

Faith for All of Life
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FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

PROCLAIMING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD OVER EVERY AREA OF LIFE AND THOUGHT

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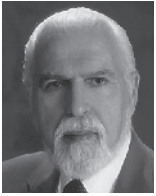
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Christianity and Culture

By R. J. Rushdoony

(Reprinted from *In His Service* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009], 75-80.)



Our Lord commands us in the Sermon on the Mount to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:16). David declares of God,

For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. (Psa. 36:9)

But men seek light elsewhere; rather, they seek to be their own light. Isaiah tells us of God's verdict on all such men:

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow. (Isa. 50:11)

Rather than the light of God, men seek to generate their own light and vision. They are men of darkness, seeking an escape by their own self-exaltation. They dream that their wisdom will give them the necessary light. Calvin felt that God was saying to all such men, You have rejected Me and sought to kindle your own light to escape the darkness. Well, now your life will take its course in your own fire, which will be, not your salvation, but your destruction: "at the place of torment ye shall lie down!"¹ They will create the culture of death.

We have seen that the false definition of culture restricts it to an upper class element interested in the arts. This interest is a non-Christian and therefore a superficial one. In New York,

people read, not books so much as book reviews, to know how to think; they visit the "trendy" art galleries in order to know art as it presently is supposed to be. The "legitimate theater" may be offering garbage, even as the films and television do, but it is "high" art as against the "low-brow" art of the more popular media. In a meaning unintended by Alan Levy in *The Culture Vultures* (1968), these people, whether in New York, London, Paris, or Moscow, are culture vultures.

Culture vultures believe that only the best in art is true culture, and it is to be enjoyed only by the best among men, namely, themselves. The popular definitions of culture are thus elitist as well as anti-Christian. In this sense, culture is seen as the prerogative of an exclusive group of people to the exclusion of those deemed uncultured.

Our Lord, however, sees the necessity of externalizing the new life we have in Him. Because we are regenerated by His saving grace, we must seek to regenerate all men and to work for the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13). We are the people of the Jubilee, and our Lord at Nazareth read the great Jubilee proclamation of Isaiah 61:1ff.:

16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esa-

ias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him

21. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:16-21)

These verses were part of the early church's marching orders. They preached salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They had a ministry of healing, and they soon established hospitals. They preached to the poor as well as the rich; they healed the brokenhearted, ransomed captives, healed the spiritually as well as the physically blind, and they set free the oppressed, those bruised or crushed by oppression.

The early church included many prominent people, lawyers, philosophers, men of state, and so on. But it also included slaves, and the poor. Such a mingling of peoples in an elitist

culture brought them contempt as a slave religion. These despised Christians were creating a Christian culture, one in which all relations, vocations, spheres of activity, and persons were aspects of God's Kingdom and an evidence of a new culture. The Christians were hated because they were effectual and successful.

This hatred is a witness to Christian power. John Dryden in the seventeenth century showed aristocratic disdain for the Puritans as trash, describing them as the "rascal rabble . . . whom kings no title gave, and God no grace."² This same "cultured contempt" is very much with us still.

One index to our loss of cultural power is the fact that a once very important Christian doctrine is now rarely heard of, namely, providence. The Westminster Larger Catechism tells us,

18. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving, and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

It was held also that, because man is created in God's image, man therefore has a duty to be *provident*. For this reason, over the centuries, the provident duties were faithfully preached and practiced: family virtues, thrift, charity, work, honesty, a trustworthy word, and so on. The Puritans especially stressed these things and thereby became powerful. Providence was a favorite doctrine for them, and a name given to ships and to at least one city. Providence, Charity, Faith, Hope, and like names were commonly given to girls.

In the past two hundred years, Providence has been steadily replaced by Revolution. Instead of stressing providence, the culture of Revolution stresses envy and violence. The work ethic has been replaced by the envy ethic. The solution to problems is not God's law faithfully

observed but the violent overthrow of the present order. The doctrine of Providence stresses the ultimate harmony of all interests in the Lord, whereas Revolution insists on the continual conflict of interests. As early as 1659 in England, men were turning from Providence to Revolution. Richard Flecknoe wrote, "all things in this world being in perpetual revolution, tis impossible from the beginning to see the end of all things."³ The believers in God's providence held and hold with Peter, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). Moreover, God sets forth His work in His Word, so that it is possible from the beginning to see the end of all things.

It is God's providence that all manner of men be saved, that all peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations know Christ as Lord and Savior (Rev. 5:9).

This cannot be done if we are poor towards God and His servants. In the eighteenth century, an evil idea gained power which in many circles is still with us. In Scotland, the General Assembly, with lay leaders dominating it, refused to raise ministerial salaries. Their self-righteous and hypocritical argument was this: "A poor church is a pure church." The result was the triumph of secularism.⁴

According to Jeffrey Burton Russell, basic to medieval culture was the fact that "holiness, rather than fame or wealth, was the way to obtain status."⁵ Without narrowing our vision to holiness, but including godly knowledge and dominion, with righteousness or justice, we must say that a Christian culture must manifest all these things in the service of God, and, in the Lord, to men.

The Greek doctrine of justice was plainly stated by Antiphon the Sophist, apparently an Athenian of the latter half of the fifth century B.C. He declared, "Justice, then, is not to transgress that

which is the law of the city in which one is a citizen."⁶ This is clear and obvious humanism. It is the faith of our time, and the culture of our time. Righteousness or justice is the tie that binds and holds a culture together. The growing injustice of humanistic states is leading to fearfulness, fragmentation, and inner decay. We must have a Christian culture, governed by God's law-word, and ever mindful that God holds us accountable for the maintenance of His order. The tests of a culture as God declares them are blunt and earnest:

21. Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

22. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.

23. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;

24. And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. (Ex. 22:21-24)

A Christian culture begins where other cultures do not venture, with the Word of God and His mandate to us for every sphere of life and thought. 🏰

1. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 304-05.

2. Ruth Nevo, *The Dial of Virtue, A Study of Poems on Affairs of State in the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 254.

3. *Ibid.*, 95.

4. G. R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648-1789* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, [1962] 1967), 91.

5. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *A History of Medieval Christianity, Prophecy and Order* (New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 84.

6. Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 147.

Evidence of the Exodus

Miles R. Jones, Ph.D.



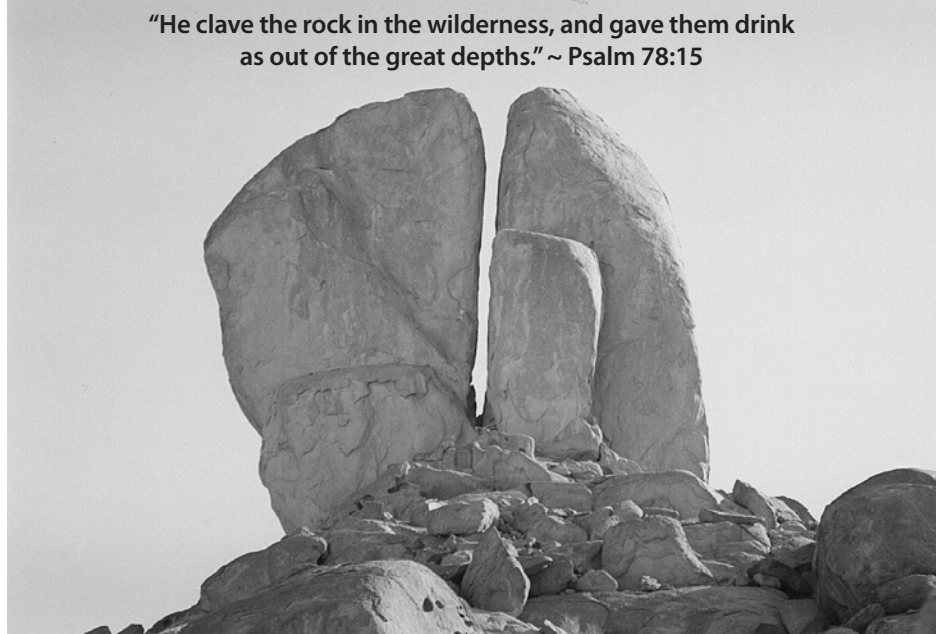
The Exodus narrative is the central event of the Old Testament. It is a complex story which gives rise to many crucial questions.

The primary question for unbelievers, of course, is whether it happened at all.

In the past few decades the field of Biblical archaeology has been secularized to the point that, in the mainstream of expert opinion, the Exodus story is now considered to be legend. Believers would probably be stunned to know the contemporary perspective of Biblical archaeology. Moses, Joshua, Elijah are all the stuff of myth. Perhaps they existed, perhaps not; but little or no archaeological evidence of these persons has surfaced, so their very existence is in question along with the events they inspired.

The miraculous nature of the Exodus narrative and the gap of more than a thousand years between the events of the Exodus and the earliest surviving manuscripts have led many scholars to question various aspects of the story. One of the logical flaws of historical science is the presumption that a lack of evidence equals a lack of an event. The typical statement of scholars that *“there is no physical proof of the events of the Exodus”* convinces many that the Exodus did not happen.

Of those believers who remain engaged in archaeological research, many have become “minimalists” who no longer support events of the Bible before 1000 B.C. as historical fact. In short, the majority of mainstream scholars have decreed a lack of historical



The Split Rock of Horeb, a few miles down a ridgeline from Mount Horeb in the area described as Rephidim. Water erosion is coming from the 60 foot split in the rock: evidence for a “fountain in the wilderness” (Gen 16:7, Ex 17:6).

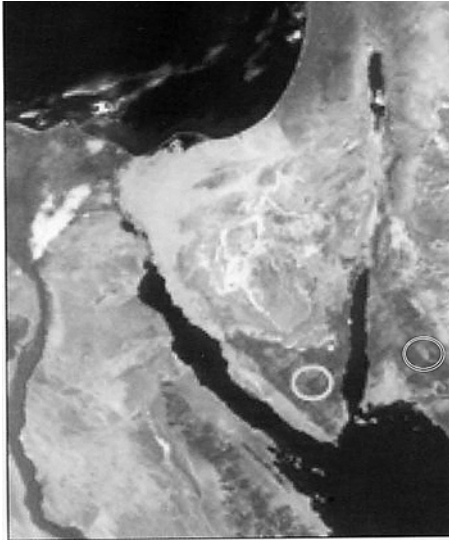
certainty of the Exodus. A consensus has been reached motivated by the increasingly secular perspective of research in the field. The case is closed and no new evidence need be considered.

The result of this consensus is that any researcher who offers evidence of the Exodus is dismissed by Biblical scholars, archaeologists, and seminarians. I was once under consideration for a professorship at a major theological seminary. They asked their Biblical archaeologist’s opinion about the perspective of my book, *The Writing of God*. A major thesis of the book is that the Exodus happened exactly as it is recorded in Scripture. He reported it as a *“fringe viewpoint.”* Needless to say, the post was not offered. Minimalism has become to Biblical research what Darwinism is to biological research.

Merely questioning it can be enough to ruin a professional career and be cast out into the darkness where one’s work will never be published, debated, or even acknowledged.

I seek to refute the mainstream consensus by providing scientific evidence of the truth of the seminal event of the Old Testament. The Exodus and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai was God’s supreme act of intervention on behalf of His chosen people. Genesis was the prelude when Yahweh prophesied the Exodus to Abraham four hundred years before it occurred (Gen. 15:16). All subsequent history of Judaism and Christianity has been shaped by the Exodus and the events at Sinai.

At Sinai, Moses first prophesied the coming of Christ: *“And the LORD said unto me ... I will raise them up a Proph-*



This satellite photo shows the traditional site of Mount Sinai in the Egyptian peninsula (left) and the Midian site in Arabia (right). Photo reprinted from *The Exodus Case* by permission of Lennart Möller.

et from among their brethren, like unto thee [Moses], and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” (Deut. 18:15–22). In turn, Christ staked His authority and credibility on teachings from the Exodus: *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”* (Matt. 5:17–18)

Over time the precepts coming from the Sinai Covenant have formed the foundation of Judeo-Christian religion, morality, human rights, and legal justice. The call from Sinai is being debated today with relevance as vital as the day Moses descended with the tablets containing the Word and the writing of God (Ex. 32:15–16). To dismiss the Exodus is to dismiss the foundation of the moral authority of God, if not His very existence. If the foundation is false then the entire edifice of religion is a house built upon sand. God becomes a myth.

