

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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Rousas John Rushdoony: A Brief History, Part II

“You Are Going to Be a Writer”

By Mark R. Rushdoony



There is a photograph of my grandmother that I remember staring at when I was very small. It was a picture of Grandma Rose

Rushdoony in a rocking chair in front of their California farm. She is holding my father in her lap. I never liked the picture when I was a child because of something about it that seemed silly to me at the time, which was incongruous with the grandmother I knew.

That photograph was of Grandma holding a large bunch of grapes in her right hand, up high so they could not be missed in the frame, and my father on her left. She had a smile that conveyed a real sense of joy. I could understand her motherly delight at holding her baby, but I never understood the reason why she held up the grapes. They seemed a very strange element to include in a portrait, a pointless prop. It was only much later I came to understand that picture.

An Armenian Upbringing

My father had a very Armenian upbringing. My grandparents arrived in New York City in late 1915 and my father was born there on April 25, 1916, a year and a day after the massacres had begun. His father Y.K. Rushdoony worked at an Armenian language New York periodical¹ there, when he received a call to pastor in California. Earlier, while still in Turkey, he had received a call to pastor an Armenian Presbyterian church in Fresno in the heart of California's most fertile farm region, the San



Joaquin Valley. He had refused that first call because he felt the situation in Van was too problematic, and his family's tie to the area for two and a half millennia gave him a sense that his responsibilities lay there. This time the call was to start a new church plant in Kingsburg, about twenty miles south of Fresno. My grandfather accepted, but on the provision that he could wait until his newborn was a little older before commencing the trip west. When my father was about six weeks old, they left for Kingsburg, then accessible only by train.

The church was named Armenian Martyrs Presbyterian Church,² in honor of those who had died in “the massacres” as they were universally referred to. A number of earlier Armenian immigrants had become well-established and not only encouraged others to come but loaned them money to buy farmland. This, and the remaining gold from my grandmother's dowry, enabled my grandparents to buy a farm less than a mile from town.

Other Armenians followed, some of them extended family and fellow survivors from Van. Armenian was the principal language at home, church, and at family gatherings. It was a community of faith and common experience. My grandfather made it a point to know every Armenian, Protestant or otherwise, wherever he went. If new arrivals were expected, he greeted them at the train station. The farm became a stopping point for new arrivals and visitors.

My father often recounted that these gatherings of Armenians usually included a recurring topic of conversation. People would ask if anyone had any knowledge of family and friends lost in the massacres. Sometimes the answers were quite graphic. He grew up knowing his elders were all survivors of a systematic program to eliminate both Christianity and Christians from a place where both had flourished for centuries. In his study was a picture of the Armenian Martyrs Presbyterian Church. On the back of it he had written, “My home church.”

My grandparents had arrived in the U.S. well before most refugees from the massacres because a British officer³ heard them speaking English shortly after they arrived to safety in Russia. He asked how they came to speak English, but when my grandfather told him he had graduated from the University of Edinburgh he was not believed. One of their few possessions they carried with them, though, was his diploma. The officer said that was as good as a British citizenship as far as he was concerned and urged the

Russian officials to let this small group have passage to their desired destination. They were then allowed to travel on the long train to Archangel, a port in the far north on the White Sea with access to the Barents Sea and from there to the Northern Atlantic. As such, this rail line was a crucial and controlled wartime supply line. Even with the help of that bold British officer, their travel was only possible because of the gold coins from her dowry that my grandmother carried. No other currency was accepted.

My grandparents' early arrival to the U.S. was in contrast to many other refugees. The modern nation of Armenia was the Russian part of Armenia that later became one of the Soviet republics. Many extended family members who had walked the same route lived through the Russian Revolution and subsequent famine in the early 1920s. One of my grandmother's sisters lost all of her children save one in those years. My father recounted the family regularly observing fasts for those whose sufferings continued for years.

Father and Son

Temperamentally, my father took after my grandmother, but he was always particularly close to his father, who he always called "Papa." There were so many bitter memories of violence and injustice that Grandma had no desire to ever go back to Turkey. She had been raised in the city of Van, a daughter of a well-to-do merchant in the Armenian old city. Her clothes were store-bought and they lived in a large home. America offered all that and more. The burden of being perhaps the only surviving Rushdoony⁴ long caused Grandpa to hope for a just resolution to the injustices that had taken place. Had these been addressed, he would have been willing to return to his family's homeland.

Grandma never wanted to talk about the massacres, whereas my father

was well-schooled on Armenian and family history by Grandpa. Part of his upbringing, my father said, was accompanying his father to church meetings and visits with my grandfather's contemporaries. In addition, my grandfather took frequent long walks. My father often accompanied him and Grandpa would often use these opportunities to discuss things too upsetting to Grandma to be discussed at home.

My father's upbringing was an immersion in the remote and recent history of the Armenian people. The community of survivors with whom he grew up was all survivors of the Turkish massacres that began in WWI. He was certainly far more aware of this history than I was at a comparable age. It was only much later when I associated that picture of Grandma with the grapes and her son with her immediate past that I realized what it represented.

In the fall of 1915 she had fled for her life while pregnant with my father, having just lost her first-born. She had made do with foul water from puddles strained through a handkerchief. Bodies of the dead lined their route into Russia. At one river crossing they scrambled to safety on the north bank as those on the south were being killed. When they made it to Russia, the only food that could be found to purchase in wartime Russia was a small package of cookies. Because she was pregnant, they were given to her. Because of her morning sickness she could not keep them down.

Just two years later she lived on a farm in a small, peaceful community of family and friends, with a healthy child and no fear of persecution. The grapes were not a silly prop; they represented the good life of God's providential blessing. They were the firstfruits of God's provision for the future. It wasn't the composition of the picture I had to understand; it was my grandmother's life.

Early Education

My father spoke very little English before he began school in the public schools of Kingsburg. He recalled it as being very old-fashioned and very strict. At home, his mother taught him to read and write Armenian.

He very early became a voracious reader. In those days it was believed you would damage your eyes if you read in dim light, such as that provided by kerosene lamps, so he was constantly being told to put his books away. He later admitted this was one area in which he disobeyed. At night when he was supposed to have gone to bed, he would crack his door just enough to let in a sliver of light by which he could read.

He read the Bible through several times in his youth. Once, his father mentioned this proudly to a Congregational minister, a man my father respected very much. The minister asked my father if he really read "all" of it. The minister expressed some concern and suggested that there were parts a young boy should not be reading. It was the first time my father was confronted with such an attitude about the Bible, and the incident dismayed him so much he never forgot it and recounted it many times later in life.

Detroit

When my father was nine years old, his father accepted a pastorate at a Congregational church in Detroit, Michigan. There, the urban schools were noticeably more secularized than in Kingsburg. Once, a teacher asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. My father recalled that he was homesick for the farm, so he replied, "I am going to be a farmer." The teacher laughed, and then replied emphatically: "No, you're not. You are going to be a writer!"

Life in the city had its advantages, though, and one of his fond memories during his adolescent years in Detroit

was taking public transit (alone) to see the Detroit Tiger games, all for pocket change. Such entertainment was welcome in a city hit hard by the Depression. In 1931, after my father's freshman year of high school, Grandpa was in poor health so the family returned to the farm in Kingsburg.

High School

My father was glad to return to the farm, though my father recalled begging his mother for permission to change from knickers to overalls before the train arrived so as not to be made fun of as a "city slicker." He attended Kingsburg High School.

In 1933, after my father's junior year, my grandfather took another pastorate, this time at another Presbyterian church in San Francisco. It was decided that my father would stay in Kingsburg for his senior year. The new pastor of Armenian Martyrs lived with his wife in the farmhouse with my father, who was class president that year and editor of the yearbook. My father's most vivid recollection of that arrangement was the Scottish wife's firm belief that a boy could not be healthy unless he began his day with a very large bowl of porridge with goat's milk.

The Kingsburg High School Viking Yearbook of 1934 was a unique one. The yearbook funds had been deposited in a local bank which failed with the worsening depression. The yearbook staff was undeterred, and the pages were printed and bound locally with a rough cloth over the hardboard covers. Each picture was glued by hand in every copy.

On graduation he joined his parents in San Francisco, where he got a job in the massive Crystal Palace Market, the 71,000-square-foot shopping mall of its era. He was paid \$14 for a 59-hour week, which in the Depression he later recounted was a "highly coveted job." Men regularly asked to work for free just

so they could claim work experience. Violence accompanied unionizing efforts and that job ended when Harry Bridges, the Marxist leader of the Longshoremen's Union, called for a general strike that led to several violent confrontations with police.

College Years

My father was accepted by the University of California at Berkeley, but felt four years there was financially impossible. For his freshman year, my father went to Los Angeles and lived with a former high school teacher while attending Santa Monica Junior College before rejoining his parents in and transferring to the newly opened San Francisco Junior College⁵ the following year. It was nicknamed the "Trolley Car College" because it had no central campus at the time and students had to travel to various city locations to attend classes.

In his junior year he transferred across the Bay to Berkeley. It was a liberal school even then. Marxism was openly avowed and argued, though civilly, my father noted.

Several things stood out to my father as he later recalled his days at the university. One was that his thinking shifted permanently from Armenian to English.

My father went to the university to study and learn, but one such effort was so unpleasant he recalled it with disgust years later. He was already very well-read in modern literature, but was told that an educated man must study the ancient classics. He began a systematic attempt to digest classical literature. "I would say it was the ugliest experience of my life, because I was still too young and naïve to assess them and say that a lot of this was humanistic garbage."

Modern literature he said he could put into a context, but he thought he had to find great wisdom in what he was now reading. "It took me a while," he

later recalled, "to say, 'I don't care what everybody says. These may be classics, but they are classics of depravity, classics of degenerate cultures. What they offer at their best is evil.' To me this came to be epitomized in a book I had to spend an entire semester studying, Plato's *Republic*. So I wound up with a very thorough distrust of the university, a very real hatred of it."⁶

Two professors left a lasting impression on him and helped crystalize elements of his thinking. One was Edwin Strong, from the philosophy department. Though he did not agree with much Strong had to say, at one point he felt Strong said something profound. In a class discussion Strong warned a student never to discuss the origin of the universe, but to start with the universe as a "given." No matter how far one pushed back into the future, accounting for the origin of matter would involve a miracle as great as the existence of a creating God. Later, Van Til gave this "given" a new term, a "presupposition."

Also, Ernst Kantorowicz described the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy as a clash between two institutions, each of which claimed to be the continuing manifestation of the incarnation of God. The church claimed this right for itself and its images while the state claimed it was the greater power and hence possessed that right. The state won that battle and has tended to have the upper hand at many junctures of Western history, though its divine claims are now secularized to a purely political ascendancy and right. The result of this has been statism, of course, but its origin was a religious claim to represent God on earth. While the argument is now secularized it is no less a de facto claim to be, as Hegel said, "god walking on earth."

Post-graduate Work

It was also at the university that

my father began his lifelong library-building. He rarely ate lunch, instead spending his lunch money at used book stores. Additionally, before inventory taxes, books were sometimes available for years after their printing. He recalled ordering books printed in the nineteenth century which were retrieved from a dusty warehouse when he ordered them. He continued at Berkeley until he completed his B.A. in English (1938) and his M.A. in Education (1940), though he continued to take classes there after he entered the nearby Pacific School of Religion, a Congregational and Methodist seminary.

The seminary was clearly liberal in its orientation. He had no interest in a Presbyterian seminary in San Anselmo which “was well infiltrated with modernism while pretending to be true to the faith.” A Baptist seminary in Berkeley he saw as representing “a religion of sentimental pietism. So I thought I might as well get my modernism straight ...”⁷ Moreover, about a third of his credits came from two other nearby seminaries: Church Divinity School of the Pacific (Episcopalian) and Starr King School (Unitarian).

In at least one area my father proved more liberal than his fellow seminar-ians. When he went to take up residence in the seminary dormitory, it became obvious that no other student wanted to share a room with a black fellow seminarian, so my father agreed to, and they became close friends. Seeing through the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of humanistic thought began early in his life.

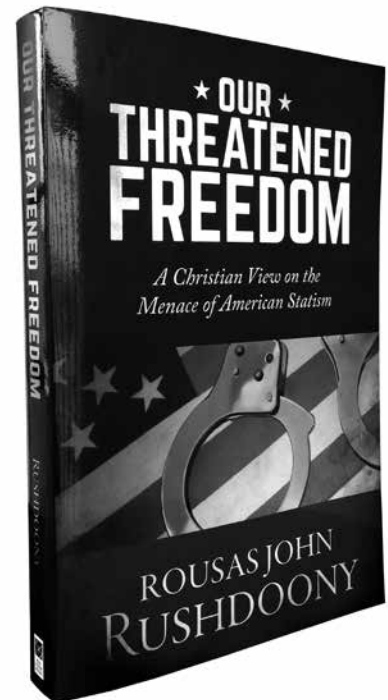
At one point, the issue of Biblical law arose and my father said he believed the Bible spoke to all areas of life. He later said he “got clobbered” for such a position. It was then he realized that the suggestion of the Congregational minister years earlier represented, in fact, the weight of modern church theology, and

that his view was far from mainstream. Later he said he found ministers in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. who would privately sympathize or even agree with him, but who refused to take a stand on an issue they saw as “too divisive.”

