

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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Kingdom Men and Kingdom Law

By Mark R. Rushdoony



Much of Scripture is given to us in types and metaphors. These images teach because they are of powerful, often violent scenes which our cartoonish Sunday school images often avoid. The Exodus, Noah's flood, and Jonah's deliverance all teach us of God's salvation, but they involve horrific scenes.

The use of lordship, kingdom, and law also once carried very negative connotations, for the experience of the ancient world with these things was almost universally a negative one. Law was arbitrary and served the interests of the few. Political order was to serve the king; individuals mattered little. When God by grace rescued the Hebrews from Egyptian despotism, one of His first provisions for their future blessing was the giving of the law. It constituted a grace in itself, the gift of a law that represented not the arbitrary and abusive will of a political-religious oligarchy, but the justice system of a merciful God.

Biblical revelation often replaces negative connotations with superlative ones. God restores by making all things new. He offers us a Kingdom, "not of this world," with Himself as King and commands us to pray that this Kingdom come in its fullness.

Theocracy

Having this command to recognize His Kingdom, we must address the issue of the law of the king. A king without authority is a figurehead. No kingdom is

without law. Chalcedon has frequently used the term *theocracy* and *theonomy*. These terms describe more theology than political philosophy. *Theocracy* means, literally, "the rule of God." It recognizes that God reigns through Jesus Christ, to Whom "all power" was given "in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). *Theonomy*, on the other hand, means "God's law," as authoritative in His Kingdom. The alternative to *theonomy* as God's law is either a denial of theocracy and the "rule of God" or to propose that Christ's Kingship is as a figurehead or at best a spiritual one. The first position renders the image of the King misleading, as there were no such monarchs in the ancient world; the later renders it weak because it means the King and His Kingdom are limited in jurisdiction.

Jurisdictional Matters

If we accept that Christ is now King (theocracy) and that His law is authoritative (theonomy), then we will view it as man's rules of Kingdom citizenship. When we travel abroad, we assume each nation has laws for its jurisdiction which bind citizen and foreigner alike. They also bind the law-abiding citizen as well as the rebel. They are, in fact, most obviously needed to control "the lawless and disobedient" (1 Tim. 1:9). There can be only one law in a kingdom, and this is particularly true in the Kingdom of God because all God's laws are, by virtue of their source, moral laws.

We must also ask ourselves where God's Kingdom is located. The pietistic

tradition of subjective dispensational eschatologies suggests that it is in suspense until the return of Christ and that the "church age" has no part in the Kingdom. A popular trend in some circles is to limit the Kingdom of God to the church, the secular world actually referred to as a separate kingdom.

Church versus Family?

Amongst those who hold to the present rule of Christ (theocracy) and the law of God (theonomy) as the authoritative codification of the Kingdom law, there has been a difference of opinion as to the relative relationship of administrative duties. The question has centered on whether the family or the local church is the primary human sphere of and authority over Kingdom activities. Neither position denies the legitimacy of the other sphere, but how one answers this question dictates the emphasis and means whereby Kingdom work is pursued.

Though Chalcedon has historically come down on the side of the family on this question, it has never intended to weaken the church, but to strengthen the emasculated family.

The weakness of the church in our day is, aside from the general decline in faith in the West, largely due to its own retreat from the world into that of mere spiritual solace. Those modern churches that encourage dominion actively find their impact is pronounced.

The faithful church, moreover, has demonstrated that it can survive persecution. Often, in such troubled

times, its message has been heard as most earnest and needed. The strength of the church is the Word of God itself.

The family is different. Its strength, even when faithful, necessitates both authority and capital. The Hebrew commonwealth was tribal, that is, family based. This is to say the basic government of the Hebrew society was the family. The great imbalance today lies not between church and family, but between family and state.

The modern family is now equated with the nuclear family rather than the patriarchal, tribal family that represented generations of wealth and wisdom. In the economic sphere we can see the modern family as emasculated. Each generation is decapitalized by inflation, debt, taxation, and inheritance laws alone. This is a revolutionary blow that is repeated with each generation. In a Biblical social order, family wealth would be accumulated and passed on, while today we expect each generation to capitalize itself. Recent Asian immigrants have followed older family-friendly strategies by living in crowded conditions while accumulating capital with which to purchase businesses and homes debt-free. Their emphasis on the family has caused them to go to great sacrificial lengths to create their own power-center. The increase in the power of the family we wish to see, likewise, would be in its authority and self-government, which is encouraged by economic power. If this replaces any other sphere of authority, such power would rob the state, not the church.

For the institutional church to add to the pressure on the already weakened family by attacking the necessity of stronger families involves a blow to an already weakened unit. Let the statistics be on guard. Stronger Christian families will make for stronger churches.

What pastor does not want to see that homeschooled family of six, eight, or ten visit for the first time?

The Larger Issue

The larger issue is not the relative roles of the church and family but theocracy, the rule of God itself. Thus, the more fundamental debate is that of theonomy versus antinomianism, that is, whether the law of God applies or not.

If there is no applicable law, there can be no theonomy as there is then no rule of God for men to follow. This creates problems. If obedience to God is subjective, there can be no objective disobedience, a very convenient result for sinful man. Moreover, no subjective obedience can be enjoined on another. The result of antinomianism has always fluctuated between lawlessness and arbitrary rule-making.

In our day there is a great expanse of open ground in need of Kingdom pioneers. If we acknowledge the law of God, then the question ought not to be what the godly church or family takes from the other, but what both can take back for the Kingdom. Ideally the church should be encouraging stronger families and families should be building up their local church. The government of the Kingdom is upon Christ's shoulders, not any of its administrative departments.

Who's in Charge?

The supremacy of God is the key to a distinctly Christian view of authority and this is what references to the Kingdom of God, the law of God (theonomy), self-consciously do. Because of a misunderstanding of the relation of the law and grace, many refer only to the *Word* of God. If Jesus is God and the Lord in Whom we profess faith (Phil. 2:9–11), then His Great

Commission to teach men “to observe all things whatsoever” He commanded involves teaching all that Word including the law.

Antinomianism is also anti-Trinitarian because it assumes that what Jesus commanded was different than what the triune God declared in Scripture. Trinitarian thought demands that the Word of God is the Word of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It demands that Jesus would not command, nor the Holy Spirit lead us contrary to that revealed, authoritative Word.

The Norm

Theocracy should be the norm in our thinking, not as an ideal future, but as the present context for all of life. Sin and rebellion should be viewed as aberrations that will not last. We need to think in terms of the absurdity of sin and unbelief.

The “rule of God” means the sovereignty of God and this precludes that of the state, church, or family. The sovereignty of God requires the authority of His law-word as the standard for all spheres and all men. If we do not call the world to God and His law, then we call the world to God and imply that they can defy His law.

A man who refuses to believe in gravity has a problem. He must not be pandered to; he should be warned of the certain laws of physics and the consequences of ignoring them. Likewise, a society (or church) that refuses to believe in God's moral law must also be warned of the consequences of its violation. Such a message is not substituting law for salvation; it is giving unbelieving man the whole gospel of the Great Commission, one which is not only of redemption but restoration and

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Reinventing Leadership

Martin G. Selbrede



At the invitation of Attorney Jerri Lynn Ward, I had an opportunity to speak to a small group of liberty-minded citizens in Austin, Texas, on June 14, 2013. There was some conspicuous opposition to that invitation, premised on the ill-informed fear that I would be peddling tyranny under color of my supposed theocratic aspirations. People were warned to avoid my presentation, and I suspect that those who bought into that poisoning of the well typified the insight of William James that “a great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.”

Cognizant of this resistance, I added several PowerPoint slides to my current Law & Liberty Tour presentation to actually quantify the size of government as laid out in Scripture. People need to see the numbers. They cannot grasp the Biblical concepts unless we bring home to them the magnitude of the situation. I wanted to show that if we followed the Bible, the total cost of civil government would be less than one-percent of what it is now.

These Biblical concepts were so important that I published Dr. Robert Fugate’s extended defense of the Biblical head tax over the span of three consecutive issues of *Faith for All of Life*.¹ Precisely because some notable theologians had publicly disputed R. J. Rushdoony’s exposition of the civil tax, it was necessary to push back and recover that critical lost ground. The true value of Dr. Fugate’s “dull, long-

winded, footnote-laden” articles has yet to be fully appreciated. They provide an astonishing blueprint for a modern deliverance from statist tyranny. If you’re shown the numbers, maybe you’ll grasp how God’s law shatters the current paradigm and thoroughly empowers *you*.

The First Comparison

The proposed federal budget (not including state, county, or city budgets) is currently \$3.8 trillion. What our opponents fear is that some alleged American Taliban will arise and seize control of this bloated federal apparatus and steer the massive ship of state in terms of a benighted Christian fundamentalist extremism. This “takeover” will supposedly institute a tyranny of untold horrors—\$3.8 trillion dollars worth of oppression.

This fear might have merit if Christians operate in terms of Rushdoony’s *critics*, who believe it fairly safe to disregard the law of God when it comes to the limits of civil taxation (whether the critique arises from dispensational rejection of the bulk of God’s law or from those Reformed theologians rebutted by Dr. Fugate). But when God’s law is applied as written, the picture is radically different.

Under the status quo, that \$3.8 trillion federal budget for 2013 *will* be paid ... by you. It is irrelevant how much of this amount is secured by direct taxation or the more insidious forms of hidden taxation (debt, monetary inflation, etc.). The government will have this much money to play with. Once I had this budget figure in hand, the massive defunding of various New World Orders

that figures so prominently into my Law & Liberty presentations across so many categories now had a reference point, a stake in the ground in regard to civil taxation.

Using this federal budget figure, I compared it with the Bible’s *total* civil tax load to arrive at the comparative size of Biblically based civil government versus the current federal government. Is there indeed room in a Biblical budget for a massive state apparatus to fund massive tyrannical impositions, as many allege?

Before we do the math, we need to understand that for the following scenarios to work, the *totality* of the Bible’s fiscal requirements need to be present (e.g., the poor tithe to eradicate poverty, the Levitical tithe to fund education, substitution of full liability laws for limited liability laws to push back regulatory insanity in terms of human responsibility, applied free market privatization strategies, a genuinely Biblical national defense policy, etc.).

In other words, the recovery of *Christian self-government* precedes the successful recovery of civil liberty. Only in that context can we realize the blessings to be outlined here. And we have been consistent in presenting this as a package deal: the totality of the covenant. Any piecemeal reduction of the above reduces God’s Word to a caricature of itself. Biblical totalism: accept no substitutes!

Understanding that, *now* we can look at the numbers.

The total annual tax to cover *all* civil government expenses is one-half

shekel of silver per male citizen twenty years or older. Using the largest value for a half shekel (0.3 ounce), the then-current market price of silver (\$22 per ounce), and the current population of the U.S., I displayed the mathematical derivation of the annual budget God allows the civil government to spend: \$528 million, amounting to less than forty-five cents per year per taxpayer in pre-1965 silver coins (one quarter plus two dimes). This amounts to 0.0139% of the U.S. federal budget for 2013. In other words, the federal government in America spends 7,200 times more than God's law allows it to collect (\$3.8 trillion versus \$528 million). Therefore, application of God's law would entail a stupendous shrinkage of the coercive sector of society, *not its expansion*.

Because Christian self-government under the law of God has radically shrunk over the last two centuries, the state has expanded in turn, taking on the attributes of God in the process. The surveillance state is simply one of the manifestations of the state's attempt to play God, having its eyes everywhere in its bid to achieve omniscience. The Bible pulls the financial plug on all this statist overreaching. Those that benefit from that overreaching (those who "eat up the sins of My people," as Hosea 4:8 puts it) will oppose every reform and justify these continued usurpations.

