

*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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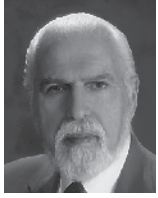
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# Religious Liberty

By R.J. Rushdoony (Reprinted from *Roots of Reconstruction* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991], 51-55).



One of the great moments of history occurred at the time of the Reformation, but its significance was too little appreciated then,

and its implications were not developed. Frederick III, or Frederick the Wise (1463–1525), was Elector of Saxony (1486–1525). He founded the university, Wittenberg, where both Martin Luther and Melancthon taught. Luther and the Elector may never have met. Although Frederick gradually came to accept certain Lutheran doctrines, he remained a Catholic to the end. His long protection of Luther was not motivated by agreement. What were his motives?

At this distance, it is not easy to say. Certainly, if we limit it to self-interest, we are distorting history. True, there were problems of jurisdiction. The Elector's area, Thuringia and Saxony, was a domain one-ninth the size of England. In it were a hundred different monasteries, and parts of six different bishoprics. Five of the bishops lived outside the Elector's realm. Thus, a different law prevailed for these ecclesiastical domains. It would be easy to conclude that self-interest led Frederick the Wise to defend Luther: he could then control the church as easily as the state if his were a unified realm.

Such a conclusion presupposes a desire by Frederick to control Luther, something he did not do. Luther was more ready for a magisterial power in the church than was Frederick. Frederick protected Luther; he did not seek to control him. This point is all the more important when we recognize their religious differences.

The protection, however, went both ways. In a letter of 1522, cited by Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, in *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man*, Luther at a critical point, offered the Elector his protection. He wrote:

This is written to Your Grace that Your Grace may know I am coming to Wittenberg under a much higher protection than the Prince-Elector's. I have no mind to ask for Your Grace's protection; nay, I hold that I could protect Your Grace more than he could protect me. Moreover, if I knew that your Grace could and would protect me, I would not come. In this, no sword can direct nor help; God alone must act in this matter, without all care and seeking.

Therefore he who believes most will protect most; and because I feel that Your Grace is still weak in the faith, I cannot by any means think of Your Grace as the man who could protect or save me.

"Protection" was thus made a theological fact. In terms of Deuteronomy 28, it was grounded in God's blessing on faith and obedience. As Rosenstock-Huussy noted so incisively, "Thomas Paine offering George Washington his protection would seem ridiculous." Both the protection and the freedom which concerned Frederick III and Luther had become theological facts. A Catholic prince and a Protestant reformer had come together to establish an important Christian relationship, one with deep Biblical roots, and long strands in church history, which established a fact too little appreciated in the days that followed.

In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution represents a development of this faith. This

amendment was added at the insistence of the clergy. The amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition for a redress of grievances." We miss the point of this law if we fail to note that each of the original ten amendments, as well as subsequent ones, is a single body of thought and law, a unified whole, a single subject. We are not talking about three, four, or five things here (freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, or petition), nor one (freedom). After all, other amendments deal with freedom as well, and, if freedom were the key legal concept, the first five amendments could have been made one amendment.

The unifying fact in the First Amendment is a man's immunity in his faith and beliefs: the freedom to express his beliefs in religious worship, in speech, press, assembly, and petition. This law was framed by colonial men for whom these things were matters of faith and principle. There was therefore for them a necessary unity in this statement: instead of five rights they saw one fact. Their separation today means their diminution. It means also the steady decline of freedom in every aspect of the First Amendment.

Thus, the purpose of the First Amendment was to bar the state from entrance into, or powers over, the principled or religious stand and expressions of law-abiding men in worship, instruction, speech, publication, assembly, and petition. When Protestant Luther said to Catholic Elector-Prince Frederick III

that he, Luther, was Frederick's protection in his (Luther's) free and independent move and expression of faith, and Frederick accepted that fact, and acted on it, a major step was taken. Freedom of religion was then not a privilege created and granted by the state, but rather something radically different. It meant rather the protection of the state by the freedom of faith. The stronger and more faithful that free exercise of faith, the greater the protection of the state. As Luther audaciously declared, "He who believes most will protect most." The stronger that free faith is, the stronger the state and society.