His decision was to keep quiet until he was ready to defend his position. Though his position was clear in some of his early sermons and articles, these were on specific issues and to targeted groups. His public presentation of his theonomic position was the 1973 publication of *The Institutes of Biblical Law*. Its publication represented a heavy boot pushed into the modern church’s door, a direct challenge to the pietism and antinomian dispensationalism that made Christianity so weak in the twentieth century. For the time being, however, he completed his seminary studies in the spring of 1944. By then, the world was at war. 🇺🇸

1. Gotchnag
2. Armenian Martyrs Presbyterian Church was a Presbyterian Church U.S.A. congregation. The martyrdom was not entirely over by then, though the majority of it took place in 1915.
3. The officer was a military advisor, apparently. Czarist Russia was allied with the British in WWI.
4. The seat of the family lay at least another long day’s walk removed from the escape route into Russia. My grandfather was only aware of two distant cousins who survived. Others now have the same last name as ours (with variant spellings). My grandfather knew of at least one family in the United States he believed took the name because of its historic significance, but was no actual relation.
5. Later City College of San Francisco.
6. From the transcript of an oral interview by Janet Larson conducted December 17, 1979 and January 20, 1980.
7. From the transcript of an oral family history session.

Is the “Land of the Free” Becoming the Home of the Enslaved?



R. J. Rushdoony reports on a mind-boggling collection of absurdities by our legislators, bureaucrats, and judges—from making it against the law for a company to go out of business, to assigning five full-time undercover agents to bust a little boy who was selling fishing worms without a license. Written some thirty years ago as radio commentaries, Rushdoony’s essays seem even more timely today as we are witnessing a staggering display of state intrusion into every area of life.

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Physician Rising: What It Takes to Get Up Again After Being Smashed Underfoot

by Martin G. Selbrede



This is the thirteenth in a series of articles about addiction treatment pioneer Dr. Punyamurtula S. Kishore and his ongoing

battle with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which shuttered his fifty-two clinics in late 2011, dramatically increasing the state's death tolls due to opioid addiction. Space forbids repeating the story developed in the first twelve articles. Readers new to this story are urged to catch up before reading on (links/references are provided at the end of this article).

It was noted at the outset of this series that Dr. Kishore had found far more respect and interest outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, despite naming his revolutionary treatment method The Massachusetts Model. We'll peer into the surprising new developments on this front at the conclusion of this article, developments which amount to powerful confirmation that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country" (John 4:44)—but does receive recognition elsewhere. So we turn now to setting the stage, providing additional context to let the truth stand out in sharper relief.

"For a Just Man Falleth Seven Times"

Those who have read all twelve previous articles in this series will be able to see that the entire scope of Proverbs 24:15–16 has played out in real life for Dr. Kishore. It is worth understanding

this passage better before proceeding further. We provide Franz Delitzsch's translation¹ for the sake of clarity:

Lie not in wait, oh wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Assault not his resting-place. For seven times doth the righteous fall and rise again, But the wicked are overthrown when calamity falls on them.

As Delitzsch notes, the righteous here "does injustice and wrong to no one," being the one whom the wicked choose to target, "driving him by cunning and violence" out of what he has built.² To head off misunderstanding of what is meant by the fall of the righteous, Plumptre makes clear that "the Hebrew word for 'falleth' is never used of falling into sin" but rather "into calamities" occasioned by such assaults.³ In the end, the wicked that laid siege against the just man will literally "stumble" and never again rise.⁴

But the meaning is deeper yet, as we see when Matthew Henry explains the schemes of evil men against the innocent (described in verse 15):

The plot is laid deeply: They *lay [in] wait against the dwelling of the righteous*, thinking to charge some iniquity upon it, or compass some design against it... The hope is raised high; they doubt not but to *spoil his dwelling-place* because he is weak and cannot support it, because his condition is low and distressed, and he is almost down already.⁵

The result is not what the plotters and schemers expected, however:

The righteous man, whose ruin was expected, recovers himself. He *falls seven times* into trouble, but, by the blessing of God upon his wisdom and integrity, he *rises again*, sees through his troubles and sees better times after them ... *The wicked man*, who expected to see his ruin and to help it forward, is undone ... his sins and his troubles are his utter destruction.⁶

In the course of the previous twelve articles, we've seen the remarkable achievements of Dr. Kishore and his pioneering work in addiction medicine, and the entirety of his life's work being attacked from all quarters. This was a man compassed about with enemies, each in turn taking a vicious debilitating bite out of him. But now we are beginning to see the transition from the grim report of verse 15 to the brighter outlook of verse 16: the man upon whom those seven incapacitating blows had fallen has started to rise back up.

And what is that man facing as he's rising again? What has happened in the nearly five years since the first blows fell upon him and his clinical practices? What has become of the political, cultural, and medical landscape in his absence? What's happening in Massachusetts, and more importantly, what's happening elsewhere?

A Policy of Scorching the Earth

Massachusetts proper is reaping what it has sown. The beleaguered governor's policies make sense only if the focus is maintaining the *appearance* of doing something about the massively rising death tolls. The policy statements

are empty because Governor Baker is appealing to a compromised, false source of “help”: the federal government:

Baker recalled hearing from Aaron Chick, a recovering heroin addict, who told the governor last week, “I know what to do when things are bad,” but “the piece that’s missing is what do we do after?”

“We have not figured that out,” Baker said Monday.

Baker suggested the federal government could play a bigger role around education and prevention with more funding for *research of best treatment practices* and training for prescribers.⁷ [Emphasis added]

The governor will not tell the truth and say, “The missing piece? Our state imprisoned the doctor who developed it and took away his medical license.” As bad as that is, his next suggestion is worse. The trust⁸ he reposes in the federal government for funding more “research of best treatment practices” has already been proven to be a dead end. In the twelfth article of this series, we showed how such federally funded research has been deliberately and fatally skewed to omit important treatment options from the testing matrix. Such research is being manipulated to rubber stamp the status quo solutions the nation’s drug czar favors.

I was provided with an advance copy of a letter being sent to JAMA (*The Journal of the American Medical Association*), written by a respected drug researcher (not Dr. Kishore), that would lead the reader to conclude that the severity of the drug problem is being downplayed through a similar process of distorting the data. The letter points out that a new 2015 study’s results were presented “in a manner that prevents readers from appreciating the full extent of the risk of long-term opioid therapy.”

The author illustrates how one 2007 study was *wrongly included* (it covered the wrong time duration) while two pertinent 2002 studies were *inexplicably omitted*. The DSM–IV definitions were used instead of the newer (2013) DSM–VM conventions, thus allowing two sets of numbers to come into play, one with an arbitrarily low range (0.6 percent to 8 percent). The author shows that 18 percent to 47 percent is the actual range supported by the studies.

This erstwhile researcher’s pending letter further points out how cancer patients and Tramadol users were improperly omitted from yet another key study, and that exit interviews of patients who said they felt addicted to their prescribed painkiller *were simply written off*, skewing the results and further cutting the final numbers in half.

What we’re seeing is a scorched earth policy being implemented by faulty deployment of politically directed (and thus fatally muddled) science. How does one overcome the hard data supporting Dr. Kishore’s work? By deploying smokescreens in support of inferior treatment programs. Increased federal involvement *will worsen the crisis* because federal orthodoxy favors the replacement opioid therapies that are failing. Dr. Kishore has openly wondered why states with the highest treatment rates also have the highest death rates: which is the cause and which is the effect? Now that more people die annually of drug overdoses than firearms,⁹ that’s a fair question to ask.

The earth is scorched in another respect: you cannot wage war against rising drug deaths without counselors to bridge recovering addicts back to normalcy. Job turnover for addiction counselors in Pennsylvania are through the roof, reaching an “alarming 33% annual turnover rate.”¹⁰ Not surprisingly, the “addictions counselor shortage is felt

more because of the increasing number of people dying from drugs.”¹¹ How the nation’s drug czar, Michael Botticelli, proposes to wage a war with dwindling troops continues to mystify Dr. Kishore.

Transitioning from Scorched Foundations to Open Attacks

When scientific research has been hijacked to support political and/or business agendas, it’s the foundations of our culture’s safety net that are being scorched. Respecting the addiction counselor shortage, the loss of boots on the ground is indicative that the human capital (what there is of it) in the current fight is also being scorched, despite such counseling being foundational to resolving the crisis.

The foundations of medical practice itself have been scorched, and most readers will easily recognize how it happened by following Dr. Kishore’s description: originally, medicine recognized four vital signs (respiration, body temperature, blood pressure, and pulse). But an important addition has recently appeared: the one-to-ten pain scale, pain scales extending from smiley face to extreme misery, etc.¹² Politicians and drug companies had essentially collaborated to create something new and dangerous, as Dr. Kishore explains the situation:

Chronic moderate pain—this is a category that should not actually exist. Pain is a symptom, not a diagnosis. It doesn’t exist in itself: there’s an underlying condition that should be diagnosed and treated. For example, *acute pain* is what we encounter as post-operative pain (there’s a gunshot wound: we find the bullet and take it out; there’s an infected appendix: we remove it; etc.).

But when OxyContin was approved by the FDA in 1995, a new market had to be created for this product. This gave birth to *chronic moderate pain* and the happy face scale. A proclamation concerning coal workers, etc., by the

then-governor of Kentucky stated that *pain should be treated*, repudiating previous medical standards. OxyContin then came on-line in the Kentucky and West Virginia coal mines, and *chronic moderate pain* and its distortion of foundational medicine became entrenched.¹³

But *open attacks* on key components of Dr. Kishore's method have also arisen. None are more dangerous than the attacks on home detox, because there is no more effective method than home detox for reasons its detractors refuse to accept. As Dr. Kishore explains,

The detox method has to have a scientific basis. All the addicted person's triggers and cues are manifested in the home detox scenario: they're not being masked, nor should they be. We need to help the patient through the process of *cue extinction*. You overcome by confronting the cue at home, which gives the patient a sense of power over the drug. No masking of cues: you must extinguish the cues. This can only be done at home, where the cues are present, not in a top-of-the-mountain detox experience elsewhere. The family connects with the patient because the addict doesn't run off to get his drug of choice: he's staying home because he's not entering withdrawal symptoms.¹⁴

But where does one go once one has publicly rejected Dr. Kishore's Sobriety Maintenance and Sobriety Enhancement approaches and heaped mindless abuse upon home detox (notwithstanding its huge success rate under Dr. Kishore's oversight)? In response, *The New York Times* essentially scorches the remaining earth with its March 23, 2016, headline, "Ithaca's Anti-Heroin Plan: Open a Site to Shoot Heroin."¹⁵

Small wonder that the day before that headline appeared, *The Blaze* ran its opioid abuse story with an equally telling headline, "Slaughter Out Of Control."¹⁶ As noted repeatedly in earlier articles in this series, the national

drug czar, Michael Botticelli, insists on pouring more gasoline on the fire.¹⁷ If you're selling such gasoline (replacement opioids), you have a good friend in Mr. Botticelli. In fact, your program will win White House awards¹⁸ to support current mythologies by diverting attention from the rising death toll.

This brings us back to home detox and why it takes a full twelve months to imprint sobriety back onto an addicted person's life, as Dr. Kishore explains it:

All of us need endorphins—natural opiates. But if you're supplying opiates from outside, what's the point of making natural opiates (endorphins)? Those factories shut down in the body. It takes ninety days to retool the physiological systems to restore natural opiate production. In other words, the addict needs ninety days of a drug-free state.¹⁹ This resets the physiology, BUT it doesn't deal with the psychological factors in the so-called seasonal cues (memories that rekindle throughout the year). All cues throughout the entire year must be extinguished and only home detox, properly administered, covers this ground.

In effect (and likely by design), the attack on the innocent described in Proverbs 24:15 with which we opened this article is inadequate to tell the whole story. Beyond the takedown of Dr. Kishore's clinics and subsequent disappearance of his treatment model detailed in the earlier articles, the steps we've just outlined go further. Such actions find a stunning historic parallel in Rome's first century assault on Jerusalem, in which the Romans reportedly plowed the land under with salt to prevent crops from growing on it. Scorched earth policies entail salt-poisoned soil.

Physician Rising

But Proverbs 24:15 doesn't stand alone. It is complemented by verse 16: the innocent man, though knocked

down seven times, still rises again.

