

*Faith for All of Life*  
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# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

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

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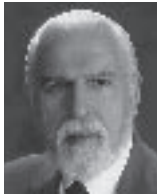
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# Confusion of Faces

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R. J. Rushdoony



Daniel 9 records a prayer and the answer to that prayer. Daniel, “[i]n the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (9:1), was in earnest prayer as a result of his study of Jeremiah, in particular of Jeremiah 25:11, and 29 (9:2), and also of Deuteronomy, as vv. 11–15 clearly indicate. The predicted seventy years of captivity were virtually ended, and deliverance accordingly nigh, so that, in terms of the promised restoration, Daniel could have rejoiced. Instead, he confessed his fear and grief for his people, acknowledging (vv. 1–19) that “all Israel,” both northern and southern kingdoms, deserved their captivity, but, in spite of it, had learned nothing. Lacking true faith, for most of them adversity had begat no healing or redeeming experience, worked no repentance, so that, Daniel feared, more captivity and punishment was their only merited destiny. The indications are, indeed, that Phariseeism was a product of the captivity itself. The sin of Judah had been, predominantly, *syncretism*, a persistent attempt to unite faiths in the belief in a common core of religion in all religions. The most common form of syncretism was and is *moralism*, and, prior to the fall of Jerusalem, many of the earlier and flagrant practices of syncretism with fertility cults had given way to a cult of the temple and of moralism. In captivity, the contrast between Hebrew morality and pagan mores had deepened

into an isolationist and proud moralism, the earlier obviously syncretistic moralism, and Phariseeism was the product. The judgment and fall of Jerusalem was already unique in history (9:2) as an instance of God’s retribution to a privileged people. In view of their further contempt for God, Daniel was fearful for their immediate future, and, as one of the faithful remnant, prayed earnestly for grace (9:18). As a true believer and an enemy of moralism, Daniel knew that his righteousness was not in or of himself but entirely of grace: “O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces” (9: 7).

The expression “confusion of faces” is a significant one. It is the confession of a godly man, and the beginning of his power. Moralism is not characterized by any such recognition, but rather by a *confidence of faces*, a self-righteousness which assumes that history is controlled by morality and works of morality. Thus, love is assumed to be capable of regenerating and controlling men, nations, and history. Liberty, fraternity, and equality—the moralism of the French Revolution and of subsequent humanism, politics, and revolt—are again instances of the self-righteous confidence that history is subject to man’s dominion in and through works of morality. Communism and democracy are further instances of this same moralism in the area of politics, even as Thomism and Arminianism give instances of it in the churches. *Virtually all churches today are monuments to moralism, but the greatest monument is the modern state.* Johann Gottlieb Fichte, lecturing in Berlin in

1804–1805, expressed the thesis of statist moralism: “A State which constantly seeks to increase its internal strength, is thus forced to desire the gradual abolition of all Privilege, and the establishment of Equal Rights for all men, in order that it, the State itself, may enter upon its true Right—to *apply the whole surplus power of all its Citizens, without exception, for the furtherance of its own purposes.*”<sup>1</sup> Only thus, Fichte believed, could the great and righteous goal of humanity be fulfilled and the true order of man be ushered in. Therefore, all power to the moralistic state.

But righteousness belongs to God, and unto us confusion of faces, for man is by nature a sinner, a covenant-breaker, and, as redeemed man, walks only by faith and grace of God. History is not in his hands, nor can he see one step ahead. To him belongs confusion of faces. Responsibility is his, but responsibility is not the power to execute eternal decrees but rather accountability to Him whose sovereign decree undergirds all creation. Only as man knows himself to be man, a creature under God, can he enter into this dominion as vicegerent under God. Only as he grounds his words upon the Word of God, can he speak with truth and assurance.

Daniel, praying in terms of this confidence in the sure mercies of God (9: 9), was answered by God through Gabriel (9:21–27), whom he had previously seen in a vision (8:16). Gabriel’s statement has reference to Daniel’s prayer concerning Israel, whose end had already been indicated, and whose course prior to that end is only inci-

dentially dealt with now. The primary reference is Messianic. Accordingly, as E. W. Hengstenberg points out, “The announcement is essentially of a cheering character. This is true in a certain sense even of that part of it which relates to the destruction of the city and temple ... The sifting judgments of God are a blessing to the church ... Daniel had not prayed for the stiff-necked and ungodly, but for those who heartily joined with him in the penitential confession of their sins.”<sup>2</sup>

Gabriel spoke of “seventy weeks” (9:24), or, more accurately, “seventy sevens” for Israel and Jerusalem, an expression again indicative of the fullness of a specified time. The purpose of the revelation is not a calendar of events, but warning, as well as hope in terms of the Messiah. Before the end of that period, six things will be accomplished, as Young points out:

#### *Negative*

1. to restrain the transgression
2. to complete sin
3. to cover iniquity

#### *Positive*

1. to bring in everlasting righteousness
2. to seal vision and prophet
3. to anoint a holy of holies<sup>3</sup>

“To restrain the transgression,” or apostasy and rebellion, was the work of Christ, who “shut up transgression by an act which He performed, namely, His atoning death. This is the only possible meaning of the words.”<sup>4</sup> “To make an end of sin” has reference again to the atonement, to removing sin out of sight. “To make reconciliation for iniquity” means propitiation by the atoning blood of the Messiah, the subject of the prophecy. Thus, the “seventy sevens” will be that period wherein God prepares the way for and then accomplishes the work of atonement. “Everlasting righteous-

ness” will be brought in by the Messiah, the righteousness of God unto salvation and a Kingdom without end. “Vision and prophet” will be sealed up or ended, the New Testament revelation of Christ summing up and concluding the Scriptures. The anointing of “the most Holy,” i.e., Messiah Jesus, has reference to the full assumption of His power and position with His ascension and the fall of Jerusalem in confirmation of His Word and prophecy.

The “seventy sevens” are divided into three periods (9:25–27). The first two periods are clearly dated from the permission to rebuild Jerusalem to “Messiah the Prince,” and the first “seven sevens” covers the time from the issuance of the permission to the completed work of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the second, sixty-two sevens, refers to the long intertestamental times from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the Messiah.

The third and last period, a single seven, shall cover the life and work of the Messiah:

1. The Messiah shall be put to death.
2. The people of a prince (of the fourth monarchy) shall enter into Israel to destroy city and sanctuary, in a war that shall be as a “flood” and the end of it “desolations.” This has reference to the war of A.D. 66–70 and Titus Vespasianus.
3. The Messiah shall confirm or cause to prevail a “covenant with many,” and this act shall be the end of the temple with its “sacrifice and oblation,” both religiously and judicially, so that the temple will also be given over to profanation and destruction. “It is the Temple, itself, which is here mentioned as an abomination. Once the true Sacrifice of Calvary had been offered, the Temple no longer was the Temple of

God but an abominable place.”<sup>5</sup>

By this destruction, judgment is pronounced not only on the moralisms of history as institutionalized in the temple cult, but also on the legitimate function of the temple as it sought to perpetuate itself as the sole vehicle of revelation. The exclusiveness of revelation cannot be arrogated by the historical instrument into an arrogance and pride wherein the vessel ascribes to itself the life of the potter. God, ever jealous of His honor, will not allow history to eternalize itself. The history of church, state, university, art, and society has been a lust for eternity that leads to the radical confusion of faces of desolation and judgment, whereas the confusion of faces of creatureliness and repentance alone leads to the life of “mercies and forgivenesses” (9:9) in terms of which alone man can stand and time have meaning and become itself a ground of joy and victory. 🏰

1. William Smith, trans., *The Popular Works of Johann Gottlieb Fichte*, Vol. II, Lecture XIV, “Development of the State in Modern Europe” (London: Trubner, 1889), 236.
2. E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, Vol. III (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1956), 86.
3. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 197.
4. Young, *Commentary*, ad loc.
5. Young, *The Messianic Prophecies of Daniel* (Delft, Netherlands, 1954), 74.

# Families in the Crosshairs

Jerri Lynn Ward, Esq.



The civil government—and its courts in particular—are to be a “terror to evildoers.” Unfortunately, it is often the “evildoer” itself. Lawless child welfare agencies and courts are usurping the God-given authority of parents and literally ripping families apart. At an increasingly alarming rate, children are being separated from parents and siblings and forced into the homes of stranger foster families, group homes, or Residential Treatment Centers where they are given psychotropic drugs not approved for use in children.<sup>1</sup>

Child welfare agencies, such as Child Protective Services (CPS) of Texas, are the embodiment of “the statist plan of salvation.”<sup>2</sup> A huge bureaucracy fueled by government and private grants seeks to transform parenting in accordance with the dictates of the state rather than “transforming the regenerated man and His world through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

CPS cases are not my usual area of practice. I discovered what was happening in the area in 2008 when the 415 children of the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints were seized from their parents and from the community of the Yearning for Zion Ranch in Eldorado, Texas. Along with other attorneys unaccustomed to this area of practice, I volunteered to represent the parents.<sup>4</sup> During my representation, I began to experience a rising concern over what I saw as clear perversions of American jurisprudence.

After that experience, I was compelled to start helping parents when and where I could. With each case, my concerns have grown. It is apparent to me that the state is trying to be “as God” and that the judges have developed too cozy a relationship with the agencies.

## A Lawless Agency

One of the most troubling aspects of child welfare law is that an investigation can be started on the basis of an anonymous report. Thus, parents often come under scrutiny because of feuds with neighbors, an angry ex-spouse, a jealous coworker, or a disgruntled employee. I suspect in one of my cases that CPS workers called in a report themselves in order to influence a judge, off the record, in the midst of a hearing.

These anonymous reports may bring a CPS worker to your child’s school where your child will be interviewed. In a recent case in San Marcos, Texas, CPS allegedly conducted a strip search of a child because of a dime-sized bruise on the back of a child’s leg. The child was also interviewed without the knowledge of her parents.

Reports can also bring the CPS investigator to your door. Many parents, not knowing their rights, allow these workers into the home without a warrant or court order. Sometimes, the workers are accompanied by police. In some of these cases, the policeman will insist that the CPS worker does not need a warrant and will barrel into the house past parents or housekeepers.<sup>5</sup>

Families that homeschool are of particular interest to CPS, although Texas CPS is forbidden from using ho-

meschooling as a trigger for an investigation.<sup>6</sup> However, in all of the four cases I have handled, CPS has used the fact of homeschooling in court in order to criticize the parents.

Because homeschooled children are not “monitored” by public school teachers or easily available in the public schools, CPS can be aggressive in its attempts to get into the home to interview the children without a warrant or court order. Many parents, out of ignorance and a misplaced confidence that they will “clear things up quickly,” make the mistake of allowing CPS into their home. One attorney, who often represents homeschooling parents, told me that one of his families allowed an investigator into the home. The family’s eight-year-old daughter was washing dishes. On the investigative report, that simple act was transformed into “eight-year-old girl playing with knives.” This is the kind of spin that CPS investigators will put in their investigative reports.

In one case, CPS has criticized a mother for homeschooling her five-year-old immune-compromised child who had undergone a bone marrow transplant within the last year. In another, CPS and the guardian ad litem were critical of a family that was homeschooling a preteen daughter (who was behind because of public schooling) in an effort to improve her academic performance (and to protect her from the advances and influence of an older boy and his parents who thought that a twelve-year-old girl should have the power to override her parents’ wishes that she not date). The attitude of one of the guard-

ian ad litem in the case—who is an attorney that works solely in this area—was particularly concerning. She seemed to believe that a twelve- or thirteen-year-old girl should hold veto power over her parents in matters of schooling and location of home. (The family was living in the country.)

