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Faith for All of Life

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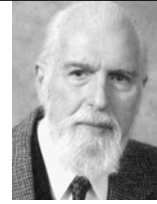
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The Decline of the West

Most people of our time are existentialists, even though they may never have heard of that philosophy, nor of existentialist thinkers from Kierkegaard through Camus and Sartre. The old observation is accurate, that armies march because of the ideas and philosophies of men unknown to them. Most people do not know what presuppositions of the modern world have been and are, nor what the world's direction is, nor why it is near death culturally.

As Henry Van Til noted, culture is religion externalized. As that culture develops, the old order often continues in the new, rebaptized into respectability by inclusion. Rene Descartes, the father of the modern age, shifted the intellectual world from the triune God to the supposedly autonomous mind of man.

The medieval criterion had commonly been, "What say the Fathers of the church?" or "What says the Holy Father?" For the Reformation, it was, "What say the Scriptures?" The modern world, being Cartesian, responds with "Well, I think," or, "In my opinion," or, "As far as I am concerned," and other like egocentric statements, and especially since the Romantic era of the modern age, "I feel" has been determinative for many.

No man has written more devastatingly of the fallacies basic to the emphasis on man's supposedly autonomous reason than Cornelius Van Til. Modern man begins by insisting on the necessity for rationalism in all discourses but ends up with nothing except itself. All else is finally swept away. Man's reason is a very jealous and exclusive god!

The Dregs of Society

At the bottom levels of societies, it is not uncommon to find depravities, perversions, a contempt for law and order, hostilities to the church, state, school, family, industry, and more. The resentment harbored by the failures in a society is as old as history. As long as those above their level retain a living faith, they can effectually govern the lawless and disorderly element. Such failed persons can be the objects of charity, but their opinions are usually in history of no consequence, and their lawlessness is generally controlled.

What happened to the West is that, as Christendom receded, and as the church became marginal in its relevance, and as modern philosophy undermined values and faith, the lowest elements' thinking became that of the overlords. Underground man became the social model for many. The "hippy" and related movements saw the children and youth from the "best" families model themselves after the dregs of society in speech, dress, and behavior.

The Enlightenment had enthroned the Cartesian premise of the sovereignty of the autonomous mind of man, it had brought God and the Bible to the bar of man's reason and had found them wanting. Max Stirner (1805-1856) had held, in *The Ego and His Own*, that since there was no God, there could be no moral law. He despised the atheists who were closet Christians because they refused to practice incest within the family. Morality, monogamy, restrictions

of any kind, he held to be disguised forms of Christianity. Not surprisingly, in the 20th century, the Marquis de Sade has been openly hailed as a great thinker and psychologist for his open avowal of, and even practice of, every form of perversion.

As Otto Scott has pointed out, before the French Revolution, it was still the concept, however battered in some areas, of Christendom which prevailed. After that flood-tide of evil, the idea of the West, or the Western World, replaced it. This meant Europe and the Americas. It also meant the white race. Racism has been a major result of the idea of the West. Prior to that, religious differences were basic, but all men were potentially converts to Christ, and the goal was to bring them all in.

With World War I, this began to decline. Modernism infiltrated the "main-line" churches and captured their pulpits, colleges, and seminaries. Christianity was seen in white and Western terms, and it was damned for this by the world at large as well as by churchmen.

A Brave New World

The West, having abandoned Christ and Christendom, has dreamed great dreams of a "brave new world" and of an ideal "new world order." For some centuries, the knowledge and development of tools has been underway, making possible the first Industrial Revolution of the 1800s, and the second one with computers, etc., after World War II. Given the premises of humanism, the world should very quickly

become a paradise. Everything on the technological side is in order. Instead, however, the world since World War II, and especially since 1960, when President John F. Kennedy presided over the fairytale Camelot which was in reality a moral cesspool, we have had, not heaven on earth, but hell. The schools are moral and educational failures; the world of politics has become war zones in conflicts between rival gangs. The West is dying and does not understand why.

The failure began with Descartes, and with all the men of the Enlightenment, and all who have followed them. Christianity and Christendom see man as a sinner, a fallen and depraved creature needing salvation. Calvinists have held that man is totally depraved, *i.e.*, that every aspect of his being is affected and governed by sin. Man's need therefore is salvation by the atonement of Jesus Christ. Apart from Him, man will replicate his sin in every area of life and thought. As a redeemed man, the Christian has a duty to bring all things into captivity to Christ, every sphere and every activity.

The governing thesis of Western man is that the problem in man and society is not sin but a lack of knowledge. Western thinkers have replaced man created in the image of God with rational man. At the same time, however, they have undermined man's rationality by reducing man to an animal and a product of evolution. Darwin's puzzled question remains: how can we trust our thinking if we are not more than an advanced ape?

Technology thus has not led to paradise on earth, because man himself cannot live in peace with himself or with anyone else.

Not only is the West dying, but in the process it is denying its own heritage. In universities, required Western Civilization courses are now damned as Eurocentric and hence evil.

The Will to Death

The West has collapsed internally, and this is a forerunner of external collapse. Richard Sennett has pointed out that, whatever men may doubt, "Belief remains a fundamental social condition, nor is the will to believe erased, even as mankind loses a belief in gods." Belief has been transferred from the supernatural to "the immediate life of man himself, and his experience as a definition of all that he can believe in." As man has "demystified" the gods, he has mystified himself.¹

Alexis de Tocqueville foresaw this withdrawal of public man into himself, a retreat from a common culture into an anarchistic individualism. The result is narcissism. It has taken over the West, and Protestantism also. "Nothing is real if I cannot feel it, but I can feel nothing."² Man as his own god defines his own reality, and he reduces the world into his own mind or feelings. Civility then begins to wane and disappear, because civility is a recognition of social obligations, a realization that there is more to the world than our own feelings

and annoyances.

To turn on one's television set is to witness mindless and senseless plots, people determined to supplant God's reality with their evil imagination, and a determination to waste life on trifles. Of course, the insanity of modern politics is good evidence also. The old proverb is true: "Whom God would destroy, He first makes mad."

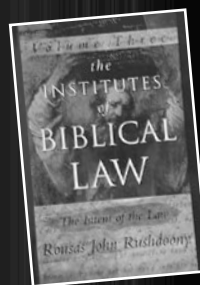
The West is declining because it has lost the will to live: it is eaten up with self-hatred, and it has a will to death. **CR**

(Abridged from *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on the Decline and Fall of the West and the Return of Christendom*, No. 2, Vol. XIII, 1994, pp. 61-73)

1. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, [1974] 1976), p. 151.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 335.

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The Future of Our Culture and the Future of the Kingdom

Western civilization has, since the 17th century Enlightenment, shifted its philosophical base from Christianity to the rationalism of autonomous man. The evidence of this shift has become increasingly apparent in the last half century. Also apparent, however, has been the decline of cohesion in the West, of any sense of purpose or direction in society. The greatest unifying factor of post-Enlightenment mankind has been its repudiation of all things Christian.

Every such victory over Christianity brings Western culture closer to its own collapse, for the West has departed from its Christian past to the point of cultural poverty. The accomplishments of post-Enlightenment man's rebellion against Christ and Christendom are a succession of horrors. Once promoted by philosophers and poets, it has, since the days of Robespierre, increasingly progressed by means of revolution, war, and statist action.

Many times my father noted in these pages that the post-Enlightenment West is a dying order, and that ours is a time of decay and collapse that will bring out the worst in evil man. But it is also a time of opportunity and an exciting time in which to live.

Kingdom Advancement in the Early church

Advancing the kingdom of God was a much more daunting task to the early church than it is today. The early church faced an entrenched political empire, a pagan culture, and the task of redirect-

ing its Jewish core from the errors they brought into the faith. Rather than defining themselves in terms of the narrow confines proposed by the Roman government and culture or emerging Judaism, Christianity began building in terms of a paradigm seemingly too large for its small numbers. Christianity saw the world in terms of the reality of the incarnate God, ascended into heaven and now seated on His throne. As Christians address the 21st century, we need to again see our calling to build on Jesus Christ as the foundation (1 Pet. 2: 5-8). Christ proclaimed that His gospel was of a kingdom to be proclaimed to all the world (Mt. 24:14). The church thus did not seek to conquer or reform Roman culture. It sought to build the kingdom of God and His Christ on a more sure foundation and call men to it. It is time for Christians to again think in terms of building the kingdom of God.

Paul told the church at Philippi (Phil. 2:9-11) that God had exalted Jesus Christ and given him a name above all names, to which every knee should bow and every tongue should confess. We do not have to approach the world of sin and death with hat in hand. We are ambassadors of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When Paul told believers to pray for kings (1 Tim. 2:1-2), he spoke of the Roman emperors, men who claimed to be gods. For Christians to pray for such men was a recognition that ordinary saints were, in fact, equal to or higher than these kings and that their prayers were to a higher authority.

The early church put God's law

first, not primarily to confront the state, but as its ultimate authority. The apostolic epistles are filled with exhortations that served as lawful commands in the name of the King to the church, both then and now. The authority ascribed to the apostles and the elevation of their writings to canonical status very early clearly shows that their readers saw the faith as more than a moral direction. It was a law of life and an entrance into a communion and community that had law and oversight.

The church avoided challenging Rome, though it did not hesitate to disobey when obedience would have violated duty or loyalty to the kingdom of God. Christians rather exercised governing powers in various areas, avoiding state control for self-government. They rescued infants abandoned to death (the accepted "abortion" practice in the empire) and adopted them as covenant children. They formed networks for works of charity (Paul mentions such collections on his behalf and for needy believers in Jerusalem several times in his letters). Christians settled grievances, so that even unbelievers came to prefer their justice to Roman courts. As Christians moved into Europe, they founded hospitals, schools, and centers of commerce. This model caught on and merchants and tradesmen established their own codes of law.

