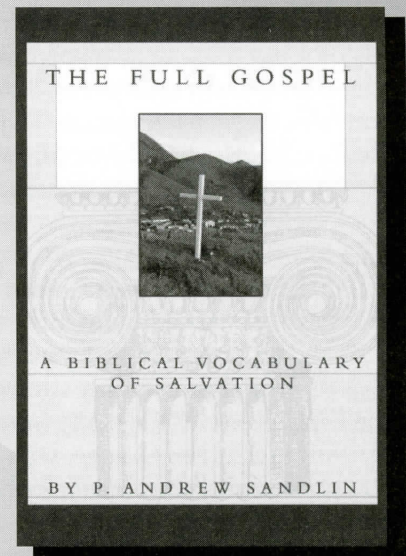
The number of George's earthly days are complete. His work under the auspices of the Mt. Olive Board continues to be available. May the Lord be pleased to allow even a wider distribution of tapes in coming years for the advancement of God's name and glory alone.

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

The Full Gospel: A Biblical Vocabulary of Salvation

By P. Andrew Sandlin

This book uniquely blends reverent scholarship, relentless instruction, and relevant application in delineating the meaning of salvation as expressed and implied in significant terms used in the Bible. The Biblical writers employed certain key words with which to define and describe salvation—words like atonement, propitiation, sacrifice, covenant, redemption, justification, and so on. They chose these words because these words accurately convey to human minds the nature of the salvation which God accomplishes in man and the world. God as the primary Author of Scripture not only specifically selected these terms, but also shaped the writers and cultures and languages as fit vehicles to convey His exact meaning of salvation as denoted by these terms. In other words, their use by Biblical writers was no afterthought or ad hoc scramble to locate some words to express the meaning of salvation. God chose them for a very good reason. *The Full Gospel* sets forth the chief features of individual salvation but moves outward to disclose the expansive, comprehensive, cosmic sweep of Jesus Christ's work of redemption. This book is indispensable reading for all who recognize that salvation is no pie-in-the-sky hope, but a concrete reality for all areas of thought and life. Paperback, \$22.00 plus \$6.00 postage and handling (\$9.00 outside U.S.)



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How Do We Know God Is Real and the Bible Is True?

By Rev. William O. Einwechter



The question of “How do we know?” is a question that does not cross our minds very often (unless you are a philosopher!); yet, it is a very important question.¹ In approaching the question, we need to understand that each of us has developed a particular view about the nature of reality that is based upon an ultimate standard of interpretation. That is, each of us interprets (gives meaning to) the “facts” of the world by an appeal to that which each one believes to be the ultimate criterion for determining reality. This process of judging the facts takes place, we might say, automatically, so it is not usually something of which we are conscious.

On the basis of a standard, we all interpret the data that comes to us individually and categorize it as right or wrong, good or bad, true or false, helpful or unhelpful, desirable or undesirable, *etc.* This is what is meant when we say that we *interpret* the “facts” of our experience. The resulting interpretation of the particulars we encounter is what we call knowledge. *We know* that something is what we believe it to be because our ultimate standard for determining knowledge tells us that it is so. Therefore, all of our presumed knowledge is actually based upon that which we *presuppose* as the final arbiter of reality. This presupposition, or first-principle, is our supreme faith-commitment; that is, we *believe* that our chosen standard is the best and most reliable one.² This presupposition is the starting point of all of our thinking and the basis for all of our predication — of all our affirmations as to the quality, nature, or attributes of a thing (fact).³ So even though most of us have not given a lot of thought to this matter of an ultimate standard of interpretation, we all have one. And we all, consciously or unconsciously, interpret all the particulars we experience from the basis of an all-controlling presupposition.

That our starting point, our basic presupposition, is all-important, is evident: if it is sound, our interpretation will be sound; if it is false, our interpretation of the facts will be defective. The goal, therefore, is to have the right presupposition. But what is the right presupposition; what is the proper standard of interpretation; what is the unfailing faith-commitment

that will lead us to true knowledge? Men have different answers to this question. For example, the rationalist says that human reason is the standard. The empiricist says that it is sensory experience. The hedonist says that it is pleasure. The pragmatist says that it is the thing that works. The irrationalist says there is no ultimate standard because all is pure chance, pure contingency. The religionist says that it is his religion. The Christian says that it is the God of the Bible. In the midst of all this babble, how does the Christian *know* that God is real and the Bible is true, and that, therefore, all other presuppositions are false?

Authority

In the quest for the right first-principle of knowledge, the matter of authority is an inescapable concept. Who has the authority to determine the nature of reality? Who has the warrant to say, “This is the first-principle of knowledge”? When you get down to it, there are really only two possible sources of authority, two possible standards in the sphere of epistemology: God or man. Either God is ultimate, or man is ultimate. You either begin with the transcendence of God as Creator, and of His absolute right to determine the meaning for all facts and the standards for all conduct, or you begin with autonomous man and his categorical right to define meaning and establish standards of action that suit him. Either God is the judge and interpreter of reality, or man is the judge and interpreter of reality.