The five-year-old child above who underwent the bone marrow transplant was taken because her mother followed the directions of the hospital social worker, resulting in easily reversible dehydration. That girl's three-year-old brother was taken a couple of weeks later for equally appalling reasons: during the time that the mother was making heroic efforts to find and fund a bone marrow transplant for the girl, the younger boy began to exhibit problems with his baby teeth (probably attributable to medications he was given when young). The mother, in the midst of a divorce, applied for Medicaid to cover treatments. Her marital status precluded coverage, and she could only apply once every six months. Upon her divorce, her ex-husband was ordered to obtain insurance coverage, but he failed to give her the insurance card upon multiple requests.

The little boy allegedly exhibited some trouble talking, and the mother had him evaluated by a government program. His birth date precluded an assessment by that program. Having experience with her daughter, this mother began to work with her son in homeschool because she did not want to place a three-year-old in public school. She wanted to gather resources to go to a private therapist. But then, the children were taken. What's more, they were taken by a judge who professes to be a Christian, whose own children go to a Christian school, and who were even homeschooled when younger. The judge stated that one of the reasons for seizing

the little boy was to get him assessed for speech in order to receive services through the government schools!

The above mindset was depressingly apparent in the hearings for the two children previously described. CPS was both relentless and ridiculous in its presentation. The mother had worried about and acted upon the child's illness "too much," and that's "medical neglect." By "failing" to take the son for speech therapy and dental treatment on CPS's unknowable time frame, she had "neglected" him. By giving more attention to a sick child than the well ones, she "neglected" the well ones. *That accusation endangers every family with a special-needs child.* I am sure, under present conditions, that had my family been so scrutinized, I would have been seized by the state because my baby sister is profoundly retarded and much of the energy of the entire family was directed toward her care.

CPS does not consider the family as a whole. It atomizes the members and looks at the pieces to pass judgment. The result is that it demands perfection without context, and there is no tolerance for what it perceives as shortcomings. There can be no surprise then at H. L. Mencken's conclusions concerning bureaucracy:

It is the invariable habit of bureaucracies, at all times and everywhere, to assume ... that every citizen is a criminal. Their one apparent purpose, pursued with a relentless and furious diligence, is to convert the assumption into a fact. They hunt endlessly for proofs, and, when proofs are lacking, for mere suspicions.<sup>7</sup>

### Worldviews in Conflict

It has become apparent to me that the position of CPS—and the members of the cottage industry surrounding it—is that parents should be constantly monitored by the government for any

perceived missteps in their dealings with their own children. Parents, in their view, should not have unfettered authority to make decisions regarding education, religious training, or inculcation of morality. This arises from a conflict of worldviews. As Tim Lambert of the Texas Home School Coalition<sup>8</sup> told me:

I do believe there is often a conflict of worldviews between CPS caseworkers and Christian families. It has been reported to me on numerous occasions that CPS workers believe that Christian families who believe in the Bible and spanking are targeted for special focus as abusers. In addition I have seen such families denied adoption for similar reasons. Many of these caseworkers are young and unmarried and have an unrealistic view of family life.

I also believe that some judges do usurp the God-given authority of the family in CPS cases. This is often done by allowing CPS caseworkers to interfere in a family with little or no evidence of abuse or neglect. Judges often fail to hold CPS accountable to the clear restraints of the law. I believe there are two reasons for this. One is the often quoted maxim of seeking to protect children, even if this means violating innocent families at some time. The other reason is that it is politically expedient to give CPS whatever they seek than to rule against them and have something happen to the child.

Because many homeschooling parents have become informed about their rights with regard to CPS investigations, special interest groups comprised of children's "rights" advocates, adoption organizations, and others who monetarily benefit from the seizure of children prevailed upon the Texas Legislature in 2009 to pass SB 1440.<sup>9</sup> SB 1440, an originally innocuous bill, was amended at the last minute to allow CPS entry into homes without the traditional protections afforded by warrants or court orders. The addition of the amendment

was stealthy and deceitful and was caught only because of the vigilance of the Parent Guidance Center of Texas.<sup>10</sup> A mammoth campaign was launched to convince Governor Rick Perry to veto the bill. After receiving 17,000 calls against SB 1440, he vetoed it.<sup>11</sup>

## Splintering the Family

Often, after an investigation begins, CPS will attempt to prevail upon parents to sign what is called a safety plan. This could be an agreement by the parents to place the child with a relative or to require one of the parents to move out of the house. This accomplishes the dividing of the family without a court order. The investigators will often lie to parents to convince them to sign the safety plan. They will claim that they will take the child and the parents “will never see them again” if the parents refuse. If the parents sign the plan, they can no longer present a united front against the usurpations against their family. Family members who take the child may be threatened with removal of the child, or their own children, if they don’t cooperate. If one parent moves out, that leaves the other to deal with such threatening behavior alone. The family is atomized and often decapitalized because of the expense of maintaining two households, in addition to legal and other expenses.

Another aspect of reporting concerns the “required reporter.” Depending on the state, those may be licensed health providers, teachers, mental health professionals, and law enforcement officers.<sup>12</sup> Because failure to report may have occupational or even criminal consequences, required reporters often err on the side of reporting. Recently, a hospital was in the news for reporting a new mother after she tested positive for drugs. The truth was that the mother had eaten a poppy-seed-covered bagel and the hospital’s testing protocols were faulty.<sup>13</sup>

The poppy seed story had a happy ending, but many parents who have experiences with hospitals don’t fare so well. Large hospital systems now employ “child abuse teams” manned by doctors who don’t treat children, but act as forensic “specialists” who handle the reporting of alleged abuse or neglect. It appears that these teams are increasingly being used to punish parents who vigorously advocate for the care of their children by the hospital or who want second opinions.

Johana Scot of the Parent Guidance Center, located in Texas, shared with me the following observation regarding her work with parents:

Now that hospitals are being equipped with teams of supposed child welfare experts and professionals, the number of “abused” children is going up in every hospital. Even the ordinary broken arms and sprained ankles of childhood are being scrutinized by these teams, which will contribute to the rise of false accusations of child abuse. Child Advocacy Centers (where children are routinely transported for forensic interviewing during child abuse and neglect investigations) are starting to buy bone scanning cameras to equip their clinics.

The recurring theme in these types of referrals is a parent who has been seeking treatment for a child but decides to disagree with a doctor or nurse and even a dentist. Suddenly, the parent, who has never been seen or suspected as being abusive or neglectful before when in contact with these medical professionals, is now the subject of a CPS investigation. Since the referral is a medical professional, the parent stands little chance against the experts and they also hold the power over the medical records at this point.

In one of my cases, a huge children’s research hospital chose to report a parent for medical “neglect” the day after the parent decided to pull the child from a study (the treatment was

completed months prior) because of the hospital’s demands that the parent fly from Texas to New England every other week. The report was made six days after the supposed neglect, the circumstances of which arose *from the hospital’s travel instructions to the parent*.

In two other Texas cases, the reports of medical neglect appear to have arisen out of professional jealousy directed against a very successful and dynamic researcher who was actually helping the children she was also studying. In Seattle, Washington, a hospital reported parents of a premature baby boy with complications for requesting a second opinion about a procedure and wishing to transfer the baby to a children’s hospital.<sup>14</sup> Parents of special-needs children are often targeted. As Johana Scot told me in my interview with her:

Specifically for special needs children, the number of interactions with medical professionals (simply due to the nature of medical issues and necessary procedures) combined with the authoritarian mentality of hospitals, their overseer Child Protection Teams, and the lack of respect for parental authority in medical decisions, [means] we are seeing the “medical neglect” and “medical child abuse” accusations rising at alarming rates. It’s as if the CPS system has found the perfect way to go after the parents with insurance as well as continuing to persecute the parents having to utilize Medicaid as it has always done.

In fact, hospitals will even make this threat against the guardians and surrogates of adults. As I was writing this article, I was contacted about a hospital that discharged an ill and medically unstable elderly man, telling the surrogate decision-maker that the man no longer merits continued treatment due to his “quality of life.” The hospital threatened to call Adult Protective Services to remove the surrogate’s guardianship if she

persisted in her advocacy for the man.

## Statist Definitions: Shifting Sand

In each of the above cases, the family members had gone to great lengths to advocate and obtain treatment for their loved ones. With regard to the above-mentioned children, CPS charged the parents with “medical neglect.” In the case of my client, she was *actually blamed for following the instructions of the hospital*. The child abuse team doctor actually testified that she should have known to ignore the social worker’s instructions and assurances that the social worker had consulted with the doctor about those instructions! In the other two Texas cases, the attorneys for CPS and child-abuse team doctors are claiming that procedures and treatments administered to the children were unnecessary and blamed the parents for them having occurred, despite objective testing and the expertise of the treating physicians.

The cases involve accusations of the parents that wildly veer from “the parents are too involved and controlling of their ill children” to “the parents didn’t do enough for the children.” The absurdity of these statements made by CPS and the hospitals is shocking.

## Incentives to Split Families into Pieces

Federal and state law mandates that CPS make reasonable efforts to keep a family intact, rather than removing the child. However, monetary incentives provided by federal funding motivate otherwise.

State Senator Nancy Schaefer, who was also a past President of Eagle Forum of Georgia, became a stalwart foe of CPS in Georgia after study of that agency. She lost her seat because she published her findings.<sup>15</sup> She spoke to the issue of monetary incentives for taking children, rather than reunifying

families. In her report, she addressed the veritable cottage industry that has grown up around CPS courts like “state employees, lawyers, court investigators, court personnel, and judges. There are psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, caseworkers, therapists, foster parents, adoptive parents, and on and on, [who] are looking to the children in state custody to provide job security. Parents do not realize that social workers are the glue that holds ‘the system’ together that funds the court, the child attorney, and the multiple other jobs including DFCS’s [Division of Family and Children Services] attorney.”

Further, Senator Schaefer found that:

The Adoption and the Safe Families Act, set in motion by President Bill Clinton, offered cash “bonuses” to the states for every child they adopted out of foster care. In order to receive the “adoption incentive bonuses” local child protective services need more children. They must have merchandise (children) that sell and you must have plenty of them so the buyer can choose ...

And:

[T]he incentive for social workers to return children to their parents quickly after taking them has disappeared and who in protective services will step up to the plate and say, “This must end!” No one, because they are all in the system together and a system with no leader and no clear policies will always fail the children.<sup>16</sup>

(Senator Schaefer was recently killed in what was believed by authorities to be a murder-suicide.)<sup>17</sup>

The incentives to take and keep children are manifested in the state’s attitude toward parents. Although CPS is supposed to provide “services” for reunification, such services are not universally available. Moreover, some of the services, like parenting classes, are often

no more than information-collecting sessions on the parents. Every action of the parents is scrutinized and evaluated for its impact during court hearings and trials.