Christians broke the back of the ancient model of unified government, formally rejecting the religious premise of this idea at the Council of Chalcedon, where Christ alone was recognized

as the only Mediator between God and man. There have been repeated attempts to recreate the pagan model of unity, but our Christian history allows us easily to recognize the evil goals of men like Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Mao Tse Tung, Lenin, and Stalin. The ancient world's unity came by putting absolute religious and political power together in the state. No opposition was possible. Today, by eliminating Christianity from public life, the state is again trying to be the *de facto* definer of morality. Even the nominal acknowledgement of God in the Pledge of Allegiance or the memory of the Ten Commandments are abominations to this humanistic statist mentality.

Kingdom Advancement Today

Civilizations dedicated to a particular religion can have direction and definition, and thus often have a staying power. But they may not necessarily have progress, as witness Islamic and Hindu cultures. The West is in crisis precisely because it is based on a philosophy that cannot give it positive direction or growth. As the West abandoned Christianity, it shifted to humanistic rationalism. Though consistently hostile to Christianity and its divine supernaturalism, Western thought since the Enlightenment has splintered into many directions. Human autonomy makes every man his own god (Gen. 3:5) and is a road map to anarchy. The reaction to anarchy is always toward statism, and both revolutionaries and reactionaries have, since the Enlightenment, increasingly resorted to force to impose their rule of "reason." Violence or coercion is thus a recurring element of the modern world.

The kingdom of God (or heaven, or Jesus Christ) will move forward despite the mess men make of their cultures. The kingdom of God may be defined as wherever God reigns. The kingdom

of God must begin in the hearts and minds of believers, but its dominion must be extended to families, workplaces, churches, and associations. The kingdom of God must begin with the regeneration of the individual, but its end must not be limited to the individual or our limited range of vision. It is the narrowing of our concept of the kingdom of God and its limitation to heaven and the millennium that has crippled the modern church's ability to address the needs of our culture. The modern church must address its failures over the past few generations, for "judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17).

The First Step Forward

To extend the kingdom of God, its citizens must first acknowledge that they are the beneficiaries of Christ's salvation and the children of the King of Kings, that they obey His law because it is His law and live and act in terms of a justice that is based on the righteousness of that law. While the wicked frame mischief by laws (Ps. 94:20), the citizens of God's kingdom must live in terms of and direct others to God's standard. As the gospel of grace is the power of God unto salvation, the law of God is His standard for our lives as new creatures in Christ.

The corruption of the Renaissance revealed the poverty of its moral offering and sowed the seeds of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The fruits of the 17th century Enlightenment, first apparent in the executions of the French Revolution, now seem to have a chokehold on the West. Ultimately, rationalism leads to irrationalism and autonomy to anarchy. Autonomous man must defy all law and ethics, if for no other reason than to prove himself autonomous. Self-destructive lifestyles and a suicidal culture result.

Political or judicial recourse may be necessary, at times, to help stem the

destructive influence of such a culture, and those who fight such battles are to be commended for fending off the consequences of a collapsing order. But the church must build on a better foundation, as did the early church. Thankfully, in the areas of creation science and education, the church has taken this major step toward advancing the kingdom in spite of an opposing culture.

The Creationist Warriors

When most churches had turned their backs on the Genesis account of creation, a few courageous scientists stepped forward not only to defend the Biblical account as literal history, but to rethink the naturalistic assumptions of modern science. A generation later, such men are still ridiculed, but by starting over on a sure foundation, they have built up, in a short time, an impressive body of data and research. They have also attracted a large following of believers, emboldened and encouraged by their stand. Creationist scientists and organizations abound, all outside the closed halls of naturalist academia. The kingdom of God has been advanced in the area of science because of the stand of faithful men against post-Enlightenment naturalism. The progress in real science and real understanding was only possible because Christians were willing to step outside the lines of respectability that their artificial culture had drawn around itself and to build on the law-word of God and His Christ.

The Educational Warriors

Similarly, it was the courageous efforts of a few educational pioneers who chose to exit the government school system in order to produce something better that has created the modern Christian education phenomenon. The Christian school movement then gave rise to the homeschool movement. Together these bold initiatives have bolstered countless families, a benefit that

has been compounded now to multiple generations and has spread outward to support churches and Christian endeavors. The kingdom of God and His Christ has been extended in education not by those who sought accommodation in the government schools, but by those who rethought education in terms of their faith and built anew on the foundation that is Jesus Christ.

In both science and education the kingdom of God has advanced. The kingdom has advanced because these endeavors praise God and His law-word. And science and education have advanced. The irrationality of Darwinism has been exposed and literacy and character have been cultivated. In

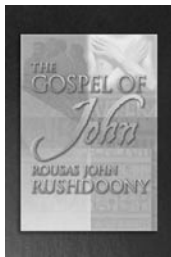
these two areas alone, Christians are advancing their culture. Now they do so as pioneers, but such bold action has developed into a critical mass.

Marching into Our Glorious Future

The advances made in creation science and Christian education must be emulated in other areas. Even our churches, in some cases, must be reclaimed. Salvation is the starting point of the Christian message, not its end. The church must call redeemed men, women, and children to an understanding that they have been restored to God so that they might serve Him with joy and gladness.

The decline of the West is a consequence of rebellion against Christianity. Its decline and death will bring dire consequences, to be sure. The Christian must not place his hope in the delicate balancing act of such a failing culture. Rather, he must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6: 33) and call others to do the same. In this there is a glorious future. In this we must invest our energies. The future of man's rebellion against and independence of God is always bleak; the future of the kingdom of God is as bright as His promises. Choose sides. **CR**

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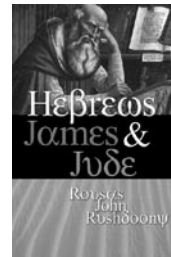
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How Christianity Needs to Position Itself in the New Millennium

Ian Hodge



In the period before Christ, the nation of Israel was unique. Of all the nations of the world, it was handpicked by God, established by His providence rather than the will of the local political rulers, and governed by a set of laws of divine origin. Even though Israel failed to follow those laws, that, at least, was the intention.

The coming of Christ did not change Israel's uniqueness, with one exception. Israel's borders were to be enlarged. She was now to encompass the whole world. She would no longer be called Israel, but the church. And it is the church, as heir to God's promises to Abraham, whose task it is to work until all Christ's enemies have become His footstool.

The Nation Without Borders

In this sense, the church is a nation without borders. Yet in all respects it is a nation that can be defined. The church is clearly established by God, not man. Its laws are (or at least should be) of divine origin. And because of this, it stands head-to-head in competition with every other nation on planet earth.

The early Christians understood this, as did the political rulers of the day. The Christian church, said the Roman rulers, could exist under its power umbrella. "No thanks," said the Christians. "To the contrary, it is Caesar who rules by the grace of God, and for the church to recognize its existence as an act of Roman grace would be to deny the faith." As a result, Christians were tortured and killed as political criminals

because they would not recognize the ultimate authority of the Roman state.

The Church's Status as a Nation

Over the centuries the church carved out a unique position for herself. She refused to be taxed, and today many of our western churches are fighting to stave off the taxing power of the nations. The tax-exempt status of the church is no different than the tax-exempt status of foreign embassies in a host country. The local authorities do not tax them, for to pay a tax would acknowledge that they are under the jurisdiction of the taxing power.

Historically, the church has understood the issue and established her independence from local national authorities, a legacy she may soon lose. The church, the unique nation founded by God, has her own taxing laws. She has her own "Constitution" that sets out the delegated powers and authorities of all mankind, including political leaders. And this makes her offensive to those of every nation whose belief system lies elsewhere.

Christianity Will Fail Until...

If Christianity is to have an impact in the new millennium, it must challenge the reigning beliefs of the nations of the world that there is no law other than what they decree, and that all must bend the knee to their own gods.

Our problem is that, at the moment, Christianity cannot challenge this idolatry because it is a set of beliefs, a way of life. And beliefs, at the end of the day, need to be manifested in the world through action. But many Christians at

the moment are not willing to put into practice these beliefs. Change will only occur when *Christians* practice the belief system of Christianity. One Christian acting in isolation will not make an impact until others join him.

What Christians Need

For Christians to act with coordinated effort will require not just good ideas, but excellent leadership. Leaders must harness the combined power of individual Christians and coordinate efforts to bring Christian ideals to the fore. Historically, this leadership has come from the institutional church, for it was the church and its leadership that stood against the powers of kings and earthly authorities and said to them, "Thus far and no further." People could take refuge from the national authorities, not only mentally with the ideas of Christianity, but physically behind the closed doors of the local church.

If the church is to have an impact in the new millennium, she must first of all regain her status as God's unique earthly kingdom, the new Israel. Those who join this "nation" must realize that they have become treasonous to the spirit of the nation in which they live, because they no longer recognize the supreme authority of the political order. That position belongs to God alone.

But the real challenge is to those who become leaders in God's new kingdom, for it is their task not only to lead His people and to build them up in the faith, but also to protect and care for them.

Citizen Warriors


Our bishops, elders, and deacons do not have a good track record at keeping at bay the wolves of the political order and its desire to rule everything in the place of God. A legacy of the Reformation has been the increase in power and authority of the nation-state. But today, Christians concentrate their efforts on personal salvation, designed to make people feel good about themselves rather than bring them into a kingdom at war with the kings of this earth.

The old battle hymns of the church proclaimed well the need for active spiritual warfare. But *Onward, Christian Soldiers!* has given way to *Oh, How I*

love Jesus. The church, largely feminized by the lack of men in attendance and its sentimental belief systems, needs to recapture a masculine theology that will re-establish a dominion-seeking Christianity. When the soldiers of the cross again stand up under competent and effective leadership we might see the church gaining instead of losing.

And we have several centuries of losses to overcome. These losses have devastated the church and her influence. And it will take a very great miracle to bring about these changes. Christianity, however, is the religion of true miracles, and there are signs of a new stirring within Christian churches.

It will take a new style of leadership to battle against all powers and principalities that set themselves up against King Jesus and His legitimate rule of the nations. That new leadership must show individual members how to live faithfully, must protect their flocks, and must protect the God-given right of the church. This is how the West was won in the past. And the West has been lost to the extent that the church has failed to maintain her opposition to all forms of idolatry and false religion.