The Second Comparison

In preparing my presentation for June 14, I omitted the state and local government budgets. I just wanted to get my point across that the implementation of Christian self-government under Biblical law *undercuts tyranny* by choking its fiscal throat. For my listeners back then, I spent considerable time on other aspects of Biblical law, but now I'd like to revisit the civil tax issue and extend it a bit further by factoring *state budgets* into the picture.

I acquired the list of the fifty state budgets that are currently available online (which range between their 2013 and 2015 budget numbers) and totaled all of them up: 1.943 trillion. To fully understand the scope of the *reduction of the state* under Biblical law, we need to add this amount to the federal budget of \$3.8 trillion. Unlike the federal government, the states can't directly implement monetary inflation, so that money will be extracted from you by way of taxation and debt manipulation.

We would still remain at the \$528 million annual taxation limit under Biblical law, but instead of comparing that amount only against the federal budget of \$3.8 trillion, we need to compare God's tax against the combined federal and state budgets, which together total \$5.743 trillion. Now we get a better picture of the actual recovery under Christian self-government: God's tax can only support a government that is 0.0092% the size of our current state and federal governments. Our state and local governments combined extract 10,876 times more cash from us than the Bible authorizes for the conduct of civil government. My earlier estimate of a 7,200-fold excess tax burden ignored the contribution of the state governments. The 10,876-fold figure is more accurate—and even this figure doesn't take into account county and municipal tax burdens.

Of course, this means that every "Christian" political candidate who speaks about implementing "Biblical morality" in government who fails to adopt these tabulated reductions as his or her ultimate target hasn't the least bit interest in what the Bible says. Many of you will continue to vote such candidates into office. Let's see what you're leaving on the table when you do so.

Leaving Money on the Table

Yes, numbers are useful. Percentages

are useful. People can grasp the idea that the Bible's limitations on civil government (in its total Biblical context, not as an isolated proof-text) surely mean that popular vilifications of theocracy are built on convenient lies propagated by anti-theists that are (regrettably) justified by too many Christians indulging a smorgasbord approach to the Scriptures. With some gunshot wounds in our own backs from some of our best-known theologians, our incapacitation has been largely self-inflicted. The big victim here is the Scriptures themselves, the living Word of God that is no longer raised as the proper Light in which to see these issues.

But perhaps more useful than battling around all these immense numbers is to *personalize them*. Big numbers cause our eyes to glaze over. But numbers that relate to us might just get our attention.

So, let's run the numbers. We have an annual budget burden of \$5.743 trillion between our state and federal budgets versus \$528 million under a theonomic budget (a civil budget based unapologetically on the Word of God). This amount was premised on an estimated national population of 318 million people, of which one quarter were males twenty years and older. Let's assume for argument that those males constitute the nation's work force and see how much better off they would be when comparing the burdens imposed by the various civil governments of America versus a government entirely aligned with God's commands.

The difference between man's and God's government is \$5.7425 trillion. If you take this amount and divide it by the number in the work force who'd be paying God's civil tax (80 million workers), you arrive at a mean average of \$71,781 per worker. In other words, the cost of rejecting liberty under God's law is on average nearly \$72,000 per year

per worker. This statism stuff is a costly proposition—as all forms of slavery are.

Yes, you can argue that I've stacked the numbers based on those who pay the Biblical civil tax, and that using 2011 census numbers you would have closer to 158 million workers out there (121 million households with 1.3 workers each). But what you cannot quantify is the radical explosion in productivity that a self-governed society brings to the table. One in three employees work for the government today—for the coercive rather than the productive sector of society. Realignment in terms of productivity, in terms of Christian self-government, will bring into play all the ramifications of the growth of the Kingdom of God.

The termination of property taxes (collected by governments below the state level) is also a key part of this realignment. Add to this the implications of the poor tithe (amounting to an annualized 3.33% of your net income), which eradicates all poverty in a society operating under God's law (Deut. 15:4), and we realize that the "perfect law of liberty" spoken of in James 1:25 truly liberates from all forms of oppression.

Confronting Failed Leadership

Christians should be out in the lead on these issues. Sadly, we are not. When we're challenged with questions like "how will you handle roads and freeways under Biblical law?" we find libertarian authors way out in front of us on these issues. Those authors thought it worth their while to work out the implications of their philosophy of limited government and start to develop compelling answers. Meanwhile, Christians hardly lift a finger to exercise leadership here despite their greater incentive to "bring every thought in captivity to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

Why, precisely, do we find such

inertia among Christian leaders? Is it slothfulness? Is it self-interest? Is it fearfulness? Is it an unwillingness to inculcate Christian self-government under the law of God? To do the right thing involves moral courage, and to know the right thing to do involves moral clarity. Do our leaders lack both?

Maybe we've not yet fully developed the concept of Christian self-government: it's still too embryonic in our imaginations to be able to stand on its own two feet. We read without understanding verses such as "the hand of the diligent shall bear rule" (Prov. 12:24) or "seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings ..." (Prov. 22:29) because we don't see ourselves as exercising leadership at the individual level, at the most basic level of government.

Dr. Rushdoony was justified in quoting Chadwick to the effect that "perhaps we are allowed to be comfortable because we are unfit to be heroic."² We despise the day of small things and scoff at the ridiculously modest things that God fixes His total attention upon, such as a dirt-cheap plumb line (Zech. 4:10). We consequently support the status quo while hypocritically bemoaning it. We would rather overfeed our civil government nearly 11,000 times more than it should receive, fattening up our false god in the process, rather than to rule ourselves by the light of God's Word.³

Yet God graciously continues to cast a spark into the hearts of men and women who are willing to roll up their sleeves and exercise leadership over the most massive, the most difficult, the most challenging of all domains: themselves. These are the Christians who wisely reject calls to "take over civil government" but faithfully answer the call to take over the *functions* of civil government in their spheres of

influence. You shrink the state by shrinking demand for it, and this is done from the bottom up, not the top down.⁴ *This is Biblical dominion. This is the reason why "the kingdom of God cometh not by observation"* (Luke 17:20). This process involves destroying the demand for the vast majority of functions currently (mis)handled by civil government by providing a superior alternative.

The law of God provides the template for that superior, decentralized alternative. We have only to be faithful in applying it. As faithful Christians come to understand this, we shall soon see the hand of the diligent bear rule.

But if you're willing to let the state and federal governments take and spend, on average, \$72,000 a year out of your family's budget, then there is nothing I could possibly say that will resonate with you. You've already chosen your true god and declared your actual allegiance, and I weep for your children.

But if you're already beginning to think about how you could use that kind of capital for the good of your family and for your Lord and Savior's Kingdom, you've already taken the most important step out of slavery: recognizing that godly dominion isn't achieved through co-opting the state but through Christian self-government. Self-government must increase, and civil government must decrease. There are no short cuts⁵ or easy ways out of statism—but there *is* a way out.⁶ By developing our spiritual capital first, we're actually building the road that will permit recovery of material capital and true liberty. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness [justice], and all these other things shall be given unto you."

1. Dr. Robert Fugate, "The Head Tax: The Only God-Endorsed Civil Tax," *Faith for All of Life* July/August 2012, 4ff., and the

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The Seminary and the Death of Missions

Bojidar Marinov



In my work with Christian missions around the globe, I have encountered a phenomenon that I consider threatening to the future of missions.

Young men who have been converted to the message of Christian Reconstruction and who have heeded the call to evangelize their nation with the comprehensive, culture-changing gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, believe they need seminary education to be able to succeed on the mission field. In fact, to be honest, I struggled with the same belief in the early years of my mission work in Bulgaria. A Christian seminary—especially one attached to a supposedly “Reformed” denomination in the U.S.—a young missionary believes, is a necessary step for him in learning theology and its practical applications, so that he can effectively evangelize the people to whom he is sent.

Such belief is based on an erroneous view of the nature and purpose of foreign missions, as well as on a misunderstanding concerning the real nature and purpose of modern seminaries.

What Does a Foreign Mission Really Do?

In two earlier articles¹ published in *Faith for All of Life*, I defended the thesis that foreign missions were never intended in the Bible to be an escapist undertaking of snatching individual souls and lining them up at the bus stop to heaven. Neither were they a “New Testament thing.” Foreign missions originated in the Old Testament and

were intended as a means to expand the culture, or rather, the civilization created by the law of God in Israel, to all the nations on the earth. That was Israel’s very *raison d’être*: to serve as a teacher to the nations, as a city on a hill and light to the world. And the nations would see the laws of Israel and would praise their God and would desire their wisdom (Deut. 4:5–8).

Foreign missions, then, were a cultural conquest, as was the later development of Israel’s Diaspora, the synagogue. But since culture is defined by its laws more than anything else, the essential nature and the main focus of foreign mission was to be *ethical/judicial*, that is, concerned with issues of *practical* righteousness and justice, both for the individual and for his institutions. God’s own “foreign mission” to Israel in Egypt culminated in Mount Sinai where He made the covenant with them and gave them the law. From there on, Israel as a community was to be defined by the law, and Israel’s purpose and meaning was to be defined by teaching the nations that same law.

But if this is so, then the main focus of foreign missions should be not abstract theology but what is often called “applied theology.” And “applied” means really *applied*, that is, theology that is not just a discipline existing for itself, an ivory tower structure of pure intellectual interest in Biblical typology, or in obscure textual structures in the Bible, or in patterns of liturgy or ritual, or in peeking into the intricate details of the ontology of the Godhead. “Applied” means a theology that is concerned

first and foremost with *translating the knowledge of God into specific ethical and judicial instructions* for the life of man, as well as for the life of his society.

This is the very meaning of the gospel, as preached by Jesus Christ: the knowledge of God translated into concrete ethical and judicial terms as the foundation for the life of man and of his society. God is holy, man is fallen. Translated into a concrete judicial reality, this means that man is heading to a place of eternal judgment. God is also merciful, and He is Sovereign; He has sent His Son to atone for the sins of man, and thus save the elect. Translated into concrete judicial reality this means that the elect are going to spend eternity with God. Those who are saved are called to obey God in Christ, and this means they are under obligation to return back to the ethical/judicial principles of the law of God, which is the very purpose of the New Testament teachings of both Christ and the apostles. Also, the creation fell with Adam, but was restored in Christ, which means that Christ’s redeemed are to work to restore the creation around them back to God’s purpose for it. The sanctification of the heart of man and the sanctification of his environment and culture are the same process, and it is a process of ethical/judicial restoration, that is, of returning man, the culture, and the creation back to ethical obedience to God.

This is exactly how the gospel is described in 1 Corinthians 15:1–28. We can’t understand the true nature of the gospel unless we accept the truth of this passage, that the gospel starts with the

fact of our sin and Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, but inevitably leads to *all things being subjected to Him*, that is, a world that is operating under the law of God. History is that judicial victory of Christ, of making all His enemies His footstool. Preaching or missions that are not led to this final goal of evangelism will always be incomplete and irrelevant. Evangelism can't be limited to the fact of Christ's death, or to the individual salvation of a few souls. Evangelism is about *restoration of all things* under God.

What Does a Seminary Really Do?

A Christian mission, therefore, is first and foremost an ethical/judicial undertaking, to change the hearts, behavior, practices, habits, customs, norms, laws of a nation so that the nation submits to God. Such a task doesn't need abstract theology; it needs a theology that informs the hearts, behavior, practices, habits, customs, norms, laws as to what practical godliness is—a theology that makes the connection between the character of God and the character of man, and teaches the redeemed man to build his culture in obedience to God.

So does a missionary really need our modern seminary education to be able to do his work?