One very disturbing aspect of these “services” is that they are entirely based on humanist presuppositions. In a hearing on such “services” before the Christian judge whom I mentioned earlier, my client’s pastor and I argued that the individual counseling to which my client was to be subjected, should be by that pastor and based upon the Holy Bible. The pastor testified that the greatest transformative power is Jesus Christ. The judge ruled that, although my client could have counseling with the pastor, the state-licensed, secular counselor had more “education” and could deal better with my client’s problems. It is obvious that this Christian judge has fallen into the trap of neutrality as described by Gary Demar in his book *Myths, Lies & Half Truths: How Misreading the Bible Neutralizes Christians*.<sup>18</sup>

So then, for a Christian to adopt the neutrality myth is to fall into the humanist trap, to believe that religious convictions are reserved for the heart, home, and place of worship, while the affairs of this world are best handled by using reason, experience, and technical expertise devoid of religious assumptions and convictions.<sup>19</sup>

## State Agencies as Infallible Entities

One characteristic of these child welfare agencies is that they will very rarely admit to mistakes themselves. In the name of saving children, these agencies harm children. The separation of the children from their mothers in the FLDS case was described by outraged mental health workers who witnessed it:<sup>20</sup>

On the awful day that they separated the mothers and children the level of cruelty and lack of respect for human rights was overwhelming. Crying,

begging children were ripped away from their devastated mothers and the mothers were put on buses to either return to the ranch or to go to shelters. Most went to shelters because they were told they would be able to see their children if they did not return to the ranch. This, of course, was another lie ... The floor was literally slick with tears in places. A baby was left in a stroller without food and water for 24 hours and ended up in the hospital. A 4-year-old boy was so terrified that he snuck away and hid and was only found after the coliseum (had) been emptied the next day.

I witnessed a small boy, maybe 3 years old, walking along the rows of cots with a little pillow saying, "I need someone to rock me, I just want to be rocked, I want to find a rocking chair." Two CPS workers were following him and writing in their notebooks but not speaking to him or comforting him. Sally and I started toward him but his 8-year-old brother came and picked him up saying, "I will take care of him" ... That little boy will always be in my mind. How can a beautiful healthy child be taken from a healthy, loving home and forced into a situation like that, right here in America, right here in Texas?

On the last day of my stay at the coliseum (April 24), the mothers had been removed ... The children had cried bitterly on the removal of the mothers, and they were now with strangers ... Children were grabbing toys from others and using the toys as play weapons against each other and their "captors." In my estimation they were acting out their fear and anger. One little boy of about 4 was frantically running from the CPS workers, avoiding capture in every way he could. Once caught, I held him firmly in my arms while he wept that he didn't want them to take his mother.

Another child was hospitalized and not allowed the company of his mother, despite insistence by the ER doctor that

she be brought to the child's bedside. I have a copy of the letter the incensed doctor wrote to the governor.

In a very recent case in Alaska, a case worker went to a government school and took the wrong children into custody. The terrified mother thought that her children had been kidnapped.<sup>21</sup> In these cases, the state minimizes the impact of such horrific neglect and abuse committed by them upon children and families, brushing such things off as trivialities, while roundly condemning parents for even the smallest mistake.

It is particularly galling that, in my previously mentioned case, the mother had her ill child taken away due to lab findings indicating dehydration (caused by the mother following the instructions of the hospital), which was easily corrected, yet no CPS worker has ever suffered the consequences of dehydrating the FLDS child left for twenty-four hours unattended in her stroller.

This, of course, is a characteristic of the messianic state so often and well described by R. J. Rushdoony. The godless state presumes to the infallibility reserved to God.<sup>22</sup> We are to submit every thought to Christ and leave nothing on the table. Yet, the state makes the same claim, leaving nothing on the table and making increasingly totalitarian claims restricting the freedom of the family in the interests of "public policy" defined by it.

This attitude of infallibility leads to ludicrous results. One of my clients recently had visitation with her daughter and brought her three-year-old boy to the visitation. The supervising CPS worker, a young, childless woman, then testified that my client's mothering skills are bad and that the three-year-old should be removed from her home because the mother read to the five-year-old daughter while the three-year-old climbed on the picnic table.

### **Infallible Agencies Equal Unaccountable Agencies**

Not only is CPS not held accountable for mistakes internally, the courts have held that CPS cannot be held accountable for failing to save a child from abuse, even when the agency knows that a child is in danger.

(a) A State's failure to protect an individual against private violence generally does not constitute a violation of the Due Process Clause, because the Clause imposes no duty on the State to provide members of the general public with adequate protective services.

(b) There is no merit to petitioner's contention that the State's knowledge of his danger and expressions of willingness to protect him against that danger established a "special relationship" giving rise to an affirmative constitutional duty to protect.<sup>23</sup>

Federal law, in a weak nod to the authority of family, requires reasonable attempts at reunification. This is attempted by the state agency providing "services," which consist of parenting classes, therapy, and other humanist solutions. However, as stated above, these services result in the gathering of information to use against the parents. The testimony gathered from the visitation described above is a good example.

In order to give the appearance of complying with federal law, states will often massage reunification figures. Johana Scot of the Parent Guidance Center told me in during my interview of her:

When talking about reunification statistics one needs to always ask what the operational definition of "reunification" really is. Some states like to add together the totals of actual biological parent reunifications (which are historically low) with the totals for relative placements and call that the "family reunification" statistic. This will inflate the statistic to make the state look bet-



ter to those unfamiliar with the child welfare system. It is why so many organizations wrongfully say that the majority of children return home. Nationally, true biological parent reunifications are statistically lower than adoptions in most every state. This is not surprising given the fact that no state makes a dime when children are returned home while every state receives perverse monetary incentives for each adoption they can consummate. And one may be surprised to learn that the state does NOT have to return the bonus money if the adoption breaks down later. The child can go through the same system all over again (albeit with a new adoptive name) and the state could receive a bonus again for the same child!

### The Lawless Courts

Long ago, our courts abandoned the fact that law comes from God, attempting to transfer His sovereignty to the “law” of man, with disastrous effect. In his landmark book *Sovereignty*, Rushdoony writes:

Beginning with Justice Holmes and on to the present, American justices have held that religion and morality have nothing to do with law, which is the will of the state.<sup>24</sup>

Statutory law in CPS cases is very similar to administrative law, wherein courts give tremendous discretion to the state in its interpretation of the law (and what constitutes abuse and neglect) and similar discretion in its rendition of the “facts.” Moreover, in the first stages of one of these cases, should the judge agree that CPS take custody of the child, near-total discretion is given to the agency to place the child where it wishes. Thus, the agency—in the guise of protecting the child—is given free rein to question the child and then to represent to the judge its versions of the “facts” as gleaned from the child in order to retain the child in its custody until trial.

Therefore, other than the main trial, the most important hearings in a CPS case are the Adversary Hearings (in cases where children have been removed on an emergency basis) and Removal Hearings (where CPS seeks a court order to remove the child from the parents). The parents are given very little notice of these hearings, perhaps only three days’ notice. In some counties, CPS lawyers schedule *ex parte* hearings with judges for orders of removal, giving the parents *no notice and no opportunity* to defend their families against the removal of the children.

Parents rarely have attorneys representing them at these critical initial hearings. The courts, however, do appoint attorneys for the children, and CPS has *its* attorneys present. Parents are attacked from all sides without any meaningful defense.

Even if parents *are* able to obtain attorneys for these cases, the attorneys have very little time to prepare. Such built-in time crunches become a recurring impediment against the parents throughout the case. Further, low rates of compensation for lawyers practicing in this area—whether paid by the courts because of appointment or by cash-strapped parents—make effective representation difficult if not inaccessible.

In working with attorneys who regularly do this type of work, I discovered that they are continually rushing from hearing to hearing and have very little time to prepare. The affected parents are usually cash-strapped and typically pay attorneys very little, while court-appointed attorneys receive a pittance compared to what most trial lawyers can earn. That economic reality means attorneys for the parents must maintain very busy dockets to survive financially. That is a significant problem, given the intensive nature of these hearings.

In an article written for *The Michi-*

*gan Child Welfare Law Journal*, Vivek Sankaran, a clinical assistant professor of law in the Child Advocacy Law Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School, writes:

The disincentives to zealous lawyering created by the structure are transparent. Attorneys are encouraged to practice relaxed advocacy, do little work outside of the courtroom, and push their clients towards entering into pleas ...

Presently, the skewed system has affected the quality of legal assistance ... Attorneys maintain caseloads by the hundreds, and in some courthouses, substitution of counsel is retained due to scheduling conflicts ...

Statistics reveal that relaxed advocacy has become the norm in the system. Decisions to remove the child from the home are rarely challenged, and the overwhelming majority of child protective cases are resolved with pleas.<sup>25</sup>

Even when parents have excellent representation at these hearings, I have observed sometimes that judges *ignore the law and evidence* and seize the child. As Tim Lambert states in the quote above, they are often fearful of returning a child, even if CPS has failed to meet its burden. So, to cover themselves politically, they will err on the side of taking or keeping a child from its home to avoid possible consequences. This conduct, of course, is a blatant violation of God’s law regarding evidence and the role of judges.

It’s apparent to me that the judiciary has developed too cozy a relationship with CPS and other parties that are aligned against the parents. The Lord commanded that courts not be “respecters of persons.” Our civil government lawlessly commands otherwise. The current body of statutes is completely based on “the best interests of the child.” The child is considered a separate party from its parents. The family is considered

the enemy by CPS and the attorney ad litem and guardian ad litem for the child.

As applied in CPS cases, “in the best interest of the child” appears to mean that time-honored and tested rules of evidence should be discarded in court proceedings. Hearsay and opinions without the laying of foundations (such as personal knowledge or expertise) are routinely admitted into evidence.

States have created so-called “cluster courts” solely to hear CPS cases. The judges in these courts are Associate Judges. In Texas, that means that they have not been elected in conformance with the Texas Constitution. I’ve yet to be personally in a cluster court, but attorneys who have inform me that these courts preside over what attorneys call “rocket dockets.” This means that the judges severely limit the duration of the hearings. Given that CPS presents first, the parents are given short shrift in putting on their cases.

### None Dare Call It Collusion

While working on the FLDS case, I made a disturbing discovery about the relationship between the judiciary and CPS. In 2007, the Texas Supreme Court created the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families.<sup>26</sup> The Texas Supreme Court directed the Commission to:

- develop a strategic plan for strengthening courts and court practice in the child-protection system;
- identify and assess current and future needs for the courts to be more effective in achieving child-welfare outcomes of safety, permanency, well-being, fairness and due process;
- promote best practices and programs that are data-driven, evidence-based, and outcome-focused;

- improve collaboration and communication among courts, the Department, attorneys, and partners in the child-protection community;
- endeavor to increase resources and funding needed for improvement, and maximize the wise and efficient use of available resources;
- promote adequate and appropriate training for all participants in the child-protection system;
- institutionalize a collaborative model that will continue systemic improvement beyond the tenure of individual Commission members;
- oversee the administration of designated funds, including the Court Improvement Program (CIP) grants; and
- provide an annual progress report to the Court.<sup>27</sup>

Notice that the directives mention *nothing* about justice. A review of the materials created by this commission lauds the collaboration of judges with CPS and other stakeholders. Once per quarter, a Supreme Court Justice, family law judges, CPS, and CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates who serve as guardian ad litem) meet with each other, and other “stakeholders,” to collaborate. Note that CPS and CASA are parties to the suits that these judges have been tasked to hear. There are no parents who’ve been wronged by CPS on this commission.