To regain the West it will be necessary to re-establish the church. This should be our goal in the new millennium, and we must pray that God will give us success in our endeavours for Him. 



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East and West

Greg Uttinger



Several years ago, while teaching my systematics class, I explained a point of difference between the Eastern and Western

churches. Something caused me to stop and ask, "You do know what I mean by Eastern?" A young man answered carefully: "You mean, like, South Carolina?" The boundary between East and West is a matter of perspective, it seems.

The ancient Greeks drew the boundary at the Bosphorus. For them, the Trojan War was the first major conflict between East and West. The Greek historians portrayed Persia as an example of degenerate Oriental despotism. Humanist writers ever since have followed suit. Actually, the Medes and Persians were descended from Japheth, who inherited Western Europe, and the Bible shows its early kings and their treatment of subject nations in a remarkably good light.

The Myth and Image of "The West"

That the Greeks should think of themselves in terms of compass points is perhaps odd. But the West occupied a special place in Greek literature and religion. The Garden of the Hesperides and the Elysian Fields lay in the Far West. Plato set Atlantis there as well, and that may have done more to perpetuate that particular myth than all of Plato's actual description. One modern writer equates the Greek Underworld with the geographical West in an ingenious, if dubious, fashion: the curvature of the Earth actually places the West underneath the

world the Greeks knew. In other words, the Greeks were in touch with mineral-rich America.

There is a more likely reason, however, that the Greeks were enchanted with the West and connected it with bliss. The original Paradise *was* in the West. At least one could only enter it by going west. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden through its one gate, they went east (Gen. 3:24). When Cain was banished from God's presence, he went still further into the East (Gen. 4:16).

This geography remains significant throughout the Old Testament. Worshipers entered the Tabernacle and Temple by going west through a single gate. That is, their approach to worship pictured man's return to Paradise. Of course, the Promised Land was utmost West since only the sea lay beyond it. The children of Israel entered Canaan by journeying westward across the Jordan River. The exiles returned from the East, and Ezekiel saw the glory of God enter the visionary temple by the East Gate (Ezk. 43:1-5). As late as the gospel of Matthew, the wise men come from the East. Matthew could have named their country of origin had he wished, but the Biblical themes of East and West carried more import.

The prophecies of Daniel forecast a westward movement of empire, as God would hand the care of His people from one kingdom to another (Dan. 2:7). Babylon gave way to Medo-Persia, a Japhetic people, whose conquests reached to the Aegean. Persia fell to the armies of Greece, which lay in Europe. The Greek states fell to Rome, which lay still

farther west. If we callously ignore Byzantium and Russia, it is easy enough to chart a course of empire that continued westward into Medieval and modern times. Thus, Bishop Berkeley wrote:

Westward the course of empire
takes its way;
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama
with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Here America takes the place of Messiah's kingdom as the end and glory of history. Much of the millennial thinking of the 18th and 19th centuries likewise looked westward.

It is no accident, then, that Tolkien set his Atlantis, which was Númenor, and the Undying Lands in the Far West. He was responding to more than the political boundaries of his day or a sentimentality that had to connect Hobbits with England. As a classicist, he knew that the West meant nobility, freedom, and vitality. The East was slavery and darkness.

Drawing the Boundaries Again

The words West and East are heavy with connotation, then; definition is a bit more difficult. Defining words and drawing cultural boundaries is, after all, a religious enterprise.

Secularists, for instance, have begun their definition of the West with ancient Greece, seeing in it the birthplace of their own secular religion. But the philosophy of ancient Greece bears some striking resemblances to Hinduism, right down to the transmigration of souls advocated by Pythagoras. Moreover, Greek philosophy idolized

the state, the *polis*, and made man's connection to the state the definition of his humanity: "Man is an animal who lives in a *polis*," Aristotle wrote. Alexander's attempt to build a cosmopolitan state (*kosmos*-embracing *polis*) should be an adequate testimony to the Greek fondness for statism. Athens' flirtation with an elitist and envy-bound democracy hardly counts as a vote for liberty.

We would do no better to begin with Rome or pre-Christian Britain. The truth is that ancient East and West were alike pagan, and that nobility, freedom, and vitality, when they blossomed in the ancient world at all, were generally historical "accidents"; that is, they were the fruits of common grace or a spill-over from God's blessings on Israel. It is Christianity that brought truth and life to the ancient world, and the best of what we call Western Civilization is the fruit of the gospel. Creedal, trinitarian Christianity reshaped Europe and planted there the seeds of political decentralization, personal liberty, technological development, and historical optimism. We should not hesitate to confess that the true West is, or was, Christendom. We will map out the boundaries between West and East, not with lines of longitude, but with questions about God.

Farthest East

For the Far East, God is the universe; that is, there is no personal God. All is one. This is pantheism or philosophical monism. Having no personal God, the Far East has no revelation from God. The universe is silent. Because all is one, material diversity is an illusion; history is cyclical; truth is irrational. Love and cruelty are equally valid. Man's inclination to make rational and moral distinctions rises from his failure to understand the nature of reality properly. The fruit of such monism is cultural stagnation and political totalitarianism.

Nearer East

The Near East is religiously and politically unitarian: the goal of all culture and social order is submission to the will of Allah (*Islam*). Islam suffers from all the philosophical and practical limitations of unitarianism. Rushdoony noted:

Since plurality has no ultimate reality in Mohammedan thought, the freedom of the many is an academic question; the one will of Allah governs all reality. The tendency of Mohammedan thought, when not arrested by statist action, to run into mysticism is an obvious and natural one.... Since the one alone has ultimacy, the one alone has freedom.

The Muslim emphasis on submission is useful in driving armies and erecting dictatorships; it is less useful in generating personal initiative, creativity, and responsibility. When Islam is not busy devouring the fruits of other cultures by military conquest, it tends to be culturally barren and stagnant.

Eastern Christendom

There is another East. It began in Byzantium and flourished for a thousand years; it blossomed again in imperial Russia, and is still a potent force in what was once the Soviet Union. We must be careful and charitable here. This East lies well within the borders of Christendom. For the Eastern church is trinitarian, and it confesses the Christ of Scripture. Its departures from Biblical Christianity are numerous, however, and one of these constitutes a clear boundary between Eastern and Western Christendom and points West. In fact, the Eastern and Western churches originally split over this issue.

The West confesses a double procession of the Holy Spirit, a procession from the Father "and the Son" (*filioque* in Latin). The East sees the procession of the Spirit as the act of the Father alone. This seems a minor and obscure

point in theology, but over a thousand years, its effects have been profound. For the West, the Father and Son breathe the Holy Spirit to each other, and the love and will of each coincide in the activity of the Spirit. Western theology leads easily to true communion, coordinate authority, and a harmony of doctrine and life, and of word and Spirit. But for the East, the Father begets the Son and unilaterally breathes forth the Spirit. The Son and Spirit have no immediate relationship to each other, and the Son does not return the Father's love. Eastern theology presents an authoritarian image of communion; it leads to a dichotomy between Spirit and doctrine; and it makes room for a Word-less mysticism. It is, moreover, easily amenable to a top-down system of order and government.

Writing in 1984, correspondent George Bailey traced the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States to the ancient conflict between Byzantium and Rome. He specifically mentioned the *Filioque* dispute. He saw clearly the contrast between the withdrawn spirituality of Russian Orthodoxy and "the dynamic involvement in worldly affairs characteristic of Catholicism and, to an even greater extent, of Protestantism...." The Latin church was active in secular affairs; the Eastern church was withdrawn. However, "The Orthodox church brought with it also the dream of empire, of world domination." Mysticism in the church and imperialism in the state: this is an accurate picture of Russia before and after Lenin. Bailey may have exaggerated the cause and effect, but we may not safely ignore his observations. In defining and rebuilding the West, we must be certain that our trinitarianism is Biblical.

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Christianity in Collapse: Can Christianity Become the Moral Force of Western Civilization Once More?

Curt Lovelace



From the conversion of Constantine (312 A.D.) until the middle of the 20th century, western civilization and Christianity have been viewed as virtually synonymous. However, though commentators disagree on its point in history, Christianity has lost its influence in society.

Christianity Has Lost Its Saltiness

For example, psychohistorian Rudolph Binion writes, “Christianity lost its credibility by and large in the course of the eighteenth century.”¹ In a volume replete with historiographical resources, Binion makes a fine argument for what he calls “Christianity in collapse.” Through extensive literature analysis and polling data, Binion asserts that though western society retains links to historic Christian doctrines, it has shed itself of belief.

In a more recent publication Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey claim, “[T]oday’s culture not only is post-Christian but is also rapidly becoming postmodernist, which means it is resistant not only to Christian truth claims, but to any truth claims.”²

Evidence that Christianity has lost its leadership role and moral influence in western culture can be found without difficulty. We need look no further than the church. Denominational debates seldom focus on doctrine today. Discussion will more likely center on social policy. The ordination of homosexual

clergy and marriage rites for homosexual parishioners have long trumped doctrinal debate as fodder for the annual meeting of most church groups. Mainline churches advocate the availability of abortion services, but few argue against the growing Sunday youth soccer schedule. Sunday school curriculum, where any at all is used, is often infused with the Values Clarification thinking of Sidney Simon.³ This philosophy teaches that there are no right or wrong values. We simply must be clear as to what our individual values are.