That, in a nutshell, is the present mainstream viewpoint of the academy, that vast body of expert researchers and higher institutions of learning who dictate “truth” to each succeeding generation of students. The purpose of this series of articles is not so much to argue the evidence of the Exodus as to establish that it exists and warrants serious debate, a debate most Biblical scholars are anxious to avoid. Although they hold minimalist views, they don’t like holding them up for examination before their more Biblically-oriented congregants.

Historicity of the Exodus

As believers, we need no proof to know the Exodus is historical fact. Nonetheless, it behooves us to inquire whether physical proof of the Exodus exists.

Evidence gives important insight into scriptural passages that were previously unclear. Physical proof can also serve as a crucial beacon for the unbeliever searching for truth. Finally, scientific evidence arms the believer confronting the secularist claim that the Bible is myth.

During the past several decades, while the field of Biblical archaeology has been sliding into secularism, a flood of new data on the Biblical location of Mount Sinai in Midian, and the physical evidence found there, has been forthcoming. A tipping point has been reached. Even Bible scholars no longer support the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt as the location of the real Mount Sinai. This is mainly due to the clear description in Scripture that Mount Horeb, also known as Mount Sinai and the Mountain of God, is in Midian (Ex. 2:15, Ex. 3:1) in Arabia, “mount Sinai in Arabia” (Gal. 4:25).

Nonetheless, church tradition since Constantine in A.D. 326 has proclaimed Mount Sinai to be in the



Mount Sinai in Midian, called Mount Oreb on old maps of the region before the Saudis changed it to Jabal al-Lawz. “Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, . . . the LORD descended upon it in fire, . . . And came down upon mount Sinai . . . And the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount.” (Ex 19:18-20) Photo reprinted by permission of Jim & Penny Caldwell and the Split Rock Research Foundation.

Egyptian peninsula that has also come to bear the name Sinai. This church tradition has confused not only the location of Mount Sinai but also the location of Midian. Many Bible maps of the ancient Mideast redraw the boundaries of Midian across the Red Sea and into Egypt just enough to include the traditional site of Mount Sinai. This revisionism is absolutely inaccurate. Historically, the Sinai Peninsula has always been a part of Egypt, and Midian, just across the Gulf of Aqaba, has always been a part of Arabia.

The current scholarly viewpoint is that the real Mount Sinai is probably somewhere in Arabia but they don’t know where. Fortunately, significant new research and archaeological evidence coming out in the past few decades have narrowed the feasible locations of Mount Sinai down to one. Although many possible sites of the Mountain of God in Arabia have been investigated over the years, the earliest sources of Jewish philosophers and Christian church fathers indicate Mount Sinai is the tallest mountain in Midian. Allen Kerkeslager¹ was the first con-

temporary historian to analyze the oral tradition of the location of Mount Sinai in Arabia. Bits and pieces of this oral tradition kept leaking out in the writing of Jewish scholars, early Christian theologians, Arab geographers and local Bedouins in the region of Midian in Arabia. Kerkeslager took his information from sources such as the *Septuagint*, *The Book of Jubilees*, Demetrius, Josephus, Philo, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome and Paul. The results of Kerkeslager's research are remarkable:

There is a long Jewish tradition dating back to antiquity that places Mount Horeb in the Midian region of north-west Arabia ... There is evidence of Jewish and early Christian pilgrimage to the Midian site ... There is no Jewish tradition at all locating Mount Horeb in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt... There is no evidence of Jewish pilgrimage to the Sinai Peninsula before 326 AD when Emperor Constantine declared it to be the holy site of Mount Sinai ... Clues gleaned from the oral tradition give us enough information to establish criteria for the location of Mount Sinai ... only one mountain meets all these criteria ... the only possible option in this case is Jebel al-Lawz at 2580 m ... uncontested as the highest mountain in the region of ancient Madyan [Midian]. Jebel al-Lawz also fulfills every other criteria. (Kerkeslager 1998:210–211)

It should be noted that Dr. Lennart Möller² (2008) unearthed ancient maps of the region that still designated Jabal al-Lawz as Mount Horeb, or Oreb, before the name was changed to Islamicize the region. In addition, Dr. Sung Hak Kim³ (2006), a fluent speaker of Arabic and one of only a handful of researchers to ever examine the site, relates that the local Bedouins call the mountain Jabal Horeb or Jabal Musa (Mount Horeb or the mountain of Moses) where, according to their oral tradition which predates



Islam, the tablets containing the Ten Commandments were handed down to Moses.

At Jabal al-Lawz in Midian, an impressive array of evidence of events of the Exodus has been found. The following discoveries support the case that Mount Sinai is Jabal al-Lawz in Arabia:

(1) Alphabetic inscriptions at the site date to the time of the Exodus and their content refers to events described in Exodus 17:8. (2) Footprints are traced there with an alphabetic caption, *“wherever the soles of your feet shall tread shall be your territory”* as in Deut. 11:24 and Josh. 1:3. (3) The split rock (of Horeb, Ex. 17:6) is found at the presumed site of Rephidim near Sinai. (4) An altar to cattle worship (Ex. 32:4, the golden calf) is found at the Midian site. (5) An altar for burnt offerings (to Yahweh, Ex. 24:4) is found at the base of the mountain. (6) Alongside that altar are remains of marble columns (to the 12 tribes of Israel, Ex. 24:4). (7) A cave just below a cleft in the rock at the peak is found there (cave of Elijah, 1 Kings 19:8–9). (8) None of these things are found at the traditional site in Egypt. We will examine the archaeological and inscriptional evidence in more detail in the next article in this series.

The Origin of the Alphabet

My part in documenting the Exodus has been to date and translate the inscriptions found at the Rephidim and Sinai sites in Midian. These inscriptions are brief but telling. They are written in the oldest alphabet of letters (Thamudic) known to historical science. They date to the fifteenth century B.C, the time of the Exodus, according to experts at the Saudi Ministry of Antiquities. Their translation, discussed in the next article in this series, reveals them to be written in ancient Hebrew. Mostly funerary, they nonetheless reflect names and events of the Exodus.

My research into these inscriptions indicates the *“writing of God”* (Ex. 32:16) engraved upon the tablets of Moses was the original alphabet of letters.⁴ As different as they all look today, there has only been one original alphabet from which all others have been derived. As a historical linguist I knew previously that this original alphabet was discovered at the time of the Exodus and in the path of the Exodus. It remained only to establish if the *“writing of God”* mentioned in Exodus could have been that first alphabet of letter symbols, a tremendous advance over the pictographic alphabet and other writing systems in use at the time. The discovery of the most ancient form of alphabetic writing at the Midian site raised the possibility that the origin of the alphabet of letters came from the events at Sinai. The inscriptions themselves will be discussed in more detail in the next installment in this series and are explained and illustrated much more completely in my book, *The Writing of God*, available at writingofgod.com.

Historically, the position that the alphabet originated at Sinai was put forward by Eupolemus, the noteworthy scholar of the second century B.C. Hillel the Third⁵ (first century A.D.),

grandson of the founder of the famous Hillel school in ancient Israel, is also attributed with a similar viewpoint of the origin of the alphabet:

The more I contemplate the mission of Moses, the higher he rises in moral sublimity in my estimation ... The whole world was sunk in the debasement of idolatry. What a noble use did the Almighty make of the recent invention of man's ingenuity, the invention of letters to engrave upon stone his awful testimony against the great, fundamental, and all-polluting sin of the world, the worship of idols: Thou shalt have no other Gods before me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing ... thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. (The Hillel Letters, 1887)

The opinion that the alphabet came from Moses was a widely-held view of medieval theologians. John Owen,⁶ in 1661, after sifting all the ancient literature, stated that *"the letters which God inscribed with His own fingers on the tables of stone were the first of all letters."* Owen also concurred with the statement of Clement of Alexandria⁷ (second century A.D.) that *"the first philosopher [Moses] taught the alphabet to the Jews. The Phoenicians obtained it from the Jews, and the Greeks from the Phoenicians."* In more modern times this was the controversial conclusion of Hubert Grimme,⁸ one of the most renowned Hebrew scholars and historical linguists of all time, who went to the Middle East to study the earliest alphabetic inscriptions. Grimme stated that ancient Thamudic script was the original alphabet of letters (1896) and the writing of the Israelites of the Exodus (1923).

The determination that around 1500 B.C. Hebrew was spoken—and even written—on the Sinai Peninsula, revolutionizes completely the present view of the history of the Hebrew language ... Neither the Egyptian hieroglyphs

nor the cuneiform writing would have been suitable for the written version in this language; only a writing system based on alphabetic characters, namely the Semitic script, could have been considered for the written version, and there is no doubt that the authors of the Bible kept in mind this Semitic writing system as the original written form of (the tablets of) the law. (Grimme, 1923:78)

Although Grimme received some support from scholars, he was mostly alone in this opinion until 1936 when the archaeologist Stephen Caiger⁹ came to the same conclusion from sources independent of Grimme.

In the light of recent research, far from questioning the ability of Moses to write, we may even conjecture that he had progressed beyond clumsy syllabic scripts to an alphabetical style of writing not dissimilar from the Hebrew of a later age. (Caiger, 1936:6)

Although Caiger misidentified the Thamudic script as *"Minaen,"* today it is well accepted that ancient Thamudic is the oldest alphabet of letters, and the precursor of Minaen/Sabean, dated by many epigraphers as early as the fifteenth century B.C. A clear statement to that effect can be found on the joint website of the Smithsonian and the Saudi Ministry of Antiquities & Museums along with many examples of ancient Thamudic inscriptions (http://www.mnh.si.edu/epigraphy/e_pre-islamic/thamudic.htm).

More recently, another expert in the development of the alphabet, Leonard Schlain¹⁰ (1998:71), theorized that the transforming event of Sinai was the invention of the alphabet.

It is not mere coincidence that the first book written in an alphabet is the Old Testament. There is none earlier ... Previously, Akhenaton and Hammurabi each took tentative steps toward introducing monotheism and the Law

to their people. These abstract concepts initially failed to take hold because both monarchs ruled over barely literate societies. The mystery of why not one but both these incredible ideas should appear shimmering together in a mirage in the middle of the desert, to a group of escaped slaves teetering on the edge of survival far from centers of learning, is one of the great puzzles of all time. Perhaps the transforming event that transpired so long ago at the foot of Mount Sinai was the invention of the alphabet.

Yet another expert on the alphabet, Robert Logan,¹¹ concurs, *"The occurrence of monotheism, codified law, and the alphabet all at the same moment in history cannot have been coincidental ... The abstractness of all three innovations were mutually reinforcing."* Or, as Schlain puts it, *"A monotheistic God not tied to a concrete image is a highly abstract concept. Abstraction is a crucial component of logical reasoning and its use can set people free from superstition."*

In the James Cameron film, *Exodus Decoded* (2006), researched and presented by Simcha Jacobovici, he concludes the Hebrews did not write in hieroglyphs but in an early alphabet. Of late, the prominent archaeologist David Rohl¹² (2009) postulates *"the Ten Commandments—were carved in the world's most ancient alphabet."* Anyone who studies early writing with an open mind eventually comes to the inevitable reality that the earliest alphabet appeared at the same time and place as the earliest body of literature written in alphabetic writing, the Old Testament. The conclusion of all of these prominent researchers, both past and present, is impressive support indeed, yet none of these experts was aware of the inscriptional evidence from the Sinai site in Midian which we will examine in this series.



Thamudic inscription from Rephidim (15th century B.C.) The inscription reads Died Kaliya. In this inscription the triple hashmark is clearly used as a letter of the alphabet. Note the two classic Proto-Semitic pictographic alephs (ox heads) beside the inscription. This inscription was made while pictographic writing was still in use. Photo reprinted by permission of Jim & Penny Caldwell and the Split Rock Research Foundation.

The Writing of God

The scriptural support for the “writing of God” (Ex. 32:16) is as profound as it is overlooked. The “writing of God” is an integral part of the call from Sinai, a sacred covenant which God intended to reach the whole world: “Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests . . .” (Ex. 19:5–6). Note that “priests” were the literate keepers of knowledge in antiquity. The tablets were written in God’s own hand: “And He gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18).

The Sinai Covenant is a teaching covenant: “And the LORD said unto Moses, come up to me into the mount, and be there: And I will give thee tablets of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou may teach them” (Ex. 24:12). God stipulates two

purposes of the covenant, to teach His Word and His writing: “And the LORD said unto Moses, write these words, for after the purpose and character of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel” (Ex. 34:27 Amplified Bible). God provides the Israelites with a system of writing: “And Moses turned, and went down the mount, and the two tablets of the testimony were in his hand: the tablets were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God . . .” (Ex. 32:15–16).