The freedom of religion as earlier Americans understood it, meant that the ministry of grace had a Levitical or instructional duty to set forth the counsel of God for every area of life. The church was separate from the state, but not religion. Through the ministry of instruction, God's law-word concerning every area of life and thought was to be set forth.

Decline set in when the church limited the scope of God's Word to the church, and when the state began to extend its powers over the family, the school, economics, and more. Today, current court cases see claims by state agencies which would entirely eliminate the First Amendment immunities for religion.

This dereliction of the press in this situation is particularly distressing. The press itself has been the target of various court decisions which seriously curtail or limit the freedom of the press, or, at the very least, place it under a cloud. Of course, all these decisions have a "good" purpose; every restriction placed upon freedom claims a good cause, to curtail or restrain abuses. All serve rather as restraints upon good motives, not evil ones. Evil places no value on, nor attention to, restraints; criminal codes already

provide a legitimate recourse against the evil misuse of freedom. Attempts to restrain pornography and libel have had minimal results; the law-breaker is a specialist in circumventing the law, whereas the legitimate publication feels the restraints which the law-breaker is impervious to.

Moreover, laws seldom are limited to the purpose of the legislators. As Charles Curtis noted in *A Better Theory of Legal Interpretation*, "Language, at any rate in legal documents, does not fix meaning. It circumscribes meaning. Legal interpretation is concerned, not with the meaning of words, but only with their boundaries." Those boundaries are almost always extended to unrecognizable limits. As a result, attempts to eliminate "abuses" in religion or press wind up creating new and worse abuses of power by the state.

The press has been defending itself from the encroachments of statism, but on weak and limited grounds. It limits its First Amendment concern too often to four words thereof, and it neglects the portion which cites free exercise of religion. All over the United States, churches, Christian schools, and parents and children have been on trial. The attacks have come from a variety of state agencies, especially departments of education, zoning, welfare, and the like. Federal attacks have come from the Internal Revenue Service, the Labor Department, the National Labor Relations Board, the White House, and more. The press has given minimal attention to these things, although they represent a major reversal of American policy. The press has become a commercial enterprise as part of large conglomerate enterprises reaching into a variety of manufacturing areas, all valid efforts, but, in the process, it has forgotten the religious nature of its immunity. The freedom it has enjoyed has

not been a federal grant but a religious principle. The change of its status is due to a shift in faith.

If man's faith is in the state, then the state is the protector of man's freedom, and the author thereof. Then, in every area, we are dependent upon the state: the state giveth, and the state taketh away: blessed be the name of the state!

The national favorite of the United States, "America," still celebrates in song an older and theocratic faith. The last stanza of Rev. Samuel Smith's song (1832), declares:

Our father's God, to Thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To Thee we sing.  
Long may our land be bright  
With freedom's holy light:  
Protect us by Thy might,  
Great God, our King.

Protection, in this theocratic perspective, is not by state controls, but by the might of the "Great God" who is "our King." The brightness of the land is not in regulatory agencies but in "freedom's holy light." This phrase is an echo of the premise which undergirds the First Amendment, the relationship of freedom to faith.

But this is not all. Article II, Section 1, of the U.S. Constitution requires an oath of office from the president. Such an oath is now a meaningless and even blasphemous fact. However, to the framers of the Constitution, an oath was a Biblical fact. To them, an oath was, *first*, a covenant fact, i.e., of a covenant between the state and God, and *second*, a theocratic fact, an oath of loyalty to the sovereign. In the Constitutional Convention, an objection was actually made to adding anything to the oath such as "and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." The fact of an oath, Wilson held, made this addi-

tion unnecessary; it was, however, still retained. *Third*, an oath invoked the covenant blessings for obedience, and curses for disobedience, as declared in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. An oath thus invokes a judgment from God rather than man as the basic judgment. It sees God, not the state, as the Author of all blessings, including liberty.

Today, we are in a time of judgment, because men have sought, all over the world, both freedom and blessings from the state rather than from God our King. As a result they have gained slavery and curses.