I stumbled upon this because I saw references to this commission preparing a training session for those lawyers appointed as attorney ad litem for the FLDS children. I examined the training material and found that the contents were virulently critical of the FLDS religion and practices. I also found that, after the children had been taken, a PowerPoint presentation was shown to

the commission members at one of its meetings. Many of the judges present at that meeting went on to preside over hearings concerning those children.

I have attended a few of the commission’s meetings, and the worldview being fostered there is disturbing. During a meeting held in August 2009, one of the judges asked that the commission come up with ideas to support the ratification of the United Nations’ Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

At that same meeting, the commission was discussing a database it has set up that will be available to judges. CPS would input data, *which has not been admitted into evidence*, and judges hearing cases would have access to it. This appears to me to be a violation of the Sixth Amendment right to confront witnesses. One attorney, who sometimes represents parents, stood up and stated as much and expressed shock that the judges and attorneys in the room had not considered this. Crickets chirped.

This commission is considering ways to accelerate putting children into permanent placement. This would influence courts to run roughshod over parents in order to fulfill this edict coming from the top. In fact, the commission seems to be determined to reach into local courts in order to control how these cases are heard. I am certain that there are local courts that *are* inefficient and fail to run their dockets in conformance with what this commission considers “best practices,” but the fallibility of men doesn’t justify building such a Tower of Babel.

### Follow the Money

Prior to the forming of this commission, proponents admitted that some might see this collaboration as undermining the impartiality and independence of the judiciary. Even the *proponents* of the commission acknowledged that it may raise concerns.<sup>28</sup>

Why would the Texas Supreme Court risk the impartiality and independence of the judiciary by creating a commission wherein judges would collaborate with some who repeatedly appear as litigants in the court? The short answer is . . . money. As documented in the publication of the newsletter of the commission, collaboration and judicial involvement in the “process” (outside of the traditional role of judging) is “mandated as a condition for receiving federal Court Improvement Program (CIP) grants.”<sup>29</sup> The newsletter goes on to state:

“As judges, we need to see ourselves as part of the system—as true partners,” said Judge Rucker, who is a member of the newly formed Supreme Court Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families, that now administers Texas’ CIP grants. “Judicial leaders are taking collaboration seriously, and not just every few years when the CFSR comes to town,” he said. Among other activities, commission members and staff conduct weekly meetings with state-level CPS officials as well as Office of Court Administration staff, Texas Center for the Judiciary staff, and others. More recently, Texas Legislature representatives have begun attending. Judge Sage volunteered her time during the on-site review by participating as a member of the Texas CFSR Review Team, as has Tina Amberboy, Executive Director of the Commission.<sup>30</sup>

Given the financial incentives, it is probable that the independence and impartiality of the judiciary is threatened in other states as well. To students of jurisprudential history, this may not be surprising.

### Usurpation of Power

Many of us decry activist judges who usurp powers reserved to other branches of government. However, we should equally fear it when the executive

branch usurps the powers and authorities of the judicial branch.

An informative writing on this subject is the Introduction to Harold J. Berman’s masterpiece *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition*. Professor Berman exposes the threats to Western jurisprudence and liberty in the form of the executive branches’ usurpation of the role of independent judges interpreting and enforcing the laws. Rather, as stated by Gary North in his comments on this book:

He argued that the West is moving into a new tyranny. We are losing the old system in which independent judges interpret the law. Instead, executive bureaucracies interpret the laws, which they then enforce. The advent of the administrative law judge is the mark of this transformation. The legal system is becoming an extension of state planning. This state is expanding at the expense of liberty.<sup>31</sup>

Although CPS cases are presently heard by judges who are not employed within the agencies, I submit that the CIP grant requiring “collaboration” is an attempt to capture the judiciary to do the bidding of the agency. It is a hallmark of “capture” that judges are receiving information from the agency that is outside both the record and the knowledge of the parents and their attorneys.

Professor Berman traces the transformation of Western jurisprudence to the Russian Revolution of 1917, which “inaugurated a new era in which ‘socialist’ law is replacing bourgeois or capitalist law” as the Soviets sought to control all economic life.<sup>32</sup> In his view, that Revolution has profoundly affected Western jurisprudence, and not just in the economic realm. He states:

The fundamental changes have taken place throughout the West not only in what has traditionally been called pub-

lic law and private law but also in what might be called social law, including family law as well as laws affecting race relations, class relations, and relations of the sexes and of generations. Marriage and divorce have increasingly become largely a consensual matter, while parental power over children has been substantially reduced.<sup>33</sup>

Professor Berman attributes these changes to “radical centralization and bureaucratization of economic life,”<sup>34</sup> shifting judging from an independent judiciary to administrative judges employed by the agencies who are parties to the dispute. He notes that this shift is spilling over to other areas such as family law.<sup>35</sup> What more cogent example of this than the specter of a state Supreme Court organizing a commission that seeks to centralize power over lower courts in order to standardize court practices?

Because federal grants, coming from the executive branch at the federal level, require the courts to shed independence in favor of collaboration with state agencies, I submit that we are seeing a shift in jurisprudence in CPS courts from traditional, Biblically inspired and based Western jurisprudence to a centralized, bureaucratized system that will heavily favor state power over the authority of the family. “The wicked frame mischief using law” (Ps. 94:20).

I am so disturbed about all this that I am creating a not-for-profit dedicated to protecting families from these deprivations. I hope to establish a network of Christian lawyers dedicated to advancing His Kingdom and protecting the authority of the family against the state. As Rushdoony has stated, we are in a state of war “between heaven and humanism, war between the Almighty God and the totalitarian state.”<sup>36</sup> We must never despair in this battle, for agencies such as CPS are ultimately doomed:

God will not share His glory nor give it to another. Even as the builders of the Tower of Babel were confounded and scattered, even as Pharaoh and his host were destroyed and his troops swallowed up in the Red Sea, even as God declared His judgment on Amalek—and Amalek is gone—even as Assyria and Babylon, and the empires of old, were brought down to dust, so those who today deny His infallible word and ascribe infallibility to the things of man shall be brought low by the Lord of Hosts. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:4)<sup>37</sup>

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*Continued on page 24*

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# “Basic to Sound Action, Is a Sound Faith”: *The Westminster Herald*

Michael J. McVicar, Ph.D.

In the last issue of *Faith for All of Life*, I offered a summary of the life’s work of Rousas John Rushdoony, the founder of the Chalcedon Foundation. “The Lord Will Perfect That Which Concerneth Me: The Work of Rousas John Rushdoony”<sup>1</sup> served as a brief overview of Rushdoony’s project of Christian Reconstruction and how that project related to the labor of the movement’s founder and driving force. Many readers of the article contacted me to comment on their profound appreciation for Rushdoony’s stunning and prodigious labor as a Christian scholar, activist, and writer. As a researcher who spent years studying Rushdoony, the feedback I received was edifying because it pointed to the deep interest in both Rushdoony’s scholarship and his life—that is, readers are not only moved by the content of his ideas but also inspired by his biography.

With this in mind, Martin Selbrede, the editor of *FFAOL*, has asked me to explore the life and work of R. J. Rushdoony in more detail. Over the course of three articles (tentatively scheduled to appear throughout the 2011 issues of *FFAOL*) I will explore some facets of Rushdoony’s life and work in greater detail. This, the first article in that series, deals with one of Rushdoony’s greatest failures—an attempt to start a newspaper called the *Westminster Herald*, which he hoped would appeal to theologically and politically conservative Presbyterians. Although the project never took off, the failure of the *Herald* is significant because it helped lay the institutional

basis for the Chalcedon Foundation and was in many ways a precursor to the *Chalcedon Report* and *FFAOL*.

The follow-up articles will examine Rushdoony’s successes. They will focus on Rushdoony’s long-time partnership with Presbyterian and Reformed Press, and Rushdoony’s collaboration and friendship with Cornelius Van Til, the father of presuppositional apologetics and theologian at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

\* \* \*

For readers unfamiliar with my previous contributions to this journal, I have previously documented multiple aspects of Rushdoony’s early life and ministry. Aside from the article cited above, I have also dealt with Rushdoony’s missionary work on an isolated Indian reservation in Nevada and documented his decades-long battle with the editors of Billy Graham’s *Christianity Today*.<sup>2</sup> This current article complements those two previous articles in that it is chronologically and thematically situated between Rushdoony’s stint as a reservation missionary and his transition to becoming a full-time researcher, lecturer, and Christian social activist associated with Christian Reconstruction. For those who find inspiration in Rushdoony’s Christian labor, the story of the *Westminster Herald* should prove interesting for the ways that it illustrates Rushdoony’s deep desire to reform the Christian church, serve God, and keep His laws. These commitments often set Rushdoony at odds with those around

him, putting him in the unenviable position of an outsider and a critic. The story of the *Herald* is a microcosm of this general tendency in Rushdoony’s ministry, but it also serves as a lesson of the value of principled persistence. While the *Herald* failed, readers will see that the values that motivated Rushdoony to undertake the project also motivated him to found the Chalcedon Foundation and its long-running publication the *Chalcedon Report*. In short, this essay presents the *Herald* as a precursor to both the *Report* and *Faith for All of Life* and suggests that their successes grew out of the lessons Rushdoony learned from the failure of the *Herald*.

## Blessed is the Name of the Government

In 1950, R. J. Rushdoony was in Owyhee, Nevada, serving as a Presbyterian missionary on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. Owyhee, located in northeastern Nevada just south of the Idaho border, is a tiny community in the Rockies. During Rushdoony’s service, poor infrastructure coupled with severe weather to make winters long and hard. In spite of the difficulties of the mission, Rushdoony took his station in stride. “We are beautifully situated here,” he wrote to a friend, “surrounded by high mountains and cradled in a small high valley.”<sup>3</sup> He fished, hunted, and spent the long winter hours studying books that he ordered from all over the United States. Rushdoony’s day-to-day activities revolved around his

missionary work. He spent much of his time developing his mission by reaching out to the Paiute and Shoshone Indians living on the reservation.

At this point in his life Rushdoony was already a disciple of Cornelius Van Til's presuppositional approach to human knowledge. As a result, Rushdoony believed that the non-Christian religious orientation of many of the Paiutes and Shoshones on the reservation had important implications for the way they organized their lives. He blamed the deplorable conditions of the reservation's residents on the non-Christian religious orientation of many of the Indians and the failure of the United States government to minister to the Indians' spiritual and physical needs. "American Indians," he wrote in an early article, "holding loosely to the tattered remnant of their old culture and often with scant respect for it, show a marked disinterest in Christian missions," and most churches, he argued, show little interest in the proper Christian education of the Indians.<sup>4</sup> In Rushdoony's view, the twin failures of indigenous culture and Christian culture left the Indians with only one savior: the state.

In fact, in Rushdoony's assessment, the failure of native and Christian cultures was so complete that the state was now a transcendent, almost god-like force in the lives of the reservation's residents: "[The state] is the giver of all things, the source of power, of land, and (having built a reservoir for irrigation here) even of water ... The government hospital delivers the children, and the government army taketh them away, and blessed is the name of the government each Memorial Day and Fourth of July."<sup>5</sup> If the federal state stood as the giver and taker of life, then it was usurping the sovereignty of Christ, yet the non-Christian perspective of the reservation's inhabitants left them unable to

properly understand the religious nature of their problem. The state, in governing men, denied them the freedom to govern themselves as Christians according to the laws of God. In short, Native Americans remained at the mercy of the United States government because they did not have a viable Christian answer to the social and ethical problems posed by reservation life.