The modern seminary is not only unfavorable to this task of evangelism, it is in reality practically opposed to it. It is in the very nature of the modern seminary to separate theology from life, and, consequently, faith from life. R. J. Rushdoony called the seminary a "neoplatonic institution," and pointed to the fact that teaching in the modern seminaries is modeled after Greek pagan thinking.² It is based not on a covenantal view of reality where faith has direct applications to the real world of human action, but on the dualistic separation of theology and practice. There is a very clear separation between theological disciplines and practical disciplines, Rush-

"A Christian mission, therefore, is first and foremost an ethical/judicial undertaking, to change the hearts, behavior, practices, habits, customs, norms, laws of a nation so that the nation submits to God."

doony continues his analysis, and that separation between theoretical theology and applied disciplines is a testimony of the dualism of the modern seminary.

If a modern student would try to find any seminary courses that try to apply theology to life outside the limited religious experience a man has in the church Sunday morning, or outside the obscure intellectual pursuits of seminary professors and students, he would have a hard time finding such a thing. There are no seminary courses on Biblical economics, or Biblical civil government, or Biblical money theory, or Biblical principles for business, or science, or family, or anything else that men in the real world have to deal with. No seminary offers anything that would apply theology to life. No seminary offers courses in comprehensive worldview, starting from understanding the creeds, through their influence on our modern ideas, to practice. There are no economic nor legal commentaries on the Bible in the libraries of the modern seminaries, and consequently such commentaries or books are not part of the curriculum and are not an assigned reading.

Instead, during the whole course of education, seminaries drown their students in a sea of irrelevance. Depending on the seminary, the courses emphasize textual and etymological criticism, or

liturgical details, or philosophical hair-splitting. The students learn about the Bible only as much as to be able to produce endless talks or papers on obscure topics in a highly academic language. At the end, a student knows how to satisfy his professors' obsession with elitist academic philosophizing; but he hasn't learned a thing about how to change the culture of a pagan nation, or how to voice a prophetic warning about a coming judgment for ungodly practices in that nation.

In fact, some modern seminaries even go as far as to limit the gospel to a few intellectual propositions, and devise a theology that separates the gospel from practical living and practical obedience. At the end, obeying God is not part of the gospel, and the seminary graduates are only trained to preach and teach that limited, truncated gospel, divorced from the Great Commission.

Can the Seminary Generate Church Leaders?

As elitist as the culture in the seminaries is, it is far from being even close to producing true Christian leadership. Elite is not the same as leadership, and leaders are not produced through training in neoplatonic irrelevance. A leader only arises when there is a *covenantal* worldview, that is, a worldview that allows for no dualism between the intellectual foundation and the practical applications of an ideology. Seminary training by professors who make a living by living in a secluded habitat of abstract theological meditation is just as incapable of producing true leaders who change cultures and teach nations as is government school education by union-protected bureaucrat-teachers incapable of producing a generation of risk-taking entrepreneurs.

It is not a surprise then that the rise of the seminary, and especially the rise of seminary education as the founda-

tional test and qualification for ministry, whether pastoral or missional, has coincided with the decline in the effectiveness of missions. A missionary who views the world in dualistic terms, who views theology separated from practical ideology, faith separated from real life, and church activities separated from “worldly” activities, would inevitably limit his mission endeavors to building a small ecclesiastical replica of his seminary, or of the world that his seminary is promoting in its curriculum.

He won't be willing to change the culture or challenge the world. In fact, he won't have the theological tools or knowledge to do either. To do so, he would have to be a *social reformer*, and being a social reformer is the ultimate anathema for the modern seminary mentality. Issues of practical personal ethics may be included in the scope of his preaching and teaching to his listeners, but never issues of justice and equity. Even that personal ethics that is present in his preaching and teaching would be rather reduced to a mystical and individualistic level, and issues of political, economic, legal, or other ethics would be excluded, as being “not the gospel.” When many years ago I asked a Presbyterian missionary in Eastern Europe whether he teaches his listeners on issues like taxes, the proper role of civil government, or investments and retirement, he replied that these issues were “general equity,” not “the gospel.” His mission is still struggling to produce any interest in its message, many years and many millions of dollars later.

And indeed, such a mission would find itself only concerned with things peripheral to the culture; and as a result, will logically be relegated to the periphery of the culture, to continue its irrelevant existence there, or die out.

A young missionary, then, has nothing to gain of seminary education. The

money spent, plus the time spent in studying irrelevant disciplines and writing irrelevant papers on obscure topics, is not worth it. Nothing that a seminary can offer can help a missionary in his task to conquer the world for Christ. If anything, it will teach him and train him to find fulfillment in doing nothing and accomplishing nothing of value, except for the intellectual pleasure of a small elitist cabal. Far from helping him in his task, a modern seminary will only waste his time, and possibly lead to the death of his mission.

How to Train a Missionary

The question then remains: Where would a missionary get his theological education?

Here I would offer my definition of a leader, that has served me well in my work: *A leader is one who is a book ahead of everyone else.* A young missionary must first and foremost, in order to prepare for the ministry, build his own library with high-quality books that help him understand the application of the gospel to every area of life. This will mean, of course, all the books of all Christian Reconstruction authors, for Christian Reconstruction has been the only movement specifically devoted to building a comprehensive Biblical worldview, applied to practice in both man's life and in the life of his culture.

Then he must read them. When a crisis hits, men always look for answers. Cultural conflicts are always won by the men who have better answers to society's problems. A missionary must be prepared to give an answer to everything he is asked about. A well-read missionary who has the Biblical answers will inevitably focus the attention of the culture on himself, and will have an open door for evangelism. Deuteronomy 4:5–8 was a promise. It still is.

Then he must teach his listeners those Biblical principles and their ap-

plication to their everyday life. Nothing speaks “come and join us” so powerfully as a covenant community that has the best laws and abides by them. A seminary will teach him neither the laws nor their practical case application to his culture. Such a job is the job of a pioneer; and one graduates from a seminary by learning to tread the old traditional paths, not by breaking new ones.

And then, he must never forget the goal of the gospel: make the culture submit to Christ. The gospel doesn't end with a person's conversion, it ends with all being subjected to Christ. Preach it to your listeners every time you have the chance.

And at the end, he must present the optimism of the gospel: that future belongs to us Christians (1 Cor. 3:22).

If a missionary does these things, his mission will be successful beyond his wildest expectations—or at least, way more successful than anything produced by seminary graduates around the world today. God doesn't bless neoplatonic dualistic irrelevance. But He certainly does bless faithful covenantal preaching and practical justice and righteousness. 🇸🇻

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1. “The True Origin of Foreign Missions,” *FFAOL*, May/June 2010; “Don't Plant Churches, Build Covenant Communities,” *FFAOL*, July/August 2011.

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology, Vol. I*, (Vallejo, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 97–101, 113–115.

Law, Covenant, and a Constitutional Republic

Rev. Paul Michael Raymond



The commandment to structure Israel's government according to the law of God is a covenantal command. Since this government model was given at Sinai, it was a model of law as well as of covenant. This covenant had the seeds of what we know as American Constitutionalism, which emphasizes limitations and spheres of jurisdiction and power.

Hebrew political scholar Daniel Elazar explains that the separation of powers is not naturally inherent. "Politically, a covenant involves a coming together (con-gregation) of basically equal humans who consent with one other through a morally binding pact supported by a transcendent power, establishing with the partners a new framework or setting them on the road to a new task, that can only be dissolved by mutual agreement of all the parties to it."¹

Elements of the Covenant

Israel's covenant had all of these components: a congregation of liberated people, a morally binding pact and new framework of life called the Testimony of Witness given at Sinai that only both parties could dissolve, with God's support. The political and religious structure was patterned after the revealed law of God. Israel's new task was to be obedient to that law. They agreed to the terms of the covenant, which included agreeing to the sanctions for rebellion. When Israel rebelled, they agreed to dissolve the covenant. In turn, God also agreed and forsook them—divorcing them and sending His law out to the

Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel.

But this covenant model of government was not a model only for Israel, but was of universal importance for all nations. Israel was to be the template for all governments in all nations. Moses says to Israel in Deuteronomy 4:5–8, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" God, through Moses, is reminding this new generation of Israelites of the importance of covenant concerning political affairs.

Since all of Western civilization's founding documents are more or less Biblically based, the structure of the Hebrew government should be of immense concern to us today. The idea of government comes directly from God. Unlike the theories of John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau or Thomas Paine, government is not man's idea. It did not originate out of a need for men to live together in an orderly fashion, and it is not a necessary evil. In the realm of eternity, before the foundation of the earth, within the Godhead, there existed the internal

government of the triune deity. When God created man in His own image, He created him with governing knowledge and the ability to govern himself. God governs man according to His holy law, and man is obligated to self-governance. Man was created to be a self-governing creature, under God's law, which would guarantee his liberty and happiness, provided that he maintained obedience.

Through His covenant, God offers Israel the freedom to obey or disobey. Since the Spirit was not at work in most of Israel's first generation, they were unable and unwilling to obey and therefore were kept from the inheritance of promise at Canaan. Elazar explains that, "He [God] offers humans freedom under the terms of the covenant, retaining the covenantal authority to reward or punish the consequences of that freedom at some future date."² The Sinai covenant set the stage for every nation whose goals are righteous judgment and justice. It was to set the stage for all governance and politics.

Since the Biblical covenant is grounded in ethics and moral commitments, whenever the Biblical model of covenant polity is enforced, power and justice together are effective both morally and operationally. Elazar shows that history is full of examples of national covenanting to protect that nation from gross apostasy, such as during the European Reformation. "[D]uring the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Swiss and the Dutch, the Scots and the English Puritans not only conceived of civil society in covenantal terms, but actually wrote national covenants to which loyal members of the body politic

subscribed. Similar covenants were used in the founding of many of the original colonies in British North America. Covenantal thinking was the common mode of political conceptualization and expression during the American Revolution, where it was reflected in any number of constitutional documents.”³

On the other hand, whenever the Biblical model of government is neglected, power and justice are perverted, giving way to injustice. The result is cultural disintegration, statism, and eventually tyranny. Thus it is so important for governments to have a perfectly infallible standard of law and government. Nations that do not adhere to God’s covenant are doing exactly what Israel did when they rebelled against the covenant of God’s law. The results will be the same.

The Parties to the Covenant

Not only was the covenant to structure the nation of Israel, set up her laws, and provide a righteous model for the entire global order, but it was to establish a relationship between the parties involved. The key focus of covenant is on relationships. By establishing His covenant with Israel, Elazar says that God was making a relationship “constitutionalizing.” The strength of the relationship between God and Israel was to be based upon the Hebrew constitution: the law of God. Elazar says that “God’s covenant with Israel established the Jewish people and founded it as a body politic while at the same time creating the religious framework which gave that polity its raison d’être, its norms, and its constitution, as well as the guidelines for developing a political order based upon proper, that is to say, covenantal relationships.”⁴

Without covenant identification, Israel could not really be a cohesive civil and religious body politic. They could not have ecclesiastic or national standing without becoming a legitimate religious

and political body. The covenant gave them legitimate standing as a godly commonwealth, without which they were nothing but Egyptian slaves. Peter comments on this fact in 1 Peter 2:9–10: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” Paul also comments in Ephesians 2:11–12, “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

God’s covenant brought the Israelites independence but not autonomy. It brought them freedom but not licentiousness. It also brought them protection under God’s power. Through God’s covenant governing structure, Israel had a moral commitment first to God, and then to each other.

According to Elazar, the Sinai covenant has two parts. The first portion is the Decalogue, consisting of the Ten Commandments and all the laws of Exodus 20–23. This portion of the law established the principles of divine law and human governance and later would be considered Israel’s political compact. The second portion translates those laws into a constitutional framework.