This leads to a second factor. If man is the authority, then the instrumentality for interpretation is his own mind and intellect — his own reason. But if God is the authority, then the means for interpretation must be revelation; that is, God must make His mind known to man in some understandable and verifiable way so that man can think God’s thoughts after Him and interpret the facts of the universe in accordance with God’s sovereign will and purpose. The orthodox Christian is not in doubt as to *Who* is the authority and *what* is the instrumentality of interpretation. The Christian believes in Almighty God as the Creator of all things and the Sovereign Determiner of all facts, and that the Bible is the

revelation of God to man (it is the *Word of God*) so that man might understand God's creation, man's place in it, and the nature and meaning of all things.

Authentication

The fact of the existence and authority of God and the fact of the Bible as the infallible Word of God are, by the nature of the case, "self-authenticating" truths. What does this mean? It means that the truth concerning the attributes and existence of God is so great, so fundamental, and so certain that it cannot be proved by reference to anything else. If God is ultimate, then there is nothing that can be employed to verify Him; if there were, that thing would be more ultimate than God, for He would have to be defined in reference to it. God has declared Himself as "I AM THAT I AM" (*Ex. 3:14*). He is the eternally self-existent, self-contained, self-sufficient, self-revealing One Who is faithful to His covenant. He is the sovereign Creator Who made all things, decreed all things, and defined all things, but Who in Himself is determined by no one or no thing. Therefore, God does not seek to prove His existence to men. His existence is the very ground for the existence of man and of the creation. In history, and in the Scripture that records that history, God presents Himself to man as *God* in all His splendor and glory, and as nothing else or nothing less.

The Bible is also, of necessity, self-authenticating. As the Word of God, it is ultimate in its authority. It cannot appeal to the word (judgment) of any other to verify its nature without denying its own nature. For example, if the word of man is necessary to establish the Bible as the Word of God, then man's word is the ultimate authority; if experience is required to establish it, then experience is supreme, *etc.* As the Word of the Creator, the Bible alone is infallible in its interpretation of man and of the creation.

Acceptance

If the existence of God and the nature of the Bible as the infallible Word of God are self-authenticating truths, then why do not all men embrace these truths? The answer is twofold.

First, man is in ethical rebellion against God. This means that he *knows* that God is his Creator and that the Bible is the Word of God, but he revolts against these truths. As a creature, he knows that God exists; but as a sinner, consumed with his own importance, his own desires, his own autonomy, he hates God and the intrusion that God represents to his plans. So, he actively suppresses his knowledge of God so that he can pursue his own agenda (*Rom. 1:18-21*). Man does not perish for a lack of knowledge about God — man's own being and all creation clearly testifies of God's glory, power, and Godhead (*Rom.*

1:19-20; Ps. 19:1-6) — he perishes because he sins against the knowledge that he does have. This rebellion began in the Garden of Eden when Eve chose to establish herself, her own reason, as the ultimate reference point of predication (initially, concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), and thus claimed her own autonomy. Eve knew of God and of His interpretive word, but did not believe that God could be ultimate; so, she reinterpreted the nature of God to suit her own autonomy (made God into a god of her own imagination, *cf. Rom. 1:23, 25*). This is what men are about today. Like Eve, they establish themselves, some other man, or some other aspect of the creation as their ultimate reference point for determining knowledge; they interpret the facts of their experience on the basis of their chosen presuppositions. Then, if they wish to retain the concept of God (a concept that man finds hard to part with), they fashion a god of their own liking (or accept one already fashioned by other men) that is far different than the sovereign, self-contained God revealed in Scripture.⁴ It must be so, if they will have a god, because their presuppositions chosen as they are in the pursuit of rebellion, deny the existence of the Creator/God of Scripture.⁵

Second, those who do believe in the existence of God and the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible do so, not because of some set of rational or sensory proofs, but because of the grace of God that has changed them from rebels to worshippers. When the Spirit of God regenerates a man, that man's epistemology is radically changed: he casts off his own autonomy, buries his false presuppositions, and embraces God as He is and the Word of God as the only true interpretation of his condition and its solution. This being done, the erstwhile rebel now submits to God's authority and puts his faith in the gospel. In salvation, a man comes to embrace God and His Word as ultimate. In sanctification, this first-principle, this absolute presupposition, works itself out in the life of the believer as he learns to interpret all facts, all areas of life, according to God's Word.

We Christians know that God exists and that the Bible is true "by the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."⁶ This witness enables us to reorient all of our thinking so that now, with our self-imposed, alien presuppositions removed, we are able to see that all creation shouts of the glory of God. We learn that our unbelief was never a problem of the lack of evidence (it is *everywhere*), but due to eyes that had willfully been blinded by false presuppositions derived from a rebellious heart that said, "I will determine truth and falsehood, and good and evil for myself."