Robert Bork, in *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, captures the decline of the influence of Christianity this way:

It is not helpful that the ideas of salvation and damnation, of sin and virtue, which once played major roles in Christian belief, are now almost never heard in the mainline churches. The sermons and homilies are now almost exclusively about love, kindness, and eternal life. That may be regarded, particularly by the sentimental, as an improvement in humaneness, indeed in civility, but it also means an alteration in the teaching of Christianity that makes the religion less powerful as a moral force.⁴

Humanism Is the New Religion of the West

Despite the demise of Christianity as its moral anchor, western civilization is still associated with a religion. That religion is humanism. In a religion that is self-centered, there is no room for a God who asks for repentance or obedience. There is only the drive to

homogenize all experience, to make life easier and more palatable for the masses. R.J. Rushdoony, 40 years ago, warned of the logical conclusions of humanism. He wrote, “In all religious faiths, one of the inevitable requirements of logical thought asserts itself in a demand for the unity of the godhead. Hence, since humanity is god, there can be no division in this godhead, humanity. Mankind must therefore be forced to unite.”⁵ “The goal,” Rushdoony adds, “is not communion but uniformity.” This lemming-like march toward sameness, he asserts, leads to a “pro-one-world” philosophy that pursues pacifism, yet actually requires war, “in that it insists on irreconcilable and contradictory things.”⁶ This crying of “peace, peace” where there is no peace is but one indication that humanism is a flawed replacement for the Christianity of our fathers. Rushdoony insists that Christians must resist this “leveling.” Referring to the concept of a United Nations, the outgrowth of humanism, he writes:

First, it insists on uniting a world and leveling all differences.... Second, it seeks to create a super-state which must increasingly coerce every state, civil government, and person into line with its dream of messianic power. Third, it seeks to arrest history and freeze it into a particular mold in terms of Enlightenment thought. *Inevitably, this faith is anti-Christian, and a conflict with Christianity is requisite to its being.*⁷ [Emphasis added.]

Reasserting Christian Influence

In order for Christianity to reassert its proper place in western (and eastern) culture, it must first reclaim the churches. Orthodox Christian theology indicates, of course, that Christianity will never be “dead.” Certainly, however, it is in need of doctors — spiritual doctors. The condition of the patient has worsened because of the malpractice of the spiritual doctors. The world does not know or understand Christianity because we have not taught it. The leadership of the church needs to extricate itself from the many “isms” and “programs” it is following down the path to humanism and reassert the primacy of Scripture. The very fact that mankind will not allow the Christian memory to die confirms the fact that a spiritual thirst still exists. Seeking some kind of spiritual fulfillment, men and women are casting about trying to find some good news.

An acquaintance with Biblical doctrines is the surest inoculation against runaway humanism. In his plea for preachers who will preach to the heart, Sinclair Ferguson stated, “When there is the exposition of the Scriptures, an enlargement and opening of the preacher’s heart, and the exposing of the hearts of the hearers, then the majesty of the Word of God written will be self-evident and the presence of the Word of God incarnate will stand forth in all His glory.”⁸ When we get the relationship between the Creator and His creation right, we can hardly continue to place man in the position reserved for God.

Avoiding Entangling Alliances

A second step toward the repositioning of Christianity within the society is to take the advice of President George Washington, who warned the fledgling United States to avoid entangling alliances. In recent years conservative Christians have bonded with the Republican

Party. Branding the other party “liberal,” Christian leaders have allowed themselves to be co-opted by the political leaders of their party. Yet, many of the elected officials and political operatives of the Republican Party openly stand for abortion rights, homosexual marriage, and other anti-Christian policies.

Some Christians have simply opted out of politics altogether. This would seem a foolhardy approach, since Christians are called to positively affect the society in which they live. Rather, a careful assessment of candidates, on an individual basis is a more reasonable approach than endorsement of a platform full of humanistic platitudes. Failing to find candidates who are willing to stand for truth and justice as expressed in God’s Word might just require Christians to find better candidates — or run for office themselves.

Neither political party is the party of God. Neither is the Christian party. As attitudes and beliefs ebb and flow, politicians adjust to the shifting sands beneath their feet. If Christians are to retake the moral and political high ground, and reassert Christian morality and practice in this land, they need to be wise in their choices and not go along with the “moderates” in the allegedly conservative party.

Proclaim His Wondrous Deeds

Christianity will not magically become the *ethos* of the land once more. Christians must be willing to work to bring it back to prominence. We are to be the first to model our repentance and obedience to the law of God. We should pray for our land — for our family members, neighbors, and strangers. We are called to work on behalf of the fatherless and widow, and to seek justice. As Colson and Pearcey put it, “We must be men and women who will dare to wrest Christianity free from its fortress mentality, its sanctuary strong-

hold, and establish it once again as the great life system and cultural force that acknowledges the Creator as sovereign over all.”⁹

Christianity has lost the West, not to invasion or military conquest, but to self-centeredness and smugness. We have “claimed to be wise” and “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and animals and reptiles” (Rom. 1:22-23). All is not lost. God will use even the weakest of His creatures for His glory. “For the foolishness of God is wiser than Man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” (1 Cor. 1:25). [CR](#)

Curt Lovelace is a small town pastor and a student of history. He has finally moved to Maine where, when asked if he would like to declare a political affiliation on his voter registration card, he politely declined.

1. Rudolph Binion, *After Christianity* (Durango: Logbridge-Rhodes, 1986), p. 9. No friend of Christianity, Professor Binion offers much food for thought and an absolute goldmine of historiographical resources.
2. Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999), p. 22.
3. *Values Clarification*, written by Sidney B. Simon, Leland W. Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, is available in numerous editions. One reviewer of this book described it this way: “This important guide presents numerous strategies for analyzing values without teaching a particular moral viewpoint. Through more than 75 intriguing and stimulating question-and-answer exercises, this book makes readers aware of their individual feelings, ideas, and beliefs so they can make choices based on their own value systems.”
4. Robert Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* (New York: Regan Books, 1996), p. 293.
5. R.J. Rushdoony, *This Independent Republic* (Vallecito: Ross House Books, 2001), p. 130.
6. *Ibid.*, p.131.

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Whither America?

Tom Rose



History records the rise and fall of many empires. The general story of most empires begins with the rise of a strong and energetic people who achieve wealth and prosperity by militarily overcoming weaker nations. In the process, the ruling elite gradually oppresses and enslaves the lower classes of society. After a period of time, the victors eventually become complacent because of opulent living and a decline in virtue. Finally that empire either collapses from within or is conquered by a stronger nation. This is the story of the ancient empires of Assyria, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome — all of which were ruled by autocratic individuals or regimes. This rise and fall has continued throughout history all over the world. Usually, the fall is preceded by spiritual decline, high levels of taxation, debauchment of the currency, and the rise of homosexuality among the ruling elite. Do we see this same historical process of decline in America today?

In ancient times, the degree of economic freedom which ordinary citizens were able to enjoy, in spite of autocratic rulers, was sometimes higher than today. Why is this so? It certainly wasn't because ancient rulers held ordinary citizens in higher esteem than their modern counterparts do today. No, not at all! For there have been political rulers in every age who have regarded citizens as nothing more than pawns to be moved about the chessboard of life and as "subjects" to be taxed and expended "for the benefit of the State" at the will of the elite.

Any greater economic freedom enjoyed by ordinary people in ancient times was simply because of a difference in the technology of control. Modern technological advances have certainly led to great rises in productivity and thus to a higher standard of living. But the use of high-powered computers today has also made it much easier for rulers to record and minutely keep track of citizens, and thereby to tax and regulate every aspect of their lives. Ancient rulers lacked the dangerous capability of having so much personal information about individual citizens, and so thus they also lacked the fearsome ability to care for citizens from the cradle to the grave, which has become a modern form of idolatry that has turned the state into a "secular god." It is also much easier today for central banks like the Federal Reserve to debauch the currency to rob citizens rather than using the slower and more laborious process of "clipping coins." So, from the aspect of personal economic freedom, there were some advantages to living in ancient times!

God blessed Israel when the people and their leaders walked faithfully in His ways, and He disciplined them when they disobeyed. America has been growing more unfaithful with each new generation, and it is ripe for a fall. In this essay we will consider periodic rises and declines in the people's economic freedom and welfare in Old Testament Israel and compare it to America today. I will state in advance the lesson to be learned: The economic and political welfare of a nation is largely determined by the faithful adherence to Biblical precepts by the people and their leaders (2 Cor. 3:17).

Blessings and Curses

Just before entering the Promised Land, Moses instructed the people:

[I]f thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, . . . [He] will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee (Dt. 28:1-2).

God promised that economic, cultural, and political blessings would result when His people faithfully adhere to His word. But He also promised that curses would come from failure to do so (Dt. 28:2-68).

Later, after God had given the Israelites all the land He promised them and had richly blessed them, Joshua told the Israelites:

[B]ehold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. (Jos. 23:14)

Then the Israelites entered the period of the Judges, a time when God continued to bless the nation richly, but "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Jud. 2:10). Time and time again the Israelites failed to follow God's Word. So God periodically punished them by raising up invaders to oppress them, especially economically and politically. But when they repented, God raised up deliverers to rescue them (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Tola, Jephthah, Samson, and Phinehas). Economic progress continued during the period of the Judges; it was Israel's growing economic wealth that enticed

invaders to rob and oppress the Israelites. The gradual process of enrichment continued through economic development of the land. When the people again fell into spiritual declension because of corrupt leaders, they asked for a king like other nations. God told the prophet Samuel to give them their request, but to warn the people that the king would become tyrannical and abuse his power over them (1 Sam. 8).

Most of the kings who ruled Old Testament Israel were bad kings, except for a few in the southern kingdom of Judah. Even King David, who is noted in Scripture as a good king, ordered faithful Uriah to be murdered in an attempt to hide David's adultery with Bathsheba. King Solomon multiplied horses and wives to himself and heavily taxed the people, who later rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam when he refused to lower taxes. To accomplish the rebellion, God raised up Jeroboam as an intermediate magistrate to free the people from tyranny (1 Kin. 12:24).

My point in bringing out these facts about Old Testament history is to emphasize two crucial truths: First, in a nation's rise and fall, the spiritual faithfulness or rebellion of the leaders and the people is always both the forerunner and cause of what later occurs in the economic, political, and cultural spheres of life. Second, it is not safe for citizens to put trust in civil rulers because they, like all men, are also sinners (Ps. 118:9, 146:3).

America Today

This brings us to America today. It is quite evident that America has been in spiritual decline for many decades, dating back at least to the early 1900s, but really almost a century earlier. And many of our civil rulers have been in the forefront leading the way.