Rushdoony's engagement with the Paiutes and Shoshones of Owyhee opened his eyes to the failure of the Christian church to speak to the concerns of contemporary Americans. Specifically, he worried that the church had lost its ability to instruct Christians on how they should understand contemporary cultural and political problems in terms of the gospel. This concern prompted Rushdoony to turn away from missionary work and focus his attention on reforming the church itself. While he never abandoned evangelism, his primary audience eventually became converted Christians, not potential converts. He worked tirelessly to popularize Van Til's presuppositional method and sought to empower Christian educators and thinkers because he believed such education would ultimately undermine a secular political system that endangered Christianity.

This led to Rushdoony's earliest attempts to merge political libertarianism with Van Tilian epistemology. He believed that if Christ is the King of all things, then the state cannot have absolute authority in the lives of men—only King Jesus has absolute power. In the remainder of this essay, I show how Rushdoony attempted to synthesize these broader political concerns into a religious publication aimed at educating Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians on the social and political implications of their faith. While this publication, the *Westminster Herald*,

ultimately failed, it was an important stepping-stone in Rushdoony's ministry, as the experience taught him how to communicate his religious concerns to political conservatives and how to persuade religious conservatives into conservative political action.

## A Tendency Toward Rigidity

While in Owyhee, Rushdoony received a small religious journal, *Faith and Freedom*.<sup>6</sup> *Faith and Freedom* was the publication of Mobilization for Spiritual Ideals. More popularly known as Spiritual Mobilization, Rev. James Fifield, a Congregationalist minister, led the organization and focused his attention on spreading free market ideals to nearly fifty thousand pastors and ministers.<sup>7</sup> Although it didn't operate on the basis of a dues-paying membership, the organization eventually claimed nearly 17,000 clerical representatives who distributed *Faith and Freedom* and used it in sermons and in public outreach.<sup>8</sup> *Faith and Freedom* published the writings of such libertarian luminaries as the Congregationalist minister Edmund A. Opitz, the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises, and the anarcho-libertarian Murray Rothbard. Although many of the authors often avoided religion in their articles, the periodical's provocative journalism nonetheless moved many clergymen to embrace Spiritual Mobilization's anti-tax, noninterventionist, anti-statist economic model. *Faith and Freedom* encouraged clergymen such as Rushdoony to see government as a problem, not a solution. Even though Rushdoony didn't agree with the organization's theological eclecticism, he did agree with its diagnosis of the problem and suggested treatment: Christians needed a robust theology capable of resisting the state and its attempts to usurp the sovereignty of Christ in the lives of Christians.

In the spring of 1950, *Faith and*

*Freedom's* editor, William Johnson, wrote Rushdoony in search of feedback about how he and other clergymen were using the publication. Rushdoony responded with an effusive note. He cited his predisposition toward "any publication which takes the stand yours does," specifically noting its support of private property and free enterprise as his principal points of agreement.<sup>9</sup> In his letter, Rushdoony noted that many clergy he had spoken with regarding *Faith and Freedom* rarely attacked its merits, but instead denounced its "tendency toward rigidity" in its social and political positions.<sup>10</sup>

Rushdoony had little critical to say of the publication except to note that it, in fact, did not go far enough on many issues. Specifically, he argued that *Faith and Freedom* needed to attack the Christian church as a whole, and Rushdoony argued that the publication was not Calvinist enough. On the former issue, Rushdoony lamented *Faith and Freedom's* timidity in directly accusing various denominations of hypocrisy on economic matters, warning that the chief danger to conservatives is "the lack of an independent church press," which "has crippled the cause of freedom."<sup>11</sup> On the latter issue of Calvinism, Rushdoony argued that "the American republic was the product of two streams of thought, classical liberalism ... and Calvinism."<sup>12</sup> *Faith and Freedom* ably embodies the first stream of thought, Rushdoony claimed, "but the Calvinist objection [to collectivism and statism] needs stating also."<sup>13</sup>

Rushdoony's laudatory but nonetheless candid comments caught someone's attention because in July Spiritual Mobilization invited him to attend a conference at Carleton College in Minnesota to discuss *Faith and Freedom* and libertarian politics. "With great personal satisfaction," James Fifield, the presi-

dent of Spiritual Mobilization, wrote, "it is my privilege to invite you to join with leading ministers in a conference dedicated to the exploration and study of individual liberty and its relationship to the Christian faith."<sup>14</sup> Fifield sweetened the invitation by stating that all of Rushdoony's travel expenses would be covered by "the generous grant of two non-profit foundations."<sup>15</sup> Although Fifield never named the two foundations, one of them was most certainly the William Volker Fund. The Volker Fund tended to support such small conferences under conditions of strict anonymity, but would send auditors to observe the proceedings in order to assess the value of its contribution. During the Carleton conference a Volker staffer, Herbert Cornuelle, attended the meeting and subsequently opened a correspondence with Rushdoony.<sup>16</sup>

The conference marked a major turning point in Rushdoony's ministry because it brought him into contact with some of the leading libertarian activists and organizers of the 1950s. At Carleton, Rushdoony not only met the Volker Fund's Herb Cornuelle, but he also met the Foundation for Economic Education's F. A. "Baldy" Harper.<sup>17</sup> Cornuelle and Harper immediately sensed an affinity with Rushdoony and an extended correspondence blossomed that ultimately brought Rushdoony out of the Presbyterian Church and into the wider world of American conservatism. The Carleton meeting served as a critical catalyst for Rushdoony's career: as he began to correspond with and deepen his ties with thinkers and activists outside of the church, Rushdoony developed a theological system that negotiated between his Calvinist convictions and the anti-communist, anti-statist commitments of his new friends. Even as he strengthened his ties with political activists outside of the church, however,

Rushdoony attempted to use his new network to change the church from the inside out.

## Westminster Herald

At Carleton College, Rushdoony circulated an idea for an independent newspaper aimed at conservative Presbyterian laymen and pastors. The project grew out of his criticisms of *Faith and Freedom* and his missionary work at Owyhee. As he had indicated in his analysis of the importance of Fifield's periodical, Rushdoony believed that the lack of critical journalism within all major Protestant denominations imperiled the church. Further, as he explained to the participants at Carleton, his time as a missionary had convinced him that clergy could no longer effectively link the profound theological realities of Christianity with the lived reality of laymen. Inspired by both *Faith and Freedom* and the Carleton conference, Rushdoony hoped to launch an ambitious project to attack mainline theological liberalism through the organization of a new publication, *Westminster Herald*.

From the outset, the project was burdened by Rushdoony's struggle to synthesize his religious concerns with his newfound aspirations to reform American culture and politics on an explicitly Christian foundation. First, Rushdoony sought support for his religious journal from political activists who shared some of his basic presuppositions, but didn't believe those presuppositions merited an expensive new publication. Second, Rushdoony dreamed that the *Herald* would refight battles long settled in theological circles: he longed to defeat theological liberals who embraced Darwinian evolutionary theory and the historical criticism of the Bible, using the tools of Van Tilian presuppositional apologetics. In many ways, his desire to join political and theological conser-

vatism was years ahead of its time. Decades later he did the same thing with the *Chalcedon Report* and found steady support and an ever-larger readership. In the 1950s there was no preexisting theological or political foundation for such a publication, and as a result, his goals for the *Herald* confused and alienated his potential supporters.

In summarizing the nature of the periodical, Rushdoony explained that it would serve as an unapologetic defender of Presbyterian economic and political theory by providing the “devotional Christian reading the laity demands and needs.”<sup>18</sup> His point was not, he explained, to make more Christians, because Christianity is at “its greatest strength in American history, [but] it exhibits the least Christian influence, because it is basically a body of sentimentally held and conflicting ideas. It is naive syncretism.”<sup>19</sup> Instead, he hoped the periodical would support the church when sensible and attack it when necessary. Clearly echoing Van Til, he argued that the point is to educate those who are already Christians on the finer points of theological orthodoxy. “Basic to sound action,” he concluded, “is a sound faith.”<sup>20</sup>

When Rushdoony pitched his new journalistic project to the Carleton College conference participants, he did so to a unique rogues’ gallery of secular libertarians and religious mavericks. Oddly, for the theologically conservative Rushdoony, he seemed unconcerned with the irony of his proposal. When he approached potential backers at the conference, his most vocal supporters were Herb Cornuelle and Spiritual Mobilization’s James C. Ingebretsen. Cornuelle’s religious beliefs remain unclear in his correspondence with Rushdoony. At best, Cornuelle didn’t mind Rushdoony’s theological conservatism, explaining in a letter, “I am

much intrigued by the idea outlined [at Carleton] regarding a publication for ministers and laymen in the Presbyterian Church.”<sup>21</sup> While Cornuelle hardly offered a ringing endorsement of Reformed Christianity, he did open avenues for support from other libertarians associated with the Volker Fund and FEE, including Baldy Harper. Like Cornuelle, Harper stopped far short of offering financial support for the project. Instead, he offered a stark warning, cautioning, “Your church ‘hierarchy’ will be grossly displeased, in the main, with your project.”<sup>22</sup>

With little hope of secure funding from the Volker Fund, Rushdoony pressed James C. Ingebretsen at Spiritual Mobilization. Like Cornuelle and Harper, Ingebretsen shared a generically Christian persuasion, but identified himself as a religious agnostic.<sup>23</sup> Ingebretsen made a halfhearted effort to stir up support for the *Herald* by pitching it to several of Spiritual Mobilization’s major financial backers, but he ultimately recognized that public support for the *Herald* would prove a distraction from his duties at Spiritual Mobilization. “When it comes to raising money,” he wrote apologetically, “my primary obligation and interest is in the direction of providing more resources for Spiritual Mobilization.”<sup>24</sup> All of this added up to a confusing and rather unsatisfying effort at networking for Rushdoony as he awkwardly tried to negotiate the beliefs of men who shared some of his anti-statist free market ideals, but none of whom shared his underlying religious convictions.<sup>25</sup>

### Starting a Dogfight in Our Denomination

Undeterred, Rushdoony pushed on with the *Herald*, going so far as to assemble an introductory issue to circulate among Presbyterian clergy and laymen. The response was swift and

underwhelming. Letter after letter came in response. Most affirmed the importance of the project. Some offered to subscribe. Few offered sizeable financial support. Most promptly demurred.

Rushdoony did find some support for his periodical among young clergymen and laymen from predominantly rural areas. One nineteen-year-old student at Southern Presbyterian College wrote a long, excited note to Rushdoony regarding the *Herald*:

I have been investigating the possibilities of organizing the faithful in our Church in order to present a united witness for the Faith and combat the spiritual wickedness. I felt that the most urgent need was a militantly conservative journal, for only after the laymen are informed will there be any hope of restoring a believing leadership and pure clergy in our beloved Church.<sup>26</sup>

Summarizing the sentiment of this letter and others like it, Rushdoony noted “the interest is mainly among the young men”<sup>27</sup> who live “in the town and country areas, where Presbyterian thinking and tradition are strongest.”<sup>28</sup> Not only did these rural supporters prove capable of resisting the siren song of theological modernism, they also were more isolated from the pull of that other urban horror, communism: “Communists,” Rushdoony reasoned, “are products of our rootless urban culture, [and] are rarely found in the rural areas.”<sup>29</sup> As a result, Rushdoony’s rural supporters were inoculated against the twin threats of theological liberalism and the dangers of messianic statism, but they were neither particularly wealthy nor intellectually sophisticated. This was a cruel catch-22 for the aspiring religious journalist and editor.