Apologetics

What, then, is the nature of apologetics? “Apologetics,” as a theological discipline, refers to the defense of the Christian Faith against the attacks of all forms of unbelief. Apologetics gives a Biblical defense of the reason for the hope that is within us (*1 Pet. 3:15*). But, in terms of our encounter with an unbelieving world, what is the purpose of this defense? Many Christians believe that the goal of apologetics is to open minds and hearts to the truth of God by showing unbelievers through rational proofs and logical argumentation that the Bible is trustworthy and that Christ is the Savior. But this is not the purpose of apologetics. The purpose of apologetics, as Greg Bahnsen has well stated it, is not to open hearts but to close mouths. That is, we show the unbeliever the foolishness of his own worldview — that by rejecting the sovereign Creator/God of the Bible, he has no basis for meaning, rationality, or prediction; no answer to the question of the one and the many; no hope for the future; and, since all unbelieving thought is bankrupt, he can only live his life by stealing from the worldview of the Christian — then, having shut his mouth, we present to him the claims of Christ without compromise. Only God can open the heart of man to receive the testimony of Christ, and the instrumentality He has chosen to accomplish this is the Word and Spirit.

Since man is a rebel who is willfully suppressing the knowledge of God that is in him and around him, we know that the problem for any particular man is not a lack of evidence for God. Man’s problem is sin. He has set himself up as ultimate. Using the Word of God, we must convict him of his sin and show him the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If the sinner raises objections, we should patiently answer those objections. But in our answers we must never give the unbeliever the idea that he has the right to sit in judgment of God’s truth, or that he is the ultimate judge of what the Scriptures say. We must not appeal to his reason as if *that* determines the matter. We, as faithful ambassadors, must deliver the Word of our sovereign God *as* the Word of a sovereign God who sits in judgment of all men and commands all men everywhere to repent. We must trust in the self-authenticating Christ of Scripture to work His sovereign will for the glory of His own name.

¹ The question of, “How do we know?” belongs to the field of study that we call “epistemology.” Epistemology concerns itself with the investigation of the origin, nature, and methods of knowledge.

² We call this a “faith-commitment” because it is something we accept without any proof beyond the presupposition itself. In other words, there is nothing beyond our chosen standard that we can appeal to to

establish it. For example, if we look to reason as the ultimate standard, we do so because it alone appears reasonable to us. If we sought to prove that reason was the true standard by an appeal to sensory experience, then what we have done is set up experience as our ultimate standard because it is used as the basis for our predication concerning reason.

³ However, men often act and believe in a way that is inconsistent with their basic presuppositions. This is due to the fact that man is a complex being with many factors influencing his mind. In spite of this, it is still true that a man will ultimately rely on his chosen standard of knowledge to interpret the facts of his experience. To be aware of one’s presupposition and to act in accord with it on a consistent basis is to be an “epistemologically self-conscious” individual.

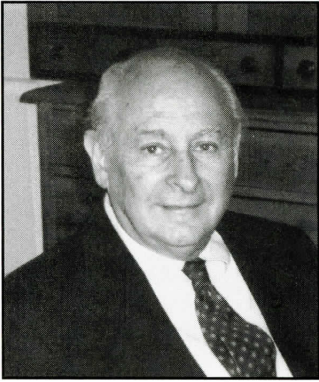
⁴ This is the origin of the many religions of the world (except, of course, Biblical Christianity). These religions are the creations of men (with assistance from Satan and his demons) for the purpose of retaining the concept of God while conveniently denying His eternal power and Godhead.

⁵ This analysis does not intend to convey that all men consciously and with deliberation follow these steps. Culture, parental sins, and the like determine the rebellious presuppositions of many. Men do not always have to plot their steps in a definitive way because other sinners have already done it for them; being in the same ethical rebellion, they follow in the paths of their predecessors.

⁶ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, I, 5.

William O. Einwechter is the editor of The Christian Statesman, vice president of the National Reform Association, and vice moderator of the Association of Free Reformed Churches. He serves as a pastor at Immanuel Free Reformed Church in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Linda, have been blessed with ten children. He can be contacted at weinwechter@dejazzd.com.

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The New York Holocaust

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

The destruction of the two World Trade Center towers was the equivalent of the total obliteration of a city of 50,000 people. There is nothing left except ashes and twisted metal. The people who were on the floors directly hit by the two planes were immediately incinerated by the inferno of exploding jet fuel. Many people on the lower floors managed to get out of the building by way of stairwells. Others, trapped on upper floors, with flames at their backs, preferred to die by jumping out of windows. When they left their homes that morning to go to work in those two ultra-modern buildings, those two great symbols of American capitalism, little did they know that within a few hours they'd be burnt to death or be jumping out of office windows.

When the two towers collapsed, everything within those 220 stories was destroyed: computers, phones, fax machines, copiers, TV sets, furniture, books, paintings, expensive rugs, *objets d'art*, records, files, cabinets full of supplies, kitchens, framed photos of children, wives, and husbands. A whole city was destroyed and everything burnable in it reduced to ashes. The ash that covered the streets around the towers were the incinerated remains of the thousands of people who were cremated in the inferno. The destruction could not have been more complete.

We know that over two hundred and fifty passengers were killed in the four planes hijacked by the terrorists. But we may never know how many people were killed in the two towers because most of their bodies simply no longer exist. Only by counting missing persons will we be able to get an idea of how many human beings were lost that morning of September 11, 2001. By September 13, the number of missing were counted as 4,700. The mayor called for over 10,000 body bags. But few bodies have been found. The rest covered the streets with their ashes. Several hundred firefighters and policemen were also killed by the collapsing towers. This is a catastrophe never before experienced in New York or by any other American city.