Tax-supported education came upon the scene in the 1830s under the leadership of Horace Mann, who was

radically anti-Christian. Tax-supported education gradually became less Biblical with each succeeding generation until, today, it is openly anti-Christian. Tax-supported education is America's most ubiquitous experiment in outright socialism and is responsible for alienating each upcoming generation from their parents. Tax-supported educators, because they regard children as wards of the state, actively undermine parental control of children.

The Effects of War

Wars always generate results that ordinary citizens fail to foresee. The economic effects of war are always increased deficit spending, monetary inflation, subsequent rises in price levels, and oppressive government controls over individual citizens and business firms.

The War Between the States (1861-1865) served as an historical watershed that began to change our nation from a decentralized republic into an autocratic unitary state with centralized controls over the economy.

The Spanish-American War (1898) started our country down the road to international imperialism, which we see in its full martial array today. Public support for the war was gained by special interests in cooperation with an eagerly cooperative newspaper press.

Our political leaders lied to the American people to involve us in World Wars I and II. The Lusitania did indeed carry arms, contrary to the claims of the Wilson Administration. The U.S.S. Sussex, which Wilson claimed was sunk by German U-boats and which provided the proximate cause of our declaration of war on Germany, was never sunk. And President Franklin D. Roosevelt did indeed conspire with Churchill to induce the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which cost the lives of 2,900 soldiers and sailors. And during WWII, the American OSS (Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of today's CIA) paid Malay-

sian troops in the only currency they would accept, heroin. This developed eventually into the clandestine ferrying of thousands of tons of drugs into our country every year by the CIA to finance their covert activities, with the full knowledge and oversight of our highest-placed political leaders, including the White House. It produced at least two generations of drug addicts beginning in the 1960s and led to the perfidious "War on Drugs" program which has produced the widespread tyranny of "property confiscation" by the federal government under the RICO law.

Every subsequent war and foreign military involvement by the U. S. has been unconstitutional because of the failure of Congress to declare war. And each foreign military engagement that has followed has been based on lies told to the American people (Korea, Vietnam, Kosovo, the First Iraq War, the Afghanistan War, and the Second Iraq War).

Congressman Ron Paul of Texas — a constitutionalist and free-market voice in Congress — had this to say on July 10, 2003 to the U.S. House of Representatives:

Various organizations and publications over the last 30 years have played a significant role in the rise to power of the neoconservatives

It is no secret, . . . how they gained influence and what organizations were used to promote their cause . . . they agitated for their beliefs through publications like *The National Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, *The Public Interest*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary* and *The New York Post*, . . .

The Defense Policy Board, chaired by Richard Perle, played no small role in coordinating the various projects and think tanks, all determined to take us into war against Iraq. It wasn't too long before the dream of empire was brought closer to reality by the election of 2000 with Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld playing key roles in this accomplishment. The plan

to promote an “American Greatness” imperialistic foreign policy was now a distinct possibility. Iraq offered a great opportunity to prove their long-held theories. This opportunity was a consequence of the 9-11 disaster. . . .

. . . Let there be no doubt, those in the neocon camp had been anxious to go to war against Iraq for a decade. They justified the use of force to accomplish their goals, even if it required preemptive war. . . .

Of course, a threat to us had to exist before the people and the Congress would go along with war. The majority of Americans became convinced of this threat, which, in actuality, never really existed. Now we have the ongoing debate over the location of weapons of mass destruction.

Where was the danger?

Was all this killing and spending necessary?

How long will this nation-building and dying go on?

When will we become more concerned about the needs of our own citizens than the problems we sought in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Who knows where we’ll go next – Iran, Syria or North Korea?

It’s of interest to note that some large Christian denominations have joined the neoconservatives in promoting preemptive war, while completely ignoring the Christian doctrine of a Just War. [T]he neocons sought and openly welcomed their support.

Neocons, anxious for the U.S. to use force to realign the boundaries and change regimes in the Middle East, clearly understand the benefit of a galvanizing and emotional event to rally the people to their cause. Without a special event, they realized the difficulty in selling their policy of preemptive war where our own military personnel would be killed. Whether it was the Lusitania, Pearl Harbor, the Gulf of Tonkin or the Maine, all served their purpose in promoting a war that was sought by our leaders.

What Should Christians Do?

What I have just written is already known by a very small number of readers, but it is highly “politically incorrect” to write about such things (John the Baptist was “politically incorrect” in his time!), so it will no doubt be quite shocking to most readers. But let me assure you that every bit of what I have written is absolutely true! For readers who would like to check on my veracity and do some interesting and enlightening reading on their own, I will send them, upon request, sources of information.

What can Christians do to correct the problems mentioned above and to restore our Christian Republic?

1. We can pray that the Lord will give us humility to change our minds when others show us to be wrong and to give us the fortitude to do spiritual battle with the forces of darkness that have been undermining our Republic for so long.
2. We can pray that the Lord, who is able to turn the heart of kings, will change the hearts of our political leaders. Failing that, pray that the Lord will remove them from office and from positions of influence and replace them with His godly people; or raise up intermediary magistrates under whom the people can rally to oppose the growing tyranny in our country.
3. We can pray that the Lord will protect and preserve godly intermediate magistrates like Judge Roy E. Moore and confound those who are attacking them.
4. We can be more observant in discovering the forces of darkness that are working to alienate our children from parents and to make them unknowing captives of secular, humanistic forces:

a) Take our children out of tax-supported school systems.

b) Remove television from our homes, or at least carefully shield children from the growing number of evil programs that promote feminism, homosexuality, humanism, statism, and international imperialism.

c) Develop a careful reading program for our children that will foster their spiritual discernment. Be sure to hold family Bible studies.

5. We can enhance our personal economic security and ability to be a beneficent influence in society by saving money instead of spending. We can invest in gold and silver, which will retain their purchasing power in the face of the inflationary and deflationary monetary policies of the federal government and the Federal Reserve. This will serve to increase the healthful influence of Christian savers in rebuilding the economy after the deflationary periods that inevitably follow credit bubbles.
6. We must not depend on the regular news media for truthful information because all such “news” is carefully designed to obfuscate instead of inform. Rather, we should rely on the internet, short-wave radio, and the few “alternative” publications and newsletters that try to present the truth that is carefully kept from the public (but be discerning). And we should oppose all government efforts to “protect the public” under the guise of “protecting children” from the evil that really is on the internet, because that government line is simply a clever ruse to gain control over all information available on the internet. *Protecting children from the internet is a parental responsibility.*
7. We must encourage pastors and elders to educate and inform their congregations about freedom, like the clerical “black brigade” did for their

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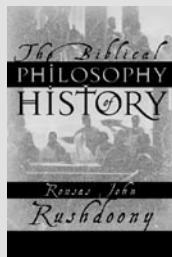
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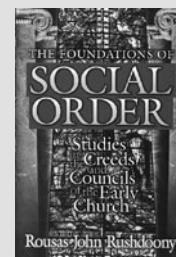


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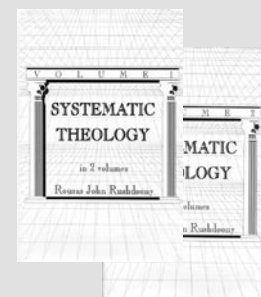


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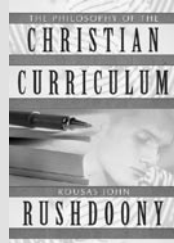
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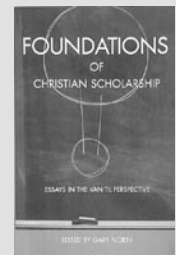


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The Origin of Allah

Samuel L. Blumenfeld



How many times have you heard it said that Christians, Jews, and Muslims all worship the same God, and that spiritually and morally the three religions are all based on the same concept of God? It is true that Ishmael, the father of the Arab nation, was the son of Abram and Hagar, Sarai's maid. But that was before God made His covenant with Abram and changed his name to Abraham. Concerning Hagar and Ishmael, we read in Genesis 16:11-12:

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

And true to God's word, the descendants of Ishmael have plagued the civilized world for centuries with piracy, extortion, murder, terrorism, assassinations, suicide bombers, kidnappers, hijackers, and slavers.

Abram and Ishmael

Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael. But it was thirteen years later, when Abram was 99, that the Lord appeared to him and said:

And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, as for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.... And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in

their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen. 17:2-8)

But God did not include Ishmael in the covenant. We read in Genesis 17:19-21:

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear thee at this set time in the next year.

Muhammad's Anti-Semitism

In other words, God made His covenant with Isaac and not with Ishmael. And that may be why Muhammad so despised the Jews. He had read the Bible, and it is quite clear that Ishmael was not a descendant of covenantal Abraham but of pre-covenantal Abram. Despite this, Muslims claim that Ishmael was a descendant of Abraham. Muslims also reject the idea that God gave Canaan to Abraham's descendants as a gift. That is why they refuse to accept modern Israel's right to exist.

Also, and most important of all, the God who established a covenant with Abraham was also capable of begetting a son, Jesus Christ, whose mission it was on earth not only to save mankind from its sinful nature but to extend the covenant beyond the seed of Abraham to all of mankind. But according to the Koran, God did not have a son,

and there is no salvation through the blood of Christ, for Jesus was merely a prophet.

In addition, Islam forbids Muslims from accepting salvation through Jesus Christ. Recently, in Palestine, a Muslim accepted Jesus Christ and went to a mountainous region to study the Bible and listen to cassette tapes. He was murdered, and his body, cut up into four pieces, was returned to his wife and two children. The family believes that this was meant to warn other Muslims against accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Allah, the Moon-god

Allah is not the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In fact, Allah is a version of the Moon-god, a pagan god in Arabia who was worshipped during pre-Islamic times. And that is why the Crescent moon is the symbol of Islam, and the month-long Ramadan fasting begins and ends with the crescent moon.

The evidence of this can be found in the extensive archeological digs in the Middle East over the last 100 years. A temple of the Moon-god was excavated in Ur by Sir Leonard Woolley. The examples of moon worship which he found can now be seen in the British Museum. In the 1950s, a temple to the Moon-god was excavated at Hazer in Palestine. Two idols of the Moon-god were found. Each was a statue of a man seated on a throne with a crescent moon carved on his chest.