Later God specifies that the writing of God, the alphabet, is of Him: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending . . . the first and the last: what thou seest, write in a book . . .” (Rev. 1:8–11). The phrase “alpha and omega,” first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, referred to the alphabet as a whole until the word *alphabet* was coined many centuries later. The covenant includes numeracy as well since the letters, just as with Roman numerals, were also used for numbers. “Take ye the sum . . . and divide . . . (Num. 1:2)” and multiply, do fractions, measurement, calendar reckoning, surveying etc. The teaching of numeracy is the unrelenting theme of the book of Numbers. The call from Sinai was, and still is, a covenant to teach literacy, numeracy, and the Word of God.

The covenant bestows a blessing on those who answer the call from Sinai. “And He has filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge . . .” (Ex. 35:31). “And He hath put it in his heart that he may teach . . .” (Ex. 35:34). God specifies the power of this covenant blessing to His believers. “Behold I make a covenant; I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth . . . with thee” (Ex. 34:10). “And every able and wise-hearted

man in whose mind the Lord had put wisdom and ability, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work . . .” (Ex. 36:2). The covenant is for men and women. “And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted” (Ex 35:22), and children.

Daniel and his cohort were also learning the Word and the writing of God and received God’s blessing for it. “God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom . . .” The blessing in Daniel 1:17 is essentially the same as Exodus 35:31. The Scripture in Daniel specified a godly yardstick—a means of measuring those receiving the blessing of the covenant “in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them [Daniel, et al.], he found them ten times better than all the [wise men] that were in his realm” (Dan. 1:20). If this godly yardstick, “ten times better” seems fanciful, be patient. I will give specific examples of it being fulfilled in the third installment in this series.

The covenant commands believers to teach the Word and the writing of God to their children: “Said the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33). “Thou shalt read this law . . .” (Deut. 31:11), “And thou shalt write them [words of the law] upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deut. 6:9), “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:7).

There is a curse to those who do not obey the covenant: “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if ye obey . . . (already cited in Ex. 35:31), and a curse if ye will not obey . . .” (Deut. 11:26–28). “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because

thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6). It seems that God took the covenant very seriously.

Remember that all of these commandments, blessings and curses, were being passed on to a people who were illiterate. Although Moses could write both hieroglyphs and cuneiform (Acts 7:22), there was no Hebrew writing that we know of before the time of the Exodus. However, the specifics of Scripture are unmistakable. At Sinai, Jehovah presented His followers with both a system of law for a lawless nation and a system of literacy for an illiterate nation. Moses, the highly educated former prince of Egypt, was the ideal innovator to convey and fashion those skills. Remarkably, modern Bible scholars have completely missed the importance of the medium of the message, the "*writing of God,*" explaining it away as simply a redundant reference to the Word of God written on the tablets. Nonetheless, the facts are crystal-clear: the multiple commands to read and write in the Exodus story went hand in hand with the gift of the "*writing of God.*"

From this covenant the Jews developed the ritual of the *bar mitzvah* (for boys) and *bat mitzvah* (for girls) where every young person, as a passage into adulthood, was required to demonstrate the ability to read and understand the Torah in Hebrew. After the great revolt in A.D. 66–73 the Hebrew people were vanquished and scattered by the Romans in a diaspora to all points of the map, a move intended to destroy their nation forever. Yet, due to their honoring the covenant to learn the Word and the writing of God, they were able to reunite in Israel almost 2,000 years later, still possessed of a common culture and a common tongue. This is an unprec-



Ritual placing and tracing of footprints found near the Split Rock of Horeb at the area identified as Rephidim. Hash marks on each are an alphabetic caption for "soles of feet." Photos reprinted by permission of Jim & Penny Caldwell and the Split Rock Research Foundation.

edented phenomenon in the history of humankind!

In our time, these scriptural edicts have inspired one of the most important social movements in U.S. history, homeschooling. Studies show that seventy percent of young people quit attending church within a couple of years after being fed into the secularizing process of the university system. If the church is to be saved, its salvation will come from those who are answering the call from Sinai to take personal responsibility for educating their children. Churches who do not respond to this call are doomed to wither.

Archaeological Evidence of the Exodus

The physical evidence from the Midian site comes from three primary sources; Jim and Penny Caldwell,¹³ Dr. Sung Hak Kim, and the *Al-Bid History and Archaeology* done by the Saudi Arabian government.¹⁴ The Caldwells are committed Christians who lived and worked in Saudi Arabia. Although they had permission to travel to the region of

Jabal al-Lawz, they were arrested twice and harassed whenever they came in contact with the frontier police. They are the only westerners to bring out film and photographs of the archaeological and inscriptional evidence behind the fenced and guarded site in Midian, published in their 2008 book, *Mountain of God*. There are now numerous books and film documentaries about the real Mount Sinai located at Jabal al-Lawz in Midian. All these other books, documentaries or websites on the real Mount Sinai are usually based on the physical evidence provided by the Caldwells.

Dr. Kim was physician to the royal family at Mecca for twenty years. Also a committed Christian, he too was drawn to the mountain in Midian. An intimate of the royal family, he was gifted with artifacts from the royal museum collection and allowed to bring them out of the country. They are now housed in the History of Christianity Museum in Seoul, Korea. Dr. Kim wrote of his experiences in the best-selling 2006 book, written in Korean, *The*

Burning Bush, now in its thirty-third printing.

The Saudis were spooked by the cascade of international publicity surrounding the Sinai site in Midian. They rushed out an archaeological survey of Jabal al-Lawz entitled *Al-Bid History and Archaeology* (2002) to debunk the notion this was the legitimate location of Mount Sinai. The unintended consequence of the survey was that they provided provenance of the Exodus documentation gathered by the Caldwells. Archaeological evidence is poorly accepted unless it comes with a scientific credential. Provenance, or scientific validation, is provided by the publication of data from a professional team of experts on an archaeological dig such as the *Al-Bid History and Archaeology*.

The Saudis provided numerous key photographs of the altars and their engraved icons identical to those in the Caldwells' archives. They documented the presence of the footprints with the "individual marks" engraved beside them. Their description of the petroglyphs on the altar (of the golden calf) acknowledged them as cattle worship motifs. They photographed the "cut marble columns" beside the altar at the base of the mountain exactly as described in Exodus 24:4. Their preliminary dig at the altar found "a layer of ash, charcoal and bones found mixed with other organic materials ... and animal waste" (p.65), exactly what you would expect to find at an altar for burnt offering.

The Saudi survey confirmed that all these elements exist at Jabal al-Lawz. "And Moses ... builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel ..." (Ex. 24:4). The Saudi study differs from my own only in the interpretation of the data. They also described evidence we did not have. Whereas we have photographs of

a few ancient Thamudic inscriptions, the Saudis documented 155 Thamudic inscriptions on the mountain. Piece by piece the mosaic of events of the Exodus has become ever more clear from the physical evidence unearthed at the Midian site of Sinai. One thing is inescapable: The inscriptions are written in the oldest alphabet of letters—dating to the time of the Exodus, when Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the tablets containing the Word and the writing of God.

The second article in this series, "The Stones Will Cry Out," describes the archaeological remains and alphabetic inscriptions from the base of Mount Sinai in Midian and the story they tell, which comes straight from the pages of Exodus. Look for it in the next edition of *Faith for All of Life*. The final article in the series, "The Call from Sinai," will describe the discovery of the Yahweh stone, the oldest artifact ever found with the name of God, *YHWH*, engraved upon it. It will illustrate the purpose of writing in combating idolatry and human sacrifice. It will outline the spread of the alphabet along with Judeo-Christian values, their role in creating the model of Western civilization, and the relevance of the call from Sinai in today's world. 🇲🇪

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Mexico to teaching in inner-city schools for six years in Dallas, Texas prior to becoming an education professor at Texas A & M. His previous work as a director of university English programs in the United Arab Emirates (and as a U.S. government specialist in Yemen training military officers) allowed him to pursue his research on the alphabet in the field and its relationship to the Exodus. His work is the culmination of decades of professional research and expertise on the origin of the alphabet. Dr. Jones hosts an online talk show entitled "The Call from Sinai." Broadcasts can be accessed at christianfreedomnetwork.com. For more information on his book *The Writing of God*, or to order, go to writingofgod.com. Dr. Jones can be contacted at jonesgeniuses.com.

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The Repentance Tipping Point, Jeremiads, and Nehemiads

Dr. George Grant

“Jeremiad.” Definition: an elaborate and prolonged lamentation; a cry of woe; and expression of righteous indignation.

“Nehemiad.” Definition: an elaborate and prolonged humiliation; a cry of grief; an expression of righteous repentance.



How do fads suddenly sweep through an entire culture, becoming practically ubiquitous overnight? What makes one craze abruptly passé and gauche while another instantaneously becomes chic and trendy? How do epidemics spread from small, contained, and isolated segments of a population to infect an entire region or nation or continent? What accounts for sudden changes in cultural behaviors—an unexplained drop in the crime rate, an unexpected demand for a particular commodity, or an unprovoked shift in public opinion? How do fashions take hold of an entire segment of the global marketplace? What is it that makes a heretofore obscure writer or musician or artist or film-maker into a bestselling international celebrity? Can any of these phenomena be understood in merely mechanical processes? Is it possible to foresee and predict such trends? Or perhaps even more importantly, is it possible to create and control them?

These are the questions advertisers, demographers, and social anthropologists wrestle with constantly. They are the obsessions of entrepreneurs, politicians, and pollsters. They are the stock and trade of marketing consultants, strategic planners, and futurists.

According to journalist Malcolm Gladwell, “Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread just like

viruses do.”¹ The mechanism that actually makes them spread is what he calls “the tipping point.” It is this illusory explanation, this unnoticed cause, this elusive mechanism that all those experts are searching for so desperately. It is that little trick, that small nudge, that opportune break, or that glorious epiphany that brings about momentous change.

The tipping point is what actually brings about breakthroughs, aha moments, and eureka developments. It is the catalyst. It is the fulcrum of innovation. It is the straw that breaks the camel’s back. It is the beacon light of dawn. It is the transforming advancement that changes everything.

The Need for Repentance

In that sense, repentance is the ultimate tipping point. It is the mechanism that puts genuine change into action in our lives and in our culture. It is what enables us to move beyond the past—and all of the mistakes of the past—and into the future with bright hopes and new dreams. Repentance is the fulcrum upon which transformation turns.

One of the central messages of the Scriptures is a call to repentance. It is not to predict the future. It is not to offer new moral mandates. It is simply to declare the “words, statutes, and commandments of the Lord” that the people might “be overtaken and repent” (Zech. 1:6). It is that they might “put on sackcloth and lament” (Joel 1:13). It is that they might “repent and turn” from

all their transgressions “lest iniquity be their stumbling block” (Ezek. 18:30). It is that they might “return to the Lord” for “healing and restoration” (Hos. 6:1). This is the constant refrain of hope in the Scriptures:

Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness. (Isa. 1:27)

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. (Ezek. 14:6)

Of course, this was not exactly a welcome message—even if it was a refrain of hope. It wasn’t in the days of the prophets and it still isn’t today. As the renowned English preacher of the last generation, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once remarked, “The great effect of preaching repentance is to make everybody feel condemned, and nobody much likes that.”²

None of us wants to hear that our hearts are “deceitful and wicked above all things and beyond cure” (Jer. 17:9). We don’t want to hear that “we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23) or that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). We don’t want to hear that our corrupt lives have resulted in a corrupt culture where the innocent are exploited, the helpless are despoiled, and the downtrodden are utterly forgotten. We don’t want to hear

that there are very real and tangible consequences to our sin that ultimately must be dealt with. We would much rather find a series of steps that would “enable” us, “empower” us, or help us to “recover,” than we would to hear the clear message of grace:

In repentance and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. (Isa. 30:15)

According to Lloyd-Jones, if Jesus “had come and told us that the way of salvation was to consider a great, noble, and wonderful teaching and then to set out and do it, why, we would have liked it. Thoughts of imitating the Lord always please mankind, because they flatter us. They tell us that if we only use our wills we can do almost anything ... The world today in its state of trouble is very ready to listen to sermons that tell it somehow or another about the application of Christian principles. No one is annoyed at them. ‘What wonderful thoughts’ people say. ‘What a wonderful conception.’ But the message of the Gospel is that, ‘The world is as it is because you are as you are. You are in trouble and confusion because you are not honoring God; because you are rebelling against Him; because of your self-will, your arrogance, and your pride. You are reaping,’ says the Gospel, ‘what you have sown’ ... We all dislike that, and yet it is always the message of Christ—He called upon men and women to repent, to acknowledge their sin with shame and to turn back to God in Him, but the message of repentance always has been and still is a cause of offense.”³

The scriptural call to repentance is inescapably clear. Alas, our resistance to it is profoundly entrenched in our hearts, our lives, our homes, and our culture.