Those familiar with the Academy Award-winning movie *Chariots of Fire* will recall a scene (based on an actual event) where Eric Liddell is knocked down near the beginning of a foot race. Having now been dealt a huge setback, Liddell gets back up to pursue the pack of runners racing away from him. Remarkably, he overtakes the field and is first to break the tape, confounding the received wisdom that he had been knocked out of the race.

We seem to be witnessing something very similar to the above scenario.

Sadly, there are more parallels than those between Liddell and Dr. Kishore. In the film, just moments before that stunning race began, Ian Holm's Sam Mussabini is given a choice line to mutter concerning the event: "I've seen better organized riots." And the state and national responses to drug addiction (the latter under Michael Botticelli's benighted watch) continue to richly earn that epithet.

But once Dr. Kishore was permitted to travel²⁰ outside of Massachusetts (thanks to the dedicated efforts of Hal Shurtleff on the doctor's behalf), the process of recovering from the blows leveled against him, his model, his track record, his medical license itself, began in earnest. Doors are opening in other New England states (and beyond). Dr. Kishore traveled to Maine in mid-March with Mr. Shurtleff and tells the story in his own words:

I spent four days in Maine and even attended a homeschooling convention there. There's a groundswell of interest. Addiction rates are very high there. I spent an hour and a half with the governor's key aide. They like the sobriety-based model. The governor himself will meet with me the first week of April. Maine has a strong homeschooling movement and her pastors are serious people. Maine's governor is willing to

do what's necessary to get things done.

I ask Dr. Kishore if Maine could license him to practice medicine. He is understandably guarded in his words:

Yes, but I'm building this up slowly. I can't rush it. I need to study the system that's set up there. But if nothing else, it appears that the Massachusetts Model will not die.

There are other states and groups keenly interested in Dr. Kishore's work and in ways to apply it, extend it, and/or rekindle it. Perhaps most remarkable of all is the following news Dr. Kishore shared with me:

I received an invitation to submit an abstract to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) concerning the National Library of Addictions [see the third article in this series]. I've done presentations for the CDC before. God willing, I'll be presenting in August of this year.

As heartening as these reports are, you'd be mistaken to think that Dr. Kishore is fully up and running again. While runner Eric Liddell took a tumble off the track, Dr. Kishore was deliberately kicked off the track, with brutal steps being taken to keep him out of the race and impoverished and destitute. We are now witnessing the process of his picking himself back up off the ground, with his eyes on the mark set before him. In Matthew Henry's words cited earlier, "by the blessing of God upon his wisdom and integrity, he *rises again*, sees through his troubles and sees better times after them." Or as Dr. Kishore put it, "The land has been tilled. The time is right for new models of care."

This man has no time for self-pity. He has a race to run and countless lives hanging in the balance. 🏃

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1. Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1982), vol. 6, section 2, p. 135.

2. *ibid.*, p. 136.

3. Rev. Professor E. H. Plumptre, in F. C. Cook, editor, *The Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981 [1871–1881]), Vol. 5, pp. 594–596. Says Plumptre, "The latter of these two verses is so often carelessly but wrongly quoted as a half-apology for sin, 'The righteous falleth i.e. *sinneth*, seven times a day,' that it is necessary to put its true meaning in the clearest light possible . . . 'Though the just man fall (not into sin, but into calamities), yet he riseth up.'" J. W. Nutt makes this same point: the just man "falls into trouble (not *sin*, as is often supposed)." Cf. Charles John Ellicott, *Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 343.

4. John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Proverbs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, n.d), p. 208.

5. Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 932.

6. *ibid.*

7. http://www.lowellsun.com/breakingnews/ci_29666933/baker-appeals-stronger-federal-role-opioid-addiction-fight

8. Many politicians are getting on the federal bandwagon, including mayors of major cities such as Orlando, Florida. Cf. <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/politics/political-pulse/os-mayor-jacobs-calls-for-federal-help-against-heroin-20160322-story.html>

9. <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/mar/21/joe-pitts/rep-joe-pitts-says-120-americans-die-daily-overdos/>

10. <http://triblive.com/mobile/10064667-96/counselors-addiction-drug>

11. *ibid.*

12. https://www.painedu.org/Downloads/NIPC/Pain_Assessment_Scales.pdf

13. During the discussion in which Dr. Kishore explained this, one listener quipped that such nonsense would eventually reduce to an absurdity on the order of "Hey, girls,

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Creation and the Timeless God

by Ian Hodge, Ph.D.



The doctrine of creation has many implications, not only to do with the scientific facts of the universe, but there are other, more subtle, issues at stake. One of those has to do with the idea of the eternal, or timeless, God. This essay looks at the arguments for a temporal God and offers suggestions why they are inadequate. As a result, it concludes that the idea of the eternal God who created time “In the beginning” is still the only view that makes sense not only of the Biblical data but what we observe in the universe around us.

When Chalcedon launched its *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* in 1974, the first edition was on creation. So central is creation to the Biblical narrative, that without it, the Bible’s message is drastically altered. Dr. Rushdoony saw this, which is why he was influential in getting Whitcomb and Morris’s *The Genesis Flood* in print.

My purpose in this essay is to explore one aspect of the idea of creation—time. Dr. Rushdoony has a discussion on time in his second volume of *Systematic Theology*. There he identifies time as a moral issue, not a metaphysical one.¹ In this essay, however, I’ll explore the idea of a temporal God as proposed by Open Theists. It raises some questions.

Is God getting older? This appears to be a legitimate question if God is in time, as some people claim, and we shall soon identify who these “some people” are. That may seem a strange notion

to many Christians who believe God is outside of time. For most Christians who hold the traditional view about God and time, according to the Bible (1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 9:14), God is an “eternal” Being and the traditional view accepts this as indicating God is outside of time—eternal. Yet, so prolific has the notion of a temporal God become that John Frame can write, “So at present one may speak of a consensus among theistic philosophers that God is in time.”²

Since the time of the early church, there has been discussion on the nature of time and God. Augustine, Aquinas and Boethius all contributed to the discussion in some form or another. In recent years, the discussion gained new impetus with the views of proponents of Open Theism. They ask whether time is something created? If so, does it entail that God is a timeless God, or is time “eternal,” thereby implying God is temporal?

When it comes to things eternal, it is helpful to remember what the Bible has to say on the matter:

He has made everything suited to its time; also, he has given human beings an awareness of eternity; but in such a way that they can’t fully comprehend, from beginning to end, the things God does. (Eccles. 3:11)

Concepts such as past, present, or future are everyday concepts. At least it was for me *yesterday*, is still so *today*, and I expect it to be the same tomorrow. And it is the same for most humans. But

in the traditional view of theology, God is beyond time, being “eternal.” Some people think of time as if it were a river, God is upstream, downstream, and right in front of you all at the same time. No matter how we think of time, the key point is this: God *transcends* time as humans know and experience it. But *how* does He transcend time, or in what ways does He transcend time? And if God transcends time, how can it be said that He is “in time”—a temporal God?

The Problem Defined

You begin to get an inkling of the problem when you think of “In the beginning ...” (Gen. 1:1). Traditionally, this has been thought of as the beginning not only of the existence of the universe but of time itself. When you think like this, you soon begin to think of God as existing *before* the creation of time. But what meaning can it have to think of *before* time began, if indeed it had a beginning? For words such as “before” or “after” are time-related words. Is it even possible to conceive of God as “before” time? And what would that “before” look like? God is usually said to be transcendent, somehow over and above His creation. R.C. Sproul explains transcendence this way:

When the term transcendent is applied to God, however, it does not refer to God’s location or physical stature. It does not mean that God is bigger, fatter, or taller than creatures. Nor does it mean that he lives way up in the sky somewhere east of the moon and west of the sun. The term refers specifically to the order of being God represents. It refers to his ontological status. When

theologians say God is a transcendent being, they mean that he transcends every created thing ontologically. He is a higher order of being precisely at the point of his being. The specific point is that he is a self-existent and eternal being who has the power of being in himself. He is uncaused. He is self-existent.³

So if God is ontologically different, does that include a difference in relationship to time? Traditional theology affirms that is so, but this is being challenged.⁴

William Lane Craig suggests that God was atemporal “prior to” the creation of time, but now he is temporal—within time. He argues, “if all events exist timelessly in God’s eternal reference frame, then none of them can exist *earlier than, simultaneously with or later than* another event, for these are temporal relations.”⁵ In the view of the temporalists, if God is simultaneously upstream, downstream and in front of you, it is not possible for God to speak of upstream and downstream, past or future events.

What Is a Person?

Some people have raised the notion of “person” to determine the meaning of the being of God and time. What does it mean to be a person? Can a person exist out of time? The following passage is often quoted as a way of getting the discussion off the ground:

Surely it is a necessary condition of anything’s being a person that it should be capable (logically) of, among other things, doing at least some of the following: remembering, anticipating, reflecting, deliberating, deciding, intending, and acting intentionally. To see that this is so one need but ask oneself whether anything which necessarily lacked all of the capacities noted would, under any conceivable circumstances, count as a person. But now an eternal being would necessarily lack all of these

capacities in as much as their exercise by a being clearly requires that the being exist in time. After all, reflection and deliberation take time, deciding typically occurs at some time—and in any case it always makes sense to ask, ‘Where did you (he, they, etc.) decide?’; remembering is impossible unless the being doing the remembering has a past; and so on. Hence, no eternal being, it would seem, could be a person.⁶

This proposed “definition” of what it means to be a person, though interesting, is not necessarily complete. A key issue in the doctrine of the Trinity is the matter of *relationality* or interpersonal relationships. Is it possible to be a person without any relationships with other persons? The Coburn definition (in the quote above) of “person” is inadequate because it mentions nothing about relationships, and therefore is an incomplete basis on which to draw conclusions about the nature of God.⁷

Craig does not quote Coburn to agree with his conclusion, as does Dr. Skip Moen. Moen concludes, “The analysis of the logic of personal capacities seems to destroy any hope of speaking of an essentially timeless person.” On the other hand, Craig concludes, “Now even if Coburn were correct that a personal being must be capable of exhibiting the forms of consciousness he lists, it does not follow that a timeless God cannot be personal. For God could be *capable* of exhibiting such forms of consciousness but be timeless just in case he does not *in fact* exhibit any of them.”⁸

At this point, it is not necessary to accept Craig’s version of a timeless God. But what Craig has done is establish the framework for identifying a false argument. Consider this:

P1: If God were in time, He would be capable of remembering, anticipating, reflecting, deliberating, deciding, etc.

P2: God is capable of remembering, anticipating, reflecting, deliberating, deciding, etc.

Conclusion: Therefore, God is in time.

Craig, by providing another explanation, exposes the argument in its current form as the fallacy of affirming the consequent.⁹ This fallacy could be avoided if it can be shown that the explanation identified is the only possible explanation. Craig shows it is not the only possible explanation, thus the fallacy is committed by temporalists such as Skip Moen. But it is more than this.

Having established the idea of person this way, these criteria are then “read back” into God by the temporalists. And the conclusion is that in order for God to be a person, He cannot exist timelessly, since all these conditions require a temporal state of being. Their logic works something like this (or doesn’t work, as the case may be):

P1: A *temporal* person remembers, anticipates, reflects, deliberates, etc.

P2: God is a person who remembers, anticipates, reflects, deliberates, etc.

Conclusion: Therefore, God is temporal.

The conclusion simply begs the question, however. Why can’t an atemporal being remember, anticipate, reflect, deliberate, etc.? Such a possibility is simply ruled out, *a priori*. Yet how it would be possible to know this about an eternal God is problematical. And what has happened to transcendence? It seems to have disappeared. Such a position assumes an ontological similarity about the idea of person, that God and man have some kind of *identicalness* in their being. But it also assumes that eternity and time are somehow similar to one another so that time is a correlative to eternity. This assumption, however, is up for a serious challenge.

The Proper Starting Place: God

At once we are thrown into a discussion about God and the nature and attributes of God. But the key to understanding the resolution to these issues is to find the proper beginning in the chain of systematic thinking that is behind the discussion of God and time.

What is the proper starting place in human thinking of any kind? The proper starting place is with God and man created in His image. But this already imposes a two-level theory of reality or being. God's being is uncreated while man is created.¹⁰

Here we are back at the transcendence question once again. But if the starting place is God the uncreated being, what attributes must He have in place to be that starting point? Can a temporal God be self-existing and self-determinative? What would be His relationship to time, one of dependency? Can a temporal God qualify as the starting place in human predication? Or it could be put this way: is true meaning found in time or eternity?

When the question about meaning is asked this way the word *eternal* is contrasted with the word *time*. In traditional theology, eternal means outside of time, beyond time, or some such notion. But our problem as creatures is that we have no way of knowing what "beyond time" might be or mean. We are, after all, creatures of time, and even though we are offered *eternal* life, eternal here is not the same quality that is usually attributed to God. If man could become *eternal like God*, he would begin to participate in divinity. But if God is a temporal God, does that mean mankind is already participating in divinity?

Thus, the question of the timeless God is ultimately a question about the nature and character of God as well as the nature and character of time itself.