While the covenant of God deals primarily with basic civil and criminal law, basic religious obligations, and basic moral laws of Israel’s polity, the most direct political message has to do with the occupation of the land promised to Is-

rael. God was going to transfer the land that had been lost in Adam back to His people. Rushdoony observes the following: “To understand the Bible, we must begin with the fact that it is a covenant book ... [it is a book of] grace and law, [and is] given as an act of saving grace, and a law for the redeemed to live by. One aspect of grace given to the people ... is the gift of the land. The land is the locale where the life of grace is lived and the covenant law is kept. This fact of victory and possession is celebrated in Israel’s liturgy of [Psalm 135 & 136].” Rev. John Otis comments on covenantal dominion in his book *Preaching and the Victory of the Gospel*, “In 2 Samuel 7:10 God promises a place for His generations to live and prosper ... this sounds familiar to the promise [God gave] to Abraham in Genesis 17:8 where God would give his seed a land as an everlasting possession. The land promised to Abraham was but a down payment to God’s Covenant people down through their generations. Romans 4:13 demonstrates that the promise really entailed the whole world. Jesus said the meek shall inherit the earth.”

When Christ appeared as the ultimate covenant guarantee, He confirmed the covenantal promise so that its realization would not be dependent upon His people’s natural obedience to the covenant per se, but rather through faith and by the power of the Holy Spirit unto lawful obedience. Rushdoony writes in his commentary on the Book of Hebrews that “Man is the recipient of God’s grace and salvation because man is the creature called into being by God’s creative word to exercise dominion and to subdue under God the creation He had made ... All things are to be placed in subjection to man IN Christ ... This is the purpose of Hebrews, to bring the church to an awareness and knowledge of its purpose and goal in Christ. It is

far more than the salvation of our souls, important as that is; the purpose of our salvation is to recall us to the creation mandate. We are not saved for ‘flowery beds of ease’, but for God’s Holy purpose, [which is] a new creation wherein justice reigns. It does not have us as its focus but rather the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and justice.”⁵

Therefore, whenever the Scriptures speak of the covenant, it is referring to a broad array of areas including religion, political, government, and dominion.

The Covenant and the Land

In Deuteronomy 11 God focuses upon covenantal dominion and land possession. Some points worthy of noting in this text are, first, the obedience to the covenant being essential and guaranteeing strength if Israel were to inherit the land, and furthermore, the promise of long life to many generations in the land provided they remained covenant keepers. It was a good land flowing with milk and honey, which is a reference to the abundance of the gospel presence in the land—a land very unlike Egypt. Egypt’s system of religion and government was pagan and failed at every point to regard His sovereignty and law. The Israelites’ land was not structured at all like Egypt. The Israelites were not supposed to fix the broken system of religion and government. Rather, they were to replace it with a righteous system based upon a covenantal structure of law taken from the Scriptures. Replacing one failed pagan system with another failed pagan system hoping that it will remedy the cultural problems is altogether illogical.

God tells Israel, “For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from hence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys,

and drinketh water of the rain of heaven” (Deut. 11:10–11). Then He tells Israel that they have to obey the commandment to love God and serve Him, and they will prosper, “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil” (Deut. 11:13–14). Finally, God sets the covenant sanctions for rebellion: “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD’S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you” (Deut. 11:16–17).

Discipling the Nations

When Jesus told the disciples that they were to go into all the world with the law and the commandments in Matthew 28, He was telling them that the covenant obligation was to structure men and nations according to the commandments of God:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Mt. 28:19–20)

Most people misunderstand “discipling the nations” to mean going on missionary trips to the farthest corners of the world, leaving their native countries behind, but that is not what

Christ was saying. He was telling His followers that the mission of the gospel is a national focus, including individual people, but focused on changing cultures. The Greek word Jesus uses for “teach” means ‘to enroll as a pupil.’ The topic of their learning would be the covenant law of God.

The important implication of the commands God gave Israel was that the covenant placed the nation under the kingship of God. God was to be considered the direct governor, with assisting prime ministers. The words used denoting the judges and political ministers of the Hebrew republic are *Eved Adonai*, which mean “lesser gods.” Ranking God as sovereign and His prime ministers as underlings was to remind Israel that they were placed in hierarchy under God. The rulers were to maintain a core of judges and civil magistrates to handle the affairs of the various tribes.

The government of Israel was structured as a safeguard against tyranny. Since men naturally seek dominance, God sets up a division of authority and powers. Elazar explains: “The Israelite polity was one of separate but shared powers . . . It was so built that power never could be concentrated in a single human authority. Each of these [domains of government] is independent of the others, drawing its authority directly from Divine mandate, though both in theory and in practice the bearers of each [domain] must work with the others in order to govern the [whole].”⁶

Elazar concludes: “In the [final] analysis, the Pentateuch constitutes one comprehensive constitutional document in three parts. Genesis, the first book, establishes the setting for the emergence of Israel and its constitution with two sets of basic covenants with Abraham, and the other patriarchs establishing Israel as a people. Exodus, Leviticus and

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Proverbs 31: Transmitting the Principles of Biblical Self-Government to the Next Generation

by Andrea Schwartz

But I had something very important. I had a mother who believed in me. And I had a mother who would never allow herself to be a victim, no matter what happened. Never made excuses and she never accepted an excuse from us. And if we ever came up with an excuse she always said, “Do you have a brain” and if the answer was “yes” then she said “Then you could have thought your way out of it. It doesn’t matter what John or Susan or Mary or anybody else did or said.” And it was the most important thing she did for my brother and myself. Because if you don’t accept excuses pretty soon people stop giving them and they start looking for solutions. And that is a critical issue when it comes to success.

~ Dr. Benjamin Carson ~ *Neurosurgeon and the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital.*¹



Dr. Ben Carson is an American success story, in spite of his early life of poverty coupled with his own anger and laziness. He credits his mother’s influence on his life as the most important grace bestowed on him by God. This illiterate woman with only a third grade education understood her responsibilities in the lives of her sons.

She Who Rocks the Cradle

William Ross Wallace (1819–1881) authored the famous poem, “The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Is the Hand that Rules the World,” in which he praises dedicated motherhood. Each of the four stanzas of the poem repeats the title as a refrain, making the point that a mother’s role is vital to the advancement of civilization itself.

The parallels between this poem and Proverbs 31 are most likely intentional given the author’s background. Proverbs 31 highlights the attributes of a virtuous woman (vv. 10–31) by demonstrating the fruits of righteous living. The first ten verses of this chapter (often

“How can sinful women ever live up to the standards of this ‘perfect-beyond-words’ woman?... Proverbs 31 provides us with a standard by which we can evaluate our progress in becoming the sanctified persons God wants us to be.”

overlooked in discussing the Proverbs 31 woman) demonstrate the kind of influence that a mother sways over her children by instruction and example.

Although there is controversy over the actual identity of King Lemuel, who is addressed in the opening verses of Proverbs 31,² the interesting part, for the purpose of this discussion, is that these words were taught to him by his mother. Verse 2 is the speaker quoting a mother’s words to her son, instructing him in the way of being a righteous ruler. Verses 3–9 are warnings against promiscuity, debauchery, irresponsibility in one’s calling and the potential aftermath of such behavior, and a strong appeal to righteous judgment, especially

as it relates to those who are poor and/or afflicted.

King Lemuel’s mother presented a blueprint outlining the kind of man her son should become and the type of woman he should marry. To teach these things, Lemuel’s mother had to embrace and live out (however imperfectly) the portrait she paints.

The question arises, How can sinful women ever live up to the standards of this “perfect-beyond-words” woman?

Many women who come to faith later in life initially find it difficult to view Proverbs 31 as anything but an indictment against us. It is like a mirror reflecting how poorly we measure up to this Biblical standard. It is the glorious fact of redemption in Jesus Christ that our former thoughts, words, and deeds have been buried with Christ and we emerge from His resurrection in a newness of life that makes becoming the virtuous woman attainable.

Proverbs 31 provides us with a standard by which we can evaluate our progress in becoming the sanctified persons God wants us to be. It has been said that Proverbs is a commentary on

the law-word of God applied to life. So the necessary prerequisite to attaining the status of a virtuous woman must be learning and understanding the law of God.

God's Law—the Key to Self-Discipline

Critics and opponents of Christianity often cite the Bible's view of women as chauvinistic, yet quite the opposite is true. The distorted view of women that we see today is a product of the Enlightenment rather than Biblical law applied.³ God's Word gives women an exalted status with the responsibility to manage the home and shape the next generation. It is hard to imagine a higher calling than this.

But the authority of the woman as helpmeet is no less real than that of a prime minister to a king; the prime minister is not a slave because he is not king, nor is the woman a slave because she is not a man. The description of a virtuous woman, or a godly wife, in Proverbs 31:10–31 is not of a helpless slave nor of a pretty parasite, but rather of a very competent wife, manager, businesswoman, and mother—a person of real authority.⁴

Because of such a high calling, it is obvious that the wife/mother must be prepared to pursue her calling as a chosen profession rather than relying on the “figure-it-out-as-you-go-along” method. As I've stated elsewhere, too many women spend more time planning their wedding day and the flower arrangements than they do preparing themselves for the Biblical duties that marriage entails. This is no job for amateurs, as Rushdoony notes,

From beginning to end, the Bible makes clear that the Lord requires a total obedience, and that, having given us His covenant grace and law, and climaxed it with the gift of the Spirit, He expects great things from us. The Lord

“This is the kind of woman who will oversee the future generation, and the product of the work of her hands will be evidence of the godliness transmitted. She is the one who day-in and day-out instills in her children the principles of Biblical self-discipline and self-government.”

does not call amateur Christians, only full-time professional ones. Nothing is more ridiculous than the idea of many that “full-time Christian service” means the mission field, a pastorate, or some like calling. We are all, whatever we are or wherever we are, called to a full time Christian life and service.⁵

It is the purposeful training in the law-word of God that gives a woman the wisdom to become virtuous. Far from a helpless, weak, and irrational individual, as is often her depiction in romantic literature, with God's law as the foundation of her thoughts, words and deeds, the self-disciplined, self-governing Proverbs 31 woman has a genuine foundation by which to demonstrate to her children that she practices what she preaches.

Actions Speak Louder than Words

Note what is not mentioned in verses 10–31. The virtuous woman is not commended for her quiet times of prayer, her Bible study, or her attendance at church functions. Rather, all that is praised is the evidence of her commitment to God by her actions. This highly commended woman is a working woman, self-consciously transmitting by her deeds what is hidden in her heart. In other words, her faith is not a dead one.

As Rushdoony highlights in his *Institutes of Biblical Law* in his section “Marriage and Woman,”

1. Her husband can trust her moral, commercial, and religious integrity and competence (v. 11–12, 29–31).

2. She not only manages her household competently, but she can also manage a business with ability (v. 13–19, 24–25). She can buy and sell like a good merchant and manage a vineyard like an experienced farmer.

3. She is good to her family, and good to the poor and the needy (v. 20–21).

4. Very important, “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness” (v. 26). The useless woman of the Age of Reason, and the useless socialite or jet-set woman of today who is a showpiece and a luxury, can and does speak lightly, and as a trifler, because she is a trifle. The godly woman, however, has “in her tongue the law of kindness.” People, men and women, who are not triflers avoid trifling and cheap, malicious talk. Loose talk is the luxury of irresponsibility.

5. She does not eat “the bread of idleness” (v. 27); i.e., the godly woman is not a mere luxury and a pretty decoration. She more than earns her keep.

6. “Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her” (v. 28).

This is the kind of woman who will oversee the future generation, and the product of the work of her hands will be evidence of the godliness transmitted. She is the one who day-in and day-out instills in her children the principles of Biblical self-discipline and self-government. She is the one who is ready, willing, able, and *present*, to instruct, correct, guide, and inspire her children to prepare themselves to be active in their service to the Kingdom of God. She is the one who has a vision for an aristocracy of submitted believers

actively proclaiming the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ!