We know that the gospel is “foolishness” to some (1 Cor. 1:18). It is a

“stumbling block” to others (1 Cor. 1:23). But it is an “offense” to all who disbelieve (Gal. 5:11). It is an offense to us for precisely the same reason the prophets were persecuted (Matt. 5:12; Acts 7: 52). It is an offense to us because the message of repentance fails to flatter us. And so like the people in the days of the prophets, we cry, “Do not speak out,” and “Do not prophesy about these things” (Mic. 2:6). We shy away from the harsh truth—thinking that surely the Word of the Lord only brings “good things” (Mic. 2:7).

Nevertheless, repentance remains the tipping point. It is the solution to our grave societal problems, the antidote to our endemic cultural pathogens, and the counterweight to our brazen political tyrannies, and can only be undertaken as we humbly yield to the truth of the gospel. This is the starting place. This is square one.

What Doesn't Work

In stark contrast to this distinctly Christian conviction, many men and women today—both conservative and liberal—believe that by skillfully combining incentives and disincentives, or by artfully devising advantageous circumstances, or by fabricating a compelling matrix of sociopolitical programs, all our problems can be solved and all our woes can be ameliorated. This, they believe, can be achieved by enacting the right bills, electing the right politicians, reclaiming the right legacies, initiating the right reforms, recalling the right precedents, or restoring the right priorities.

On October 3, 1789, George Washington commenced the fledgling American republic's first administration with a decree of Thanksgiving:

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to

implore his protection and favor—and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness. Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be—That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks—for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation—for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed—for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted—for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.⁴

Interestingly, his decree did not end with a call for the people to merely demonstrate their gratitude and thanksgiving. It also challenged them to turn from their sins and repent:

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions—to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly

and punctually—to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed—to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord—To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us—and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.⁵

In days gone by, America's social and cultural tipping point has always been repentance. If ours is to remain a genuinely free, prosperous, and civil society, it must always be so in the days ahead as well.

Well might we plead the case for an outpouring of Jeremiads from Reformed and evangelical pulpits in our day. What with inhuman humanism and patronizing pietism launching a tandem assault upon all that is near and dear, such a prophetic stance seems all too appropriate. Expose the evils. Demonstrate the inconsistencies. Broadcast the hypocrisies. Denounce the barbarities. Set forth with zeal the clear consequences of God's wrath, God's retribution, and God's judgment. Hurl upon the land Jeremiad after Jeremiad like unto none that man nor beast has 'ere seen.

Alas, as fitting as all that may seem to be, the modern church is in no position to carry it out. Trivialized and crippled by praisalluia-poppcock, hermeneutical hot-dogging, church-growth skullduggery, and intellectual hodge-podgery, our churches are probably incapable of much more than the braggadocio balderdash and eschatological bosh that long has been our stock and trade. Jeremiads are thus probably well beyond the realm of possibility for

us. Our obsession with brainless bric-a-brac and business meeting bilge has made our ineffectiveness and unproductiveness all but a foregone conclusion. Jeremiads? No way.

So, how should we then live? What can we then do?

A Call to Humility

Perhaps we ought to consider the possibility of taking the course of the Nehemiad. In contradistinction to the Jeremiad, the Nehemiad, though never reticent, does not merely rip into those who flaunt ungodliness. Its first concern is our own repentance. Humility before our Sovereign God is its stock and trade. The Nehemiad is not simply negative or indictive. Its primary concern is restorative. Again, the Nehemiad is not largely tied to a critical spirit. Its foremost concern is constructive.

The Jeremiad is beautifully modeled by the prophet Jeremiah when he cried out, "This is what the Lord says about this people: they greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the Lord does not accept them; He will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins" (Jer. 14:10). This is altogether right, good, true, and needful. May the Lord afford us voice in the days to come to sound such prophetic alarms.

In the meantime though, may He grant us the courage and vision to have recourse to the Nehemiad.

The Nehemiad is modeled by the cupbearer to Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, when he cried out,

O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands, let your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer Your servant is praying before You day and night ... I confess the sins we

Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against You. We have acted very wickedly toward You. For we have not obeyed the commands, decrees, and statutes You gave Your servant Moses ... O Lord, hear, O hear this prayer and give Your servant, who delights in revering Your Name, success. (Nehemiah 1:5–11)

Undoubtedly, our corrupt culture is in dire need of the work of zealous Jeremiad-pronouncing churches, but comprehending that our piffle pulpits are not yet fit for such a robust task, the place of the Nehemiad is all the more prominent. The walls are down. The rubble is nigh unto impassable. All is in a shambles. So let the Nehemiads begin.

Let the Nehemiads take a priority place in our worship. Let the Nehemiad mark our heretofore paucitous preaching. Let the Nehemiad replace the Sunday school swill and training tatter-nasters. Let the Nehemiad proceed from our life and work.

It is only when a haughty church comes to grips with its theological, cultural, and intellectual impoverishment, does humiliation open the door for humility. And that is a position of vulnerability that we churchmen are, sadly, none too anxious to embrace—which explains why humility is a gospel virtue in desperately short supply, and why the Nehemiad is, to us, an alien concept.

But, considering the crisis that girds us round about, no risk is too great, no commitment too bold. Let the Nehemiads begin. And may the tipping point make its appearance in the House of God, amongst the People of God.

For such is the need of the hour. O God, grant us repentance.

After all, the church is Plan A, and there is no Plan B. 🙏

Footnotes and bio continued on page 25

Charity: The Covenantal Way

By Bojidar Marinov



A supposedly “Reformed” author recently declared that the sign of a “just” society is that the “material needs of the poor are taken care of.” He said this in the context of the supposed “inner contradictions of capitalism.” The message was, “Capitalism is unjust because it doesn’t take care of the material needs of the poor.” And he claimed this in the name of the Bible, from his position as a “Reformed” author.

The meaning of the word “capitalism” is a matter for a different article. Still another article could be devoted to the issue of whether true capitalism leaves anyone truly poor in the society. It takes no deep research to figure out that societies that made the expansion of capital—which is the true meaning of “capitalism”—the foundation of their economies raised the material standard of living of *everyone* to levels which can’t be compared to anything that the Bible calls “poor.” The Biblical standard for “poor”—one who has only his cloak left as his only asset (Ex. 22:26–27), or who has no food or clothing whatsoever (James 2:15)—is completely forgotten in our society where the poorest have ten times more in monetary terms than the upper middle class in Europe just 300 years ago. (Their real purchasing power would be immeasurably higher.¹) If “capitalism” should be blamed for any “inner contradictions,” abandoning the poor certainly isn’t one of them. It’s been long since any truly capitalist society had any really poor people.

But, as I said, these are topics for different articles: not about charity but about economic systems and their success or failure. Our interest with the above statement is theological, and therefore ethical and judicial: Is it true that a genuinely just society will be known by whether the material needs of the poor are taken care of?

A Wrong Definition of Charity

The answer is no, as far as the covenant theology of the Bible is concerned. Such a definition, focused on man, his material needs, and his physical actions apart from covenantal considerations, is an essentially humanistic definition, with a humanistic focus, and based on a humanistic worldview. It ignores the ethical/judicial nature of the covenant of God, and it ignores the fact that before the question of the material needs of the poor, another question must be asked: “What is the revealed will of God?” It defines “justice” on the basis of material factors—economic affluence and poverty—rather than on the basis of ethical factors. It divides society along economic lines—poor and not poor—instead of covenantal lines. It ignores the fact that the issues of good and evil, justice and injustice, are resolved on the basis of God’s moral character rather than on the basis of perceived human needs. And it almost always ends up subsidizing evil under the guise of doing good.

I call this kind of charity “ritual” charity. It is characteristic to ritual or liturgical religions where man’s connection to God or to the gods is determined

by the correct performance of certain rituals or ceremonies, to the exclusion or neglect of real ethical issues. In many of these religions, charity is one of the rituals. In the pagan temples of the ancient world, many of the sacrifices included distribution of *lepta* to beggars outside the temples. Almsgiving is a religious rite in many pagan religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism. Hinduism, especially, has a very elaborate system of rituals of “taking care of the poor.” In Islam, a highly ritualistic and liturgical religion, charity is the third of the five pillars of the faith (*zakat*). In Roman Catholicism, the “holiness” of a person is defined by his “care for the poor,” whether that care for the poor is based on Biblical principles or not. (Mother Theresa’s popularity among Roman Catholics and Hindus is a good example. The woman never publicly expressed the desire to preach Christ and His gospel.)

Of course, statism as a religion, being highly ritualistic and liturgical from as early as ancient Egypt to modern Communist and socialist states, makes “care for the poor” the mainstay of its policies and propaganda. In fact, some of the most spectacular liturgical acts in the history of humanity are the discussions and the signing of laws that “care for the poor.” (Think Obamacare.) Rich liberal celebrities, when they want to look “caring,” always take the route of caring for some poor people around the globe. Whatever the god or the gods are, caring for the poor is the ritual that wins access to the god’s heart and the title of “most just” person or society.

There is one problem with this kind of charity: It is not mentioned in the Bible, and it is not commanded in the Bible. As I said above, it is humanistic to the core. The Bible never commands anything close to “taking care of the material needs of the poor”; where it says something similar to it, it is in a completely different context, and with a completely different focus than the poor or their material needs. In fact, in the only place where the “poor” are mentioned in a general way, Jesus seems to advocate *voluntarism*: “For you always have the poor with you, and *whenever you wish* you can do good to them” (Mark 14:7). “Caring for the material needs of the poor” is not mentioned as a virtue, nor as good works. The law of God contains no provisions nor commandments to either state, church, or individuals to engage in a promiscuous “caring for the poor” in general. As we will see, those provisions that mention the poor have a different focus, and a different context and meaning than the material needs of the poor per se. “Justice” is never defined in the Bible as “caring for the material needs of the poor,” etc.

Instead, the Bible speaks about *covenantal* charity.

Covenantal Charity

Some theological background will be necessary here.

When we talk about the covenant of God, or about anything “covenantal,” we know that it always revolves around two things: *work* and *community*. This principle is clearly expounded in the very beginning of man’s existence, when God placed man in the garden. Man was just created, he had just received the task of the covenant, and there was no sin to pollute his mind, his will, and his actions. God took him and put him in the garden to do two things: *work* and *protect* the garden.

The first, *work* (or, more properly, in Hebrew, *serve*), had for its purpose the increase in value of the resources man had in the garden. Eden, for sure, had resources in abundance. Man’s job was to put them together and make them productive and useful for mankind called to exercise dominion. In another article, I discussed the ethical value of work:

[W]ork is not *only* not a “worldly” thing, but it is the most spiritual and ethical activity of all activities mentioned in the Bible. Based on the number of verses, work is declared to be an ethical and spiritual virtue, it is more spiritual than prayer, church attendance, praise and worship, singing psalms and hymns, helping the poor, offering sacrifices, healing the sick, performing miracles, raising children, having the right relationship with other people, being nice to people, street evangelisms, etc. From beginning to end, man’s very nature as the image of God is defined much more by the word “work” than it is defined by liturgy, relationship, or prayer. Man was created and put in the Garden, and the first task he was given was to *work*. The Law of God as given to the Hebrews, from beginning to end, presupposes a *working* culture, not a culture of religious observances. (Any religious observances were peripheral and temporary in nature.) The Promised Land was described as a place where *work* will be blessed, not cursed; the commandment for offering the first fruit presupposes they would *work* the land (Deut. 26:1–2) ...

Our modern interpretation of the Fourth Commandment often focuses on the Sabbath rest and we seldom stop to think that that commandment actually has two parts: *work* and *rest* (not work and worship). But Jesus challenged our modern interpretation and explained that the more important part of that Commandment is *work*; in John 5:16–17, he replied to the Jews concerning their interpretation

of the Sabbath and their accusations, that “My Father *is working* until now, and I Myself *am working*.” In Matthew 7:15–20 Jesus talks about the trees being good or bad according to what they produce. Immediately after that, He says that religious observances do not secure one’s place in the Kingdom of heaven (vv. 21–23). And of course, that great parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30 declares that refusal to work and produce and increase wealth may cost a man his place in the Kingdom. Jesus there specifically calls the servant “wicked and *lazy*,” indicating that laziness is a vice. Paul told the Thesalonians to “do their own things and work with their own hands” (1 Thess. 4:11), and in case they hadn’t gotten the message, in his next letter to them he warned them that “if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either” (2 Thess. 3:10). (Seriously, Paul? You’ll let a man starve just because he doesn’t work?) The threat of starvation must be a convincing testimony to the ethical importance of work in Paul’s thinking.