When God declares "I change not" (Mal. 3:6), this has been traditionally understood that He does not change in His essence. From that, some questions then follow:

If God is limited by time, is He also limited in His knowledge and His power, for example?

For man, time is a limitation. Is it also a limitation for God?

For man, time is the theater of change. Is God changing? If so, in what ways is He changing?

For man, time is the theater of aging. Is God getting older?

If He's not getting older or He's not limited by time, then God obviously transcends time in some manner. In which case it appears reasonable to ask: In what way is God temporal if, in fact, He is temporal at all?

Is God Being or Becoming?

Consider the philosophy of being. When Parmenides and Heraclitus locked horns over the nature of change, the question arose whether humans are *being* or *becoming*? A being that has yet to reach its full potential is *becoming*.¹¹ The existence of the universe is only explained by a being that has the power of existence within him and therefore is not caused to exist by something else. Such a being is self-determinative, and self-determination implies no change. For if God were subject to change, it would imply something else must have existed besides God that influenced change within Him. And that would mean God has not yet reached His full potential—He is becoming.

You can see from the questions and the possible answers that the difference between created and uncreated *being* is at the center of the discussion. Is God really potentially and actually *fully realized*? Or is there some aspect of God which has not yet reached its potential?

For example, His knowledge. Does God know everything, or is He still learning? Some people suggest He is still learning, that the only things He can know now are things that are timelessly true. Other things, such as what you will be doing tomorrow, are not timelessly true according to one writer, they are contingently true, and God does not know what you will do until you do it.¹²

Gregory Boyd is quite adamant when he says, "the only remaining issue from God's perspective is how He might strategically weave the wicked character of these 'sons of perdition' into His divine plan."¹³ In other words, Boyd attributes *process* into the being of God. If this is a true representation of God, then the whole question of God's self-determination is called into question. If God is still learning things (what people will do in the future), then ontologically He is still in the category of becoming, not fully actualized. Though He may know all the possible actions you might take, He does not know which actual one until you make it. At which point, God becomes the great super-reactor to the actions of man. "Perhaps," suggests Paul Helm in his defense of a timeless God, "God is only an enlarged and magnified human being."¹⁴ But if God, like man, is still learning new things, how can He be totally self-sufficient? Apparently He *needs* the libertarian free will decisions of His creatures in order to finally discover what His next course of action will be.

Boyd, however, explains himself when he writes, "God can *at some point* predetermine and/or foreknow *some* things about the future without *eternally* predetermining and/or foreknowing *everything* about the future."¹⁵ But this is confusing. Consider this: How can God predetermine *some* things *unless* He predetermines and controls *all* things? Without *total control*, God's attempts

at predetermination or foreknowledge would become merely a “best guess” by a now divine being who appears as a lame duck in the futures game. God, apparently, is no more than a player in the cosmic game of chance or probability: sometimes He wins, sometimes He loses. Somehow, however, He can overcome the adversity and eventually get what He wants. But here we see God merely as the great cosmic reactor, a Super Genie able to overcome all adversity in a single leap—but unable to bring human future events into reality with any certainty. In other words, God is subject to chance or random activities foreseen as potential acts by Him but beyond His control, which makes time-bound human events the ultimate dictator of God’s activities. Such a God cannot be self-sufficient or self-determinative.

For Gregory Boyd or Skip Moen, it is time that determines everything. All the events of the universe obtain their meaning from the existential and libertarian free-will actions of man.

The question must be asked, however, what drives the conclusions of Moen and Boyd and the open theists?

Is Libertarian Free Will the Only Choice?

Behind the debate over God and time is the notion of free will and infallibility. For open theists, man does not have a free will if God knows infallibly *today* that you will be run over by a bus at 2:37 p.m. *tomorrow* afternoon. If God knows this infallibly *today*, then there is nothing you can do, apparently, to avoid the catastrophe. But already you can see a good part of the problem: it assumes God acts in a time-tensed environment, that His thoughts are sequential in some fashion. Sequence, however, presupposes time. Thus, Dr. Moen concludes

Since we have argued that timelessness

is not only inconsistent with the idea of personhood, it is internally incoherent in relation to acts of cognition, it should be obvious that the only logically acceptable view of omniscience for a Christian God is one in which God logically cannot know the definite truth-values of propositions about some future events.¹⁶

But there is a lingering question raised by Moen when he suggests that God has somehow limited His knowledge. How could He who knows everything limit His knowledge? By pretending He does not know things? That’s not a limitation of knowledge; that’s just making a pretense about one’s knowledge of certain future events.

The idea of the absolute sovereignty of God implies that God micromanages the events of the world. But such a view, contends Gregory Boyd, would demean God’s sovereignty.¹⁷ For Boyd, God knows and determines some events in the future, but not all of them. Apparently He has taken a deliberate policy of limiting His knowledge in order to make room for human free will. But the question then is this one: Can God limit Himself? And would any such limitation mean that He is no longer God? You can begin to see what is at stake in the discussion, and the traditional view has always attempted to hold on to God’s character as the bedrock of systematic theology.

Dr. Moen sees the discussion as one that is to be controlled by logic. Saying that the discussion should be controlled by logic, however, explains very little. Human beings, made in the image of the God who is Ultimate Rationality, are always logical to their presuppositions, though their premises are often faulty. So when Dr. Moen asks for logic, he is really asking that all the decisions be made on the basis of *his* presuppositions. And therein lies the real matter of debate: who has the correct presupposi-

tions about God, free will, omniscience and infallibility?¹⁸

The real discussion, then, is the relationship between the eternal and the temporal. Here, Van Til provides an answer:

Again, if we are asked, What do you think of the relation of the eternal to the temporal?, we reply that the eternal for us does not exist as a principle but as a person, and that as an absolute person. Accordingly, we do not use the eternal as a correlative to the temporal; we use the notion of the eternal God as the personal creator of the temporal universe.

Once more, if men ask us as to which is first, *becoming* or *being*, we reply by saying first of all that the term becoming cannot be applied to God. God’s being is not subject to becoming. He is eternal being. And as for created being, it is in the process of becoming by virtue of the plan of God. God’s being is therefore “before” the becoming of the created universe. The eternal One-and-Many are “prior to” in quotation marks. It will readily be seen that if our theory of reality is true, we cannot simply say that God is prior to the universe, meaning by “prior to” temporal priority. Inasmuch as God is not subject to time, we cannot enclose him in the calendar. God is the creator of time itself as a form of created being. On the other hand, if we say that God is “prior to” the created universe we do not simply mean what is usually meant by logical priority. God is, to be sure, logically “prior to” the created universe but he is logically prior by virtue of the fact that he has actually created the universe with its temporal form out of or into (sic) nothing.¹⁹

So God’s nature is the unmovable point in theology. This is why, for example, the Cosmological Argument, in order to be carried, requires a God who is a *necessary* being, who has *within* Himself the power of existence. Sproul concludes, “Something must have

the power of being within itself (self-existence or *aseity*) or nothing would or could possibly exist ... An ontologically necessary being is a being who cannot not be. It is proven by the law of the impossibility of the contrary.”²⁰ This means, among other things, that God is self-existent, or self-determinative. And conservative Christianity has always attempted to maintain the difference between that which is created and that which is uncreated. Thus, “For the orthodox Christian the triune God is ultimate, and the whole of creation is His handiwork and thus derivative. It does not undercut the reality of the creation, and thus of time, to say that it is created: rather, it simply identifies the kind of reality it is.”²¹

Paul Helm comes to a similar conclusion: “Why cannot divine timelessness consist in a manner of existence which sustains no temporal relations with human time? If God timelessly exists he is neither earlier nor later nor simultaneous with any event of time. He exists timelessly.”²²

If time and eternity are equated as a series of chronological events, then man is already living in the eternal and God and man have an equality of “being” at this particular point. Now traditional theology points out that man is made in the image of God. But in what way is man in the image of God? The answer implies that man is an analogy of God in some way. But if you consider the arguments of the open theists, they try to make God an analogy of man. It’s a reverse *via negativa*. This is how they get to the point of arguing that in order for God to be a person He must be within the temporal order, for the only persons they can identify are those like you and me. We exist as persons, so therefore God must exist as we do—temporally. And that is simply logic of the worst kind, a *non sequitur*.

Does History Have Meaning?

There is yet another issue, and that is the meaning of history itself. If time is eternal, then history becomes meaningless. In the traditional view, time, a created reality, serves the purposes of God. Thus instead of a cyclical history of meaninglessness, history becomes the theater where God achieves His ultimate eschatological events. Attempting to make time ultimate, however, leads to broader philosophic problems. Not surprisingly, those “philosophies which have as their premise the ultimacy of time end in a world and life negation and a desire to escape from life into a nirvana of nothingness.”²³

We are left to ask: what happens to the transcendent God if God is temporal, that His knowledge of future events is limited and so His knowledge is still growing? The answer is that the transcendent God disappears. But this has broader implications.

The basis of science is a rational universe, a universe where every item has its meaning from the God who created all things. Each fact or event occurs where and when it occurs because it was designed to be that way. Without design, however, the idea of *brute* factuality is introduced. Brute factuality implies unique events—*random* events. These are the kind of events required by Dr. Moen and the open theists who have challenged the traditional view of God and time. For them, the notion of free will requires random events. So, if you do get run over by a bus at 2:37 p.m. tomorrow afternoon, that event was random, unplanned, and while it may be a possibility in God’s mind, it was not an actual event to God until it happened.

Thus, chance, or magic, or superstition becomes the center of the discussion. If there is no transcendental meaning, then man’s only recourse is to his own private opinions.

Modifications to Traditional Theology

Dr. Moen explains, “Apparently the only avenues open to a theistic proponent of free will are modifications of one or both of the key doctrines—omniscience and infallibility.”²⁴ For Dr. Moen, it also requires a modification to the idea of a timeless God. There is, of course, yet another possibility. And that is his definition of free will is defective in the first instance. For if libertarian free will is denied in favor of the idea of the free will of secondary causes, to quote the language of the Westminster Confession, John Frame’s conclusion is valid: “[I]t seems to me that once we deny the existence of libertarian freedom, all the relevant considerations favor atemporality, and none favor temporality.”²⁵

In other words, the debate about time and God, His alleged lack of omniscience and the denial of His infallibility, are built on the bed of a philosophical discussion about the nature of free will. Libertarian freedom implies the idea that man is totally beyond the control of God when it comes to free-will choices. To deny infallibility, however, is to eliminate the possibility of *any* truth claim, for every truth claim has an explicit or implied infallibility.

Consider the argument:

(P) If libertarian free will exists, it will demand (Q) modifications to omniscience or infallibility or God’s atemporality.

(Q) Modifications to omniscience, infallibility and atemporality are identified.

Therefore, (P) libertarian free will is proven.

This is the argument constructed by those who oppose the traditional view of God. Put in this form, it can be seen that the argument is a fallacy. And that

is because the proposed modifications are neither essential nor necessary. For if the definition of “libertarian free will” is in reality a *faulty* definition then no amount of modifications to the traditional views about God can rescue that bad definition.

The Impossibility of Infinite Time

A question has to be asked about the relationship of a temporal God to time and infinity—and logic. The temporalists are suggesting that God has existed infinitely in time. Their view requires the existence of time before the creation of the universe. But here they come into conflict with the idea of an *actual infinite*. In the temporal view, there must be an infinite series of events that have taken place up to this present point in time. This, however, is a logical impossibility. You cannot have an infinite series of events and then attempt to add yet another event into the chain. For if you are still adding to the chain of events then the series is not infinite. In the words of Craig, “the formation of an actual infinite by successive addition is impossible because one can always add one more.”²⁶ If the time-clock is still ticking away, then you have not yet reached an infinity in time, and therefore, if the idea of a temporal God was accurate, both time *and* God had a beginning.

Thus, in the temporal view, since the series of events is not yet complete and therefore not infinite, God must have had a beginning. And if God had a beginning, He is not God.²⁷

Conclusion

Who is God? What kind of attributes are necessary for the God who does all that is revealed in the Bible? Historically, the theologians came down on the side of a timeless God, not a temporal God.

Since both God and time become

finite on the temporalist view, the alternative and traditional view remains intact. Time was created.

The doctrine of creation and the Genesis record thus provide the important backdrop for establishing the character of God and the nature of time.

It is unfortunate that so many people struggle with the absolute sovereignty of God. But that is the issue in the discussion about the timeless God. In the Augustinian–Calvinist view, it is the absolute sovereignty of God that establishes the “liberty or contingency of second causes.”²⁸ Man’s actions only obtain their true meaning when viewed against the backdrop of the absolute plan of God. Otherwise, man’s actions are merely person-relative in terms of their meaning. Without a transcendental place to establish the meaning of man’s actions, man’s “free will” drifts into the vast ocean of chance with no guarantee that free will has any meaning whatsoever. And thus history itself becomes a meaningless series of events rather than the theater where God achieves his purposes without fail. 🙌

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1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology in Two Volumes Volume II* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), p. 1079ff.
2. John M. Frame, *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Co., 2001), p. 146.
3. R. C. Sproul, and Keith A. Mathison, *Not a Chance: God, Science and the Revolt Against Reason* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, [1999] 2013), Kindle Edition, loc. 1950–52. This is a recent update and expansion of Sproul’s book, originally published in 1999 with the title, *Not a Chance: The Myth of Chance in Modern Science and Cosmology*.