The founders of the United States believed in an aristocracy, but not an hereditary one but in the natural aristocracy of ability and talent. Such an aristocracy always rises to the top: the best attitude of a country should be to further its progress to the top rather than to impede it. In other words, *superiority asserts itself and governs*. If the moral character, if the faith of a people is defective, then the superiority which prevails is of an evil sort, but, if the character be godly, then a godly superiority prevails.⁶

Since the Word of God calls all who bear the name of Christ as members of a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), the words from King Lemuel's mother are applicable to any son or daughter in the context of their calling. The mother's role is vital in incorporating within the family culture the most important aspects of serving the living God. The call to exercise godly leadership in these verses has a strong parallel to Michah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

James 1:27 also echoes these sentiments:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

The Crisis of Our Time

With the certain collapse of the humanist state, there is a great need for self-governing individuals, families, and communities to be ready to establish the law of God as the standard for

“With the certain collapse of the humanist state, there is a great need for self-governing individuals, families, and communities to be ready to establish the law of God as the standard for living and governance.”

living and governance. God did not fully deliver the Promised Land to the Children of Israel before they were ready to inhabit it (Deut. 7:22). Likewise, we need to be prepared to lead as the opportunities come. As Martin Selbrede notes in his essay in this issue of *FFAOL*, “Reinventing Leadership,” we begin this task in our own homes, consistently working to unfetter ourselves from the chains of civil government solutions and handouts.

This practice must begin in the home and give more than lip-service to Biblical principles and mandates. Children should witness the faithfulness of their parents in paying their tithes, refusing to live in debt, valuing and sacrificing to provide a Christian education, and refusing to vote for those things the law of God forbids. When children see their father and mother cheerfully obeying God's commands and teaching them to do likewise, they will grow to become the kings and queens of a reconstructed society that looks *first* to the law of God to remedy problems and crises.

Rushdoony encourages us to take heart in our task of Christian reconstruction. His words especially should encourage the woman of the house to silence the belittling voices that whisper to her, telling her that rearing children is below her ability level and she can farm it out to others.

The crisis of our time is a hopeful and heartening fact: it means emphatically that the world is under God's law, that what a man sows that shall he also reap. True, it means times of crisis and judgment, but how else is history cleared of the debris of man's sin and folly? What takes place on television is pale and lifeless when compared to the excitement and development of the world around us. History is the work of God, and it has a good beginning and ending.⁷

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1. This tribute to his mother was part of his address to the 2013 National Prayer Breakfast.
2. Some believe King Lemuel is a pseudonym or other name for Solomon. Some adhere to the idea that it was meant allegorically, applicable to all kings. Others hold to the idea that King Lemuel is a distinct person and king in another realm.
3. See my article: “Putting Women in Their Place” in the Jan/Feb 2013 issue of *FFAOL*.
4. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (n.p.:The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973) 164.
5. R. J. Rushdoony, *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 1070.
6. *Ibid.*, 661.
7. *Ibid.*, 883.

The Place of Tradition

By Timothy Terrell



Reformed believers will sometimes remind each other that the task of reforming the church did not end with Luther, Calvin,

Zwingli, Knox, and the rest of the “Reformers.” We say, *“ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda,”* the church reformed, always being reformed, to become more obedient to the Word of God as the church grows and matures.

Michael Horton points out that the *semper reformanda* phrase can be traced back to the Reformed Dutch writer Jodocus van Lodenstein, who wrote, “The church is reformed and always [in need of] being reformed according to the Word of God.” Horton points out that this is not an active verb, but a passive one: the church is “‘always being reformed’ by the Spirit of God through the Word.”¹ The *semper reformanda* principle pulls us toward the Word of God, correcting errors that may have crept in, or unbiblical traditions that have not yet been rooted out.

Tradition reflects the collective wisdom—or folly—of the past. There are those who see it generally as a valuable social inheritance, and those who see it as a barrier to progress. Left-liberalism, whether theological or political, tends to see tradition as worse than useless—a slavery to the past. Conservatism is characterized by a high regard for the traditions of history, for established procedure, for the wisdom of elders, for the original meaning of authors, for original intent, and for creeds and confessions.

While Christians should be ready

“Tradition reflects the collective wisdom—or folly—of the past.

There are those who see it generally as a valuable social inheritance, and those who see it as a barrier to progress.”

and willing to discard traditions that are demonstrably unbiblical, there is a difference between scrapping a practice that is out of accord with the Bible and scrapping a practice that has no obvious Biblical mandate. Too often, families and churches have been willing to discard traditional practices that they do not understand.

Traditional Worship

The modern churchgoer, claiming a desire for Biblical worship, and declaring “*sola scriptura*,” demands justification for each tradition. If the Bible doesn’t require it, the only grounds for keeping it is to placate those in the congregation who still cling to such things for sentimental reasons, as for “weaker brethren.” Frequently, even that last support for tradition fails when the church seeks to attract a younger generation that hasn’t been made familiar with traditional practices.

Recently I sat in a worship service in a Presbyterian church in which the pastor questioned the common Reformed practice of placing the pulpit front and center in the sanctuary, and even of having a pulpit at all. “This is the way we’ve

always done things,” he said, which was not sufficient to justify continuing such practices. Other churches, pursuing “contemporary worship,” have phased out older hymns, classical architecture and furnishings, coats and ties for the pastors, sermon references to church history, and traditional liturgies with the reciting of historical creeds and confessions. In place of these is the “praise band” with lyrics written last week, a warehouse-style building with stage lighting, and movie clips to spice up the sermons.

Whatever one’s position on the regulative principle of worship, there are several considerations that should give Christians pause before exchanging tradition for the latest worship trend. Whether or not we understand the reasoning of those countless believers before us whose practices became embedded in what we call “traditional worship,” abandoning those practices may cost us more than we recognize at first.

Traditional hymns, for instance, tend to have a regular verse-chorus-verse-chorus organization that is conducive to memorization and congregational singing. While new songs may be appropriate in worship (begging the pardon of the exclusive psalmodists), modern worship songs are sometimes irregular in their sequencing and therefore hard to follow, and the anti-traditionalists’ relentless search for something new and fresh means that congregations are constantly confronted with songs that they don’t know and cannot sing. Broad participation in worship suffers as wor-

ship becomes a spectator event at which professionals perform.

The placement of a pulpit has been a distinctive of Reformed churches for hundreds of years. It has signified the centrality of the preached Word of God in those churches. No, the Bible does not specify that there must be a pulpit, or that it must be placed front and center. But the traditional placement conveys the message of historical priorities. The traditional-versus-contemporary discussion is about more than differing tastes and preferences. Tradition communicates the lessons of centuries past.

Traditional Parenting

Questions about tradition extend outside the church walls. Christian parents, wanting to bring their children up Biblically and mindful of the errors of the Pharisees, may think that a “this is how we’ve always done things” is inadequate to justify a family practice. But what families consider “appropriate” attire for church, school, family events, and going to the beach is informed by a long history of cultural expectations. The particular practices that we consider “good manners” or etiquette are not generally traceable to a Bible verse commanding that specific practice. And teenagers, inclined to question parental rules and regulations, may protest that a parent’s objection to an unusual hairstyle or application of makeup is only a groundless whim.

Appeal to tradition, however, is perfectly legitimate—so long as that tradition does not violate a Biblical principle. Parents may not be able to articulate moral reasons for their requirement that a daughter wear a particular kind of dress to a wedding, but the requirement embodies something other than an unreasoning attachment to the past. The requirement is a connection to historical, traditional practices that command such respect that we humbly

follow them even when we don’t understand why they exist. The requirement is based on a presumption that there is a collective wisdom in such cultural practices; they somehow promote the good of the society and would be ignored at our peril.

The Estimable Constraints of History

Those who would throw off traditional constraints must exterminate history—the context in which traditions are born and preserved. For the young person eager to be independent of parental constraints, “what your grandmother used to say” may be irrelevant, merely a piece of family history hauled out by parents wishing to add weight to an unwanted restriction. This is small-scale anti-traditionalism, reflected in hostility toward historical context and the wisdom of elders. But for those who have broader plans for social reform, history and tradition are provincial relics that stand in the way of Progress. These must be replaced with what is new, modern, and scientific. People who are steeped in their history will resist the efforts of the social reformer.

R. J. Rushdoony wrote, “History . . . is a road-block to those who wish to remake man.”² Thus, he argued, statist educators who wish to exert control over a society must destroy history, replacing it with science and reason. “Some people do live in the past too much,” Rushdoony added, “some live only for the moment, and some, most foolish of all, think they live only by reason.”³

The economist Friedrich A. Hayek pointed out the danger of elevating reason and discarding tradition that is not well-understood:

The most dangerous state in the growth of civilization may well be that in which man has come to regard all these beliefs as superstitions and refuses to accept or to submit to anything which he

does not rationally understand. The rationalist whose reason is not sufficient to teach him those limitations of the power of conscious reason, and who despises all the institutions and customs which have not been consciously designed, would thus become the destroyer of the civilization built upon them.⁴

And Blackstone, who argued that “reason is corrupt,” noted the importance of adherence to precedent as a collected wisdom of earlier ages:

Not that the particular reason for every rule in law can at this distance of time be always precisely assigned; but it is sufficient that there be nothing in the rule flatly contradictory to reason, and then the law will presume it to be well founded. And it has been an ancient observation in the laws of England, that whenever a standing rule of law, of which the reason perhaps could not be remembered or discerned, hath been wantonly broke in upon by statutes or new resolutions, the wisdom of the rule hath in the end appeared from the inconveniences that have followed the innovation.⁵

The hazards from poorly considered “innovations” are enough to put the onus on the reformer to state carefully and thoroughly the reasoning for deviating from tradition. Blackstone continues,

The doctrine of the law then is this: that precedents and rules must be followed, unless flatly absurd or unjust: for though their reason be not obvious at first view, yet we owe such deference to former times as not to suppose they acted wholly without consideration.⁶

A Conflict of Visions

Economist Thomas Sowell expanded on this idea in his book *A Conflict of Visions*. In it, he explained that there are two “visions,” or senses of how the world works. These visions are of two

basic types, Sowell says: constrained and unconstrained. A constrained vision is one that sees man as morally and intellectually constrained, prone to selfishness and not easily improved. The unconstrained vision, which is optimistic about human potential, sees man as capable of overcoming those constraints to design and create a better society.

The unconstrained vision favors sophisticated intellectuals who will overturn tradition in favor of innovation. The constrained vision sees the complexity of society as beyond the capacity of any intellectual to understand, so that we must rely on customs and traditions as guides to behavior. “In the constrained vision,” Sowell writes, “where knowledge was a multiplicity of experience too complex for explicit articulation, it was distilled over the generations in cultural processes and traits so deeply embedded as to be virtually unconscious reflexes—widely shared.”⁷

The Faith of Our Fathers

The Christian view is a blend of these two visions. It is partly an unconstrained vision. By the work of the Holy Spirit, we can achieve an improvement in our behavior toward those around us. By the light of God’s Word, we can see places where ancient cultural practices should be changed. But there are constraints: our sin natures are with us all our lives, and it would be unwise indeed to ignore our tendency toward evil. Regard for tradition serves as a valuable restraint in society, cautioning us from thinking too highly of ourselves and our modern intellects. And, while the Bible clearly trumps tradition if the two come into conflict (e.g., Matthew 15:1–9), the lessons of history and tradition are not to be disregarded. This is seen in the respect we should have for those who are older, as in I Peter 5:5a: “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders,” (the word “elders” used here

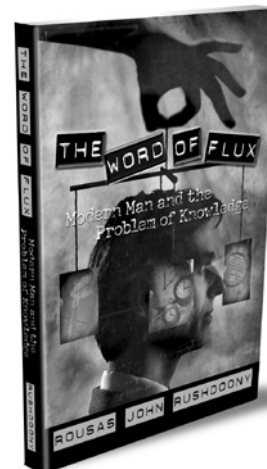
in the sense of an older man, as in I Timothy 5:1).