Americans have just awakened to the fact that the world is a dangerous place, not only for Israelis, but for Americans. We all agree that it was an act of war, as devastating and unprovoked as the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. But how do we fight a war against terrorism? Do we fight it by sending a missile into a desert tent somewhere? Do we fight it by bombing an aspirin factory? That's what our last President did after Islamic terrorists bombed the two American embassies in Africa.

Learning From the Past

Perhaps we can learn some lessons from the past. This is not the first time that America has experienced conflict with the Islamic world. After the Revolution, the United States made annual payments to the piratical Barbary States of Morocco, Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis for unmo- lested transit in the Mediterranean. European nations were doing the same. In May 1801, Pasha Yusuf Karamanli of Tripolitania declared war on the United States by cutting down the flagpole at the U.S. Consulate in Tripoli and seizing several Americans and their vessels. The Pasha believed that the new republic was too weak to fight back. In 1802, during the Jefferson administration, Congress passed a measure permitting the arming of merchant ships, in preparation for the Tripolitan War. In February 1804, Lieut. Stephen Decatur sailed the ketch *Intrepid* into Tripoli harbor, where her crew boarded and burned the captured 38-gun U.S. frigate *Philadelphia*, thus depriving the Tripolitans of their prize. In April 1805, the city of Derna in Tripolitania was captured by an American invasion force. Hence, the anthem of the U.S. Marines, "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli." The war ended by placing the friendly brother of Pasha Yusuf on the throne and paying \$60,000 ransom money for the officers and crew of the *Philadelphia*.

However, that didn't stop the piratical activities of the other Barbary States. Algiers seized other American merchantmen, demanding payment. In 1815, Decatur was sent to the Mediterranean where he captured the Algerian flagship *Mashuda* in a running fight off Cape de Gat. Decatur then appeared off Algiers, demanded and secured a treaty humiliating to the once proud piratical state: no future payments, restoration of all American property, the emancipation of all Christian slaves, civilized treatment of prisoners of war.

Today's War

Today, the situation is quite different. What we must do to eradicate terrorism is overthrow the present regimes that harbor and nurture terrorists and replace them with friendly, pro-democratic leadership. Note that it took four years, from 1801 to 1805, to accomplish the job in Tripoli alone, and additional years to subdue the other piratical states. However, with today's military technology, we may be able to do the job faster.

The French, also suffering the kidnappings and terrorism emanating from the Barbary Coast, finally decided to invade Algeria in the 1830s and take it over completely, inviting Europeans to settle there and bring European civilization with them. They also took control of Morocco and Tunisia. After World War II, with the growth of national liberation movements aided and abetted by the communists, the West surrendered to the liberal anti-colonialist movement and gave independence to the Moslem states. The result has been this plague of modern terrorism ever since.

There must be something about the Islamic worldview or state of mind that produces this fanatic lust for destruction. In Algeria, Islamic terrorists slit the throats of school children in their beds. In the West Bank and Gaza, children turn themselves into human suicide bombers eager to blow up Israeli teenagers. Adult terrorists engineer the most brutal and devastating airplane hijackings, killing themselves, the innocent passengers on board, and thousands of civilians in the targets they hit with explosive jet fuel. For what reason? Is this kind of cruelty and murder called for in the Koran? Is hatred of non-Moslems so deep and obsessive that only self-destructive mass murder is actually preferable to living in a world where non-Moslems exist? What have non-Moslems done to deserve such hatred?

It is said that America's backing of Israel is the cause of Islamic hatred. But why can't the Arabs accept the existence of Israel, which occupies a tiny part of the Middle East, in which Arab states swimming in oil occupy millions of square miles of land? Unfortunately, the idea of "live and let live" simply does not exist in the Islamic mind. They call Zionism racism, yet a million Arabs live within Israel where they are full citizens. Yet the Palestinians will not accept a single Jew in their midst. Who is the racist?

The only way that we can live safely in a world with such malevolent people is to subdue them to the point where they cannot harm us or anyone else. Turkey has found a way of dealing with Islamic fanatics: keep them from gaining political power. Saddam Hussein in Iraq uses the fanatics to bolster his dictatorial rule. The clerics in Iran thrive on Islamic fanaticism and terror. Pakistan uses it in Kashmir against the Hindus. Chechnyan terrorists bomb apartment houses in Moscow. Syria uses Hezbollah terrorists to maintain its hold on Lebanon. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan provides a safe haven for Osama bin Laden while reducing the country to rubble. It persecutes Christian missionaries.

It is obvious that terrorism and religious intolerance are as much a part of the Islamic world as openness and religious freedom are part of the Western world. Biblical religion is the basis of the West's benevolent values. Despite the diversity of religious sects in the United States, there is that sense of tolerance and trust that permits us all to live together in a free society.

The catastrophe in New York has made Americans affirm those benevolent values in the face of such fanatical Islamic hatred and destructiveness. In 1996, historian Samuel P. Huntington wrote a book that

explains why September 11th took place. Its title tells it all: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. He wrote:

World politics is being reconfigured along cultural and civilizational lines. In this world the most pervasive, important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities.... The most dangerous cultural conflicts are those along the fault lines between civilizations.... It's now the line separating the peoples of Western Christianity, on the one hand, from Muslim and Orthodox peoples on the other.... Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world.