4. Gregory E. Ganssle, ed., *God & Time: Four Views* (Downer’s Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001). Contributors include William Lane Craig, Paul Helm, Allan Padgett, and Nicolas Wolterstorff.

5. Craig in Ganssle, *ibid.*, p. 144.

6. Robert Coburn, “Professor Malcolm on God,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 41 (June, 1963), p. 155, quoted by William Lane Craig in Ganssle, *ibid.*, p.138. See also Skip Moen, *God, Time and the Limits of Omniscience*, (Dr. Moen’s Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University (1979), self-published in 2010), p. 180. Dr. Moen obtained his M.A. degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School when Clark Pinnock was lecturing there. Pinnock went on to become a leading voice in the open theism movement.

7. This theme is picked up by Colin Gunton in his book, *The One, The Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993). Gunton’s thesis is that a defective view of creation and the Trinity helped create the rejection of Christianity which is the key to understanding modernism. See also B.A. Bosserman, *The Trinity and the Vindication of Christian Paradox: An Interpretation and Refinement of the Theological Apologetic of Cornelius Van Til*, (Pickwick Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, Kindle Edition, 2014). It is a key failure of Unitarianism to address the question of relationships and whether the idea of interpersonal relationships has a transcendent origin. Under the Unitarian view of God, God had no relationships with other persons at all until He created other personal beings. But in what sense, then, could it be said that a Unitarian monad is a person? Unitarianism ultimately takes us down the path of an *impersonal* God.

8. Moen, *ibid.*, p. 181; Craig in Ganssle, *idem.*, emphasis in the original.

9. The argument has the form:

If P then Q,

Q,

therefore P.

See <http://creation.com/loving-god-with-all-your-mind-logic-and-creation>. The fallacy is

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Sharing Your Life: The Christian Way to Kingdom Service

by Andrea Schwartz



My resume includes the distinction that I was an active home educator for over twenty-eight years. I often joke that when I ran out of children to homeschool, I began my “career” as a writer and mentor, helping younger women maneuver through their journeys with their families.

During the time I was the primary teacher for my children, I received many positive and negative comments about our family’s educational choice. They ranged from the customary, “I could never do that! I just don’t have the patience,” to “How selfish it is to restrict your gifts and talents to just your own children. You should send them to school to be missionaries to other kids, and you should get credentialed as a teacher so that with your talents you could help many children and just not your own.” I always laughed at the latter criticism based on its faulty logic. This collectivist view held that by giving priority to my own family I was cheating others. By God’s grace, a sound theology allowed me to dismiss these “helpful” pieces of advice as the distractions they were.

Now that the season of life I enjoy does not include day-to-day teaching, and running children to various activities and lessons, I am in a position to utilize my experience as a teacher and put it to productive use. Those 28-plus years served as my “advanced degree” studies as I took three children from be-

ing uneducated to well educated, and in the process, I acquired useful, transmittable knowledge. Rather than pursue additional schooling, as some suggested, I purposed to apply what I had learned and share it with others. My personal ministry became sharing my life with those God placed in my path, and putting to good use all that He had allowed me to learn.

What Is Ministry?

It is a shame that the word “ministry” has been relegated to something that the ecclesiastical realm is responsible for. Per Webster’s 1828 *Dictionary*, the definition offered, *the office, duties or functions of a subordinate agent of any kind*, is not limited to ecclesiastical matters. It is time that the people of God recognize that as subordinate agents (disciples) of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a duty and obligation to recognize our office, duties, and functions.

Because we have ghettoized the concept of ministry to be something apart from our day-to-day lives, and often limited to the clergy, we have neglected key components of the dominion mandate/Great Commission to disciple the nations. What if we considered the degree to which we are sharing our lives with others, as either individuals or families, a benchmark of our gratitude and appreciation for our eternal salvation and God’s grace towards us? What if dedicated believers determined truly to be salt and light within the sphere of their everyday existence? The results

would be staggering.

For those of us who desire to see our culture reconstructed according to Biblical guidelines and mandates, we have a duty, responsibility, and opportunity to reach out into our surrounding culture and shine the light of Christ. This does not mean that we need do anything extraordinary to find an area of ministry where we can immediately begin to serve. Ministry should be a logical extension of what we already do.

Whatever occupies our time and focus can be extended, in compassionate ways, to others as a means to share Jesus as we share our life with them. One does not need to be “credentialed” by anyone other than our Savior to go about making disciples of those whose paths cross ours—by assisting in tangible ways, whether within our extended family, our neighborhood, our church congregation, or even the workplace. Moreover, it does not need to be in great numbers to be God-honoring. As Jesus stated, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me” (Matt. 25:40). This is the subject of compassion and it falls into the area of charitable works. Recall that St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 13:13: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.”

R.J. Rushdoony points out,

In the Bible, compassion or pity is always associated with grace. Having received the grace of God, we manifest it to others. We too often hear of people who show compassion to the

poor and needy, but less often that their motivation is grace. When grace is our motivation, we know the limitations of our efforts, and how limited is the good we can do, and how great God's power and works. As we survey the evil in men both high and low, we know that the resolution lies in God's sovereign grace. For us then, the necessity is to recognize that the cross means judgment on sin. If God the Son, as man's last Adam, undergoes judgment for His people, how can men and nations expect to evade judgment for sin? We know they shall be judged. Our duty is to obey our Lord, be charitable where we can, and to know that, however miserable may be the results that we see, in Jesus Christ, our "labour is not in vain" but will accomplish His purpose (1 Cor. 15:58). Our work is thus one of reconstruction, knowing that the design is not of us but the Lord.¹

Immediate Areas of Ministry

And he also went on to say to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." (Luke 14:12-14)

People prioritize their time according to what is important to them. It is all too easy to breeze over Jesus's words in the gospel with a hearty "Amen," without real, tangible applications in our lives. We all have areas that occupy our time that, with a little effort, can be extended to help those who are not in a position to repay us. By doing so, we are merely adding to those things already

taking place in our own lives, with an emphasis to share our lives with others.

When my children were young, I was not in a position to volunteer as a counselor at the local community pregnancy center. That did not hinder me from pro-life ministry. I involved my son from a young age with me in activities such as operating a pro-life booth at the county fair. In addition, he and other young pro-lifers produced a regular newsletter, *Kids for Life*, expressing their plea for the unborn. To this day, he remains committed to the cause of ending abortion and supporting ministries that work to that end.

My youngest daughter volunteered her time, when she was quite young, washing donated clothes that the pregnancy center received in order to have them clean before giving them to mothers in need. Additionally, our family asked the local pregnancy center to send women our way who did not have a support structure in place to help them during their pregnancies. We shared holidays with them and I had the privilege of being the labor coach for two of them when they gave birth to their children.

You see, none of these went outside of what we were already doing. Our efforts were an extension of our lives and a reflection of our appreciation for what the Lord had done for us—something that we could never repay. And, as in all cases of obedience to the directives of God's law-word, we were the richer for it.

An Immediate Need Almost Anyone Can Fill

Illiteracy remains a problem in our society. In many ways, it is the result of a godless, statist, educational system that does not address children as people made in the image and likeness of God. Along with the myriad of other problems that result when students don't

become good readers is their separation from the means by which Jesus Christ becomes known to them. While it is true that as people we first hear God's Word, without the ability to steep oneself in the text of Scripture by being able to read it, personal responsibility and self-government are almost impossible to attain. This is an area where Christians can have an immediate impact, and in the process transmit vital Biblical principles.

The *purpose* of God's law is to provide government under God, not under men, not the church, nor the state. God's law is the means to a free and godly community. In surveying Biblical law, we must *first* recognize its premise. Fallen man can only create a sinful society and a tyrannical one. The goal of unregenerate man is a new Tower of Babel, Babylon the Great. It means playing God and controlling all things. The goal of regenerate man in Christ is the kingdom of God and the New Jerusalem, a realm wherein righteousness or justice dwells (2 Peter 3:13). Fallen man cannot build a just social order because he is in revolt against the God of *all* justice or righteousness and His law, which is justice. God's law is "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), and it is a law hated by all who are in sin, which is slavery (John 8:31-36).²

Christian individuals and families are in a position to play a significant role in removing the bonds of slavery that entangle so many. By helping others (both old and young) bridge the gap from illiteracy to literacy, we have the opportunity to help them become free indeed (John 8:36). What's more, this can be a great chance for young people still living at home, and who are good readers themselves, to contribute to the lives of others. The simple rule of thumb is this: If you can read, you can teach someone else to read. Imagine what it would be like if each Christian

family determined to let their light shine in this way.

Personal Story

Having taught three children to read and having helped adults who struggle with reading, this is an area of ministry that comes naturally to me. For example, over twenty years ago, when I met a woman who owned a ranch and taught horseback riding, I was able to exchange reading instruction for her two young children with riding lessons for mine. Each of us was satisfied with the arrangement and her struggling students became better readers.

Currently, I have teamed up with a public school teacher who refers to me families whose children are struggling in school, specifically with reading. Once the parents make contact with me by phone, I explain that I will help their child become a good reader. The requirements include their promise to supervise their son or daughter in their practice in between tutoring sessions. I arrange for us to meet at a public library and I spend about a half an hour to forty-five minutes two times a week, going through the material in Sam Blumenfeld's *Alpha-Phonics* program. I assign homework, making it clear that I am only interested in continuing with this arrangement if the family (including the student) values the opportunity. I charge a minimal \$5 per session, and require that the student be the one to hand me the money. What the family does not know, is that when we complete the program, the money that I have been paid will be used to purchase a Bible and some good reading material as an acknowledgement of the accomplishment.

All along the way, who I am and what I believe is a part of our interaction. One mother thanked me for investing in her son. I told her that I do what I do because of Jesus Christ and

what He has done for me. She began to cry. This started discussion about her life and faith and has encouraged her to read the Bible in her own native language. A little bit of effort on my part has produced positive results.

Chalcedon Makes This Easier

Should you wish to try your hand at this accessible ministry for you or your children, Chalcedon makes the process easy. For a small investment, you can purchase the *Alpha-Phonics Tutor's Package*³ and make use of our helpful tutorial as to how to get started along with one-on-one mentoring along the way should you need it. By focusing on God's requirement for charity, we can do much to advance the Kingdom in a way that produces tangible results. This is one way to let our light shine before others and point them to Christ in the process.

Religion is either man-centered or God-centered, and non-Christian, non-Biblical faiths are men-centered. The concern of pagans, whether in the church or out of it, whether in an ancient mystery religion or in a modern church, is man-centered. In effect, the believer is interested in what God can do for him or her. As against this, Biblical faith insists that justice means righteousness in us, set forth by our faithfulness to God's law; because God's law is the expression of His nature and being, to believe in God means to obey His law and to manifest His communicable attributes, which include grace, mercy, and charity ... Moreover, to believe in God is to know His grace, mercy, and charity to us in and through Jesus Christ, His atonement, and His providential care.⁴

Sharing Our Lives

Christian charity is altogether different from its humanistic counterpart. Christendom resulted from the people of God applying the law of God to all aspects of life. Today, much of that has

been clouded by a self-centeredness that has no root in Scripture. With an emphasis on the Christian call to charity, we will be in a better position to reconstruct our society on Biblical foundations. Rushdoony points out,

We sometimes forget what a radical change in every area of life and thought was made by Christianity. As one scholar observed, those who were the closest to the gods in Homer were not the poor nor the meek, but the strong and the powerful. Greek philosophy and popular thought did not consider the potential for goodness in the poor ... Giving to another person took place only when one knew that the other person would in due time reciprocate...

Our Lord reversed the prevailing moral order. His command was, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). Matthew 6:1 says that it is our Father in Heaven who will reward us by His providence. "And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same" (Luke 6:33).

Over the centuries, one of the unexpected kindnesses of Christians was that they asked people, who were unable to reciprocate the invitation, to share their dinner. The poor were thus welcomed to the table by richer believers.

We are now on the road back to paganism. We pay little attention to our Lord's commandments concerning charity and brotherly love. As a result, we have made ourselves comfortable but poor in grace.⁵

Those of us adopted into God's family, and eager to see His Kingdom lived out here on earth as it is in heaven, have to look no further than our daily lives to find ways of furthering the Kingdom. We have much to offer our culture by means of Christian

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Anchored: A Grandfather's Legacy

Movie Reviewed by Lee Duigon



You know you're in for something unusual when the credits roll for *Anchored* and this is what you see:

Executive Producer, Roger Strackbein; Screenwriter, Shanna Strackbein; Producers, Wesley Strackbein and Shanna Strackbein; Co-producers, Jenny Strackbein and Jenna Strackbein; Costume Designers, Emily Strackbein and Jenna Strackbein; Editors, Shanna Strackbein and Jenna Strackbein; Composers, Emily Strackbein and Elisabeth Strackbein.