The “faith of our fathers” is embedded in worship practices, creeds and confessions, and family practices. It is even reflected in civil institutions and legal precedents. None of these are perfect, and some may need to be radically changed. But we should be cautious in our reforms. There is value in tradition that we may not recognize until it has been lost. Christians wishing to build a society based on Biblical principles would do well to avoid a “revolutionary” approach that abandons history in favor of the latest innovation. 🇺🇸

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1. Michael Horton, “Semper Reformanda,” *Tabletalk*, October 1, 2009.
2. Rousas J. Rushdoony, “Chalcedon Report No. 108,” in *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 891.
3. *Ibid.*, 892.
4. Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Counterrevolution of Science: Studies on the Abuses of Reason* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1979), 162–163.
5. William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England, Vol. 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 70.
6. *Ibid.*, 70.
7. Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions* (New York: Basic Books), 42, 43.

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How the West Was Lost

Apostasy by Kevin Swanson

(Generations With Vision, 2013) Reviewed by Lee Duigon



If you are old enough to remember better times; and if you see in our nation today a seething mass of sin and folly everywhere you look—“gay pride” parades, a federal government that demands that Christians pay for other people’s abortions and contraception, families dissolving as fast as the national economy ... Well, you probably find yourself wondering, over and over again, “How in heaven’s name has it ever come to this? How did we ever wind up *here*?”

Kevin Swanson has written a book to answer that question.

The short answer is, of course, that it took several centuries and a lot of hard, persistent work to gut the Christian culture of the Western world. By now, says Swanson, that work is just about finished.

“Western civilization is over,” he told Chalcedon. “We are living in its last age of decline.”

But his book is not about short answers.

What Have They Done?

Swanson finds that taking down Christendom was a three-step process carried out by thinkers “who led the Western world to its present state.” It took three hundred years.

The book is structured to reveal and analyze this three-step process: how apostasy originates with philosophers; how it is taken up by such culture-

shapers as writers, artists, musicians, and schoolteachers; and finally enshrined as orthodoxy in the liberal arts universities, where the next generation of culture-shapers goes to be trained.

“What I want to capture in this book,” Swanson writes, “is the incredible destructive force leveled by a handful of men on the entire Western world.”

Destructive? As the ideas dreamed up by this handful of philosophers were put into practice by politicians, soldiers, and revolutionaries of all kinds, the modern age has seen two world wars, a multitude of dictators making war on their own people and dotting the landscape with concentration camps, genocidal campaigns waged against people deemed “inferior” for one philosophical reason or another, the rise of the drug subculture, the weakening of the very concept of the family, the global spread of AIDS, the global ruling class’s infatuation with homosexuality, imploding birth rates—need we say more? And all of it hatched from seeds planted by the likes of Rousseau, Darwin, Marx, Dewey, Sartre, and the rest of Kevin Swanson’s rogues gallery.

And many of them were rogues, in every sense of the word. Rousseau abandoned five children. Darwin was a sadist and a hypochondriac. Marx “fully intended to destroy mankind and consign the whole world to hell.” Friedrich Nietzsche ended his days in a madhouse. Sartre abused himself with drugs while proclaiming, “Hell is other people.” Ernest Hemingway, whose mother called

his writing “filth,” once tried to murder his father and, in the end, committed suicide. And so on.

These are not smears. They are facts collected by Swanson from the historical record, and fully documented.

As for those apostates like John Dewey, the father of modern public education, who managed to lead a long and reasonably orderly life, his ideas—which have done so much to debauch our modern world—are not only both wicked and counterproductive, but also illogical and even silly, flatly defying common sense. In this he has plenty of company.

Why Did We Listen?

In reading this book, the question that rushes to the mind is, “Why on earth did anybody ever listen to these fools and reprobates?” Dewey, for instance, taught that no one can ever know anything for sure. If everyone knows nothing, does that not necessarily imply that “I, John Dewey, am an ignoramus, too”? Why ever should we take seriously the ideas of a man who virtually confesses that he doesn’t know what he’s talking about?

In an interview, Swanson tried to answer this question.

“It’s because in the West, people are running from God,” he said. “These great thinkers offered a pseudo-intellectual means to exit the house of rationality. People listened to them because they were ready to listen to them.

“I believe the gentiles of the West

became proud, and Romans 11 applies: God has lopped off the branch which He had grafted onto the tree.”

“Nevertheless,” he added, “even while it is being abandoned in the West, the gospel is growing elsewhere in the world—in Africa, Asia, and even in the Middle East.”

Might the cavalry, so to speak, someday come charging out of Africa to the rescue of the church?

“Amen to that!” he said. “As it is, in some of the mainline, failing churches, like the worldwide Anglican Communion, it’s only the delegates and the congregations from Africa that have kept the church from plunging headlong into full apostasy.”

Swanson fended off some potential misunderstandings of his book.

“I’m not trying to tell Christians not to read these writings,” he said. “I’m trying to re-introduce their antithesis. I am saying, ‘Don’t feed these books to your children if they’re not prepared for war.’”

“We are engaged in a war of ideas, thesis versus antithesis. Your children should read the Bible first, and then the works of great Christian thinkers like Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Only then, after preparation, should we introduce the works of pagans and apostates. Otherwise, your children won’t know how to answer their arguments.”

In modern secular education, he said, “Their goal is always confusion, as if all ideas were equal. Their priority is always quantity over quality. So they throw these ideas at children all at once—first this, then that, until the children don’t know what to think.

“Our children must learn to engage in the battle of ideas. But they’re never introduced to the war of ideas in the classroom, so they don’t even know there is a war. They only get the thesis—secular orthodoxy—never the antithesis. They’re only taught the one side of any

argument.”

Many of these thinkers, Swanson said, “offer a mixture of good and bad. Much of what Thomas Aquinas wrote was good.” Aquinas is criticized in the book as “deeply flawed” because he tried to reconcile the church to Aristotle and humanism, and thus “provided the epistemological juggernaut”—that is, the idea that man can know things apart from God—that paved the way for humanism and the ruin of faith in Western society.” Much the same, he added, can be said for John Locke: the philosopher whose ideas inspired the Declaration of Independence, but who also, writes Swanson, “completely betrayed his Puritan roots” and “rejected outright the doctrine of original sin.” Under Locke’s teaching, he writes, “‘In the name of God’ [yielded to] ‘We the people.’”

Apostate Literature

Swanson’s book is thorough. Even readers who have already devoted much thought and study to these matters will learn things that they didn’t know before.

Speaking for myself, I somehow managed to avoid reading such highly-praised literary monuments as are analyzed by Swanson. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, in the mid-nineteenth century, voices a “psychotic hatred” of Puritanism (Hawthorne slandered Cotton Mather, for instance, by blaming him for the Salem witch trials, when in fact Mather labored to *stop* the trials) and did very much to turn the American public against its Puritan heritage, and so succeeded in estranging Americans from a major and vital part of their past. *The Scarlet Letter* has long been a staple of public high school English teaching. (Happily, my own high school skipped it.)

Mark Twain’s *Letters from the Earth* was so virulently atheistic that it couldn’t be published until fifty years

after his death. And in *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain blames Christianity and Christians for American slavery, when in fact the Bible, although it recognizes slavery as a universal institution of the ancient world, hedges it with restrictions and, in the end, provides no justification for it at all. Those who, like me, laughed heartily while reading *Huckleberry Finn*, might have done well to read with some awareness of its sub-text.

John Steinbeck’s prize-winning *The Grapes of Wrath* is a long, drawn-out cry of despair and hopelessness—just what we might expect from a man who hated Christianity and got in trouble, as a college student, for disrupting chapel services with loud outbursts of blasphemy and cursing. And to the venerated idiot savant of Massachusetts, Ralph Waldo Emerson, we owe a legacy of radical moral cluelessness. “[T]o believe *what is true for you*” was his great teaching—a maxim that is perpetually on the lips of every sophomoric ninny in America to this day. And I’ll bet you didn’t know that John Stuart Mill, glorified throughout my high school and college education as the father of modern liberalism, was the godfather (literally) of the twentieth century’s leading atheist mountebank, Bertrand Russell.

On and on it goes. It couldn’t have been all that much fun to write this book, but it was necessary.

Heading for a Fall

So Western civilization is sinking into dotage, because ideas like communism, socialism, radical moral uncertainty, unfettered sodomy, power politics as a substitute for virtue, welfarism as a substitute for church and family, the state as a substitute for God, and making governments, corporations, and other institutions so big, so complicated, so expensive, that they collapse under their own weight—those ideas simply haven’t worked, and never will. Those are the

brainchildren of Marx, Neitzche, Rousseau, and the rest of the humanist gang, and they have brought us to the brink of ruin. If it succeeds in doing nothing else, Swanson's book at least succeeds in teaching us that lesson. "This may be the first time in history," he writes, "in which so many young people are influenced to engage in gross immorality by the fantasy world of violent games, internet pornography, motion pictures, and music"—for the ideas of the reprobates, and their consequences, have moved out of the universities and are now engrained in our culture.

What are we to do about it? What can we do? It's not the purpose of *Apostasy* to answer those questions, but Swanson does address them.

As bad as things may look, he reminds us, Christ still reigns, and will reign, and God is still the sovereign ruler of Creation.

Christians, writes Swanson, must teach and preach the antithesis of humanism. "We could not be more optimistic about the possibilities," he adds, predicting that the Christian homeschooling population of America will soon increase to fifteen million. Those are children who have not had their minds turned into mush by John Dewey's theories and the teachers' unions' practices.

"Above all," he concludes, "we will need fathers"—fathers heading stable families, fathers seeing to it that their children grow up to be as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16).

"We must continue to have faith and confidence that Christ is king," he said.

"We are living in an age like the one that saw the fall of Rome. There is bound to be some level of chaos or decentralization."

Indeed, it seems to me, the harder

the statist try to centralize their institutions, and wad them together into bigger and bigger ones, the great tendency of those super-states and super-organizations to break down. Hence the rise of small, independent news agencies to challenge the great networks, bloggers, and people getting together, via social media, to resist their overreaching rulers.

Swanson agreed. "There are hard times coming," he said, "but it won't be all bad."

Even so—there were sighs of relief heard in many quarters when Rome fell.

We Endorse It!

Apostasy is not easy reading. The catalogue of folly and depravity can sometimes be rather hard to take. But it is vitally necessary to understand how our civilization wound up in this mess, and Kevin Swanson explains that problem exhaustively.

We recommend his book wholeheartedly. By the time this review is published, you'll be able to order *Apostasy* directly from Kevin's ministry, Generations With Vision, <http://www.generationswithvision.com>. 🇺🇸

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.

Editor's note: As of this reading in May 2013, the page numbers in *Apostasy* had not yet been finalized so none are listed in this article.

IT IS IN HIS SERVICE THAT WE UNDERSTAND OUR CALLING TO CHARITY

R. J. RUSHDOONY



IN HIS SERVICE

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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.

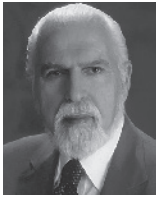
Hardback, 232 pages, \$23.00

The Levitical Tithe

By R. J. Rushdoony

(Reprinted from Numbers [Vallecito, CA; Ross House Books, 2006], 211–214.)

25. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 26. Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.
 27. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress.
 28. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave offering to Aaron the priest.
 29. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.
 30. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress.
 31. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation.
 32. And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die. (Numbers 18:25–32)



The priests and the Levites had a common purpose, the service of the Lord. The priests were primarily centered on sacrifice

and worship, whereas the Levites had instruction as their basic function (Deut. 33:10). While in the wilderness, the care of the sanctuary predominated for the Levites. Once they were in Canaan, only a small minority were needed for sanctuary service; the rest had broader duties, basically related to instruction.

In the church today, the division is somewhat less clear but is still there. The work of the clergy centers on worship, but, basic to worship now is preaching, a Levitical service. The clergy thus is not only the heirs of the priests but also of the Levites.