Also in the 1950s, archeologists excavated sites at Qataban, Timna, and Marib. Thousands of inscriptions from walls and rocks in Northern Arabia have also been collected. Reliefs and votive bowls used in worship of the "daughters of Allah" have also been discovered. The

three daughters, al-Lat, al-Uzza, and Manat, are sometimes depicted together with Allah the Moon-god represented by a crescent moon above them. The archeological evidence demonstrates that the dominant religion of Arabia was the cult of the Moon-god.

The oldest name of the Moon-God was Sin, of Sumerian origin. Hence, Sinai, or the wilderness of Sin. While the Arabs worshipped 360 gods at the Kabah in Mecca, the Mood-god was the chief deity. The Moon-god was also called Il or Ilah, which eventually became Allah.

Muhammad's Monotheism

Muhammad was raised in the religion of the Moon-god Allah. But he went one step further than his fellow pagan Arabs. While they believed that Allah, the Moon-god, was the greatest of all gods and the supreme deity of them all, Muhammad decided that Allah was not only the greatest god but the only god. Thus, he added the trappings of monotheism to his concept of the Moon-god. In other words, Allah is not Jehovah.

And this becomes obvious when one hears of the murderous rantings of Imams in the mosques preaching genocide against the Jews, encouraging children to become suicide bombers, promoting jihad against the infidels.

The followers of Jesus Christ largely conquered the western world by offering salvation, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life after death. They conquered by the Word of God, by the gospel, by the love of Jesus Christ. Islam conquers by the sword, by enslavement, brutality, and tyranny. A non-Muslim can only live in a Muslim country by accepting an inferior status.

Antithesis

While love and life are dominant themes in Christianity and Judaism, ha-

tried and death are the dominant themes in modern Islam. The religions of the Bible and Islam are clearly opposite each other. Islam's pagan origin has made it a religion of Satan. It is not derived from the God on high who spoke to Moses. It is pagan in concept, pagan in practice, and pagan in results. That is why no Muslim nation has ever experienced or achieved the freedom and general prosperity that are found in nations based on Christianity.

Communism produced poverty and murder. Islam does the same. Millions of Muslims have been led to believe that theirs is the true religion. Which only proves that millions of human beings can be led down the path of misery and submission, enslaved by a religion of superstition, violence, and ignorance. All one has to do is look at a Muslim mob shouting and screaming, ranting and raving, to know that Muslims are driven by appeals to their emotions and not their minds.

It is only because they sit on an ocean of oil and have more money than they know what to do with that they have become a mortal danger to us. This is what happens when a religion of death and hatred has the financial means to spread its murderous philosophy across the globe. Their wealth has not provided philanthropy, but terror.

But there is an even more cogent reason why the Koran cannot be considered a furtherance of Biblical monotheism. For we are told in Revelation 22: 18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. CR

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.

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Conclusion

The East stresses the unity of God. But monism and unitarian theology lead to mysticism, imperialism, and cultural stagnation. The One swallows up the Many. Given enough time, Eastern Orthodoxy's defective understanding of the Trinity bears similar fruit. If we do not maintain the full equality of the Father and the Son, we fall back towards unitarianism and all that that involves.

Western civilization is the product of Western Christianity, of a thoroughly trinitarian faith. Individual freedom, personal responsibility and initiative, and a commitment to earthly dominion rest upon true diversity in the one true God. As the West departs from its trinitarian moorings, it will cease to be the West. For the West is not a geographical designation. Nazi Germany was farther East than, say, the Byzantine Empire. And Berkeley in the 60s was probably much farther East than South Korea is today. In truth, the line between East and West runs through every human heart. The issues are religious and creedal, and any attempts to shore up or rebuild the West had better reckon with these boundaries. CR

Greg Uttinger teaches theology, history, and literature at Cornerstone Christian School in Roseville, California. He lives nearby in Sacramento County with his wife, Kate, and their three children.

The Household of Faith: church Histories and Covenant Evangelism

Roger Schultz, Ph.D.



Some five years ago as I visited my childhood home church in north-central Minnesota, a retired pastor stood up during the evening testimonial time. “I’d like to sing a little song my mother used to sing to me,” he said, proceeding to sing a spiritual lullaby in Swedish. It seemed pretty corny, until I looked around and saw tears glistening in the eyes of elderly members of the congregation. Rev. Bernstrom had reminded them of their roots.

Temple Baptist church in Brainerd, Minnesota, is a Swedish Baptist church. The names I remember from my youth were mostly Swedish — Bloomstrom, Olson, Johnson, Norr, Torkelquist — and the older folks spoke with a pleasant Scandinavian lilt. The first time my German grandfather visited the church in 1926 for a special service, he was surprised when the evangelist preached in Swedish (but he felt too embarrassed to leave).¹ My favorite youth club speaker was Myre Skoog, a Norwegian immigrant who told fascinating boyhood stories of fishing way out on the ocean and climbing the mountains in the old country to go skiing.² For better or worse, the church had its roots in the pietistic, free-church movement of Scandinavia.

We all have church roots and connections, and they help shape us. It was at my home church that I learned stories about the Bible, heard the Gospel preached, and framed basic evangelical

convictions. Obviously, no church is perfect. (“And if you ever find a perfect church,” my grandmother used to tell me, “leave it right away... so you don’t ruin it!”) No family is perfect, either, but we love our families and are interested in their histories, because they tell us about our past and reveal what makes us tick.

Preserving Our Spiritual Heritage

The Bible reminds us of the value of our spiritual roots. Christians are charged with remembering and emulating their worthy leaders: “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and consider the result of their conduct, imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7). Paul urges Timothy to continue in the doctrines of the faith, “knowing from whom you have learned them” (2 Tim. 3:16). Histories of the church and faithful leaders, then, can be God-ordained ways of rooting us in the covenant community and securing us in the faith.

Christians can do much to preserve their spiritual heritage by researching and writing church histories. Doing history will automatically teach lessons about theology and history. Doing history is a good way of serving the local congregation, and it will make you feel more connected and involved. Doing church history is also a wonderful homeschool project that parents and children can work on together.

It is easy to start with oral interviews. Visit with the pastor and older members to learn about the church’s

past. Memories may not be perfect, and you may have to check perceptions and confirm facts. Interviews are also an excellent way of getting acquainted with people who might ordinarily be outside of your circle in church. People love to share their experiences and tell stories, and collecting oral histories will be enjoyable for you and your children.

Have a variety of questions ahead of time. When did the church start? Who were the pastors? When — and why — were the sanctuary and other buildings constructed? (I recall one frail woman in her nineties telling me with vivid detail and great emotion how the beautiful family church across the road burned down in the 1920s.) What were the biggest events in a church’s past?

Church Histories

Three years ago, while interested in Billy Sunday’s ministry, I was fascinated to learn that my next-door neighbor had gone forward at a Sunday crusade. N.A. Taggart was just a boy in 1917 when Sunday came to Chattanooga. “Tag” remembered the long streetcar rides with his parents to the revival; he liked the preaching (Sunday was “some preacher”) and went forward to shake Sunday’s hand; but he especially liked the music of the revival (he’d never heard anything like it since). I knew a fair bit about Billy Sunday, and had formed different ideas about the wildly popular and flamboyant Presbyterian revivalist. But nothing caught my attention like my neighbor’s remembrance.

Printed material, if available, will be helpful. Older churches often have anniversary collections or histories. It may be possible to use records of sessions and presbyteries, although the material may be cumbersome for amateur historians and access may be restricted because of the sensitivity of the material. I have found some excellent church-related materials in public libraries, county historical societies, university archives, and special collections. The Washington County Historical Society in Abingdon, Virginia, for instance, has a wealth of material on early churches in southwest Virginia. For those living near Asheville, North Carolina, the Montreat Historical Foundation is a phenomenal resource for Presbyterian history. Even newspaper microfilm can be a rich source. Newspapers commonly gave extensive coverage to city-wide revival crusades in the early 20th century. (I have followed the progress of Billy Sunday's Bristol crusade in 1920, for instance, simply by reading the day-to-day coverage of the paper.) As with most kinds of research, the biggest chore is trying to find out where the material is.

Deal with questions of substance in addition to the simple chronological or factual elements. One religious historian argues that you can understand churches by asking questions about the "4 Cs": Creed, Code, Cultus and Community. "Creed" refers to the doctrine or beliefs of a church. All churches have a creed or some integrating principle of belief. It may be a formal statement of doctrine (such as the Westminster Standards), or some vague religious commitments (e.g., "think highly of Jesus and be nice to each other"). The trick, of course, is to find out what a church really believes. "Code" refers to behavioral and ethical requirements. Churches used to endorse the Golden Rule and the 10 Commandments, for instance, although many today are squeamish about God's

law. Some have proscriptions against alcohol or tobacco or movies. The basic question is: "How does the church expect you to live?" (Or, how does the church think that God wants you to live?) "Cultus" refers to special religious observances or sacraments. "Community" refers to the way churches establish an identity or draw the circle of membership or fellowship. According to the church's teaching (either explicit or implicit), who are the "good guys" and who are the "bad guys"?

Ask questions to "place" a congregation. What issues really matter to my church? What seminaries do the pastors come from? What theological or devotional books are recommended? What missions does it support? Who are the church's heroes?

For years I have been a member of Westminster Presbyterian church (PCA) in Kingsport, Tennessee. The church started in 1973 from a Bible Study led by Joe Morecraft. Special speakers over the past dozen years have included Morecraft, R.J. Rushdoony, Greg Bahnsen, Ken Gentry, Steve Schlissel, and Steve Wilkins —

a veritable "who's who" of conservative Presbyterians. The speakers give a sense of the mission and focus of the congregation.