So much for Hollywood. This is a film by Unbroken Faith Productions, and very much a family affair. In fact, it's about the life of Dewey Holden, the grandfather of the men and women mentioned in the credits above, and Dorothy Smith, his wife, their grandmother. It's a film about a family, by a family.

Anchored has been nominated for an award, and will be an Official Selection at the 2016 Christian Worldview Film Festival at San Antonio, Texas, March 14–19.

A Very Sweet Movie

Do we even need the Hollywood film industry anymore? This is an independently made movie, a family project—and we can be pretty sure it didn't cost \$100 million to produce. And yet there's no hint of amateurishness about it.

This is a very sweet movie with deep roots in family, in place, and in a devoutly Christian faith. Maybe these

are things that some Americans need to be reminded about. “Papaw” Holden lived a quiet, stable life, punctuated by periods of flood, drought, war and other disruptions, acquiring skills, doing different jobs, building a house, and raising a family—all of it within a context of personal belief and trust in God: and none of it outside that context.

What struck me as remarkable, unusual—because in my part of the country, I see this so seldom, maybe never—is that Mr. Holden's children, grandchildren and now great-grandchildren all live virtually within walking distance of his house. What a blessing that must be! My own family was like that, once upon a time. If someone wasn't visiting us, we were visiting another household in the family. Really, we were doing it all the time—weekend cookouts and horseshoes in the summer, Sunday dinners together, all the holidays, or just hangin' out at Grandma's. But by now we're scattered all over the continent, a lot of us are dead—and I measure what the family in this movie has by what I've lost. They live as my own family used to live, and were exceedingly wise to keep it that way. I wish we had been so wise.

Anchored follows the grandfather's life from his early childhood. Papaw grew up amid the challenges of the Depression, and his family met those challenges by sticking together, trusting in God, working hard, and creating new ways to make a little money. I doubt there are many families that resourceful anymore.

When war came, World War II,

Dewey Holder joined the U.S. Coast Guard. He met Dorothy Smith at a USO dance. They fell in love, married, and stayed married and in love for as long as Dorothy lived. It was a marriage of the kind prescribed in God's Word; it was a blessing.

I don't know if I can get across how moving I found all this. I would find it hard to read it aloud. Is this what happens when you live the way God meant for us to live? There is a rich reward! That, at least, is the message I get from this film. What I wouldn't give to sit again with Grandpa and “help” him with his stamp collection! How wise Dewey and Dorothy were to love one another, settle down on their own land, in their own house, and lovingly raise Christian children who went on to raise a next generation! And they're all still together.

Living a godly, peaceable, industrious life makes no one immune from adversity or hardships. Like his own father before him, Dewey had his share of those. But God makes His people strong, able to outlast hardships, able to learn from adversity. These quiet, peaceful people are strong. They will endure.

How Did They Do That?

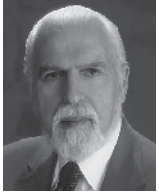
Naturally, the Strackbeins had to find actors to portray Dewey and Dorothy in their younger days. You probably won't have heard of any of the actors in the cast of *Anchored*.

It must be said that this movie is amazingly convincing. They don't do it with big-name actors or snazzy special

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Sovereignty, Power, and Dominion

by R. J. Rushoony (Reprinted from *Sovereignty*)



Near the conclusion of his analysis of *The Decline of the West*, Spengler made a statement with respect to ascertaining the future: “A power can be overthrown only by another power, not by a principle.”¹ Principles or ideas can have an extensive influence; they can create a climate of opinion which can greatly affect a culture, but they are not a power unless they are a religious faith, the governing power in a man’s life, and in a culture. Ideas prevail when a faith no longer governs.

An example of a “prevailing” idea is to be found in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. Filostrato tells a story based on an idea of law: “laws should be common to all and made with the consent of those whom they concern.”² It was the popularity of this idea that made Boccaccio’s story possible. It is not without significance that a consequence of such a view of law was not democracy but the vicious tyrants of the Italian Renaissance. A false idea of law had helped disarm the peoples. When law was transferred from God to man, the tyrants were able to prevail over the religiously disarmed peoples.

In the twentieth century, similar views undermined the Christian view of God as God’s enscriptured law-word gave way to humanistic law and pseudo-equalitarian ideas. Together with a semblance of democracy, there came again an era of tyranny, this time in the name of the people.

To deny the power of God is to open society to the evil powers of men. Fallen men can only exercise evil power; hence, the denial of God’s sovereignty

and law is the choice of human tyranny and the triumph of evil.

Berle, in his analysis of power, gave five laws of power, of which the first and third concern us here:

One: Power invariably fills any vacuum in human organization. As between chaos and power, the latter always prevails.

Three: Power is invariably based on a system of ideas or philosophy. Absent such a system or philosophy, the institutions essential to power cease to be reliable, power ceases to be effective, and the power holder is eventually displaced.³

The “system of ideas or philosophy” on which humanistic powers are based is in every case a development of the basic premise of the tempter and of man’s fall, Genesis 3:5, every man as his own god, knowing or determining good and evil for himself. If any man opens up for himself the freedom to determine good and evil for himself in his own chosen domain, i.e., money, property, sex, or anything else, he has thereby breached the law for others and is congenial to the same license in others. As a result, a general lawlessness is established whereby the man seeking power over all others is able to gain his objective. The result is a tyrant state and a slave people. Their ideas or philosophies provide the soil for tyranny, and nothing short of a Biblical faith can effect a substantive change.

Linscheid has written, with respect to sovereignty,

Black’s Law Dictionary defines sovereignty as “supreme political authority ... the self-sufficient source of political power, from which all specific political

powers are derived; the international independence of a state, combined with the right and power of regulating its internal affairs without foreign direction.” *Black’s* states that sovereignty is “(t)he power to do everything in a state without accountability—to make laws, to execute and to apply them, to impose and collect taxes and levy contributions, to make war or peace, to form treaties of alliance or of commerce with foreign nations, and the like.”⁴

This, of course, is tantamount to saying that the state is a god, and statist claims to sovereignty sooner or later lead to conflict with Christianity. What John Dryden said of monarchs applies to all statist:

Monarchies may own religion’s name

But states are Atheists in their very frame.

A civil government is a limited sphere, one among many spheres of government, such as individuals, families, churches, schools, vocations, and society, with its many institutions. A state sees itself as the government, and all these other spheres as under its jurisdiction. It sees itself, in Black’s language, as “the self-sufficient source of political power,” and, eventually, of all power.

With Spengler’s and Black’s premises concerning power in mind, let us go a step further. The practitioners of revolution speak readily about “power to the people,” i.e., power to the down-trodden and the helpless. In all revolutions, however, the people become only more savagely oppressed. The new power group oppresses more savagely than any would have imagined possible, and the people are its primary victims. In any

and every non-Christian society, *power allies itself with power*, not weakness. It exploits weakness. The powers in a society may compete for supreme power; they *may* seek to weaken or demolish one another. What is always certain is that the weak will be destroyed.

The weak may be flattered. They may technically be given an “equal” status in theory, but not in practice. Cicero saw himself, and other men, as gods.⁵ For Cicero, the common possession of the gods and of men was Reason, and “Law is the highest reason, implanted in Nature,” and “Law is a natural force.”⁶ Of course, for Cicero, very few men in the Roman Empire or elsewhere were men of reason. Thus, this godhood was in fact very limited, held by a few! Cicero’s affirmation of the gods was pragmatic; the common people should be persuaded that “the gods are the lords and rulers of all things, and that what is done, is done by their will and authority.”⁷ Ruling them would then be easier.

Power is exercised against the weak.

George Orwell saw the spirit of the new politics as the continual obliteration of any independence on the part of the people. No deviant thought could be permitted. Even where no deviant thought exists, obliteration must take place, because humanistic power requires the continual exercise of brute force as its means of self-affirmation. Humanism began in the modern era with Rene Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am.” Now it declares, “I exercise power for power’s sake: therefore I am.” The image of such a future, according to Orwell, is “a boot stamping on a human face—forever.”⁸ The goal of humanistic sovereign powers is the exercise of such unrestrained power. To acknowledge a law over oneself as a restraint on power is to deny that one is a sovereign power. It is necessary to deny God and His moral law by choosing evil in order to

affirm an independent will and sovereignty. As Camus said, “Since God claims all that is good in man, it is necessary to deride what is good and choose what is evil.”⁹

The doctrine of Kenosis, a prevalent heresy, makes weak men out of those in the church who accept it. Ostensibly, according to this doctrine, the Christian must be a pacifist, one who always surrenders, is a victim, not a conqueror or victor, and, with some Kenotic cults, the faith has involved self-castration. In all its forms, Kenosis calls for at least psychological self-castration by the believer. Kenosis began in Russia and has moved westward in the past century or more. It has deeply influenced the church in a variety of ways. R.J. Sider’s views are Kenotic at the least. Dick Wulf’s *Find Yourself, Give Yourself* (1983), a publication of the Navigators, equates unconditional love for other people with the true Christianity. God can require of us unconditional love for Himself, but can we ever give it to any man? To Hitler, Stalin, the murderer, the rapist? According to Wulf, the starting point is, “I will accept myself as I am, just as God does.”¹⁰ God, however, does not “accept” us as we are; rather, by His sovereign grace, He saves us as we are and requires us to grow in holiness and faithfulness. To follow Wulf’s counsel is to undercut sanctification. Wulf’s religion requires self-acceptance and unconditional love for others to take precedence over God’s law, which does not enter into his view at all. This undercuts the moral nature of Christianity and places it in a position of Kenotic surrender to all evil.

If man plays god, he will exercise only an evil power. All sovereignties other than God’s are attempts at establishing an independent godhood and are an unrelieved evil. The Christian can never exercise sovereign power. As David tells us, “God hath spoken once; twice

have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Ps. 62:11). At most, the Christian can exercise delegated power. His truest power comes from faithfulness to the every word of God (Matt. 4:4). God’s law-word gives man the way to dominion, and dominion is not domination. Domination is the exercise of lawless power over others. Dominion is the exercise of godly power in our God-given sphere. The rejection of God’s sovereignty leads to domination; the affirmation of God’s sovereignty and His law is the foundation of dominion. It is also the means to power under God. To return to Spengler’s premise, we must add, a humanistic power can only be truly overthrown by God’s power, and men cannot escape domination and tyranny apart from a return to the triune God and their total calling and dominion mandate under Him. 🇺🇸

1. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, [1932] 1935), p. 506.
2. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (New York, NY: Triangle Books, [1931] 1940), p. 307.
3. Adolf Berle, *Power* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969), p. 37.
4. Steven K. Linscheid, “Sovereignty and Self-Determination,” *MCC Peace Section Newsletter*, September-October, 1986, p. 3. The citation from Black is from the 5th edition, 1979.
5. Marcus Tullius Cicero, “The Republic,” in Cicero, *De Re Publica, De Legibus*, ed. Clinton Walker Keyes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1928] 1959), p. 279, p. 281.
6. Cicero, “Laws,” in *ibid.*, pp. 317-23.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 389.
8. George Orwell, *1984* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, [1949] 1977).
9. Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 47.
10. Dick Wulf, *Find Yourself, Give Yourself* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1983), p. 70.

A Blemished Offering: *Chronicles of the Nephilim* by Brian Godawa

Noah Primeval (2011), *Enoch Primordial* (2012), *Gilgamesh Immortal* (2012),
and Others... Embedded Pictures Publishing, Los Angeles, CA.

Reviewed by Lee Duigon

There were giants in the earth in those days ... Genesis 6:4



Who doesn't want to know more about those "giants in the earth"—*Nephilim* in Hebrew?

I couldn't wait to read these books. Biblical mysteries elucidated! The bare-bones narrative of Genesis fleshed out! What really happened in that age before the Flood? It's quite a draw.

And what a disappointment, when I finally read them.

But first I read the appendices attached to each book. These were fascinating, compelling. Delving deeply into Biblical and extra-Biblical scholarship, Godawa relocates Genesis into its original historical and cultural context, that of the Ancient Near East: Sumerians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and how ancient Israel itself was influenced by these neighboring civilizations.

This led him to make an intriguing argument that there are other spiritual beings, angels, some good and some evil, some subordinate to God, Yahweh Elohim, but others in rebellion against Him; and that these rebel entities came down to earth and set themselves up as false gods, worshiped by the heathen nations; that these beings sought to control human history; and that they interbred with mortal women, producing a race of giants and assorted abominations.