The modern Levites are Christian scholars. It is important to note how early thinkers and teachers, writers and philosophers, were basic to the life of

the early church. The surviving literature of the church fathers tells us how important scholarship was to the early church. The pagan scholars were not connected with the various temples to the pagan gods. They were tutors to the wealthy and had only contempt for the common man. The ideas represented by Plato's *Republic*, the manipulation and total control of most people by philosopher-kings, were common to pagan thinkers. Scholarship was an adjunct to aristocracy, and was *not* a religious function.

Thus the support of scholarship by Christians was a remarkable development in the world's history. It is worth noting that the Reformation was the work of Christian scholars.

In this text, we are told, *first*, that the tithe was to be paid normally, in whatever form it was given, to the Levites. These gifts were holy and belonged to God for the work of His Kingdom. To misuse the tithe was to "pollute the

holy things of the children of Israel," and it would bring God's judgment of death (v. 32). *Second*, the Levites were in turn to tithe the people's tithe to the priests or sanctuary, for the purpose of furthering worship. If what the Levites received was in the form of ranch and farm products, the best of the tenth had to go for worship, with nine tenths retained for Levitical purposes.

When Jesus and Paul *required* the support of the servants of God, they had reference to this law (Matt. 10:9–10; 1 Cor. 9:3–10, 16:2).

The observations of James Philip on this text are excellent. *First*, in God's plan everything depends on this fact of tithing. It provides the funding for a variety of activities, worship, health, education, and welfare, and also scholarship. The tithe is God's tax, the rent which is His due, but no man or institution is empowered to collect it. *Thus, a people get the kind of society they pay for in their tithing.* "It is plain to see that

everything in the Israelite economy really depended on the principle of tithing being adopted and strictly adhered to. Only thus would the system work.” *The alternative to a tithing society is a tyrant state and its oppressive taxation.*

Second, “the spiritual impoverishment” of our time is due to the failure to tithe. Men seem to prefer the Internal Revenue Service and its power-state to tithing and a free society.

Third, in Philip’s telling words,

The significance of the tithe is that it is similar in principle to the institution of the Sabbath day of rest. Israel was to keep the Sabbath day holy and devote it entirely to God as a symbol that all days belonged to Him. In the same way the tithe is the symbol that all we have is the Lord’s; to practice tithing is therefore a standing witness of our recognition that this is so.¹

Both the tithe and the Sabbath tell us to rest in the Lord and in confidence that His government alone gives us peace and prosperity.

Then, *fourth*, the subject of tithing is referred to in Deuteronomy 12:6, 11 and 26:12, and Deuteronomy was used in the instruction of children. The tithe is important to shaping the future, and therefore children need to be taught its *necessity*.

We can add, *fifth*, that a *non-tithing culture is a dying one, because it does not provide for its future under God.*

Christendom has been unique in world history, in that Christian scholarship has again and again revived culture by providing a framework for the future. When we look at the modern academic community *at its best*, we see men who are able critics, analysts, and historians, but their orientation is to the past and to the present. They are *more* than incompetent in their views of the future.

No other religion or culture has ever had any provision resembling this. The

“The modern Levites are Christian scholars. It is important to note how early thinkers and teachers, writers and philosophers, were basic to the life of the early church. The surviving literature of the church fathers tells us how important scholarship was to the early church.”

magi or wise men of Babylon were state-trained and state-controlled experts in various fields. The purpose of their work was to serve the state.

The quick rise of scholarship in the early church has not received sufficient attention. Paul says of Christ’s purpose for His people,

11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:11–12)

The word *prophet* means one who speaks for God, one who enlightens us to see things in God’s perspective. A teacher, *didaskalos*, is an instructor, master, doctor, or teacher. The early church thus had its doctors or teachers who were philosophers, theologians, historians, and so on. These were men supported by the believers.

In ancient China, and until recently, various scholars, Confucians especially, were state officials, and all scholarship was state oriented and state governed. This has been the pattern wherever in

any culture we find scholars. The exception has been ancient Israel and, since Christ’s day in particular, Christendom.

The Levites were not allowed to neglect worship. They had to tithe and thereby witness to the priority of the worship of God; the top tenth of the tithe to them had to go for worship. But nine tenths remained with the Levites in order to further the dominion mandate of the faith. Whether in the area of knowledge, agriculture, science, and in all things else, we are required to exercise dominion (Gen. 1:26–28).

Without the tithe, without the support of Christian scholarship, we get at best a static society, and static societies are very prone to decay and collapse.

The purpose of Christian scholarship should be to clarify our vision of the past and present, to make clear God’s requirements of us, to further our knowledge in every sphere, to give freedom for the exercise of the arts and sciences under God, and much, much more.

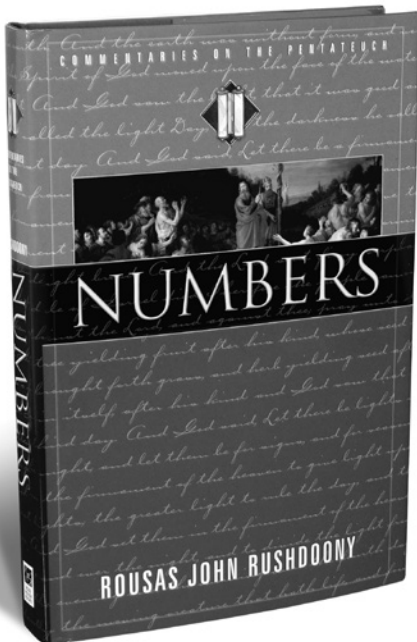
Without the tithe and the provision for the Christian teacher and scholar, a moral paralysis overtakes the church and society. This century has seen the moral paralysis of men and nations. The crisis will not go away automatically; no historical pendulum swings men and nations back into health when they are *willfully* committing suicide. The crisis deepens daily, and the popular solutions are more and more ridiculous and inane. *We have bought disaster*; we will have nothing unless we turn to God’s law and way. 🏰

1. James Philip, *Numbers: The Communicator’s Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 212.1



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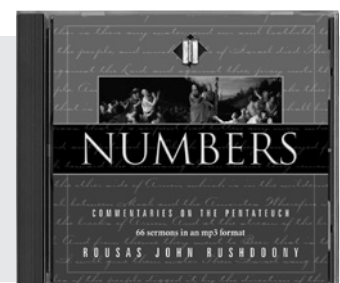
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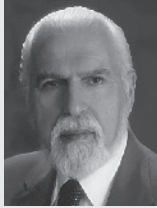
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SEIZURE AND PROPERTY

By R. J. Rushdoony

(Reprinted from *A Word in Season*, Vol. 3 [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2011], 23-25.)



The history of words sometimes tells us much about the history of man. The word “seizure” is a good example. Originally, the word “seizure” was a legal term for ownership. “Seize” meant legal possession, and “seizing” or “seisin” meant in early English law possession with quiet enjoyment. In common law “seizen in deed” means actual possession, and “seizing in law” means the right of present possession.

Now, of course, “seize” means to confiscate, to take possession by force. The word has thus come to mean its exact opposite, changing from the ownership of property to the confiscation by force of something or anything.

The history of the change in the meaning of this English word is a complex one, but basically it tells us this: the law, which should have confirmed a man in his “seizing,” began to rob a man of his property. The lords and kings of England worked too often to dispossess by law a man from his property, and the law of “seizing” became a law of seizure in the modern sense. The change in the meaning of the word thus tells us of a change in the life of the kingdom.

Behind that change was a spiritual change. The Renaissance and its humanism destroyed the old sense of Christian responsibility and law, so that, in terms of Judges 21:25, because Christ was not King in the hearts of men, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” The result was a rapid decline of honesty and godliness in every area of life and, lacking moral restraints, men began to exploit one another. Those who had the power to use the courts to do so began to confiscate the property of other men, so that the very legal term for ownership came to mean confiscation.

We are drifting closer to such a condition daily. To be a property owner is to be the target of confiscatory taxes, crime, and hostility. Men who are professed “peace lovers” are increasingly also bombers and rioters. Men who claim to believe in a religion of love are most likely to spout hatred. Good words are used as a cover for evil ends, and peace may come to mean war someday, if this trend continues.

No reform movement can change these things more than superficially. Only Christ can change the hearts of men, and Christ will not rule a man who will not be His absolute possession. Christ is not merely a resource or a power for men to rely on but an absolute Lord and King who claims and seizes us as His property. If we are His, we must obey His law and serve His Kingdom. We are then not our own, for we “are bought with a price” by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:20). He made us so that we and all creation are His property. By His redemption, we are doubly His.

If we are guilty of seizure in the modern sense, that is, if we have taken our lives as our own, to be lived apart from Christ, can we expect our world to show respect for our property when we ourselves rob God of His due? When we restore ourselves, our homes, churches, schools, civil government, and all things else to God the King, then God will restore to us what is our due property.

M. Rushdoony ... Kingdom cont. from page 3

fellowship through obedience. We must preach both faith and faithfulness.

As the second person of the triune God, Jesus spoke of the entire Word when He said, “If you love me, keep my commandments,” (John 14:15; see also v. 21; 15:10) and “whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19). 🇺🇸

Selbrede... Leadership cont. from page 6

two subsequent issues of *FFAOL* where Dr. Fugate expositis Exodus 30:11–16 and its parallels. Dr. Fugate compellingly argues that this commandment remains an active part of the law that Christians are to establish (Rom. 3:31), notwithstanding our ignorance and neglect of it (or even our open hostility to it). The modern lust for credibility blinds us to the reality that being friends with the world makes us the enemy of God (James 4:4). We consequently resist entering into the radical multi-generational work He commends to us, preferring theological posturing that reeks of irresponsibility from one end to the other – an option that’s inherently popular (2 Tim. 4:3).

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Exodus* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2004), 207.

3. Even after paying these astronomical amounts (and incurring debt to cover what isn’t extracted directly by taxation, and debauching our currency to cover the rest), the nation is unable to cure poverty among its people. Under Biblical law, poverty is eradicated completely without resorting to institutional means. Institutional solutions proceeding from the state only worsen poverty: it is a “war” we’ve lost because we in our arrogance rejected God’s solution for it. See R. J. Rushdoony and E. A. Powell’s discussion in the Chalcedon publication, *Tithing and Dominion*.

4. One should add that this process extends to other areas as well, e.g., health insurance, as exemplified so powerfully by the work of Samaritan Ministries. Note also that in the

days of the early church, abortion entailed abandonment of newborns under bridges to die of exposure or predators. The Christians rescued the infants and raised them as their own. Dr. Rushdoony declared that the early church’s response to Rome’s barbarity represented Christian self-government with a vengeance—something which we need now more than ever.

5. R. J. Rushdoony consistently repudiated calls for the radical overthrow of social programs when no Christian alternatives had been successfully put in place to take up the resulting slack. He also rejected all calls for a tax revolt. He held that high taxes are a consequence, a symptom, an effect, of the collapse of Christian self-government, and they can only be rolled back when the root cause is addressed. To think otherwise constitutes moral insanity.

6. The key to this is the Holy Spirit’s work through the gospel, bringing in the transformative power of “regeneration, not revolution” (as Rushdoony insisted). Here are just a few of the Biblical applications already covered in detail over the last 48 years by Chalcedon’s writers that point “the way out” to us: homeschooling, providing church courts, observing the poor tithe, observing the Biblical limits on long-term debt, observing the land Sabbaths, returning lost animals to their owners, abolishing limited liability corporation status, restoring a biblical doctrine of national defense, moving toward sound money, and implementing daily payment of workers. The last example is interesting because under God’s law, there is no massive paperwork burden involved in paying workers daily as required by Lev. 19:13 (which teaches that payment on any longer timeframe constitutes *robbery and defrauding of the laborer*, inasmuch as the earnings are actually *his* property, not his employer’s property, yet it’s the employer who collects the interest on it). I’d also recommend getting rid of your television, but that’s just me talking. If you can faithfully build God’s Kingdom, rule your family, storm the gates of hell, and still have time to watch television, you’re a better Christian than I am, and I applaud you for it. We need a lot more like you!