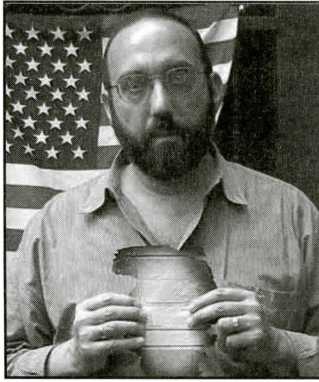
In other words, we are not only fighting terrorism, which is the Islamic mode of waging war against us, but we are fighting a civilization based on evil. President Reagan called communist Russia the Evil Empire. As much as we tolerate Moslems who choose to live in Western countries, we cannot tolerate the Islamic regimes in the Middle East that want to destroy us. We must subdue them or bequeath to our children a future of fear, terrorist destruction, and the triumph of unlimited evil.

Israeli journalist Amotz Asa-El wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* of September 13:

Sadly, as Middle East Israelis have been arguing in the face of repeated suicide bomb attacks, the war has now proven to be not about land, creed or faith, but about civilization. It is the Armageddon of tyranny on freedom, the war of the sons of darkness against the sons of light, who dared make Islamic fundamentalists and Arab tyrants suffer from an inferiority complex they would neither treat nor contain.

So how do we fight such a war? We were willing to use carpet bombing over Germany in World War II to force them into unconditional surrender. We were willing to use nuclear bombs against Japan to end the war in the Pacific. What are we willing to use against the Islamic states that wish to destroy our civilization piecemeal through terror? I heard one caller on a talk show say, "Nuke them!" Sounds simple enough. But in a clash of civilizations, a new strategy is needed. It is going to require a vision that understands what we are up against. So we should have no illusion that it is going to be easy. The President has emphasized that this is war. Then if that's the case, we'd better do what we have to do to win it.

Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the author of eight books on education, including NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education, How to Tutor, Alpha-Phonics: A Primer for Beginning Readers, and Homeschooling: A Parents Guide to Teaching Children. All of these books are available on Amazon.com or by calling 208-322-4440. Mr. Blumenfeld can be reached at sblu@netway.com.



Shaken — and Stirred

By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel

Shortly after 9:00 a.m. on September 11, I got a call from our firstborn, Sarah Faith (23), who works for Morgan Stanley. She was at her office in Midtown Manhattan — the Rockefeller Center area — about two miles north of the World Trade Center. “Daddy, did you hear about the Trade Center?” I had not. “A plane crashed into it.” From her description, it sounded like a horrible accident. I thought a pilot of a small plane must have tried to show off the Towers to some passengers and had simply gone too close or lost control. What else could it be? But while she was on the phone she was looking downtown at the Trade Center from her 28th-floor office window. “Daddy, there was just another explosion in the other tower.”

The *other* tower? I ran up to see the news to learn what had happened. I have been profoundly shaken since.

I Am Shaken for My Family

Sarah’s train into Manhattan, it turns out, was not far from what is being called “ground zero” when the first plane crashed into the North Tower. After the second crash, her building, like so many others in New York, was evacuated. (Humorous note: During the evacuation, a woman from Sarah’s floor asked, “Is your father on the radio?” “You mean ‘Messiah’s Minutes’? Yes.” The woman turned to her friend, “I’m talking to a girl whose father is on the radio!”)

Evacuated, but where could she go? We live in Brooklyn and train service was suspended. Fortunately she was able to go with a few women from the office to the apartment of a co-worker who lives on 92nd & Lexington (still further north, away from the tragedy). The woman who owns the apartment was very kind indeed. Now one daughter was safe (we prayed), but my second-born, Rebeccah Hope (20), was also in Manhattan (having traveled in with Sarah) and we couldn’t reach her. Cell phone service had gone down. Rebeccah was at Lincoln Center taking classes at the Alvin Ailey School of Dance. She described her morning this way:

When I walked out of class at 10:30 a.m. with my friend Michelle, there were people talking in the halls about the Trade Center being on fire and about

hijacked planes. I couldn’t get in touch with my parents and they couldn’t reach me because there was no cellular service: everyone’s phone was off. I went to my next class and the teacher gave us more detail about the hijacked planes and told us that the towers were severely damaged. We were all devastated, but we did not yet know all of the story: we still didn’t know that the buildings had collapsed.

I thought my parents could drive in and pick up me and my friend. I knew my father would want to. But we had no idea what outside was like. We left the building at about 10:45, trying to find a phone to call our parents. All the payphones had long lines. We found a phone in a diner, but we were unable to make calls outside of Manhattan. I left a message on my sister Sarah’s voicemail at work and we headed to her office in Rockefeller Center, about a mile away. We didn’t know she had been evacuated.

Michelle and I were the only people walking in a downtown direction. There were so many people walking against us, we were literally pushing our way through the crowds. When we got to Sarah’s building, we discovered that she, along with thousands of others, had been evacuated from her building at 9:45.

While en route we had seen news flashes telling the actual damage and details concerning the collapse of both towers, so we were more devastated and horrified than before. First we would cry for the people. Then we would cry for the buildings.