Ask and research "differentiating" questions. How does a church differ from other denominations? More interesting, how does a local church differ from other churches in the same denomination? Presbyterians in Bristol, Virginia, where I used to live, were within driving distance of dozens of Presbyterian churches and eight different Presbyterian communions. Their choices included the PCUSA, PCA, OPC, RPCGA, ARP, EPC, BPC, and even two Independent Presbyterian churches. One could get a good lesson in American church history by studying the origins of these bodies.³ Those

interested in Lutheranism could research the twenty-some distinct Lutheran denominations in America.⁴ It would be interesting to document and categorize the Baptist communions and the issues and personalities that created them.

The Dividends of Research

The research can pay dividends. Doing history is a learning experience, and an opportunity to serve the church. And few things are as fun as finding a historical gem in a microfilmed document or buried in a musty, forgotten file. And those historical gems can be spiritually uplifting.

A few years ago, while doing genealogical research, my daughter stumbled upon material about my wife's great-great grandfather, Joseph Roof (1799-1894). Born in Switzerland, the eight-year old Roof was orphaned when a shipboard cholera epidemic killed his parents during their voyage to America. Roof, who lived to be 95 and had three wives and twelve children, became a Lutheran minister, and preached in both German and English. During his 43 year ministry, according to the local church's historian, he preached 4,082 sermons, administered 1,268 baptisms, solemnized 1,100 marriages, and conducted 1,300 funerals. A veritable lion of the faith, he "stood like a stonewall in defense of pure doctrine and scriptural practices." It was a meaningful trip for my family, then, to visit St. Paul's Evangelical church outside of Asheville, Ohio, where the Rev. Grandpa Roof served for most of his ministry. In describing Roof's tragic migration to America and his life as an orphan, the faithful church historian had simply put it this way: "the covenant-keeping God... was exercising over him a watchful care!" It was a wonderful reminder of our spiritual roots, and it was enough to bring a tear to my eye.

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Privacy, Tolerance, and Social Morality

Rev. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr



Greenville, South Carolina, located in the deep south Bible belt, and home to Bob Jones University, has only fairly recently experienced the homosexual revolution. On April 19, 1996 Greenville's first ever "Gay Rights" march was held — encouraged, directed, and attended by Atlanta and Charlotte gay rights advocates. Even the conservative South and fundamentalist dominated cities are not immune to the moral decline and degradation of our culture. Having experienced the birth of these tragic moral events in my city, I thought it might be of historical and theological interest to the readership of the *Chalcedon Report*.

A firestorm of controversy exploded in Greenville over a May 21, 1996, County Council resolution regarding homosexuality. The controversial resolution reaffirmed "established state laws regarding gay lifestyles" by stating that "lifestyles advocated by the gay community should not be endorsed by government policy makers." As one who supports the resolution and current state laws prohibiting homosexual conduct, I would like to respond to some of the charges, both local and national, being hurled against evangelical Christians and social conservatives. The same sorts of charges have recently been levied against Cobb County, Georgia, Spartanburg, South Carolina, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and other localities that have adopted similar resolutions.

Several prominent Greenville opponents of the resolution called the resolu-

tion "restrained" (Beth Padgett, Deputy Editorial Page Director, *Greenville News*) and a "mild expression" (Tom Inman, Editorial Page Editor, *Greenville News*). Yet at the same time they and several others have vigorously attacked it as "intolerant," an "invasion of privacy," "disrespectful of diversity of opinion," and a "senseless government intrusion." Well over a hundred letters to the editor, dozens of counter resolutions by liberal churches, the Chamber of Commerce, Furman University, and other organizations, and numerous public pronouncements have lashed out at the County Council and its resolution.

Unfortunately, the whole controversy is a study in muddled ethical thinking, contradictory assertions, sloganeering, and outlandish charges. The resolution, though deemed "mild" and "restrained" by the editors of the local paper, has been ridiculed as: "a breach of the separation of church and state," "Nazism," "menacing authority," "an atrocity," "right-wing extremism," "poisonous," "ayatollah-like," "warped," "a return to the dark ages," "frightening," "appalling," "a witch hunt," and more. Consequently, the dispute exposes our inability to think through moral issues. But public socio-political discourse is not the place for such moral confusion.

So for these reasons, even if for no other, the methodology of the moral charges levied against the council statement demand careful analysis. I will focus on the two highly charged issues so prominent in the debate both locally and nationally: privacy and tolerance.

The Right to Privacy

Those who fear this resolution as an "invasion of privacy" by "senseless government intrusion" seem unaware of current legal realities. The resolution did little more than reaffirm current South Carolina state law. What is more, government is already (and necessarily) involved in private moral concerns. The libertine ideal that asserts the primacy and inviolability of privacy rights has never existed in America. We have many laws restricting the private acts of consenting adults, including laws against polygamy, prostitution, incest, illegal drug use, bestiality, consensual sado-masochism, suicide, and more.

We also have anti-privacy laws demanding compulsory education, overriding private family convictions regarding medical treatment (*e.g.*, forced blood transfusions), forbidding cruelty to animals, and so forth. Privacy is only one value among many other competing values. At points of collision, privacy values must give place to other values such as justice, security, and human life.

Private morality cannot be a matter of public indifference. If civil law fails to witness against the abnormality of homosexual conduct, then governmental authority will allow a progressive degeneration of moral values in society. This is detrimental to society's moral stability, government's legal substructure, the dignity of human life, the monogamous foundation of all civilized societies, the ability of parents to raise their children in a stable moral environment, and more. The issues relative to privacy are of gigantic proportions and poorly understood.


The Toleration of Diversity

The call for “tolerance” is a moral demand. That being the case, it must come from within a particular moral system. And the system that best supports and gives meaning to public, universal, invariant moral principles must be recognized and defensible. This, then, requires public moral discourse that cannot preclude the Christian system at the outset, as so many try to do. In fact, on historical grounds this “one nation under God” that asserts “In God we trust” should not disallow Christian moral values. The U. S. Supreme Court has noted in *Zorach v. Clauson* that “we are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being” (343 U.S. 306 [1952]). Neither may the Christian sit idly by, for he must “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11).

In addition, though the term is carelessly tossed about, “toleration” has limits. Those limits must be defined by moral considerations, not loud assertions. The tolerance of all opinions would lead to moral relativism, which would undermine a stable and just society. Tolerance also becomes self-refuting in that it destroys any and all moral objection to any actions, including the call to tolerance. The very existence of an orderly society of men and laws militates against absolute moral toleration. Social rectitude and civil justice, rather than absolute tolerance or maximum personal freedom, should be the goals of the civil order.

The issue of civil legislation discouraging homosexual conduct is not a question of whether values will be imposed, but whose values. All law necessarily involves the imposition of values (we have different values from cannibals, for instance), or else laws are merely suggestions. Law is always an imposition of someone’s religious values, in that all

law is rooted in morality, and morality is based on ideas of ultimacy and value that are intrinsically religious conceptions. Consequently, all law is fundamentally religious in character. Historical evidence of this has been noted by the Supreme Court in *Abington v. Schempp* (374 U.S. 203 [1963]): “Nearly every criminal law on the books can be traced to some religious inspiration.”

Greenville County Council’s resolution is justified as a concern for the moral well-being of the community. This concern is warranted not only by America’s continuing moral decline in general, but by recent national debate seeking to expand homosexual influence by legally endorsing same gender marriages. As Edmund Burke warned long ago: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” 

Dr. Gentry is the author of thirteen books and a contributor to eight others, from publishers such as Zondervan, Baker, Kregel, P & R, and American Vision. He is the editor of a forthcoming title from Ross House Books: *Thine Is the kingdom: A Summary of the Postmillennial Hope*. He has spoken at conferences and on radio across the nation and runs a website for Reformed educational materials: www.kennethgentry.com.

Schultz, Household...continued from page 22

Dr. Schultz is Chairman of the History Department at Liberty University, teaches church History at Christ College, and is the homeschooling father of nine children.

1. Northern Minnesota was settled in the late 19th century and there are strong connections with the old countries. The Finnish Lutheran church a couple blocks away from Temple Baptist maintained services in the mother tongue until the 1970s. My grandparents always referred to local churches by their country of origin: the Norwegian Lutheran church, the German Lutheran church, the Swedish Lutheran church, etc., which was confusing for a youngster who had yet to learn the power of ethnic identity.
2. Myre’s son “Whitey” played professional basketball for the Minneapolis (now L.A.) Lakers, so we boys were always in awe of the Skoog family.
3. One helpful annotated website on American Presbyterianism is www.tateville.com/churches.html.
4. Valparasio University (www.valpo.edu/lutheran/LutheranChurchBodies.html) maintains a website with connections to all the Lutheran bodies. It is interesting to see what prompted the start of these churches. Was it theology, church polity, ethnicity, social issues, or personalities? Or was it some combination of these factors?

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Prayer Warriors:

Virginia Military Institute and the Legacy of Francis H. Smith

R.G. "Rick" Williams, Jr.

"There is no part of my life that I look back upon with more real pleasure than the cadets' prayer meetings."

Major-General Francis H. Smith, LL.D. – First Superintendent of VMI¹

"Whether [the cadets] agree with the prayers or not, they are exposed to these prayers and they, in fact, are encouraged in a heavy-handed fashion in this religious exercise."

Steve Benen, spokesperson for Americans United for the Separation of church and State²



Virginia Military Institute has, since its founding, enjoyed a reputation for being one of the most outstanding military schools in the United States. So well revered was this reputation, especially in Virginia, that it was common knowledge that a graduate of VMI had a ticket to just about any career he desired. I said, "*was*." Though the school's academic standards and military atmosphere are still worthy of admiration, it's not the school it was just ten years ago.

Geldings

Over the past decade, the school has come under increasing fire — and this time it's not from Union soldiers, though I would argue it is from their spiritual heirs. But that's another article. First the feminist groups, along with George Bush the elder's justice department, successfully persuaded the Supreme Court to force VMI to enroll women in 1996. Now that VMI has been neutered and feminized, the ACLU has turned its guns on VMI's "non-sectarian" mealtime prayers. The whole dispute began when two students were "offended" by the blessing over

supper. The prayer mentions God, but not Jesus Christ. VMI lost the challenge before Judge Norman K. Moon of the U. S. District Court, Western District of Virginia, then appealed to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which dutifully refused to hear the case and left the lower court's ruling to stand — we've heard it all before, haven't we? Of course, Virginia's Attorney General Jerry Kilgore promises to fight this all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Frankly, I doubt there's much hope there, but it is Kilgore's duty and my *prayers* (which, I guess, are still legal) are with him. So, in recent years, arguably one of the best schools in the nation has had two of its most prominent and long-standing traditions tossed out like rotten garbage. In with girls, out with God. As C.S. Lewis observed in *The Abolition of Man*: "We castrate and then bid the geldings to be fruitful."