Even with this degree of support from young, rural clergy and laymen, Rushdoony found few supporters in the church’s hierarchy. In fact, many



conservatives in the Presbyterian Church familiar with the project tried to dissuade Rushdoony from moving forward with it. Warning of the disastrous consequences to both his ministry and his wallet, they argued that Rushdoony was picking a fight against a firmly established liberal hierarchy that could not be dislodged by a small publication like the one he proposed. In response to one such letter that registered support for Rushdoony's ideas but urged him to end the project, Rushdoony replied,

I thoroughly share your feeling about starting a dog fight in our denomination. I am by nature averse to such things, and it was only after long and prayerful consideration that I was ready to make this present step ... The fight is already being waged against us, and there is no evading that point. I do not want to respond in kind, but I do feel that our fundamental principles need re-asserting, that we need to put up our own candidates, and take up patient, Christian action.<sup>30</sup>

At every turn, much like his non-Presbyterian, secular associates, Rushdoony's Presbyterian supporters urged him to understand the awkward position into which he was attempting to pull them and warned him of the personal consequences of his actions.

As a case in point, Dr. Samuel G. Craig, the theologically conservative president of the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, living in Princeton, New Jersey,<sup>31</sup> offered Rushdoony everything short of his direct support. "I am disposed to think," Craig wrote, "... that it would be better for me to at least keep well into the background in the early period of the publication."<sup>32</sup> That such "support" did Rushdoony little good was not lost on the aspiring editor. As Rushdoony later observed in a forlorn note to Ingebretsen,

[T]he more prominent ministers, like senators, will play safe until they feel that open support is politically expedient. I have received very enthusiastic letters from a number, written immediately on receipt of the *Westminster Herald*, promising help, but, as the days go by, they seem embarrassed by their outburst and find themselves "too busy" to do much.<sup>33</sup>

Most prominent men in the church recognized that Rushdoony was hankering for a dogfight whether he knew it or not. As a result, they gave their support privately and kept their wallets and mouths firmly closed.

On a more personal note, one of the most blunt and telling responses to the *Herald* came from John M. Paxton of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Paxton, like so many others familiar with Rushdoony and his ideas, registered his support but encouraged him to abandon the project.

I am much interested in your venture in journalism ... I am not, however, financially able to assist in the project. It is quite beyond my present ability to undertake, nor could I in good conscience encourage [sic] you to proceed in the financial indebtedness, which I am sure will incur in such a project ... I am not unaware of the sacrifice you have made but I am loath to see you inflict upon yourself and your loved ones more of the same, and of course, you must know it will mean ostracism if not more. I speak to you in perfect frankness as a friend.<sup>34</sup>

Unbowed, Rushdoony largely ignored such advice no matter how practical or heartfelt. He longed to participate in the larger theological and ecclesiastical debates taking place within orthodox Presbyterianism, but short of support from small, rural clergy and laymen, he found little denominational interest in a journalistic project that addressed

long-settled issues. This nominal support for the *Herald* succeeded in making Rushdoony a controversial regional figure among Presbyterian clergy on the West Coast and made his life difficult when he decided to leave the reservation in Owyhee for a pastorate in Santa Cruz, California.

## Conclusion

The isolation of Owyhee and the transition back to the city took its toll on Rushdoony's long-term goals of reforming the Christian church. During his time in Owyhee it had become clear to Rushdoony that the reservation was not an environment conducive for achieving his newly formulated goals of using education to revitalize both the church and American culture. In response to this realization, Rushdoony sought out a pastorate that would allow him to advance his ministry. After some searching, Rushdoony accepted a call to the pastorate of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Santa Cruz, California.

The new church called Rushdoony to its pastorate, and Rushdoony left Owyhee in May 1952.<sup>35</sup> The 300-member church was affiliated with the mainline Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).<sup>36</sup> Although Rushdoony had strong support from some in the church, many in the congregation immediately attacked his theological and political conservatism. They were particularly angered when Rushdoony solicited support for his struggling *Westminster Herald* project and voiced his unwavering support of Van Til's presuppositional apologetic method.<sup>37</sup> Several in the congregation, however, remained fiercely loyal to Rushdoony and they petitioned to separate from Trinity and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At least sixty-six members split from Trinity and joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a secessionist church founded by J. Gresham Machen.

With a significant portion of his own denomination against him and deep divisions in his first pastorate, Rushdoony continued to cultivate the connections he made at Carleton College to build support for his ideas outside of the boundaries of traditional Presbyterianism. While it seems clear from his correspondence and activities that Rushdoony loved his work as a missionary and preacher, it seems equally clear that Rushdoony felt at home with the political activists he met through his association with Spiritual Mobilization, FEE, and the Volker Fund. In fact, it's reasonable to suggest that Rushdoony saw no tension between his associations with these political activists and his duties as a Presbyterian missionary and pastor.

The activists staffing Spiritual Mobilization, FEE, the Volker Fund, and any number of other fledgling "conservative" or "libertarian" organizations were at the forefront of a broader and growing movement to attack federal management of the economy, criticize U.S. foreign policy, and roll back the social welfare advances of the New Deal. For secular libertarians such as Ingebretsen, Harper, and Cornuelle, their political and economic agenda had a quasi-religious force behind it that remained unarticulated and ambiguous. For others, however, resistance to a centralized federal government was not simply a matter of liberation and spiritual well being: it was a religious obligation rooted in the deepest traditions of Western Christianity.

In this essay I have attempted to outline how Rushdoony's time on the Duck Valley reservation led him to this latter position. His time on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation convinced him that modern Christianity had abdicated its responsibility to address the very problems of political theology

that it had bequeathed to the modern world. On the reservation, Rushdoony believed that he had seen two peoples: a race that had lost faith in its own history and in the religion of the culture that had conquered it, and another that was eager to reject its God-given Christian liberty for government management of its peoples' lives. Rushdoony longed to carry these insights to other Christians through a publication like the *Westminster Herald*. Over the next two decades, Rushdoony refined his message and approach. He eventually learned how to persuasively present his message to political and religious conservatives with the concept of Christian Reconstruction, a project that remains alive and well to this day. 🇺🇸

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1. Michael J. McVicar, "The Lord Will Perfect That Which Concerneth Me: The Work of Rousas John Rushdoony," *Faith for All of Life* (November/December 2010): 6–11, 24.
2. See Michael J. McVicar, "First Owyhee, and then the World': The Early Ministry of R. J. Rushdoony," *Faith for All of Life* (November/December 2008): 18–22, 33; and Michael J. McVicar, "Working with Pygmies: R. J. Rushdoony, Christianity Today, and the Making of an American Theologian," *Faith for All of Life* (July/August 2008): 14–18, 32.
3. R. J. Rushdoony to Kantorowicz, March 22, 1945, R. J. Rushdoony Library, Chalcedon Foundation, Vallecito, CA (hereafter cited as the RJR Library).
4. Rousas John Rushdoony, "Christian Missions and Indian Culture," *Westminster Theological Journal* 12, no. 1 (May 1949): 1.
5. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, February 24, 1945, RJR Library.

6. Readers interested in *Faith and Freedom* can find an online archive of the publication at <http://mises.org/literature.aspx?action=source&source=Faith%20and%20Freedom>. For an excellent history of the publication, see Eckard V. Toy, "Faith and Freedom, 1949–1960," in *The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America*, eds. Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton, Historical Guides to the World's Periodicals and Newspapers (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 153–161.

7. I have outlined Rushdoony's relationship with Spiritual Mobilization in Michael J. McVicar, "The Libertarian Theocrats: The Long, Strange History of R. J. Rushdoony and Christian Reconstructionism," *The Public Eye*, Fall 2007, available online at <http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v22n3/libertarian.html>. For a more complete history of Spiritual Mobilization, see Eckard V. Toy, "Spiritual Mobilization: The Failure of an Ultraconservative Ideal in the 1950s," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 61 (April 1970): 77–86.

8. Ralph Lord Roy, *Apostles of Discord: A Study of Organized Bigotry and Disruption on the Fringes of Protestantism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), 286.

9. R. J. Rushdoony to William Johnson, March 14, 1950, RJR Library.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. James W. Fifield, Jr., to R. J. Rushdoony, July 1, 1950, RJR Library.

15. Ibid.

16. Herbert C. Cornuelle to R. J. Rushdoony, August 30, 1950, RJR Library.

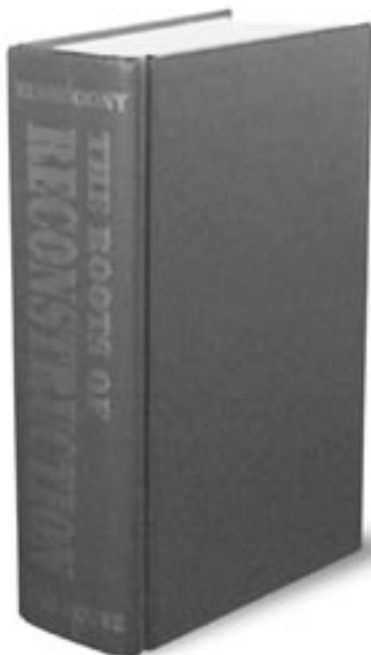
17. Rushdoony had been corresponding with Harper, then at FEE, for several months prior to the conference but had not yet met him in person. Although it is not clear how Rushdoony began corresponding with Harper, it appears that Rushdoony was operating as an author or researcher for FEE by early 1950. See R. J. Rushdoony to F. A. Harper, April 26, 1950, RJR Library, and F. A. Harper to R. J. Rushdoony, August 31, 1950, RJR Library.

18. R. J. Rushdoony to Herbert C. Cornuelle, October 10, 1950, RJR Library.  
 19. Ibid.  
 20. Ibid.  
 21. Herbert Cornuelle to R. J. Rushdoony, August 30, 1950, RJR Library.  
 22. F. A. Harper to R. J. Rushdoony, October 18, 1950, RJR Library. Ultimately, the Volker Fund, citing its long-standing “non-denominational” policy, rejected offering any assistance to the *Herald* (Herbert C. Cornuelle to R. J. Rushdoony, May 20, 1952, RJR Library).  
 23. For Ingebretsen’s religious convictions, see James C. Ingebretsen, *Apprentice to the Dawn: A Spiritual Memoir* (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 2003).  
 24. James C. Ingebretsen to R. J. Rushdoony, April 10, 1952, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, collection 147, box 9, folder 32 (hereafter UO Libraries).  
 25. Further, Fifield, the spiritual engine behind Spiritual Mobilization “is not,”

Ingebretsen relayed, “particularly sympathetic to your theological position, but he likes what you are trying to do and has been giving the magazine some publicity” (James C. Ingebretsen to R. J. Rushdoony, June 10, 1952, UO Libraries). Despite his theological disagreements with Rushdoony, Fifield spoke favorably of the *Herald* during his radio program.  
 26. Robert Glover Shoemaker to R. J. Rushdoony, October 5, 1950, RJR Library.  
 27. R. J. Rushdoony to Samuel G. Craig, October 11, 1950, RJR Library.  
 28. R. J. Rushdoony to James C. Ingebretsen, April 15, 1952, UO Libraries.  
 29. Ibid.  
 30. R. J. Rushdoony to C. Ralston Smith, May 10, 1952.  
 31. Partly as a result of Craig’s sympathy for conservative theology, Rushdoony eventually would go on to have a long and highly productive relationship with the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.  
 32. Samuel G. Craig to R. J. Rushdoony,

September 20, 1950, RJR Library.  
 33. R. J. Rushdoony to James C. Ingebretsen, April 15, 1952, UO Libraries.  
 34. John M. Paxton to R. J. Rushdoony, June 11, 1952, RJR Library.  
 35. “Santa Cruz Church Formed,” *The Presbyterian Guardian*, July 15, 1958.  
 36. David Watson, “Theonomy: A History of the Movement and an Evaluation of its Primary Text,” (master’s thesis, Calvin College, 1985).  
 37. “Two Churches Organized in California,” *The Presbyterian Guardian*, June 15, 1958.