We still needed to find a phone and every phone had a line of 40 or more people waiting. We finally found a shorter line on 46th, between 6th and 5th, and we were able to call out of Manhattan. When I spoke to my parents, my Dad gave me the address of Sarah’s co-worker’s apartment. I started to cry. My Dad told me to write down the friend’s address but I didn’t have a pen. A woman in line behind me gave me a pen to use. When I tried to return it she said, “Keep it, you might need it again.” It was so moving to see how generous people were in the immediate wake of

this tragedy. Some stores were giving away refreshments, others were giving away shoes because many people trekking uptown had walked long distances, and some of these were barefoot; buses and trains were fare-free all day. By evening, payphones were free of charge as well.

My Dad had said "Stay away from 5th Ave," because he thought if there were to be another incident, that would be the most likely area of attack. In confusion and grief, we wandered west instead of east, ending up at 11th Ave. Thank God the buses were running at that time. We caught the M 57 on 57th and 11 Ave. and it took us to Lex and 57th. From there we walked to 92nd and found Sarah. We stayed with her until subway service resumed later that evening. Our train was not running so we had to take a different line that left us in another area of Brooklyn. My Dad was able to pick us up there.

It's not as though we suffered in any way, but the day was so traumatic and uncertain for us. Michelle and I weren't even sure if we were safe walking at one point because we thought we might be vulnerable to another air attack. Thank God we were safe. It was scary and horrible being away from our families.

I had retrieved Jed (14) and Anna (13) from their Christian school at midday. As I stepped outside my home to get in the van, the smell of the Trade Center fires had reached us in southern Brooklyn, and only got stronger as I headed north to pick up the kids. The city smelt and felt the tragedy. Leah Love (18) was in the Urban Nations offices nearby, and Esther (12) was in homeschool. When we were reunited as a family that evening, the relief, especially in Mommy, was palpable. Nevertheless, Sarah was soon back in Manhattan, making use of her training in disaster relief by doing a 13-hour shift at a Red Cross Shelter. But our concerns for our children remain high.

I Am Shaken for My Friends

At the time of the attack, we were bidding adieu to our dear friends, Rev. Paul Murphy, his wife Julie, and their five children who had been visiting from Michigan for a week. After the attack, bridges and tunnels were closed, preventing Rev. Murphy from getting back to Grand Rapids in time to conduct a funeral for a man from their church who had died suddenly. They had to stay in NYC another day. As we watched the horrors unfold before us, Paul — like most of us — was dumbfounded. But he had an "inside" reason most of us did not have. He had been a construction worker before becoming a minister. "I was one of the men who poured the foundation of the Trade Center. You can't believe how strong it is! How could this be?"



This was one of a thousand questions we'd asked ourselves before day's end.

Our friend James Tyne, a leader at Messiah's and an attorney who worked at 7 World Trade Center, arrived from his New Jersey home for a morning meeting at the Trade Center when the first plane hit. He was coming up from the PATH train to the concourse area of the Twin Towers and saw a mixed scene of some people running with alarm, and other people casually drinking coffee. As he looked out into the plaza he saw slabs of concrete and steel. "There must have been an accident," he thought, not quite able to imagine what would cause that debris, but certainly not envisioning the actual state of affairs. Jim was soon huddled outside the Trade Center with thousands of others. Suddenly the second plane crashed into the other tower. People started yelling, "This is not an accident! We are under attack." Knowing, by the grace of God, it was time to leave, Jim quickly made his way west to catch a ferry back to Jersey. As he was walking he looked over his shoulder and saw at least two bodies falling from upper stories. He couldn't bear to look any more. Nothing has been more affecting than the pictures of those who felt they had to jump from the upper floors. When he arrived home to the joyful shouts of his wife and four children, he recounted what had happened. As he was speaking, it became apparent to his wife Josephine that Jim did not yet know the full story: The Twin Towers were no longer there. Jim soon afterward called me and said, "I've never in my life been so happy to make a phone call, just to hear a voice, and just to tell you 'I love you.'"

My closest friend and elder, André Setyon, also works downtown but was on vacation that morning. So we had reason to rejoice. Then we remembered Valeriy Muratov, a member of Messiah's who works in the WTC Marriott. After innumerable phone calls and too many hours, we found that Valeriy had been safely evacuated before his hotel was destroyed in the disaster.

After determining that all Messiah's people were safe, we contacted our sister churches: Kings Highway Reformed Church, The Neighborhood Church of Greenwich Village, and The Bronx Household of Faith. No deaths or injuries to any members. Praise God!

I Am Shaken for New York

I think people around the world are, or are becoming, very sympathetic to how profound the loss of the Trade Center is to New Yorkers. My friend Larry Woiwode has written eloquently about "the importance of place." Our attachment to areas is anchored in outstanding features and symbols. In a deep and real way, true New Yorkers were *connected* to the Towers. They could be seen from virtually anywhere in the city. I could see them from my third floor window, a dozen miles away. There was a genuine *bond* between those buildings and our psyches.

We had been planning to have dinner with the Murphys at *Windows on the World*, the restaurant that was on the 106th floor of the Trade Center, on Monday, September 10, in celebration of our 27th anniversary (Sept. 8). The only reason we did not go was that they were so busy that they had kept me on hold for 20 minutes, so we couldn't confirm availability. We ate locally. The next morning *Windows on the World* no longer existed, and thousands of people were buried beneath its rubble.