In general, work is considered in the Bible as more important and of a greater spiritual value than religious observances ...²

We may add Jesus’ parable of the laborers in the vineyard, which presents the Kingdom of heaven as a landowner who puts people to work when he sees them idle (Matt. 20:1–16).

God’s Community

The second, *protect*, was meant in two ways: to keep the outsiders from the covenant out, and the insiders in. Jesus explains in John 10:1–18 the function of the good shepherd: he is supposed to know his own sheep and be able to separate them from the others, and there is separation—a fence and a gate—meant to divide the sheep. The fence and the gate are that protection, or the separation line, that keeps the outsiders out and the insiders in. The community of God, the Holy Assembly of Israel, was protected

as a *community* by sacraments and laws for cleanness; they established boundaries around Israel and the Temple, and they also defined the rules for the cohesion of God's community. Circumcision and the Passover were the most visible of these "separation rituals" in the Old Testament; baptism and the Lord's Supper in the New. While the principles and laws for righteousness and justice were to be the same for the Israelite and for the stranger, and while the strangers enjoyed the same judicial protection in Israel as everyone else (Ex. 12:49), strangers were excluded from participation in the community until they earned the right to be part of Israel. The descendants of certain nations were excluded from full participation in the community until a specific number of generations after their circumcision (Deut. 23:1–8). The church in the New Testament also had its own laws and principles for organizing and holding the community together, while keeping the strangers out.

Our participation in the covenant always falls under one of these two categories: *work* or *community*. Both are commanded and regulated by the law of God.

Covenantal charity is not an exception. In the Bible, we see the commandments of God concerning the poor being related either to work or to community, but never to a general concept of "caring for the poor."

In the Old Testament, there were several ways of helping the poor.

First, there was *gleaning* (Deut. 24:19–21; Lev. 19:9–10). Gleaning had to do with *work*. It didn't separate between Israelites and non-Israelites; strangers were also allowed to participate. But they had to work. While it was meant to help the "needy," gleaning did not involve an active distribution of goods to the poor. The poor were expected to make the effort of going to

the field and working to gather what was left after the workers. Gleaning—together with the other laws for the poor—was not meant to create a system of "taking care for the material needs of the poor." Rather, it presented the poor with the opportunity to work and to earn their living.

Then there were the laws for *debt and servitude*. There is a multitude of such laws in the Bible (see, for example, Lev. 25 and Deut. 15), and they all have to do with helping the poor members of Israel. If Israel was obedient to God, they would have experienced economic prosperity as a nation, but individual Israelites could still find themselves in dire straits, economically. The law created no government organ to deal with this problem; neither did it create a church ministry to care for the poor. Outside the family, the solution to poverty was a well-regulated system of debt and servitude which was sufficient to address the needs of society.

While debt and servitude were means to address the needs of the poor members of the society, they were not meant to do it outside the two principles of covenant action, *work* and *community*. Debt was a form of temporary relief, but it did not involve a handout. The debtor had to work to return the money—and he had control over what work he was going to do, for how much time, and where. If he didn't work to repay the debt, the next step for him was to sell himself into servitude, where he would be put to work directly by his creditor, on terms defined by the creditor. *Work* was central to debt and servitude; there was no free lunch, even if the price the poor man had to pay for his lunch was not in money but in foregone freedom.

In the New Testament, Paul insists on the value of work by declaring that a person shouldn't eat unless he works

(2 Thess. 3:10). This declaration may seem harsh but it is supported by Paul's words in 1 Tim. 5, where he instructs Timothy not to allow church support to a widow who hasn't met certain criteria, all of which can be summed up under "work." Paul contrasts a true widow who *works* to a false widow who learns to be *idle*. Even a starving widow, according to Paul, can't hope to get support unless she works.

All these were Biblical ways to help the poor by putting them to work. The focus was on work, not on their needs, and not on the fact that they were poor. Work was a virtue, and work was the ethical principle behind the laws for the poor. The fact that there were poor in the society whose material needs were not taken care of did not make that society "unjust." What made a society "unjust" was that there was no opportunity for work. According to the Bible, idleness was the true injustice, not hunger.

But there were other laws concerning the poor that had had the purpose to create not just work but cohesion in the community, as a covenant community.

Most of the laws for work, of course, were meant to provide relief *for members of Israel*. While some provisions—like gleaning—did allow access to strangers, others, like the seven-year debt and servitude limit, were limited to members of the covenant community. (There was no limit on the servitude of a member of a different religion.) Paul's instructions about the widows, of course, apply only to those widows who are church members; he would have hardly expected that a pagan widow would serve the saints.

The "celebration tithe" was a community event which had to include everyone living in the town (Deut. 14; 26). Aliens were invited if they lived in the town. But the feast itself was a feast

of cleansing (Deut. 26:13–15), that is, of *excluding* uncleanness from the community. God was called upon to remember His covenant with Israel, and to bless Israel as a covenant community under Him. The focus was not on the poor and their needs but on the community of Israel. (The feast was held every three years; it wasn't a continuing system of support for the poor.) The celebration was meant to establish ritual borders around Israel as a nation blessed by God; if a person wanted the blessings of God, he had to participate in it.

We see this same principle at work in the New Testament, in the Lord's Supper. It is a celebration of the community (not a solemn, funeral-type, sober, individualistic self-examination), and all the participants are called to discern in the Supper not an ordinary supper but a feast of belonging to the community of God (1 Cor. 11:29). It is limited, indeed, to those who belong to the church, but within the church, it invites to the table both rich and poor, and people have to wait for each other so that everyone can participate. The very meaning of that waiting for each other is that all participants, rich and poor, are the same body, and therefore everyone eats an equal share, irrespective of the share they contribute to the community. And yet, the Supper's purpose is not to feed the hungry but to celebrate the covenant community, the body of Christ.

Who Is My Brother?

We see this principle again in James 2:15–16. While it is taken by many to mean that we need to supply the needs of the poor, the verse specifically talks about a “brother or sister.” It is in the same sense that we should take the verses in Matt. 25:34–46, used by the Roman Church as the basis for indiscriminate almsgiving. Jesus specifically talks about “these brothers of mine.” Not having a theology of the covenant,

the Roman Church interprets these verses by postulating the “brothers of Jesus” to be the beggars and the poor. But the meaning of “brothers” here is those belonging to the community of faith; and the offering of a cup of water mentioned in Matt. 25 must be connected to the same in Mark 9:41: “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink *because you belong to Christ*, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.” It is *the belonging to Christ* that matters, not the economic condition of the beneficiary.

The two non-Jews who benefited from Jesus' healing power—the centurion and the Phoenician woman—understood very well that Biblical charity was covenant-based and covenant-oriented. Therefore, the centurion insisted that Jesus wouldn't come to his house so that the sanctity of the covenant community remained inviolate (Luke 7:6–7). Even though as a stranger living in a Jewish city (and therefore eligible to participate in the community feasts), and having the Jewish elders testify well of him, he was still aware of the fact that Jesus' charity toward his servant would be a unique case. The Syro-Phoenician woman accepted Jesus' refusal on the basis that works of charity must remain limited to the covenant community; but she offered a solution that would satisfy the covenant requirements and yet make it possible for her daughter to be healed: “the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs” (Mark 7:28). The two were commended by Jesus for their faith, and there is much speculation among theologians and preachers today what exactly was it that Jesus commended. The unifying element that Jesus saw between the centurion and the Phoenician woman was this: They understood the nature of the covenant and the covenant community, and that charity should remain limited to it. They just hoped to benefit from it as dogs at least, if not as children.

Indeed, any charity extended outside the covenant community must be a special case and must fall under the category “crumbs for the dogs,” rather than a special ritual designed to please God and create an image of a “just society.” When charity is promiscuous, extended to the “poor” in general, it ends up with the dogs on the table, eating the bread of the children. It leads to God's resources being squandered for almsgiving instead of for the Kingdom of God. It leads to subsidizing evil. Eventually, such theology of indiscriminate charity leads to socialism and statism.

Of course, we have such a special case in Jesus' reply to the Syro-Phoenician woman; the crumbs from the table there were meant not to diminish the covenantal separation but to *declare* a person as already belonging to the covenantal community by the fact of her faith: “O, woman, your *faith* is great” (Matt. 15:28). A modern example of such special case would be the Salvation Army in its original mission of intent. R. J. Rushdoony comments on William Booth's book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*,

In 1890, a remarkable book was written summoning Christians *to save the lost and to remake their lives and all society in terms of Christ's mandate to seek and to save the lost.*³

There was a specific goal for the gigantic charity project General Booth envisioned: the expansion of the covenant community, both in terms of numbers, and in terms of personal and corporate spiritual growth. That he didn't envision charity divorced from that covenant growth is evident from his own words in the book:

There is not one sinner in the world—no matter how degraded and dirty he may be—whom my people will not rejoice to take by the hand and pray with, and labour for, if therefore they

can but snatch him as a brand from the burning.⁴

It is important also to observe that Rushdoony included his praise for Booth and his Salvation Army in a chapter properly titled, “The Community of Christ.”

The church must oppose humanistic charity using the Biblical concept of covenantal charity, based on the covenant of God, focused on the covenant of God, and serving the covenant of God. True charity can not be concerned with a general “care for the poor.” Even if we assume that the West today has any “poor” whatsoever—and it doesn’t, in the Biblical sense of the word—we cannot afford to buy into a worldview that opposes the covenant. Biblical charity is not concerned primarily with the poor but with the *idle*; it puts idle men to work. And Biblical charity is not concerned with material needs but with the needs of the covenant community: keep the outsiders out, keep the members in, and provide a principle of community cohesion consistent with our Biblical faith. Charity is not a religious rite done to please God or to demonstrate a “just society.” Justice and righteousness are based only on the law of God; and so should our charity be as well.

Note 1: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) can not be taken as an excuse for indiscriminate almsgiving. First, it must be read in the context of Jesus’ words in Mark 7:27, “it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” Second, it is a story of personal charity in a very specific, unusual situation. Third, both the starting question and the end of the story, “Who is my neighbor?” point to the fact that the story is about inclusion and exclusion, not about almsgiving per se. The lawyer wanted to “justify himself.” About what? In the parable, Jesus gives the examples of a priest and

of a Levite who refuse to show mercy to another member of their own community. Apparently, the lawyer wanted to justify his refusal to help his covenant brothers which made him worse than that Samaritan in the parable. At the end, Jesus declares the exclusion of the priest and the Levite from the covenant community and the inclusion of the Samaritan (“the one who showed mercy”); thus implying that the lawyer has excluded himself from being a “neighbor” by not obeying the laws of covenantal charity. It is in the same sense that Jesus interprets the charity shown by Elijah and Elisha in Luke 4:25–27 (see the context, and especially the reaction of the Jews). He interpreted those in terms of covenant inclusion and exclusion. It’s about covenant, not about almsgiving.

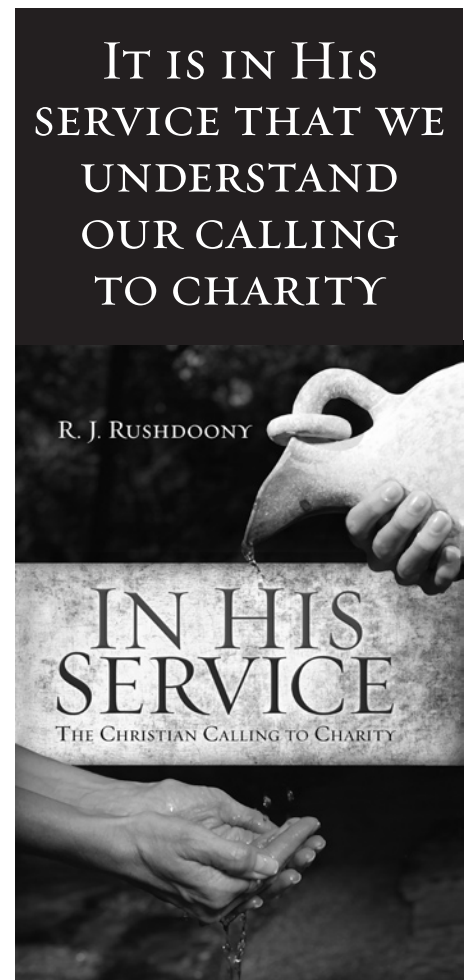
Note 2: An objection may be raised based on Gal. 6:10: “Do good to all men, and especially to the household of faith.” The word for “especially” (*malista*) is the same as in 1 Tim. 4:10: God is “Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” Gal. 6:10 teaches universal, indiscriminate charity no more than 1 Tim. 4:10 teaches universal, indiscriminate salvation. What both verses teach is *bread for the children, crumbs for the dogs.* 🐕

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1. See Deirdre McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can’t Explain the Modern World*.
2. bit.ly/MissionsBigC2
3. R. J. Rushdoony, *In His Service: The*

Christian Calling to Charity (Vallecito, California: Ross House Books, 2009), 65–68.