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# Evangelical Politics: A Review of Wayne Grudem, *Politics – According to the Bible*

Roger Schultz



Wayne Grudem's *Politics – According to the Bible* (Zondervan, 2010) is a 600-page tome, covering sixty specific issues,

and purports to be a “comprehensive resource for understanding modern political issues in light of scripture.” The book is relevant and engaging; the perspective is conservative and Biblical. “I wrote this book,” Grudem says, “because I was convinced that God intended the Bible to give guidance to every area of life—including how governments should function!” (p. 13).

Grudem's *Politics* has weaknesses—in methodology, research, and conclusions. Sometimes it says more about conservative evangelicalism than it does about Biblical ethics. But the book is worth reading, and it should be a platform for engaging Christians who want a more consistent Biblical perspective on government, politics, and law.

Grudem is a professor of theology and Biblical studies at Phoenix Seminary. A graduate of Harvard, Westminster, and Cambridge, he has impeccable academic credentials. He taught for many years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where nearly thirty years ago my wife was one of his admiring students. *Politics* is not written by a political activist, but by a highly respected theologian and leading evangelical academic.

Grudem is pleasant and nonthreatening, and his book has a polite and gracious style. He is no thundering demagogue like the cranky leaders of the

Old Christian Right. I asked my wife why she liked him so much. “Well,” she said thoughtfully, “he was so nice!” And Mr. Nice hopes to promote an irenic evangelical engagement on political issues. Grudem writes: “[S]ignificant influence’ does not mean angry, belligerent, intolerant, judgmental, red-faced, and hate-filled influence, but rather winsome, kind, thoughtful, loving, persuasive influence that is suitable to each circumstance and protects the other person’s right to disagree, but that is also uncompromising about the truthfulness and moral goodness of the teachings of God’s Word” (p. 55). In short, Grudem longs for kinder, gentler Christian apologists and activists, ones who are fully committed to Biblical standards but who are also . . . nicer.

Grudem appears connected to conservative politics and groups. He was motivated to write by friends at two conservative organizations, the Alliance Defense Fund and the Center for Arizona Policy. His perspective is consistently and admittedly conservative. While he does not intend to be partisan, he notes that his conclusions and positions are largely those of the Republican Party. Grudem explains that Republicans tend to favor “smaller government, lower taxes, strong defense, traditional moral standards regarding abortion and marriage, the promotion of democracy and the promotion of free market economics.” And these principles are consistent with Biblical ethics, Biblical teachings on government, and an overarching Biblical worldview (pp. 6, 13, 573).

*Politics* is organized by different themes or clusters of issues: protection of life, marriage, family, economics, environment, national defense, foreign policy, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. Though hampered by methodological weaknesses, it provides a basic Biblical worldview approach to contemporary political issues.

Grudem's methodological and analytical framework is clearly stated. Some of his analysis rests upon the straightforward teaching of Scripture, where it is “clear, direct and decisive.” Other portions rest upon “broader biblical principles.” Still other arguments depend upon “an appeal to facts in the world” (pp. 18–19). This pragmatic and eclectic approach is problematic. Liberals have long touted the “broader principles” of Scripture to justify multiple humanistic initiatives. Appeals to the “*relevant facts* in the world today” (emphasis his) can lead almost anywhere. These “actual facts in the world” presumably allow the Christian apologist to make common cause with non-Christians on the basis of natural law or neutral data. As Grudem explains, “It would be impossible to write about political issues today without appealing to a large number of facts in the world” (p. 19). Grudem's repeated references to these “facts,” “relevant facts,” and “actual facts” sound silly. I'd feel more comfortable with a simple, steadfast commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture.

Grudem argues that there are six basic Christian attitudes toward government. (The categories are somewhat

reminiscent of H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work, *Christ and Culture*.<sup>1</sup>) Five approaches to government are misguided—that government should compel religion; that government should exclude religion; that all government is evil and demonic; that the church should do evangelism, not politics; and that the church should do politics, not evangelism. But for Grudem, a sixth option is best—that there should be a significant Christian influence on government. There is much to like in his thesis statement: “Christians should seek to influence civil government according to God’s moral standards and God’s purposes for government as revealed in the Bible (when rightly understood).” His foundational statement on scriptural authority is also clear-cut and commendable: “[T]he whole Bible comes with the authority of God and the authority of Jesus Christ, and our position on government should be based on the teaching of the whole Bible” (pp. 55, 38).

He is especially interested in confronting those on the evangelical left, such as Jim Wallis. (Long associated with *Sojourners*, Wallis has become a darling of religious progressives and Democratic operatives who hope to erode evangelical support for the Republican Party. Wallis has received major funding from George Soros, the spooky billionaire globalist.) Grudem does a good job pointing out the worldview flaws and inconsistencies of pacifists, socialists, and statists on the left wing of evangelicalism.

They say it is easier to smell a bad egg than to lay a good one. While Grudem knows where the statists are wrong, he has more trouble articulating a Christian alternative. He struggles, for instance, to explain his support for Mitt Romney in the Republican presidential primary campaign of

2007. Christians are not required to support fellow Christians alone for public office, Grudem insists, it’s a candidate’s Biblical and moral positions that are of paramount importance. That may be true, but Grudem’s scriptural support is bewildering. “[N]othing in the Bible says that people have to be born-again Christians before they can be governmental authorities who are used by God to advance his purposes. God used Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to raise Joseph to a position of authority over the whole country” (p. 67).

Grudem apparently doesn’t recognize the difference between the prerogatives of a Sovereign God and the prescribed and normative conduct for Christians. (Even if God used tyrants and pagans to accomplish His purposes in the past, it doesn’t mean Christians should start voting for tyrants and pagans.)

The more Grudem explains himself, the worse it gets. He supported candidate Romney, a Mormon, because he preferred Romney’s policies in 2007 to those of Mike Huckabee, a Southern Baptist candidate. But after further reflection, Grudem concluded that a Mormon would never carry the evangelical vote, particularly in the South, and therefore Romney had little chance of winning the Republican nomination. Grudem, therefore, demonstrates that his real criterion for candidate selection is not a Biblically principled stance on the issues, but political expediency—the ability to win. Grudem then admits that he was overly optimistic about Romney and probably didn’t do his homework before giving the endorsement. “The health care system that Romney successfully advocated in Massachusetts costs far more than was predicted and has lost much of its initial appeal. Therefore, I do not know if I would support Romney or some other candidate in the future.”

Everyone makes mistakes, but we might expect more from evangelicalism’s expert on politics and the Bible. Nonetheless, Grudem concludes, “[T]he principle remains: I think that Christians should support the candidate who best represents moral and political values consistent with biblical teaching, no matter what his or her religious background or convictions” (p. 68). This assumes, of course, that there is no divergence between religious principle, on the one hand, and political or moral principle, on the other.

And too much religious principle would be a bad thing. Grudem disagrees with the position that “government should compel religion.” He identifies a “small, fringe movement called Christian Reconstructionism that advocates government enforcement of Old Testament laws today.”<sup>2</sup> But Grudem has little to say about this position. He is far more interested in confronting the Left and has scant time for opponents on the Right—except for Ron Paul.

Since Grudem advocates a vigorous application of the whole Bible to the political issues of the day, this matter is worth exploration. Grudem knows that the civil magistrate must enforce some Old Testament laws, and he has no argument with laws against murder (“Thou shalt not kill”), theft (“Thou shalt not steal”), and perjury (“Thou shalt not bear false witness”) (p. 56). While he discusses Biblical law and the Ten Commandments, he is squeamish about applying them too far. Grudem is far more comfortable with “general principles” of the Bible or generic discussions about the need for absolutes.<sup>3</sup> He concludes the consideration of Old Testament law by saying, “If these distinctions are kept in mind, the laws that God gave to Israel can still provide useful information for understanding the purposes of government and the

nature of good and bad government.”<sup>4</sup> The Bible, in short, provides useful information—but not foundational law.

Presbyterians can better sort through these matters because of the wealth of theological information in Reformed confessional standards. The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 19, has a classic differentiation of Biblical law. The moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, represents a basic standard of justice and everywhere binds the nations. The ceremonial law—including sacrifices, ritual provisions, dietary laws—pointed to Christ and His perfect sacrifice and has been abrogated. The judicial law of the Old Testament, reflected in the case laws for Israel, is no longer binding (apart from what “the general equity thereof may require”). The Westminster Larger Catechism has extensive treatment of the Ten Commandments, and the scriptural proof texts draw heavily on the case laws.<sup>5</sup> However one handles the Westminster standards, it is clear that they provide a more succinct and coherent framework for understanding Biblical law.

Of greater concern is Grudem’s shaky historical scholarship. Discussing the U.S. Constitution, he says that the First Amendment reads “Government shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” The First Amendment actually says “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion” (emphasis added). There is a major difference in these readings, and I’m not sure Grudem understands the difference.<sup>6</sup> He does reference Daniel Dreisbach, an outstanding constitutional historian, whose work *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation between Church and State* has been highly influential. But Grudem lists the title as *Thomas Jefferson and the Myth of Separation*, perhaps confusing it with a

book by David Barton.<sup>7</sup> In any event, Grudem doesn’t appear conversant with historical scholarship on this vital topic.

The bulk of Grudem’s big book deals with current political issues. I found Grudem’s treatment of issues to be interesting and informative, although sometimes disappointing. The use of Biblical material was sometimes good, sometimes weak, and sometimes overshadowed by all those “actual facts in the world.”

A good example is Grudem’s treatment of guns, part of a lengthy section on “self-defense and ownership of guns” in a chapter on “The Protection of Life.” Grudem argues that the Bible establishes the right of self-defense based on Luke 22:36, where Jesus directs His disciples to purchase and carry swords. This is an excellent Biblical passage, and Grudem’s discussion is superb. He says “merely carrying a sword would deter a criminal” and “would also enable a person to defend someone else such as a woman or child or elderly person who might be attacked from someone stronger.” Likewise, “a gun is a great equalizer that offsets huge deficiencies in physical strength.” There are also reasonable qualifications, that the use of force should be commensurate with the level of threat, which Grudem bases on the Golden Rule: “The requirement to act in love toward our neighbor, including even the intruder, implies that the least amount of force required to stop the attack should be used, resulting in the least amount of harm to the intruder himself” (p. 213f).

From there, Grudem moves to a discussion of crime statistics, the Second Amendment (which he likes), and gun control legislation (which he does not). He argues that the issue of gun rights is important for four reasons: the original intention of the Second Amendment, the basic human right of self-defense,

the need for protection against tyranny, and the deterrence of violent crime. Grudem’s reasoning and conclusions are solid.