We can't take this in, we can't absorb the magnitude of this loss. It does not stop with deaths and injuries. It will continue for weeks, months, and years to come. Taking down *those* buildings was — make no mistake — a tremendous victory for evil. The result of this act of terror is not felt alone in the loss of a landmark, nor alone in the massive loss of life. By taking down the World Trade Center *hundreds* of businesses were immediately and directly affected, *thousands* of families were left without breadwinners, and many more thousands of breadwinners have no place to report to work.

The ramifications of this direct hit on the heart of New York will not be fully seen for a time, but they include the bankrupting of businesses and the impoverishment of families, perhaps the beginning of a major recession. Even now, as businesses from 14th Street south are shut, their rents continue to be due, their bills continue to mount, but their incomes have been cut off.

On that fateful day when the Trade Center was destroyed, papers from #7 were blown into the air. They sailed over Brooklyn in the late afternoon sun, making a scene eerier than Hitchcock might have portrayed. Buoyed by a gentle breeze moving south toward Sheepshead Bay (my neighborhood), thousands of sheets of paper shimmered and floated in the sky: looking now like birds, now like UFOs, now

like stars, depending on how they caught the waning sunlight. One charred sheet, a scientific printout, landed on my doorstep, a grim souvenir.

I Am Shaken for America

Though this was the worst act of terrorism committed against us, we have no reason to believe that it will be the last. Yet that is not why I shake for my nation. I shake because we seem not to know how to speak with humility before the God of the Bible. I shake because the airwaves have been filled with unending and hyperbolic bravado, without the slightest hint that a tragedy of this proportion would be a perfect occasion for self-examination. I shake because the meaning of the events is being interpreted for the masses by the non-reflective talking heads. I shake because Americans want immediate answers to life's most difficult questions, and they *think* they have been given the answers by images and emotions. I shake because we don't know the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Brotherhood of Man. I shake because we seem dead to the suggestion that running into action of *any* sort, without a firm bond with God, leaves us exposed to horrors which could make the Trade Center disaster look like Disneyworld. I shake because this attack is already becoming the occasion for Christians to identify themselves in terms of the State rather than understanding that the State must identify itself in terms of Christ.

I Shake for the Church

I shake for the church for some of these same reasons. We have a church today that does not know where to stand. It does not know that it ought to look in the mirror; it is not even sure where the mirror is. The Bible is the mirror (*Jas. 1:22-25*), not the television. One cannot gain insight into our current crisis, nor understand the opportunities it may present, by feeding on scraps of diced information supplied by anti-Christian newsroom editors. We're already being made to look like oddballs because our stomachs turn at the ecumenical services we are supposed to embrace.

Some Christians think it will be easy to take back ground for Christ in the wake of this fiasco. This is naïve. People are *not* looking to Christ. Oh, they are ready to *use* the church, like Rocky Balboa did on the way to his championship fight: he stopped at the priest's apartment and yelled to his third-floor window, "Father, t'row me down a blessin'." In the short term we well may see a return to "religious" exercises. But is that a return to Christ and His Word?

This naiveté extends to some Christians who think that if we just throw enough money at the

problem, we can claim a string of victories. But they fail to consider two things: One, money never bought a conversion; and two, that when it comes to throwing money around, we have long been — and long will be — unable to compete with the Feds. Think about it. New York has a *disaster*. The first thing our representatives do is ask Washington for 20 billion dollars. Done! Who can compete with that? GE pledges 10 million, Cisco 4, and on it goes. Competing with the big boys on their terms is like competing with Rome on ritual: you cannot beat ‘em. That is why...

I’m Stirred

I’m stirred to see the church understand that her best opportunities are not in the brassiest arenas, nor necessarily in the most well-lit venues, nor in the most public places. Rather, our goals should be simple and our works pure. We must, in our day, seek to do “*niche ministries*.” We must put ourselves where governments, with their virtually unlimited resources, nevertheless cannot tread. We must apply ourselves *humbly* to make Christ known *personally* in *intimate* ministry — making the best use of limited resources by extensive contact with real people whom we can really help. Programmatic Christianity has been a colossal failure. We must immediately stop using statist and corporate models for ministry.

Faithful ministry is possible, if we would allow Christ, not polls, to measure fidelity. Because many brothers and sisters in Christ have as much as commanded us to, we are venturing to offer, in the days ahead, help in the name of Jesus Christ to those impacted by this horrific tragedy. We have been besieged by Christians who desire to employ the meager, but earnest, resources and contacts of Messiah’s Congregation to express their Christian love and concern for those impacted by the tragedy in New York City. We feel obliged — humbly compelled, you might say — to be so used. At this point we cannot say *exactly* what form of help we will be offering. Our high priority will be to bring relief to *Christians* who have suffered loss. It is most fitting that help for Christians come directly from other Christians. Galatians 6:10.