4. Quoted in *Ibid*.



In this book, Rushdoony elucidates the Christian’s calling to charity and its implications for godly dominion. In an age when Christian action is viewed in political terms, a return to Christian works of compassion and godly service will help usher in a return of the reign of God as no piece of legislation ever could.

Hardback, 232 pages, \$23.00

The Virtue of Deliberate Christianity

By Andrea Schwartz

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. (Prov. 31:10)

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. (Prov. 31:29)



When we speak of a virtuous woman, we often limit the meaning to sexual purity or the absence of sinful actions in her life. However, as R. J. Rushdoony points out, there is a much more positive connotation attached to the word “virtue”:

The word “virtue” comes from the Latin and meant originally “strength, courage, and excellence.” In the Old and New Testaments, the words in Hebrew and Greek translated as “virtue” mean in the original languages “force, strength of mind or body, and power.” The meaning of “power” as virtue is clear in Luke 6:19 and 8:46.

In Proverbs 31:10 and 29, the virtuous woman is a strong woman, strong in character and in her abilities. In Proverbs 12:4, we read, “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.” Because a virtuous woman is morally and in every other way strong and capable, she adds so greatly to her husband’s calling that she enables him to be a ruler or king in his realm, whereas a morally weak and incompetent wife is a source of shame and weakness, “as rottenness in his bones.” A husband lacking virtue is fully as disastrous as his wife, if not more so.

Virtue thus in its Biblical meaning is strength, moral strength, the wise use of abilities, and a general competence.¹

The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 can best be described as *deliberate* in her actions and duties. Her decisions and undertakings are purposefully in line

with her calling, resulting in such a well-run family that her husband’s ability to carry out his dominion role is enhanced. Additionally, as her children mature, they praise their mother for her investment in them because they see the fruits of her efforts in their lives.

How does a young girl arrive at the place in life with the ability to step into the shoes of the immense calling described in this last chapter of Proverbs? Rushdoony points out that this comes through training from a very early age.

A boy or girl reared without the discipline of work, self-government, and moral force thus lacks virtue in the Biblical sense ...

Virtue is the strong and positive faithfulness to every word of God, and a courageous stand for the Lord in every area of life and thought. Virtue in the Bible means power. Today, as always, true virtue is God’s power at work in this world through men.²

Thus, it is the duty of every family to establish a *deliberate* Christianity as the norm for the household. The mother’s day-to-day interaction with her children is especially important in this pursuit. The goal is to advance a mindset of keeping the law-word of God and functioning within its guidelines as the way we *demonstrate* our love for Christ.

Deliberate

Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines the adjective *deliberate*:

1. Weighing facts and arguments with a view to a choice or decision; carefully considering the probable consequences

of a step; circumspect; slow in determining; applies to persons; as a deliberate judge or counselor.

2. Formed with deliberation; well advised or considered; not sudden or rash; as a deliberate opinion; a deliberate measure, or result.

From a very early age, children must be taught the standard of behavior that conforms to the commandments of God. Only with this standard can infractions and disobediences be properly understood and dealt with. Children need to comprehend that every sin is an offense against God, whether or not there has been damage done to another person. With grace, young ones will grow and mature in obedience knowing that they will be held accountable for their actions (Eccl. 12:13–14).

Proverbs 3:5–6 tells us to “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. **In all thy ways acknowledge him**, and he shall direct thy paths.” All things that we think, do, or say must be analyzed by the Word of God looking to Jesus as the embodiment of that Word in the flesh. That is a tall order. It involves a number of things:

1. Knowing the Word sufficiently to “weigh” one’s thoughts, words, and actions to determine if they are in conformity to God’s standards.
2. Understanding the application(s) in day-to-day life
3. Having the conviction to remain within the parameters the Bible prescribes.

The Bible makes clear in numerous places that we accomplish this by being straightforward and *deliberate* in our witness of our new life in Christ:

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:14–16)

He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matthew 12:30).

Straightforward vs. Subtle

Because the Great Commission given by Jesus before His ascension is a mandate rather than a suggestion, impacting the culture for Christ is not an optional activity for the Christian. In a time when Christianity is derided and belittled, many believers decide the best way to “win” people to Christ is by subtlety. Their concern is that being direct with people will “turn them off” and they, all too often, are so subtle that their intended audience misses their point entirely.

If we look at the early church and its confrontations with the culture of its day, we note that subtlety was not the preferred weapon used to combat the prevailing pagan ideology. In fact, we see disciples being beaten, jailed, and killed because of their out-in-the-open, unswerving adherence to Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords and His law-word.

In contrast to much of what passes as Christianity in our day, a study of the saints in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* shows that they were deliberate in aligning themselves with the Savior and lost their

lives as a result. The virtue (power) of their stance may have cost them their lives, but it encouraged greater numbers to see their light and become followers of Christ.³

In America, if we are deliberate in proclaiming the need for repentance and Christ as the solution to our guilt and sin, we may avoid being beaten, or fired, or jailed for our identification as Christians. But this is not true for our brothers and sisters in Africa, China, or the Middle East. In many parts of the world, *deliberate* Christianity is a challenge to those who rail at Christ, and believers pay a huge price. However, like Christians through the centuries, they consider their sufferings small compared to the sufferings of Christ who redeemed them and restored them to fellowship with the Father. Sometime in America, we may face the same persecution for our deliberate Christianity.

Many believe that if they model Christianity rather than explicitly share it (“Preach the Gospel. Use words if necessary.”), they will win souls. St. Paul appears to disagree

13. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

14. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

15. And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

16. But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

17. So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of

Christ. (Romans 10:13–17, ESV)

A deliberate Christian education is a MUST for any professing/confessing family because allowing anti-Christian worldviews and practices to be presented to children as fact produces a schizophrenic/conflicted mindset. When the Bible’s absolutes are challenged without resistance on a daily basis, is it any wonder that so many children from Christian homes abandon the faith after graduating from statist schools? The absence of a deliberate Christianity permits the humanistic/materialistic/secularist worldview to win the day.

Getting into Shape

When my children were younger and I coached them in preparation for a performance, whether it was a piano recital, a speech, or a drama, I emphasized that all their actions and words should be delivered in a deliberate fashion. I stressed that in order to convey to an audience that they were confident in what they were communicating, it was necessary to be aware of everything that they were doing. I had many examples to point to. Among them were world-class gymnasts and figure skaters. It was always easy to see those who were coached very well and had embraced the particulars of their sport. If you’ve ever seen stop-action photography of these athletes, you can see that they are being deliberate right down to the tips of their fingers and toes. No movement is unpracticed or unrehearsed, and the smoother and more effortless it looks, the more time and effort were put in to achieving it. No gymnast or skater accidentally delivers an excellent performance.

Why don’t believers put the same emphasis on deliberate Christianity? The command to be ready always to give a reason for the hope that is within us is a directive to demonstrate in our

thinking, conversation, and actions that what we do is predicated on living our life according to God's law-word.

When do you instill a purposeful Christianity? First of all, you can't instill something you don't possess. The first step is to make this a priority in your own life. Do your children witness you making your decisions in a deliberately Biblical way? Do you consider any decision beyond the scope of Scripture? The young ones who look to you for guidance should be able to conclude that you live your life in accordance with the declarative statement,

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
(2 Tim. 3:16–17)

I believe many sincere Christians hold back on giving testimony to their faith because they are concerned they will do a poor job of giving a Biblical answer to questions that may be raised. Being ready to give an answer for the hope that is within (a command rather than a suggestion) will follow from living out a deliberate Christianity. Being salt and light *are* byproducts of a deliberate Christianity. As a result, providing an explanation should be as natural as reciting our residence address, phone number, or email address. We are ready with an answer because we have done what we've done intentionally.

Passing the Torch

How can parents teach their children this purposeful Christianity? Initially it comes by way of example. Children should regularly witness their parents making lifestyle choices (where to live, how to educate, where to work, where to worship, where to shop) based on conformity to God's Word. God's

Word does not always mandate the details, but provides the guidelines and parameters for our decisions.

I recall an incident that involved one of our pets. Our English Springer Spaniel had been attacked by another dog and almost lost his life. Although he recovered from his injury after surgery for a punctured lung, our dog was never the same. We were no longer able to take him out to run on an adjacent field or for walks in the neighborhood; he was skittish of other animals and would respond aggressively. We had to keep him away from visitors because he would often growl. Eventually he became unpredictable even around my children. One evening my daughter dropped a paper towel and the dog began to eat it. She reached down to get it from him. The dog growled, lunged at her, and made an effort to bite her. Although he didn't succeed, I became convinced that it was no longer appropriate to have this animal as a pet.

My husband and I went to the Scriptures to determine our course of action. We knew that the dog had serious issues and felt it would be dishonest to give the dog to another family or even the pound for adoption. We knew that providentially we had avoided a trip to the emergency room for our daughter. We went to God's Word for guidance.

When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall not be liable. But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. (Ex. 21:28–29)

Because we had both been students of Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law*,

we also knew to look at his chapter on The Sixth Commandment for instruction. In the section "Restitution or Restoration," he discusses injuries to persons by animals.

[I]f an animal owned by a man were guilty of the injury; if the animal had no previous record of violence to man, then the animal died (and of course the injured person was cared for and compensated). But if the animal had a previous record of violence, the owner now became liable to the death penalty for murder. (Ex. 21:28–29).⁴

It became a clear-cut decision that we needed to put the dog down, that we couldn't risk another incident. Having a Biblical law that said I would be liable for the death penalty got my attention. However, I had children who loved this dog, and my daughter was convinced this was all her fault. I knew I needed to explain that God's law required me to act and that sentimentality, emotion, and our love for the animal were not good reasons to violate it.

The next day, my daughter and I brought the dog to the pound and remained with him throughout the procedure until it was completed. For days, amidst the tears and sorrow over losing an animal that we had loved for eight years, we discussed the wisdom of God's law and the need to follow it even when it hurts.

Power in our Testimony

The very purpose of being ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ in our everyday lives is to manifest His grace as we follow His law. We don't want to be guilty of having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5), since St. Paul warns us to turn away from such people. God's claims are total and we should abandon the practice of being "subtle" in carrying out the

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The Challenge to the Church: An Interview with George Grant

Interviewed by Lee Duigon



Rev. George Grant, pastor at Parish Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, has packed an amazing variety into his career.

As a young man, he served under Dr. D. James Kennedy with Coral Ridge Ministries, Florida, to become executive director and vice president of the organization.

As a pro-life activist, he became such a controversial figure that he had to have bodyguards when he traveled. (“Let’s just say it got very hot,” he said.)

As part of his own ministry to combat extreme poverty, he once spent three days and nights as a homeless man on the most troubled and dangerous streets in New York City.

He has written and published sixty books on a wide range of Christian issues. Meanwhile, he and his wife, Karen, raised three children who now have children of their own.

Today he’s planting churches in Tennessee and doing foreign missionary work. Chalcedon was able to corral him for an interview a few days before he left for a trip to South Korea and Indonesia.

As varied as all these activities have been, they are all, he said, part of one vision for his life of ministry:

“It’s always the same challenge to the church—to live out our faith effectively. Not to ‘do church,’ but to be the church.”

How the Poor Get Poorer

We read Dr. Grant’s 1986 book, *The Dispossessed: Homelessness in America*

(Dominion Press, Ft. Worth, TX), to get a feel for his face-to-face encounters with the most extreme form of poverty. We say face-to-face because, to write the book, Grant traveled all around the country to meet the homeless, to hear their individual life stories, and, at times, to share their hardships. The book paints a grim picture.

“I didn’t mean for my message to be one of hopelessness,” he said, “but I did want to show that the top-down, government approach to poverty really is hopeless. It does more harm than good.