He supports his argument with both Scripture and other ancient sources, such as the non-canonical Book of Enoch, Jewish tradition, and non-Jewish mythology. I have not the scholarship to debate his conclusions.

But whatever the value of the scholarship behind them, I cannot endorse these novels.

A Movie in Your Mind

Godawa is a Hollywood screenwriter by profession. His work is in the movies, he thinks in terms of movies, and he writes his novels hoping that his readers will experience them as a kind of movie in the mind.

What he does is string one movie cliché after another. He's got them all: wise-cracking heroes getting off zingers as they march into mortal danger, like any pair of cops in a buddy movie; beautiful young women who are really good at martial arts; rapid shifts from one scene to another, action-movie style; sneering villains who are only one short step removed from snarling "Curses, foiled again!" My impression was of a comic book without pictures. Godawa prefers to think of his novels as movies without film. Maybe it would be fair to liken them to movies based on comic books.

And of course, as in any movie pitched to eleven-year-olds, these novels

feature endless slangy, smart-alecky dialogue. What is the point of having characters that are supposed to be immortal spiritual beings, or great heroes of the Bible, if they're just going to talk like a twenty-first century screenwriter thinks teenagers talk?

Really—it just seems wrong for archangels to say things like "We saved your rear ends."

Literary Offenses

Two more literary offenses must be noted here.

These books present a bad case of "adjectivitis"—way too many adjectives burden the text, most of them unnecessary. There is no need for the author to editorialize about his villains. What they say and do establishes them as the bad guys. There is no need to label them, repeatedly, as "diabolical" or "sadistic." Not when they're always shown doing diabolical or sadistic things.

Worse, Godawa puts into the mouths of rebel angels, immortal beings living centuries before the Flood, actual quotations from present-day leaders of the Democratic Party. To list just a few examples, with their original speakers:

"Hope and change" (Barack Obama)

"Fundamental transformation" (Obama)

"I feel your pain" (Bill Clinton)

“It depends on what ‘is’ is” (Bill Clinton)

“You didn’t build that” (Obama quoting Elizabeth Warren)

In addition to verbatim quotations from the twenty-first century, Godawa’s wicked spiritual entities also spout modern catch-phrases of feminism, “gay rights,” “animal rights,” and accuse God of such modern trespasses as colonialism, imperialism, sexism, and being “macho.” As a reader I found this very hard to bear.

Godawa says (in an email to me: I thank him for taking the time for it) that he has done this to demonstrate that wickedness, tyranny, and flimflam have always been with us, they originate from spiritual wickedness, and they haven’t changed. To use current political leaders’ quotes, he says, is to demonstrate that the same sins that afflict us today afflicted us before the Flood.

Fair enough. You can make that argument. But maybe Godawa doubts the readers’ ability to come to the desired conclusion unless he makes things thunderingly obvious.

Elsewhere he himself has written, “Christian movies, though well-intentioned and sincere, often suffer from heavy-handedness in their desire to convert the unbeliever through art.” And he adds, “Which is more to be avoided: a pagan movie that rings true, or ‘Christian’ propaganda that rings false?”¹

Physician, heal thyself.

Why Does It Matter?

I’ve taken time to discuss these literary faults because I think it’s important.

Why? Because we as Christian novelists or movie makers are out to win ground for Christ’s Kingdom in the popular culture—not just rent little pieces of it, like sharecroppers, from its secular landlords.

To do that, our work has to be better than theirs, so that people will

choose it over theirs. Our work must not be allowed to come across as a mere imitation of theirs—and all too often a cheap imitation, at that. Some may say, “It doesn’t matter if this Christian novel is poorly written, and not up to the standard of a secular novel—the important thing is Christian content.” But I’m not sure it works that way, and I am sure it shouldn’t work that way.

To write an ostensibly Biblical novel that copies all the conventions and clichés of a dime-a-dozen Hollywood summer action movies is, I think, to risk getting the Christian message lost in the sauce. There is a point where the Christian imitation comes so close to the secular original that the audience will not be able to tell the difference anymore.

Gods Other than God

No one can deny that the Bible mentions spiritual beings other than God, inferior to Him, as in Psalm 82:1, “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.” Note the small “g” in “gods.” And of course we are all familiar with angels and demons.

Here the verse that most concerns us in Genesis 6:2, “[T]he sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” And the result, for Godawa, is seen in Genesis 6:4, “There were giants in the earth in those days—the Hebrew word translated as “giants” is *Nephilim*—“and also after that, when the sons of God”—the Hebrew word for “son,” *ben*, *Strong’s Concordance* defines as sons or offspring “in the widest possible sense (of lit. and fig. relationship...)”—came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” For “man” *Strong’s* has the Hebrew *adam*, meaning a human being, and then *enowsh*

for a mortal man, but in a less dignified sense, as with our word, “guy.” So “mighty men,” with *enowsh*, connotes “tough guys.”

Godawa’s “sons of God” are rebels, spiritual beings who invaded the earth and committed the profound sin of mixing mortal with spiritual, giving birth to monstrous giants that are a bit of both.

Needless to say, this is hardly the only possible interpretation of those verses.

But I don’t wish to get into a theological debate, nor am I prepared to judge which group of scholars has it right. It’s just that certain questions spring to mind:

How, exactly, do these rebel spirits take on flesh? And why is their fleshly form gigantic, virtually indestructible, and not really very nice to look at?

Why is their agenda identical to that of today’s prominent liberal politicians, and expressed in the same words the politicians use? Wouldn’t immortal entities be cleverer than that?

Since they are obviously not human, how are they able to interbreed with humans?

Again we find ourselves, as it were, inside a blockbuster Hollywood movie pitched to an audience brought up on a steady diet of comic books, video games, superheroes and super-villains, non-stop action, unrealistically flip dialogue, and gaudy special effects. Maybe we ought to salute Godawa for trying to capture that audience.

But what we don’t want is for that audience to capture the Bible and reduce it to just another source of cheap thrills.

Is This the Right Way to Do It?

Godawa says he has received letters and emails from many readers, including pastors, who said his books made the Bible “come alive” for them.

Well and good—but I can't fathom it. To me, these novels only make the Bible seem like some kind of video game or summer movie. For me, the heaping-up of action movie clichés, the modern slang and political quotations, the superfluous adjectives, and rather more violence than I can fit into my comfort zone, translate the Biblical narrative into something sensational but not especially holy. And not very serious, either.

Finally—if a storyteller is dealing with Biblical material, which is often short of detail, to what extent is he justified in making up the details? After all, the details he invents might not be true.

Take Methuselah, for instance. What does the Bible tell us about him?

He was the son of Enoch (Genesis 5:21); his son was Lamech, father of Noah (v. 25, 29); he lived 969 years, then died (v. 27). That's all.

In Godawa's books, Methuselah is a great warrior, a doting, lusty husband with a decidedly sensual and earthy turn of mind, which sometimes brings him into conflict with his father, and always quick with a sarcastic quip: a real smart-aleck. He's also an expert giant killer, thanks to his mastery of secret martial arts.

You can't make Methuselah a major character in two novels (*Noah* and *Enoch*) without inventing things about him. The risk here is that some readers don't understand poetic license. I remember a made-for-TV movie about Napoleon that falsely depicted him as epileptic: which one of my wife's co-workers unshakably believed because, she said, she saw it on TV.

What about readers who can't tell where the Bible ends and Godawa's inventions begin—especially that vast host of readers who have never read the Bible? Is this much invention really what we ought to be feeding them? I'm not saying it's the author's fault—if it

were, a Christian in good conscience couldn't novelize the Bible at all: a position taken by any number of Christian commentators. This problem of invention has always been a criticism leveled at "Christian books" and "Christian movies," ever since Lew Wallace published *Ben-Hur* in 1880.

The thing about "Bible stories" is, we profess them to be more than just stories. We profess them to be true.

I think we must be very careful when we try to create Bible-based fiction. It may wind up being perceived as nothing more than fiction. It may lead to wonderful personal success for the artist—but at what cost in credibility?

I write Bible-based novels, too. Mine are based on Biblical principles, not facts. The Biblical teachings that shape my *Bell Mountain* novels are real, but everything else is purely imaginary and all the readers know it. Writing scenes in which I put words into the mouths of Scriptural heroes, archangels, and even God Himself is rather more than I would ever dare presume.

But Brian Godawa has, and his boldness has rewarded him. Whether his approach has pleased God is more than I know. 🙏

Lee Duigon is a Christian freelance 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.

1. Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002), p. 14.

Selbreds... Physician Rising cont. from page 9

have premenstrual cramps? Start a morphine drip—we'll show you how."

14. See the first two articles in the series for details concerning how Dr. Kishore intuited a simple solution to all the cues he's uncovered over years of study. The example he provided in this conversation was the common nausea cue: "I provide anti-nausea

medication in place of the drug. The guy wakes up the next day and says 'Hey, I feel good this morning. I don't need the drug.' He's waking up in the same bed where morning nausea would trigger his search for his drug of choice."

15. http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/03/23/nyregion/fighting-heroin-ithaca-looks-to-injection-centers.html?referer=https://www.google.com/&_r=0

16. <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2016/03/22/slaughter-out-of-control-heroin-opioid-prosecutions-down-as-deaths-go-up/>

17. Heroin is like a knife in a person's back: how to treat it? Methadone and Suboxone® are simply replacement knives to stick in the back. If such knife replacement threatens the business of the dealer who provided the first knife, he might go so far as to report the replacement knife provider and have him prosecuted (as has actually happened). What nobody talks about is removing the knife and making it possible for the wound to heal over the course of a year, as Dr. Kishore's method articulated.

18. <http://skyvalleychronicle.com/BREAKING-NEWS/WHITE-HOUSE-HONORS-SNOHOMISH-COUNTY-S-OPIATE-PROJECT-2425988>

19. Dr. Kishore adds, "This fact is recognized by Alcoholics Anonymous in their position that if one goes to ninety meetings in ninety days, one is home free.

20. He is now able to travel to all fifty states. This is remarkable, Dr. Kishore says, given the powerful interests still intent on keeping him muzzled and sidelined.

Hodge... Creation cont. from page 15

avoided when (P) is the *only possible explanation* for (Q).

10. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1979), p. 29.

11. An excellent introduction to these concepts is given by R.C. Sproul (Snr) in his DVD lectures and book by the same title, *The Consequences of Ideas*.

12. Moen, *ibid*, pp. 310ff.

13. Boyd, Gregory A., *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God*

(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), Kindle edition, loc. 329.

14. Paul Helm, *Eternal God: A Study of God Without Time* (Oxford University Press, [1988] 2002), Kindle edition Loc. 96.

15. Boyd, *ibid.*, Loc. 356, emphasis in original.

16. Moen, *ibid.*, p. 313.

17. Boyd, *ibid.*, loc. 259.

18. An excellent discussion on the nature of free will can be found in Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation* (Nutley: NJ: Craig Press, 1961), chapter 5, “God and Evil.”

19. Van Til, *Defense of the Faith*, p. 29, emphasis in original.

20. Sproul and Mathison, *Not a Chance*, Kindle locations. 1923 and 1983.

21. R. J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology in Two Volumes: Volume II* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), p. 1084.

22. Paul Helm, *ibid.*, (Kindle Edition), Locations 375–376.

23. Rushdoony, *Ibid.*, p. 1085.

24. Moen, *ibid.*, p. 259.

25. Frame, *No Other God*, p. 156.

26. William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1979. Previously published by the Macmillan Press, LTD), p. 109.

27. William Lane Craig attempts to avoid this problem of infinite time by claiming that God was atemporal before creation, but became temporal at the time of His creation. Can God, however, change His essential nature, His essence? No! He cannot! He is light, in Him is no darkness; He is the truth, and He cannot lie! He is unable to repent, because He is perfect (Matt 5:48). Or can He become, what He was not? Is God now getting older, whereas before He was ageless? And then we’re back into the discussion of being and becoming, and the nature of God.

28. Westminster Confession of Faith, III:I.

Schwartz... Sharing cont. from page 18

reconstruction done within the context of who we are and what we do. Just as paying a tithe from our increase affirms that all our assets belong to God, so too,

all of our life belongs to Him and we should share it with others as a Christian way to Kingdom service. 🏠

Andrea Schwartz is the Chalcedon Foundation’s active proponent of Christian education and matters relating to the family. She’s the author of five books dealing with homeschooling and the family. Her latest book is *Woman of the House*. She oversees the Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute (www.ctti.org) and continues to mentor, lecture, and teach. Visit her website www.thekingdomdrivenfamily.com. She lives in San Jose with her husband of 39 years. She can be reached by email at WordsFromAndrea@gmail.com.

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *In His Service: The Christian Calling to Charity* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009), pp.117–118.

2. *ibid.*, p. 22.

3. <http://chalcedon.edu/store/item/alphaphonics-primer-readers-and-how-to-tutor-set/>

4. *ibid.*, 184–185.