Messiah’s Congregation has established a special fund dedicated to bringing relief from the suffering caused by this brutal act of war. We will administer received funds in cooperation with three other NYC churches: Kings Highway Reformed Church (Brooklyn), The Neighborhood Church of Greenwich Village (Manhattan), and The Bronx Household of Faith. Since none of these churches has lost members — thank the Sovereign Lord — we will be looking to show Christ’s love as we learn of secondary and

tertiary relations in need of assistance. The stories will, no doubt, be heard soon, and for weeks, if not months, to come. The help we offer will be up close and personal. It will be firstly *for* those who belong to Christ, *from* those who belong to Christ, in the hope that others may earnestly desire to belong to Christ, when they see our sincere love for all the saints. Those who would like to support this service to Christ and His own may send offerings to: Messiah’s Congregation, 9-11 Relief Fund, 2662 East 24th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11235-2610. Checks should be made out to *Messiah’s Congregation / 9-11*.

I am writing this on September 14, a day our President has set apart as a National Day of Prayer. Let me propose a prayer we ought to consider praying:

Lord, we have not believed as your people should believe. We have not behaved as your people should behave. We have not confessed as your people should confess. Despite all this, our Father, we are your people. When our terrorist enemies train for war, they shoot down cut-out figures with Christian crosses painted on their chests. If we were to fall, the nations would surely say, “Those who were called by the Name of His Son have perished.” Do not let our sins become the occasion for dishonor to fall upon the Name of our Savior! O Lord, forgive us! Have pity on us and sustain us. Have mercy on us, God of our Fathers, and strengthen us. We have gone far from our founding, but we have not wandered entirely out of your sight. Look upon us now in your infinite compassion and restore us to Yourself, O God. Use us to crush the enemies of Christ. Use us to build and extend the kingdom of God. In the Name of Christ our only Savior and Lord we pray. Amen.

Let me hear politicians pray this, and television commentators saying a hearty “Amen!” If we would ever see that day, the church of Christ must start shaking — instead of resting in — the world; the church of Christ must start stirring. She can do this by steering — instead of being led by — the world. September 11th may be the start of a new beginning. It’s something only God our King can grant. O, may He do so!

Steve Schlissel has been pastor of Messiah’s Congregation in Brooklyn, NY since 1979. He serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations (a mission to the world in a single city) and is the Director of Meantime Ministries (an outreach to women who were sexually abused as children). Steve lives with his wife of 27 years, Jeanne, and their five children. He can be reached at steve@schlissel.com.

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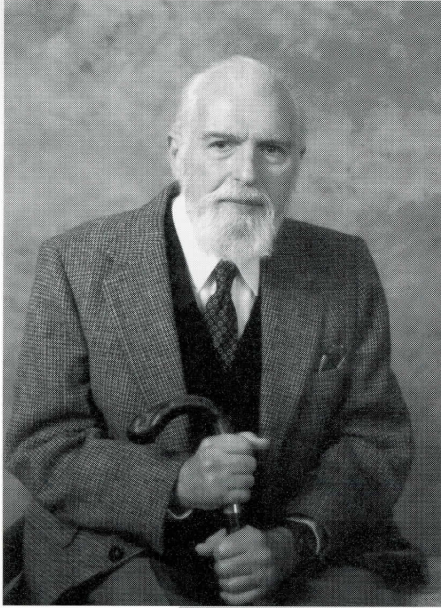
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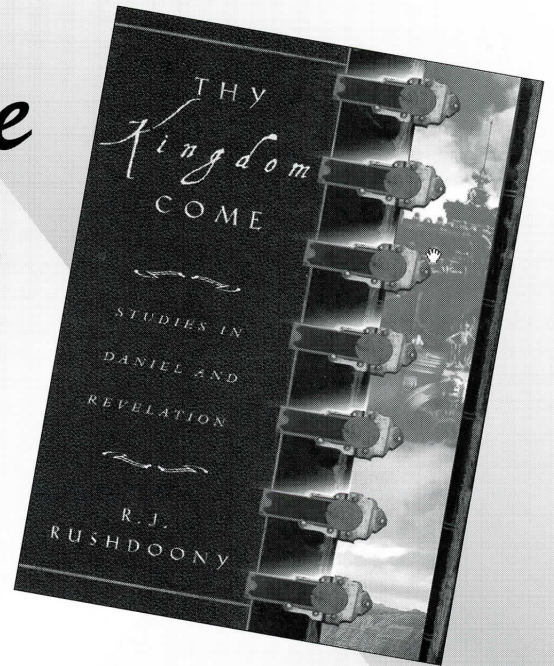
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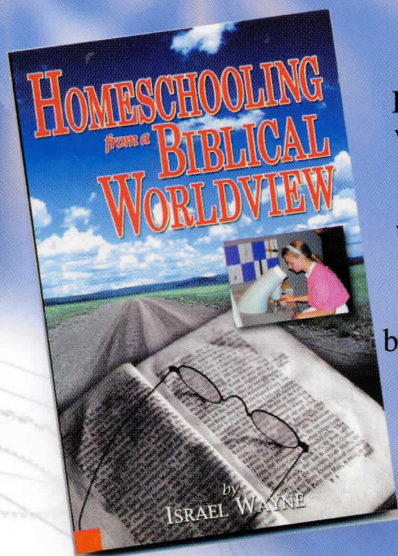
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