“Because all of these top-down policies are a violation of the principles of sphere sovereignty, government agencies and big secular charities exacerbate the problems rather than solve them. This approach rewards irresponsibility and leads to an erosion of self-government and church discipline. In all of our preaching and teaching, we have to rebuild an awareness of sphere sovereignty.”

What does that mean? “The care of the poor must begin with the individual’s own self-government; and then the church. God never told the government to take care of the poor. He told us to do it.

“But to a large degree, the church has failed to speak articulately to our culture [For more on how the church has failed to do this, see Dr. Grant’s own article in this issue—ed.], and the enemies of the gospel have prevailed.”

Grant’s book contains a disclaimer:

[L]est anyone get the impression from this book that I threw caution

to the wind and struck out alone and unguarded in the wilds of New York, let me clarify: During the time I was on the street I was in constant communication with professional contacts in New York, local police, and family members back home; I never entered into an unsafe area without first taking the precaution of notifying authorities; at particularly sensitive times I had a ‘guardian angel,’ a friend, follow close behind me; I scouted out the areas I was going ahead of time so that I would not go into a situation ‘blind’; I had read and researched extensively so I knew what to expect pretty well; I prayed constantly . . . The point of my relating all this is to warn anyone against trying to duplicate my sojourn on the streets without similar preparation and precaution. The streets are lethal and should not be taken lightly. (p. vi)

How many times have we wished TV “news reporters” and documentarians would be this honest? But Dr. Grant was seeking knowledge and understanding, not ratings.

Another Kind of Poverty

In many American communities and neighborhoods, stark material poverty is invisible, perhaps even non-existent. Everyone seems to be adequately housed, adequately fed, and adequately clothed. But here we may find another kind of poverty.

I presented Dr. Grant with a real-life example from my own suburban neighborhood.

A woman with three children by three different men, no husband involved, lives in a nice apartment paid

for by government subsidies. The oldest daughter already has an out-of-wedlock baby, no husband, and has been in serious trouble with the law, the details of which I prefer not to publish. The middle daughter wanders around with half her head shaved bald. The little boy attends public school but is not allowed to play outside, not allowed to have friends. The mother does not work. She is a perpetual student at the local community college, publicly subsidized. The family belongs to a church and professes to be Christian. In fact, the church held a shower for the daughter's out-of-wedlock baby, with the pastor displaying no curiosity as to the baby's father.

They have everything they need, and yet they have nothing. They are dependents of the state, going back three generations. We asked Dr. Grant how he would begin to approach their poverty.

He had no easy answer.

"That kind of situation is all too common," he said. "There, all the props have been knocked out from responsibility—and knocked out from any prospects for reform. Thanks to a massive program of disincentives"—Why work when you can live on public subsidies?—"we've locked them into a horrific existence where they can subsist, but never progress. It shows the hopelessness of the world's solutions to great problems."

How does one evangelize persons who say they are Christians, and who look as if they would respond with sharp hostility to any "interference" in their lives? But before this kind of poverty can be addressed, Grant said, other things have to happen.

"We have to learn how to speak to a culture that's in a terrible state of demise," he said. "Historically, that's not a new kind of challenge for the church. We're in the midst of another one of

those bad periods—like the fourteenth century, with the Black Death, or the seventeenth, with the Thirty Years' War. There have been worse times than ours, and the church has always dealt with them." He cited the example of John Amos Comenius, who rose from being a homeless refugee in the Thirty Years' War to become "the father of modern Christian education" in the Western world.

"Our responsibility begins, as always, with the house of God," Dr. Grant said. "In our churches today, the Word of God is not preached, and the gospel not propounded. Instead, the churches are all about happy attitudes and the therapeutic approach to life's problems." [Dr. Grant discusses this more fully in his article—ed.]

"We, the church, have to reach out to society," he said, "but people in the church today are not being taught how to do this. Even then, there will always be those who will not listen. We have to be ready to take the opportunities that will be appreciated, when the lost are ready to hear the gospel."

"The gospel is affording us real and substantial answers. Our eschatology must be such that, given the magnitude of the problems that we face, we are, in the short term, pessimists—but in the long term, optimists."

As he concludes in *The Dispossessed*, "Our commission is not dependent upon conditions and restrictions. Our commission is dependent only upon the unconditional promises of God's word. So, we should just go. Do what we ought to do. Starting now" (p. 232).

Why Foreign Missions?

With America's culture in such a state of demise, why spend time, labor, and resources on foreign missions? Why go to places like Korea and Indonesia?

"We wait on the Lord, and on His purposes, and His timing," Grant said.

"So, first, it's good for my church to see me exercise this kind of commitment, laboring in a mission overseas. It shapes their own vision of servanthood and sacrifice."

"Also, there is much that we can learn from other cultures, especially in light of the increasing paganization of our own. Korea, for instance, is a country that has no long, historical Christian tradition. Yet the church in Korea is a great model for us, powerfully affecting the culture of that nation."

"Indonesia is the most populous Muslim nation in the world. There's even less of a Christian tradition there, and yet the church is working there, too. We have a global Kingdom that Christ is establishing."

Finally, in those American churches which have large congregations in other countries, sometimes the participation of those new congregations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and other regions plays a vital role in the life of their parent denominations in America. The United Methodist Church, for example, would surely have surrendered to groups pressing for the acceptance of same-sex "marriage," had the delegates from Africa not taken such a strong stand for Biblical morality at the denomination's yearly general conferences. In the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria was for many years a powerful voice for faithfulness to God's Word. It is not pleasant to imagine what might have happened to these churches without the contribution of their African congregations.

So What Else Does He Do?

In addition to all of the above, Dr. Grant maintains a blog, Grantian Florilegium (grantian.blogspot.com), is the founder of the Kings Meadow Study Center (kingsmeadow.com), and

Continued on page 25

Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind

By Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011)

Reviewed by Hannah Schultz



In his most recent book, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, Mark Noll continues the discussion of Christian, and particularly evangelical, scholarship which he began in *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1995). He argues that Christian scholarship can best be advanced by recognizing the centrality of Christ and the Incarnation in the Bible. Using church creeds and the works of a variety of Christian scholars, Noll attempts to develop an overarching principle to govern Christian scholarship in a variety of disciplines.

Noll is a well-known figure in the evangelical (and Reformed) world. As a follow-up to the very popular *Scandal*, this book is likely to attract significant interest. It was a selection for the ecumenical Christian reading group to which I belong, at a large secular university, particularly because of its broad appeal to evangelicals. He serves a wide audience and is well respected as an historian.

Noll focuses on important issues. He points to an emphasis on Christology. He encourages the Christian pursuit of excellence in academic and scholarly endeavors. He devotes significant space to the study of historic Christian creeds. He provides a useful rubric delineating the “Varieties of Providential History” which offers a useful format for evaluating the ways in which historians interpret their subject matter (p. 88). Unfortunately, while arguing for desirable goals, Noll is quick to abandon the sufficiency and inerrancy of Scripture.

A Major Flaw

Much of Noll’s discussion of Christology and of the Christian study of science is heavily indebted to Peter Enns’s work in his *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (2005). The theological views that Enns presented in this book resulted in his being terminated from Westminster Theological Seminary in 2008. Although Noll offers the caveat that he does not to subscribe to all of Enns’s beliefs, his work is heavily influenced by Enns’s unorthodox interpretive hermeneutic. He adopts Enns’s “Christotelic” focus, positing that the Bible ought to be seen exclusively as a path to the Incarnation. Noll argues that because the Incarnation meant that Christ is fully human, and because the primary (if not only) focus of the Scripture is the Incarnation, then the Scriptures are, in the same way, also fully human. He takes this full humanity to mean that the Scriptures are inextricably linked to the period in which they are written and are therefore inaccessible to modern-day Christians except as a snapshot of ancient believers’ journeys toward the Incarnate Christ.

This “grammatical-historical hermeneutic” (p. 142) results in significant problems in Noll’s discussion of Biblical inerrancy, problems which result in further errors as he discusses the relationship between the Bible and science. Quoting Enns, Noll argues that “We begin with the assumption that what the Bible intends for us to learn is not primarily concerned with textual unity or precise moral consistency ...

It is a broad and fundamental theological commitment based on the analogy between Christ and Scripture” (p. 139). As a result of this hermeneutic, and Noll’s heightened appreciation for God’s general revelation as interpreted by modern secular scholars, the Scriptures become important exclusively as a trope. “Historical awareness (of the periods in which the Bible was written) is required because the relationship between God’s ‘two books,’ Scripture and nature, has changed significantly over the course of centuries between biblical times and the present” (p. 100).

While Noll does not deny the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture outright, he makes it clear that the preservation of those doctrines is not of significant importance. “If by taking advantage of new historical knowledge ... and using techniques of literary and cultural analysis ... believers agree on some matters with secularists who deny the inspired character of Scripture, this is not automatically a bad thing” (p. 142). This new way of examining the Scriptures leaves the way open not only to evolutionary thought but also to all variety of modern liberal beliefs on sin. This new hermeneutic, when used to interpret Christ’s teachings on the law, “would still provide considerable authoritative teaching from the OT, but not as much as evangelical interpreters have sometimes held Jesus to be offering” (p.143).

Noll seems to point to a valuable goal. Without a doubt, Christians should seek to be the best and most diligent workers in whichever field to which they are called, be they historians

or scientists, garbage-men or philosophers. Where Noll fails is in attempting to base his pursuit of excellence in something other than the clear teaching of God's Word. In attempting to be all-inclusive, he loses the definition which gives direction to his search. In seeking an authority outside of the Scriptures, he has produced a vision of Christ and of the Scriptures which is distorted and stripped of meaning. 🏠

Hannah Schultz, M.A.R., M.B.A., J.D., is a Ph.D. student in History at Central Michigan University.

Jones ... Exodus cont. from page 10

- the form of the name Yahweh] (Freiburg, Germany: Freiburg Universitaets Buchhandlung, 1896). Grimme, Hubert, *Althebräische Inschriften vom Sinai* [Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions in Sinai]. (Hannover, Germany: Orient Buchhandlung Heinz Lafaire, 1923).
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 10. Schlain, Leonard, *The Alphabet versus the Goddess: Conflict between Word and Image* (New York, NY: Penguin, 1998).
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 12. Rohl, David, *From Eden to Exile* (London, UK: Century, Random House, 2009).
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 14. Al-Ansary, Abdul-Rahman and Majeed Khan et al., *Al-Bid: History and Archaeology* (Saudi Arabia Ministries of Education, Antiquities, & Museums, 2002).

Grant ... Repentance cont. from page 13

George Grant is the pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church, director of the King's Meadow Study Center, Founder of Franklin Classical School, New College Franklin, the Comenius School, LifeNet Coalition, HELP Services, Parish Life Network, and the Chalmers Fund. He is the author of more

than five dozen books. The father of three and grandfather of three, he lives in Franklin, TN with his wife and co-author, Karen.

1. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2000), 7.
2. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Heart of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 61.
3. *Ibid.*, 62.
4. George Grant, ed., *The Patriot's Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Cumberland House, 1996), 178.
5. *Ibid.*

Schwartz ... Virtue cont. from page 21

Great Commission.⁵ Rather we should be deliberate as we inject commentary, opinions, decisions, and ideas with the highest priority being that are we being faithful. As Rushdoony points out,

Our God makes a total claim on our lives, and on our money, too; He requires that our children be given to Him also. How do we respond to Him? Are we rich toward ourselves and poor towards God? Do we have time for everything except His Word? Do we want Him only when we need Him?

If we do not have the power of God in our lives, it is because we are denying it; it may well be that we do not want God to interfere too much with our lifestyle. The mere "form of godliness" will get us no further with the Lord than an imitation airline ticket will get us a flight.

Serve the Lord with all your heart, mind, and being with your life, your money, and your family. Go for the power!⁶ 🏠

Andrea Schwartz is the Chalcedon Foundation's active proponent of Christian education and matters relating to the family. She's the author of five books dealing with homeschooling and the family. Her latest book is *Woman of the House*. She oversees the Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute (www.ctti.org) and continues to mentor,

lecture, and teach. Visit her website www.WordsFromAndrea.com. She lives in San Jose with her husband of 37 years. She can be reached by email at lessons.learned@yahoo.com.

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *A Word in Season Vol. 4* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2012), 15.
2. R. J. Rushdoony, *A Word in Season Vol. 4* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2012), 15–16. Of course the term "men" here refers to both men and women.
3. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* is available in many formats and should be incorporated into family devotions and the study of church history. Peter Hammond of Frontline Fellowship has an excellent audio CD, *Heroes of the Faith*, in which he shares many stories of deliberate Christianity.
4. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law Vol. 1* (The Craig Press, 1973), 274.
5. In no way is the call to deliberate Christianity a call to arrogance, pride, or insults. The message of the Cross is offensive; we are not commanded to be offensive.
6. R. J. Rushdoony, *A Word in Season Vol. 4* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2012), 37–38.