It is indeed a very sad thing to observe a once great culture crumble — one institution at a time. It would almost seem more merciful if it just all happened overnight. Slow death is painful.

The great school that once produced men of the caliber of George

Patton and George Marshall has lost much of its uniqueness. As Bob Munno, 42, a New York businessman and 1981 VMI graduate so appropriately asked, "Why would anybody go there now?"³ Good question. The question is akin to one I hear many Christians asking themselves today — "Why *even* try to save the culture?" Another good question. And we have a good answer — the witness and testimony of Scripture gives us hope, not to mention the commandments of God.

"It is history that teaches us to hope," Robert E. Lee once wrote. The history of the church and the gospel throughout the ages is one of constant struggle: evil vs. good, dark vs. light, Christ vs. Satan. As with much going on in our culture today, it is always instructive to look at history and see how and when certain practices and traditions originated. Knowing history will better equip us to defend and apply our faith to every aspect of our lives. The history of the church and its epic struggle will give us hope. The story of VMI is but a microcosm of this conflict and represents an excellent case study of how Christians have forgotten their heritage.

Our courts, along with most present day historians, are revolutionary in

nature. They are rewriting our history in order to discredit and defame Christianity and the wisdom of our Fathers. It is our duty to combat this with historical truth in order to combat evil and win the hearts of others. Christ embodies truth (Jn. 14:6) and despite what we may think or see, we know the truth will eventually triumph. So what of the spiritual history of VMI? More specifically, what, if any, association has this Spartan military school had with Christianity, and what can we learn from this grossly modernized institution?

Grand Beginnings

Although the mealtime prayer was not officially instituted until the 1950s, VMI's spiritual moorings were well established at its founding. John Thomas Lewis Preston, a brother-in-law and close confidante of Stonewall Jackson, was the primary impetus for the founding of VMI in 1839. It was Preston who named the school and who served as the school's first teacher of languages.⁴ Preston was a prominent attorney and businessman in Lexington. He was also a committed Christian and fellow churchman of Jackson's.⁵ Preston served as the Sunday school superintendent of the Lexington Presbyterian church, and it was Preston who helped Jackson undertake the Confederate General's now famous Sunday school for blacks in 1855. The idea for VMI was born in the heart of a believer. Moreover, VMI's first superintendent, Frances Henney Smith, conducted daily Bible studies in his office and introduced the tradition of handing out Bibles to each graduating cadet; a tradition that continues to this day. (That practice is probably on the ACLU's radar as well.) Smith would often inscribe the following words in these Bibles: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."⁶ Smith was a devout Episcopalian believer and was also instrumental in founding the church where Robert E. Lee served as

vestryman. Smith would serve VMI for fifty years as superintendent, and his influence is still felt today. While it is true that VMI was not founded specifically as a *Christian* school, it is important to remember that Christianity was so much a part of American culture in the 19th century that certain duties and responsibilities regarding Christianity were assumed, especially when it came to the moral conduct of the young:

"There is no part of the duty of the superintendent which weighs so heavily upon his mind and heart," Smith wrote in the 1859 annual report, "as that connected with the control... of the moral conduct of those committed to his charge."⁷ Smith took his duty seriously, instituting the tradition of mandatory (unless excused by parents) church attendance on the Sabbath:

By the regulations of the Virginia Military Institute, it was enjoined that "Duties appropriate for the Sabbath, including attendance on Divine service, which shall be imperative, shall be prescribed by the Superintendent, and each cadet shall be required to conform thereto."⁸

Smith was of the opinion that VMI was an extension of the home and that:

... [T]he school stood in *loco parentis*, and must enjoin all those duties for the Sabbath, which, in a well-regulated Christian home might properly be required by the parent.... Thus the foundation was laid for systematic religious instruction, under the authority and sanction of law; and upon this foundation without varying the slightest particular, the cadets have been trained year by year, and class by class, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.⁹

It is worth noting that U.S. District Court Judge Norman K. Moon, who ruled against VMI, used the word "indoctrination," *i.e.*, "brainwashing," when referring to the simple mealtime prayers. That term is in stark contrast to the word "instruction" used by Smith,

which further exposes our courts' contempt for Christian influences.

In the early 1840s, Smith, along with Major Preston, instituted "Bible recitations" every Sunday, along with organized prayer meetings for the cadets. These meetings were conducted every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, "and sometimes on Sunday" in Smith's office. Smith's dedication to these prayer meetings and the principles of Christian education bore much fruit over the years as Smith indicated: "Great good was done to the young Christian by strengthening the sense of his duty to God. Others were brought into the meeting, and some of these made a profession of religion." There were also at least five "seasons of revival" at VMI. Smith makes particular note of the revival that occurred in 1869, writing that, "... some eighty cadets made a profession of religion." Smith writes further of the fruits of the prayer meetings: "Through the influence of these meetings nearly 250 cadets have been brought into the church, some of whom entered the ministry, and have made useful members of Gospel ministry."¹⁰

Though some of the local staunch Presbyterians opposed Smith's "proselytizing," Smith noted that the meetings were "purely voluntary, and in no respect compulsory." Many local citizens supported the efforts, including Mrs. Robert E. Lee, who sent gospel tracts for distribution among the cadets.¹¹ Parents, too, were appreciative of Smith's efforts as some of Smith's correspondence indicates he kept them informed of their sons' spiritual progress. One letter in particular poignantly illustrates Smith's sincerity in reaching the cadets with the gospel:

A most wonderful work of divine grace is in progress at this time among our young men. Among those under conviction is your son. He has been regularly attending our prayer meetings

of late, and I have an appointment with him...on the momentous question, "what shall I do to be saved?"¹²

Current Cultural Trends

As readers of this journal know, history unerringly shows that Christianity produces a higher caliber institution and culture. Since its founding, VMI has been able to produce the "citizen soldier" committed to "duty, honor, country" because of the rich Christian heritage that God blessed it with. This is the story behind the attack upon VMI. It is an attack upon Christianity, though most involved are not even aware of the shadowy forces at work here (Eph. 6:12). Of course, VMI is, and has always been, a state supported institution and most would argue that is the problem. Since the courts now worship the inviolable (though unknown to our nation's founders) legal creed of "separation of church and state," any fight to establish any "official" Christian influence in a state supported institution of any kind is sadly, but predictably, a lost cause. The courageous Chief Justice Roy Moore of Alabama is just the latest example of how entrenched this ideology has become. Even I was shocked at how quickly "conservative" Christians, commentators, and others who claim to believe in "original intent," sanctimoniously spouted off about the "rule of law" and left Judge Moore twisting in the wind as they ran off to the next Republican fund-raiser.

One of the reasons this sad state of affairs has come about is because of the general naiveté of professing Christians. I dare say that 90% of those reading this piece were not aware of the extent of VMI's Christian heritage. The truth has always been there, but its being distorted, covered up, hidden. I grew up and now live only a half-hour from the VMI campus, so I've had a keen interest in what has happened to the school since the radical left targeted it for "modern-

ization." I've read dozens of editorials and news articles about the court challenge to prayer, many from conservative Christian writers. But I've yet to see one writer mention this aspect of VMI's history and the stalwart Christians that were instrumental in its founding. Is it any wonder we continue to lose these battles? We Christians must know our history. Only by arming ourselves with the truth of the gospel and the truth of our nation's Christian heritage, can we hope to influence the culture in any meaningful way. For it is history that teaches us to hope. **CR**

Rick Williams is a businessman, publisher (www.virginiagentleman.com), freelance writer, and formerly served as a Magistrate for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

1. Francis H. Smith, *History of the Virginia Military Institute* (Lynchburg: J.P. Bell Company, 1912), p. 257.
2. Jason Pierce, "Court Rules No Prayer at Supper for Military Cadets," www.aclj.org, January 25, 2002.
3. Chris Kahn, "VMI Alumni Upset About Prayer Ruling," *Richmond-Times Dispatch*, January, 26, 2002.
4. Henry A. Wise, *Drawing Out the Man - The VMI Story* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 11.
5. Preston also fought with Jackson for the Confederacy.
6. Edwin L. Dooley, "Gilt Buttons and the Collegiate Way," *Virginia Cavalcade*, Summer issue, 1986, 34.
7. Dooley, p. 33.
8. Smith, p. 83.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Smith, p. 256.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
12. VMI Archives: Letter (March 1, 1856) from VMI's Superintendent Francis H. Smith to the mother of Cadet John J. Smith, in which he discusses Cadet Smith's religious awakening.

Rose, *Whither...continued from page 15*

congregations in the pre-Revolutionary War period. We should encourage them to support homeschools and Christian schools.

8. We must discipline our children according to Biblical guidelines. Each new generation is always only one step away from spiritual chaos, which can be offset by careful spiritual instruction in God's law (Ps.119:97-104).

Remember that the Christian life has always been one of intense spiritual warfare against the forces of darkness. But don't despair; God *is* in control! We already have victory through Christ (Eph. 6:10-12; Ps.2)! **CR**

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Tom Rose is retired professor of economics and author of nine books and hundreds of articles dealing with economic and political issues. Rose's latest books are: *Free Enterprise Economics in America* and *God, Gold, and Civil Government*. Phone: 724-748-3726; Website: www.biblicaleconomics.com.

Lovelace, Collapse...continued from page 12

7. *Ibid.*

8. Sinclair Ferguson, "Preaching to the Heart," in *Feed My Sheep* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Ministries, 2002), pp. 196-7.

9. Colson and Percy, p. 36.

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