Raymond... Republic cont. from page 12

Numbers constitute the second part based upon the exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Sinai, and its auxiliary additions, establishing the Adat Bnai Israel or the Israeli Congregation. The third part, Deuteronomy, is a summarization and reinstatement of the second under the changed conditions of permanent settlement in the land of Israel.”⁷

Under the Pentateuch’s conditions of government, God tells Israel to go in and possess what is rightfully theirs by covenant inheritance. They were not to fear, but rather were to go in the strength and power of the Lord in the full assurance of faith, with tenacity, resolve, and courage. This was their commission and glory. 🇺🇸

Rev. Paul Michael Raymond is the pastor of the Reformed Bible Church in Appomattox, VA, and founder of the Institute for Theonomic Reformation (www.hisglory.us).

1. Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Polity in Biblical Israel: Biblical Foundations and Jewish Expressions* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publications, 1995) See <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/books/ct-vol1-int.htm>
2. Ibid.
3. Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant as a Political Concept*, <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/books/ct-vol1-ch1.htm>
4. Ibid.
5. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Hebrews, James & Jude* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001), 16–17.
6. Daniel J. Elazar, *Deuteronomy as Israel’s Ancient Constitution: Some Preliminary Reflections*, <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/deut-const.htm>
7. Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Polity in Biblical Israel*.

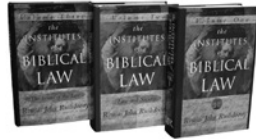
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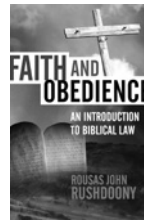
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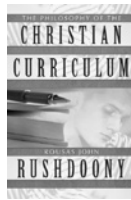
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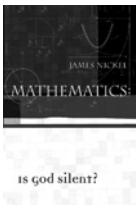
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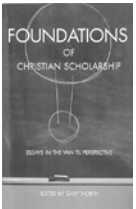
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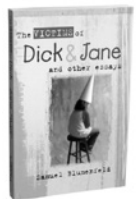
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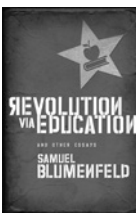
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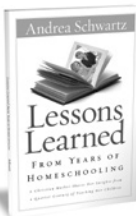
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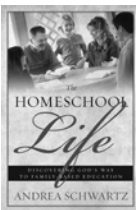
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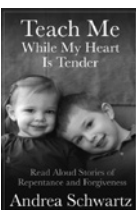
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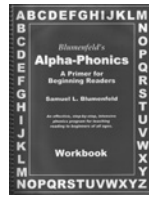


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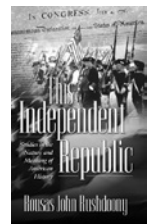


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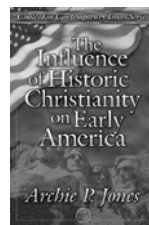
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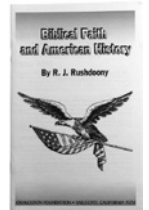


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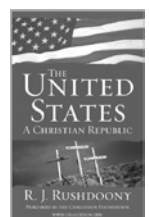
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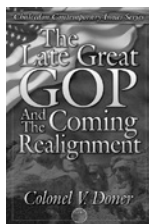
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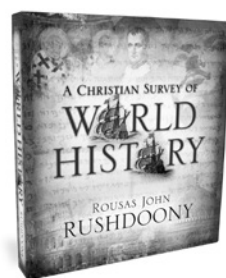


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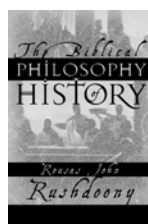
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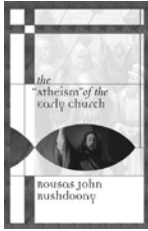


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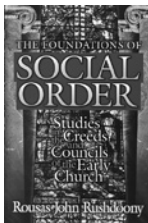
Church History



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By R. J. Rushdoony. Early Christians were called "heretics" and "atheists" when they denied the gods of Rome, in particular the divinity of the emperor and the statism he embodied in his personality cult. These Christians knew that Jesus Christ, not the state, was their Lord and that this faith required a different kind of relationship to the state than the state demanded.

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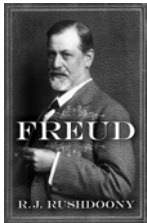


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By R. J. Rushdoony. The Biblical doctrine of psychology is a branch of theology dealing with man as a fallen creature marked by a revolt against maturity. Man was created a mature being with a responsibility to dominion and cannot be understood from the Freudian child, nor the Darwinian standpoint of a long biological history. Man's history is a short one filled with responsibility to God. Man's

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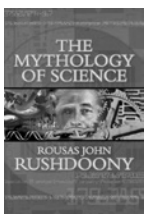
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By R. J. Rushdoony. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought, how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual paradigm, and how they are deferred to as sacrosanct by institutions and disciplines far removed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

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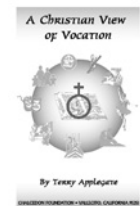
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By R.J. Rushdoony. In this study, first published under the title *Roots of Inflation*, the reader sees why envy often causes the most successful and advanced members of society to be deemed criminals. The reader is shown how envious man finds any superiority in others intolerable and how this leads to a desire for a leveling. The author uncovers the larceny in the heart of man and its results.

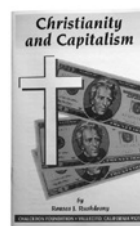
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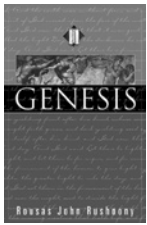
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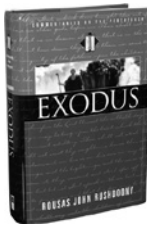


Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

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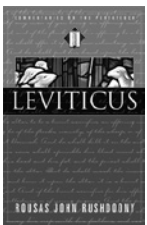
By R. J. Rushdoony. Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ,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

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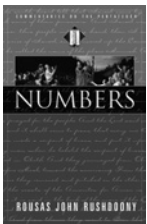
By R. J. Rushdoony. Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God’s law is readily shunned in pursuit of more “spiritual” studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God’s image and is duty-bound to develop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

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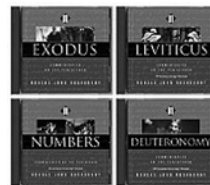
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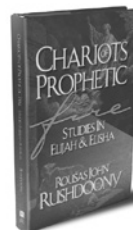
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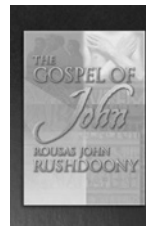
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and was resurrected. His life cannot be understood apart from this, nor can we know His history in any other light.

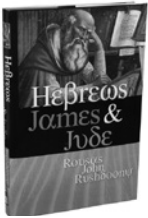
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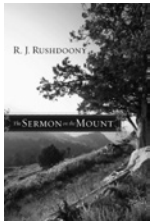
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Hebrews, James and Jude

By R. J. Rushdoony. The Book of Hebrews is a summons to serve Christ the Redeemer-King fully and faithfully, without compromise. When James, in his epistle, says that faith without works is dead, he tells us that faith is not a mere matter of words, but it is of necessity a matter of life. "Pure religion and undefiled" requires Christian charity and action. Anything short of this is a self-delusion. Jude similarly recalls us to Jesus Christ's apostolic commission, "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 17). Jude's letter reminds us of the necessity for a new creation beginning with us, and of the inescapable triumph of the Kingdom of God.

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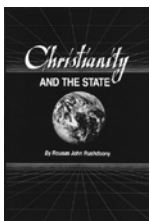
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that the Biblical requirement of tithing is a continuing aspect of God's law-word and cannot be neglected.

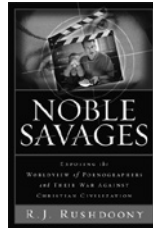
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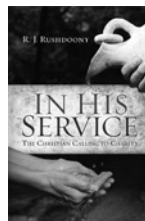
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By R. J. Rushdoony. In this powerful book *Noble Savages* (formerly *The Politics of Pornography*) Rushdoony demonstrates that in order for modern man to justify his perversion he must reject the Biblical doctrine of the fall of man. If there is no 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.

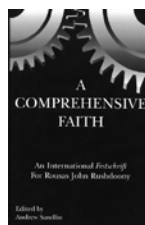
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A Comprehensive Faith

Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R. J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical contributions in numerous fields. Contributors include Theodore Letis, Brian Abshire, Steve Schlissel, Joe Morecraft III, Jean-Marc Berthoud, Byron Snapp, Samuel Blumenfeld, Christine and Thomas Schirrmacher, Herbert W. Titus, Ellsworth McIntyre, Howard Phillips, Ian Hodge, and many more. Also included is a foreword by John Frame and a brief biographical sketch of R. J. Rushdoony's life by Mark Rushdoony.

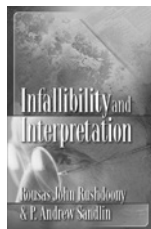
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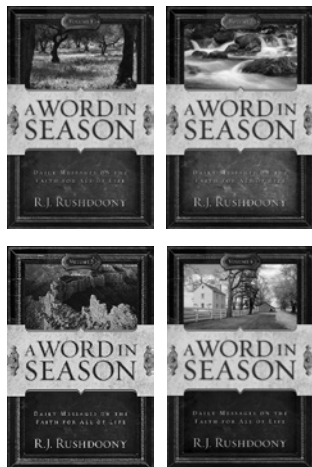
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Infallibility and Interpretation

By R. J. Rushdoony & P. Andrew Sandlin. The authors argue for infallibility from a distinctly presuppositional perspective. That is, their arguments are unapologetically circular because they believe all ultimate claims are based on one's beginning assumptions. The question of Biblical infallibility rests ultimately in one's belief about the character of God.

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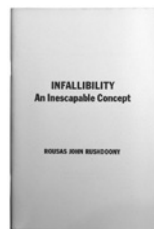
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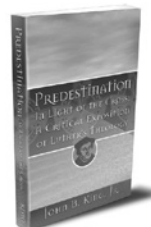
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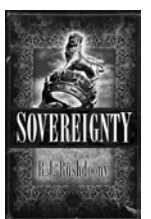
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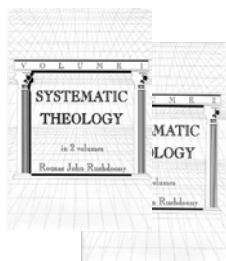


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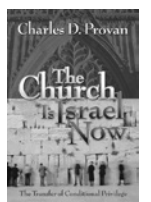
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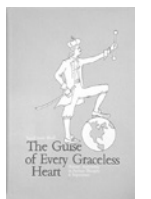
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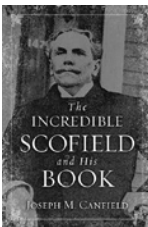
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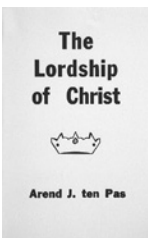
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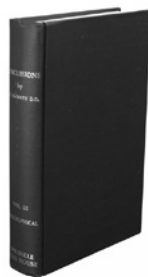


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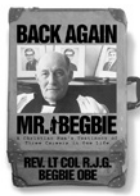
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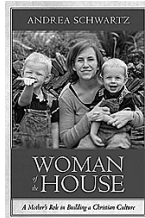


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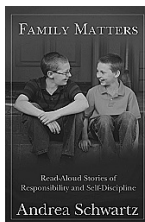
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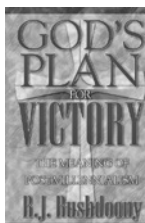
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