Duigon ... Interview cont. from page 23

teaches at the Franklin Classical School in Franklin, TN, which he founded—a private Christian school offering a full curriculum for grades K–12 (franklin-classical.com). In a short video attached to the Kings Meadow website, Grant, asked how he is able to keep up with so many different projects, jokes, "I don't!"

But all of these various enterprises, he said, are part of his way of meeting the challenge to the church to live out her faith effectually. "That's the whole thrust of my ministry. That's what I've always tried to do." 🏠

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for *Faith for All of Life*. He has been a newspaper editor and reporter and is the author of the Bell Mountain Series of novels.

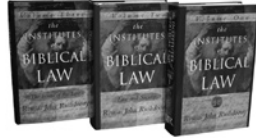
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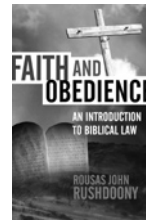
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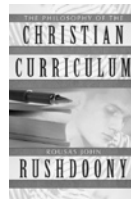
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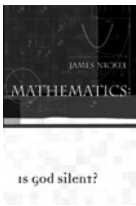


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book was instrumental in launching the Christian school and homeschool movements.

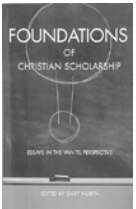
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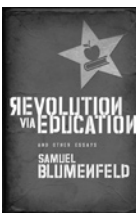
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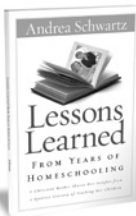
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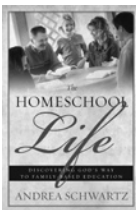
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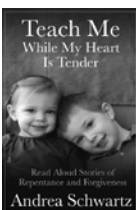
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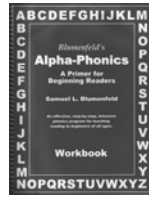


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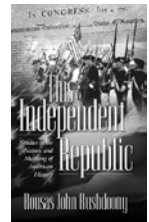


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This Independent Republic

By R. J. Rushdoony. Important insight into American history by one who could trace American development in terms of the Christian ideas which gave it direction. These essays will greatly alter your understanding of, and appreciation for, American history.

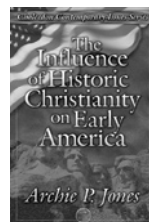
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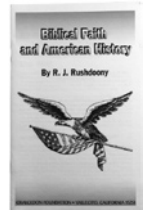


The Influence of Historic Christianity on Early America

By Archie P. Jones. Early America was founded upon the deep, extensive influence of Christianity inherited from the medieval period and the Protestant Reformation. That priceless heritage was not limited to the narrow confines of the personal life of the individual, nor to ecclesiastical structure. Christianity positively and predominately (though not perfectly) shaped culture, education, science,

literature, legal thought, legal education, political thought, law, politics, charity, and missions.

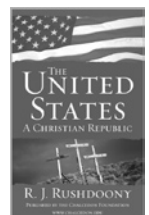
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By R. J. Rushdoony. The author demolishes the modern myth that the United States was founded by deists or humanists bent on creating a secular republic.

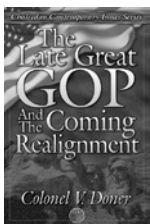
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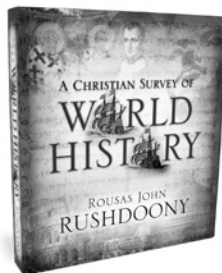
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World History



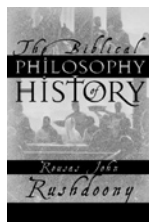
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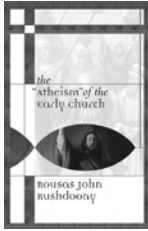


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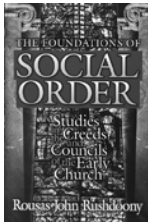
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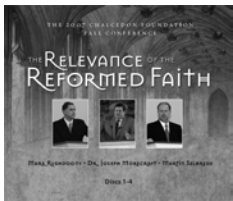


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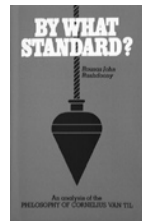
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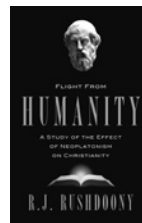


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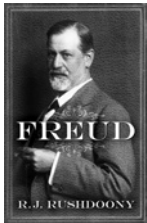


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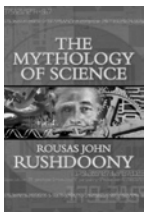
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By R. J. Rushdoony. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought, how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual paradigm, and how they are deferred to as sacrosanct by institutions and disciplines far removed from the empirical sciences. The "mythology" of modern science is its religious devotion to the myth of evolution.

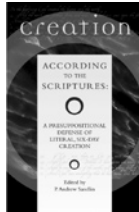
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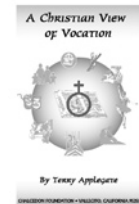
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Larceny in the Heart: The Economics of Satan and the Inflationary State

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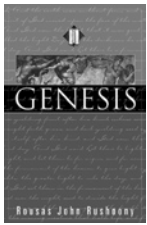
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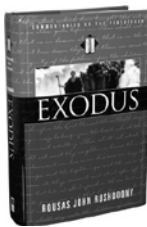


Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

By R. J. Rushdoony. In recent years, it has become commonplace for both humanists and churchmen to sneer at anyone who takes Genesis 1-11 as historical. Yet to believe in the myth of evolution is to accept trillions of miracles to account for our cosmos. Spontaneous generation, the development of something out of nothing, and the blind belief in the miraculous powers of chance,

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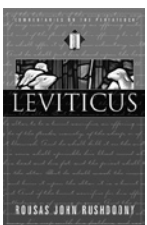
By R. J. Rushdoony. Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ, the exodus is now a glorious ascent into the justice and dominion of the everlasting Kingdom

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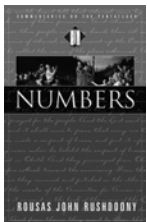
By R. J. Rushdoony. Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God's law is readily shunned in pursuit of more "spiritual" studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God's image and is duty-bound to develop the implications of that image by obedience to God's law. The book of Leviticus contains

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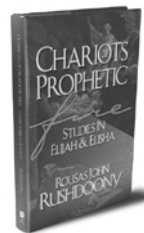
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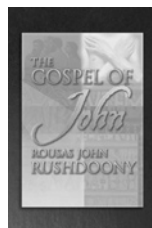
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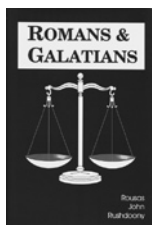
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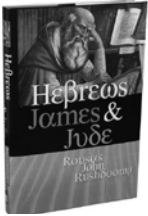
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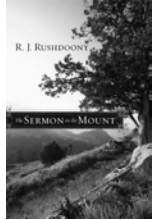
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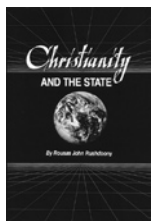
By R. J. Rushdoony. So much has been written about the Sermon on the Mount, but so little of the commentaries venture outside of the matters of the heart. The Beatitudes are reduced to the assumed meaning of their more popular portions, and much of that meaning limits our concerns to downplaying wealth, praying in secret, suppressing our worries, or simply reciting the Lord's Prayer. The Beatitudes are the Kingdom commission to the new Israel of God, and R. J. Rushdoony elucidates this powerful thesis in a readable and engaging commentary on the world's greatest sermon.

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Christianity and the State

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Tithing and Dominion

By Edward A. Powell and R. J. Rushdoony. God's Kingdom covers all things in its scope, and its immediate ministry includes, according to Scripture, the ministry of grace (the church), instruction (the Christian and homeschool), help to the needy (the diaconate), and many other things. God's appointed means for financing His Kingdom activities is centrally the tithe. This work affirms that the Biblical requirement of tithing is a continuing aspect of God's law-word and cannot be neglected.

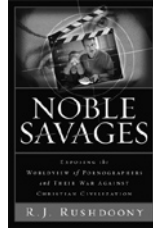
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Salvation and Godly Rule

By R. J. Rushdoony. Salvation in Scripture includes in its meaning "health" and "victory." By limiting the meaning of salvation, men have limited the power of God and the meaning of the Gospel. In this study R. J. Rushdoony demonstrates the expanse of the doctrine of salvation as it relates to the rule of the God and His people.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. In this powerful book *Noble Savages* (formerly *The Politics of Pornography*) Rushdoony demonstrates that in order for modern man to justify his perversion he must reject the Biblical doctrine of the fall of man. If there is no fall, the Marquis de Sade argued, then all that man does is normative. What is the problem? It's the philosophy behind pornography — the rejection of the fall of man that makes normative all that man does. Learn it all in this timeless classic.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. The Christian faith once meant that a believer responded to a dark world by actively working to bring God's grace and mercy to others, both by word and by deed. However, a modern, self-centered church has isolated the faith to a pietism that relinquishes charitable responsibility to the state. The end result has been the empowering of a humanistic world order. In this book, Rushdoony elucidates the Christian's calling to charity and its implications for Godly dominion.

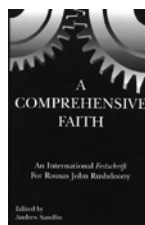
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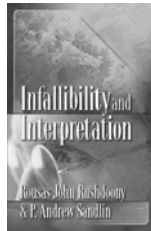
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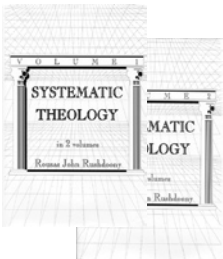
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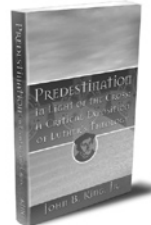
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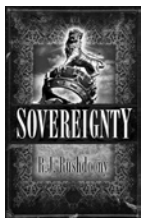
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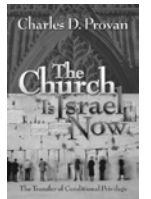
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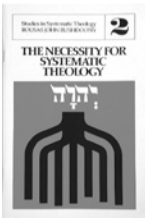
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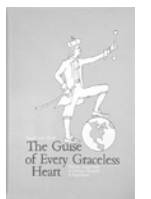
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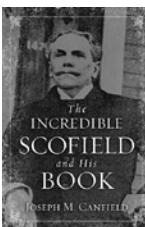
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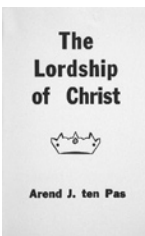
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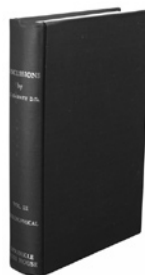


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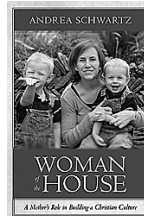


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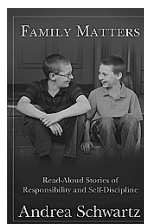
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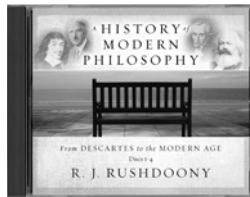
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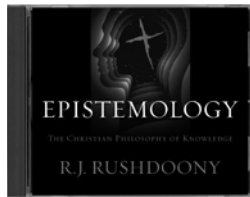
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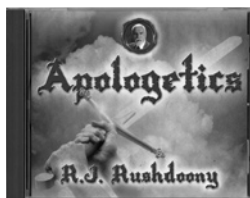


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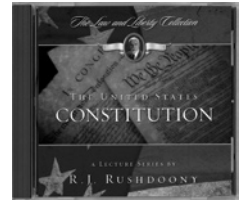
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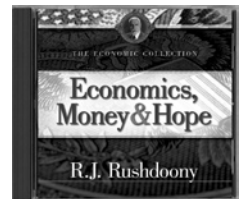
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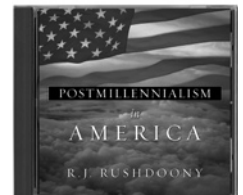
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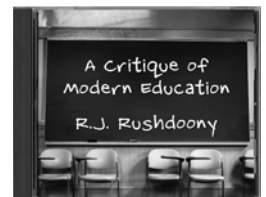
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