But the lack of scriptural references is disappointing. Apart from Luke 22:36, other Biblical references are vague, primarily examples of people avoiding violence: David dodging Saul’s spear, Paul sneaking over the wall in a basket, and Jesus evading the mob in Nazareth. Grudem spends some time explaining that “turning the other cheek” (Matt. 5:38–39) doesn’t negate the right of self-defense. Overall, there is limited Biblical justification for his position.

Why not use Exodus 22 as a support for armed self-defense? (Maybe an Old Testament law is too threatening?) Exodus 22:2 says, “If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.” In short, under Old Testament provisions for self-defense, a man would not be subject to prosecution if he killed someone who was breaking into his house. (Lest the homeowner be prone to vigilantism, however, the following verse says that the homeowner may not track down and kill the bad guy the next day.)

I remember Jerry Falwell commenting on this passage once during a chapel service at Liberty University. “If a crook breaks into your home ... shoot him!” The whole student body cheered, delighted with their chancellor’s direct, no-nonsense Biblical approach. An older generation of conservative evangelicals knew how to deal with thorny questions: Frame the issue. Identify a Biblical principle. Find your gun. Solve the problem.<sup>8</sup>

The Foreign Policy section also illustrates Grudem’s approach. His internationalist and interventionist commitments have neocon tones, and there is little Scripture. Because of the emphasis

on rights in the Declaration of Independence, “it is in our best interest and also consistent with our foundational convictions as a nation to promote the protection of life and human freedom in various nations around the world. Therefore such alliances for the purpose of defending other countries are based on the convictions that are at the very basis of our existence as a nation.” (He “strongly disagrees” with Ron Paul’s noninterventionist positions.) Grudem’s internationalist appeal is largely pragmatic—in that the United States has “made the world a much better and more peaceable place” and “genuine peace in the world comes through the strength of the United States and other democratic, peace-loving nations.” The Golden Rule, Grudem further explains, “gives warrant for thinking that nations should seek to do good for other nations so far as they have an opportunity to do so” (pp. 399f, 439).

I am all for neighborliness, and I like to see people do good. American conservatives, however, believe that the Constitution must define and limit the scope of governmental engagement. Grudem’s passion for international interventionism appears limited only by the “broad principles” of the Bible and his own good intentions. As he puts it, “My conclusion, therefore, is that biblical moral standards, our Declaration of Independence, our own national self-interest as a nation, and the promotion of world peace all argue that the United States should promote freedom and democracy wherever it is able to do so around the world” (p. 441).

Sometimes Grudem’s positions are bewildering, as on the United Nations. He knows that the UN is anti-American, is “hostile to freedom,” and opposes “biblical standards of moral conduct.” He knows that it is “corrupt,” “harmful,” “destructive,” and unlikely ever to

be reformed. But he says that the United States has “no choice but to stay actively involved with it [the UN]” (p. 448). But he offers little reason for this (and none from Scripture), apart from maintaining a place at the international table.

There are certainly Scripture passages that Grudem could have explored in discussing the United Nations. He could look at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11), the rebellion of the nations (Ps. 2, Acts 4:27), the dominion of Christ (Ps. 72:8–11), and the gathering of the nations (Isa. 2:2, Micah 4:2). The UN has used secularized language from Isaiah 2:4 (turning swords to plowshares). The Christian should emphasize Isaiah’s promise of global peace, but only by tying it to the gathering of nations at Zion, the teaching of the law of God, and the submission of the nations to the rule of God.

Portions of the book are disappointing. The commentary on issues frequently lacks scriptural analysis, strange for a work with this title. His proposals have a predictable conservative (and Republican) tone. Though the book is full of facts and statistics, it needs further editorial work to eliminate redundancies, sharpen its focus, and reduce its overall size.

But Grudem’s book will be useful to the evangelical community, and I recommend it for four reasons:

It is Biblical. Grudem is committed to God’s Word. While not always consistent, Grudem advocates a full application of Scripture to every area of life.

It is comprehensive. It covers multiple issues and is an excellent resource. Despite its weaknesses, *Politics* attempts to operate from a coherent Biblical worldview.

It is accessible. The lay person will have no trouble understanding *Politics*. The study originated as a Sunday school series (p. 14). It would still serve this

function well, with the teacher providing additional Biblical and worldview depth and political application.

It is evangelical. Grudem knows that government is not the final answer. Our confidence is not in politicians; our hope is not in political victory. Ultimately, there is no hope for man apart from Jesus Christ, salvation through His redeeming work, and submission to His Word.

Grudem finishes with reminders of God’s sovereignty and the prospects of national revival. Though fully aware of the challenges of the day, he is encouraged by a new Christian purpose, Christian schooling movements, and God’s providence. “Therefore, no matter what happens, no matter whether we win or lose individual elections and individual battles, we should never despair, for our God is on the throne, and he will certainly accomplish his good purposes in all of history, his good purpose for his church, and his good purpose for each of us” (p. 595). 🙌

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1. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (1951). Niebuhr outlines five categories: Christ Against Culture, Christ of Culture, Christ Above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox, and Christ the Transformer of Culture. For a recent reassessment of Niebuhr’s work, see D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).
2. Grudem, *Politics*, 23n. Grudem later notes (pp. 65–66) that there are advocates of theonomy, like Rousas Rushdoony and Greg Bahnsen, but says that their views have been critiqued by Vern Poythress and John Frame. For the most part, Grudem is content to dismiss straw men, and there is little engagement with theonomic authors (or critics).
3. *Ibid.*, 36. In arguing against the “exclude religion” viewpoint, he says, “Moreover, since all *absolute* moral standards are in some way based on religious convictions and

a sense of moral accountability to God, this view would *tend to remove from the entire nation any sense of absolute moral standards* or any sense that there is any clear way of knowing right from wrong. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this viewpoint is not only the destruction of all *belief in God*, but also the *complete moral disintegration* of a society.”

4. Ibid, 84. Grudem follows this with a discussion of the Sabbath, which he believes is a part of the “ceremonial law.” As such, he doesn’t believe that the government should enforce Sunday blue laws (p. 85). The implication, however, in terms of Westminster categories, is that the civil magistrate has some obligation to enforce the remainder of the moral law.

5. See Westminster Confession of Faith 19:4 and the Westminster Larger Catechism, 103–148. The best historical study of the “general equity clause” is by Marc Clauson, *A History of the Idea of God’s Law (Theonomy): Its Origins, Development and Place in Political and Legal Thought* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

6. Grudem, *Politics*, 28. Grudem accurately quotes the First Amendment on page 33, so this may primarily be an editing problem. Grudem’s discussion, however, does not show a nuanced understanding of the issue. The best recent study is by James Hutson, *Church and State in America: The First Two Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

7. Grudem, *Politics*, 33n. See Daniel Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation between Church and State* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

8. This was not an abstract issue for Jerry Falwell. His father, Carey Falwell, killed his own brother, Garland Falwell, in self-defense in 1931. Garland was an ex-con with drinking, drug, and anger issues. For the rest of his life, Carey Falwell was tormented by the fratricide and increasingly turned to drink. A lifelong agnostic and long-time bootlegger, Carey Falwell was converted on his deathbed in 1948 by the local Presbyterian minister. The story is found in Jerry Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty House, 1997), 29–93.

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[http://www.adn.com/2010/11/18/1562091/social-worker-picks-up-wrong-kids.html#disqus\\_thread](http://www.adn.com/2010/11/18/1562091/social-worker-picks-up-wrong-kids.html#disqus_thread).

22. R. J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 7.

23. *DeShaney v. Winnebago Cty. Soc. Servs. Dept.*, 489 U.S. 189 (1989) <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=489&invol=189>, also at [http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0489\\_0189\\_ZS.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0489_0189_ZS.html).

24. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty*, 134.

25. Vivek Sankaran, “Procedural Injustice: How the Practices and Procedures of the Child Welfare System Disempower Parents and Why it Matters,” *The Michigan Child Welfare Law Journal* (Fall 2007).

26. <http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/children.asp>

27. Ibid.

28. Scott McCown, “Proposed Judicial Commission on Children, Youth, and Families,” *Center for Public Policy Priorities*, September 25, 2007, <http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=716&cid=4>.

29. *Better Courts for Kids and Families: Newsletter of the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families*, vol. 1, no. 1, April 2009, 6.

30. Ibid.

31. Gary North, “Four Articles That Will Change Your Thinking, I Hope,” November 18, 2010, published at [www.garynorth.com](http://www.garynorth.com).

32. Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition*.

33. Ibid., 35, 36.

34. Ibid., 34.

35. Ibid., 34.

36. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, 7.

37. Ibid.

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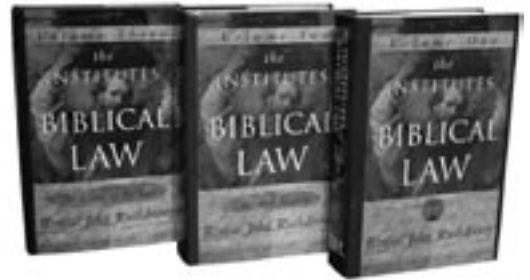
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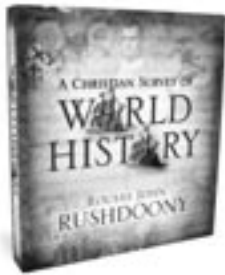
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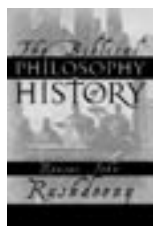
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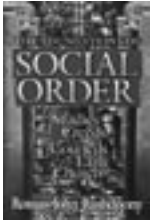
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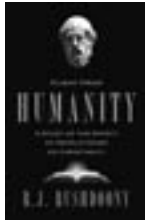
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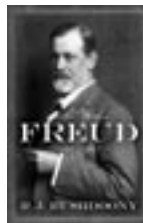


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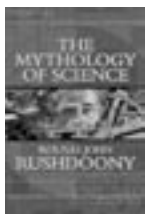


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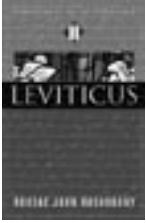
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Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from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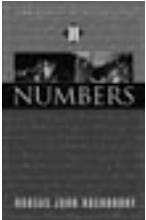


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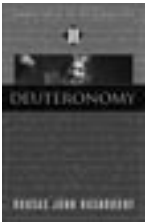


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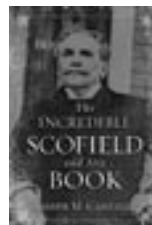
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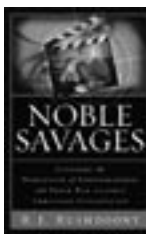
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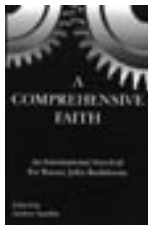
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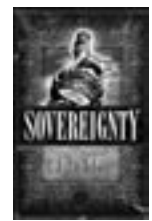
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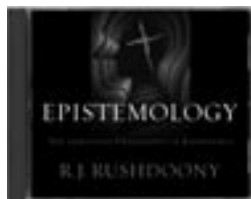
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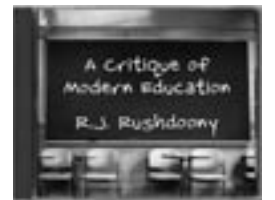
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