5. R. J. Rushdoony, *A Word in Season*, vol. 7 (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2016), pp. 34–35.

Duigon... Anchored cont. from page 19

effects. Emotion and conviction are the main ingredients; but they also do something really cool with the cinematography. This, by the way, was by Philip and Chris Leclerc.

What they did was to make most of the “historical” part of the film look like home movies—even with the peculiar, subtle tint that most home movies used to have. You could tell they weren’t real home movies because the actors were in them, playing scenes from the 1940s, and when the action shifted to earlier times than that—well, who in the rural South made home movies in the 1920s and 30s? Also, these scenes are without that hand-held camera wobble which makes it hard for persons with motion sickness to watch home movies.

So we know that these scenes are

not home movies, not actual glimpses back into a distant past—but they appear to be! It’s a very skillfully created illusion. I have no idea how they did it, and I don’t want to know; I’d rather just sit back and enjoy it.

A New Direction

Yes, of course I recommend this film. I found it, and continue to find it, very moving. It stays with you for quite a while after you watch it. Doesn’t just evaporate, like so much of what we see for entertainment. There is real substance to *Anchored*, and I have a feeling it’ll stick to my ribs for a long time.

It also makes me wonder—have we found a new direction in film-making? The Strackbeins cite “some key outside help” in completing the film, along with a little help from “friends and supporters in the broader community,” but for the most part they did it all themselves and successfully created something that stacks up pretty well against a Hollywood movie of the same general description. In fact, it’s hard to see how the pros could do any better—and some industry-made “family movies” come off as schmaltzy and contrived.

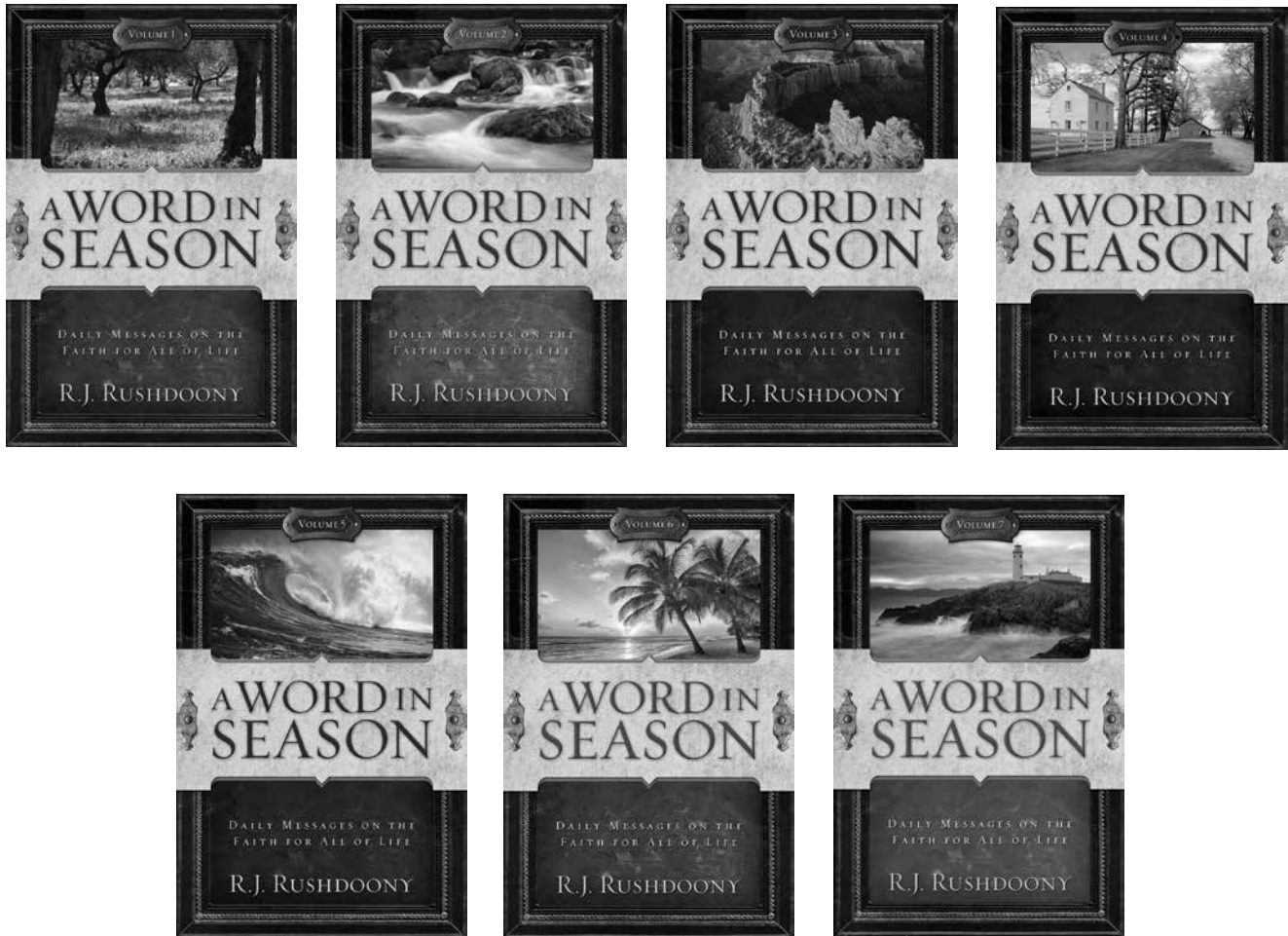
The movie-making skills learned by assorted members of the Strackbein family can be learned by others. How staggering an idea is that—anyone who’s willing to learn how, can make a movie? It might not be *Jurassic Park* or *Star Wars*, but if the theme of the movie is the human heart, suddenly we seem to have a level playing field.

Love of family, love of God. Trust in God, and living according to His Word.

These things matter. They matter very much; and this is a movie about them. 🏠

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

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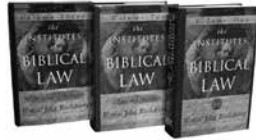
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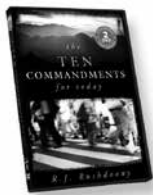
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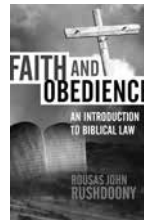
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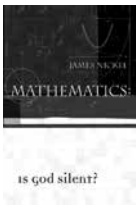


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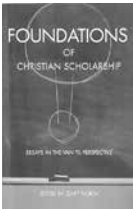
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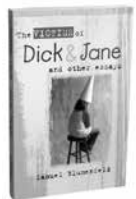
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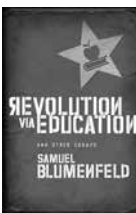
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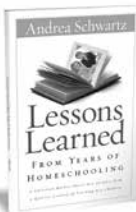
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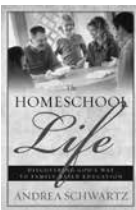
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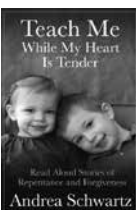
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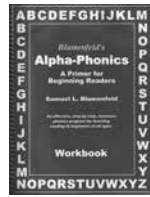
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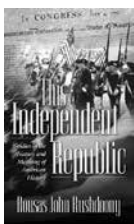
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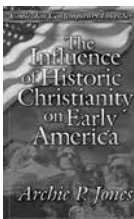
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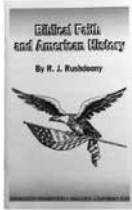


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By Archie P. Jones. Early America was founded upon the deep, extensive influence of Christianity inherited from the medieval period and the Protestant Reformation. That priceless heritage was not limited to the narrow confines of the personal life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

not perfectly) shaped culture, education, science, literature, legal thought, legal education, political thought, law, politics, charity, and missions.

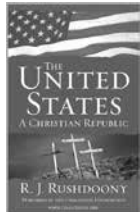
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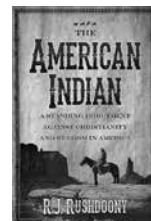


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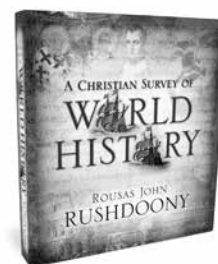


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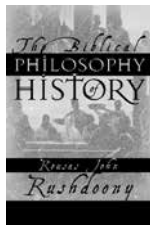
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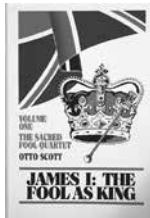
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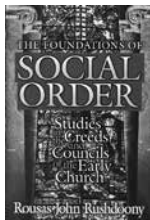


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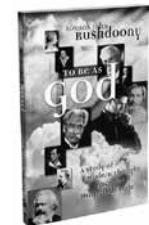


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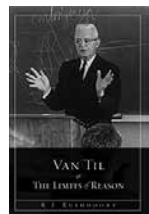
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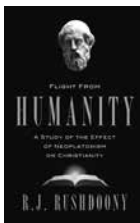
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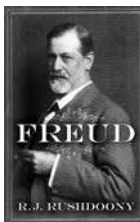


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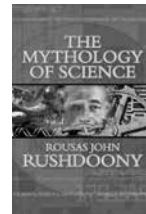


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Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession**

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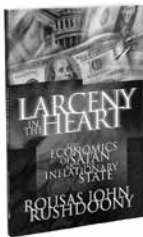
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Making Sense of Your Dollars: A Biblical Approach to Wealth

By Ian Hodge. The author puts the creation and use of wealth in their Biblical context. Debt has put the economies of nations and individuals in dangerous straits. This book discusses why a business is the best investment, as well as the issues of debt avoidance and insurance. Wealth is a tool for dominion men to use as faithful stewards.

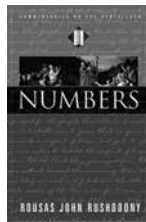
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By R.J. Rushdoony. In this study, first published under the title *Roots of Inflation*, the reader sees why envy often causes the most successful and advanced members of society to be deemed criminals. The reader is shown how envious man finds any 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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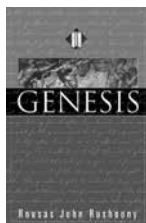
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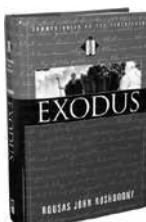
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Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

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, require tremendous faith. Theology without literal six-day creationism becomes alien to the God of Scripture because it turns from the God Who acts and Whose Word is the creative word and the word of power, to a belief in process as god.

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of God. Therefore, if we are to better understand the gracious provisions made for us in the "promised land" of the New Covenant, a thorough examination into the historic path of Israel as described in the book of Exodus is essential. It is to this end that this volume was written.

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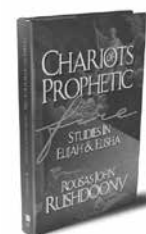
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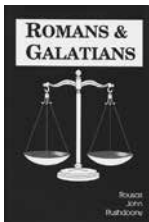


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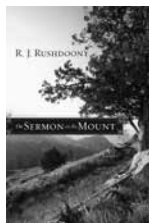
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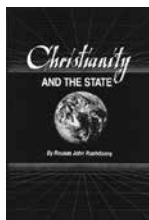
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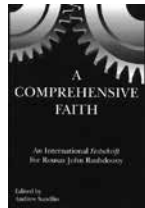
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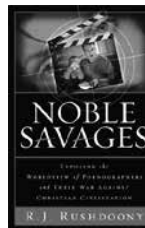
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Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R. J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical 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 Schirmacher, 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.

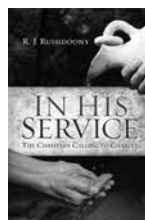
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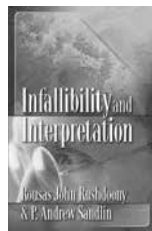
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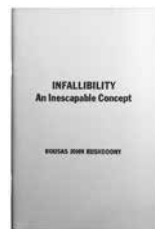
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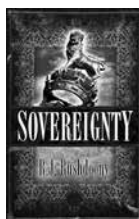
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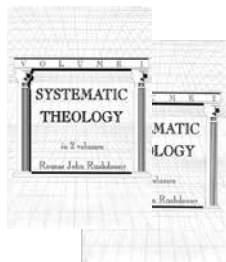
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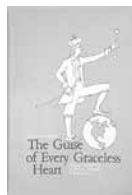
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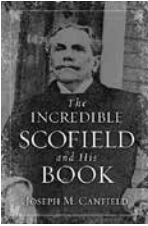
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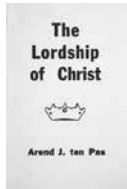
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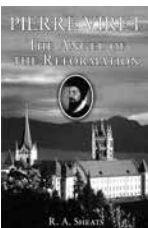
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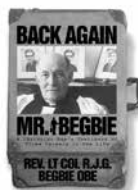
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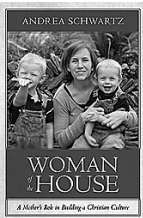


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