In the humanistic, statist conception of things, freedom is not a privilege and a blessing from and under God, but either a human right, or a state grant. Man the sinner, however, is a slave, and his freedom is in essence a freedom to

sin. The love of slavery has more clearly marked human history than the love of freedom. Mankind has largely been in chains throughout history, because men have preferred security to freedom. Men have often rebelled against the limitations imposed by slavery, but even more against the responsibilities imposed by freedom.

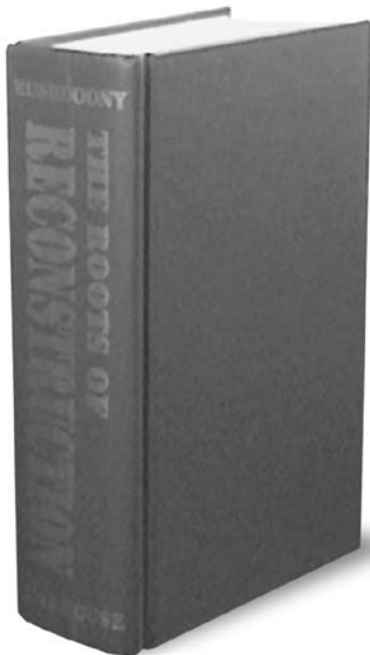
Freedom is not a natural fact but a religious principle, and the decline of freedom is an aspect of the rise of false faiths, false forms of "Christianity," as well as other varieties of faith.

This century has seen, moreover, the divorce of freedom from faith, with great damage and decay on both sides.

When Luther offered his protection to the Elector Frederick, he had just come out of hiding at the peril of his life. His reappearance was an act of faith, and one which Frederick matched.

For all too long, those who have believed the most have been Marxists, Keynesians, fascists, and humanists generally. Their "freedom" has been slavery, for "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" (Prov. 12:10). Now, however, as the faith of Christians strengthens, battles are underway for the freedom of Christian schools, churches, and families. Religious liberty is only a product of religious understanding, growth, and faith. If Christians lose their freedom, they will only have themselves to blame, and their indifference to the Author of true liberty, the Lord our King. (May, 1980) ■

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# The Government Christian Reconstruction Seeks

Mark R. Rushdoony



The modern era has seen the concurrent rise of humanism and statism. The two have, since antiquity, gone hand in hand. If we seek to supplant humanistic thought in our worldview, we must also renounce statism as a method of replacing it in our culture.

Those grown accustomed to a strong state will see the remedy to oppressive statism in some better form of the same. This has, unfortunately, been what the conservative/liberal division has come to mean, that conservative statist are to be preferred to liberal statist because of their somewhat better stand on particular social issues. Meanwhile, our liberties grow fewer and fewer, and the growth of civil government is outpaced only by the debt it imposes on our futures and those of our children.

## Rejecting Statism

In an age of statist growth and proposed statist solutions, Christian Reconstruction has a difficult time getting its message of reform understood. People correctly assume we believe in change but incorrectly assume that we seek to do so through control of the state and its legislative powers. Much of this is likely because of our emphasis on the necessity of Biblical law. Many, no doubt, assume that law necessarily implies civil law and that our alternative to humanistic statist law is Biblical statist law. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Solomon writes, “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Ps. 127:1). He speaks of house and home but also of the city, in fact, the entire social order, and its builders. All efforts are in vain unless God is the Creator and Defender of man’s community life.

A statist is like the watchman of Psalm 127:1, who believes human activity and initiative is the key to social order and progress. Any real reform must begin with a foundation in God and His Word. Because man is a sinner, his activity tends toward the expression of and license to his sin nature. Humanism, as the elevation of man above his legitimate role as God’s creature, leads to an exaggerated view of man’s role in society. In humanism it is man’s sin against God that defines his lust for power over other men.

## Self-Government

In Scripture, sin represents a servitude (John 8:33–36) that began in Genesis 3, and our redemption is our freedom from that sin and its guilt. As our servitude was moral, so is our freedom in Christ. Our life as new creatures in Christ’s salvation is thus characterized by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and His government of us. Our sanctification is our growth in grace as the self-governed of God. We grow in obedience to God and His Word in an increasing awareness of our moral duty as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Christians have a duty in the civil realm, but they must always be aware

that they hold a dual citizenship and that they are called to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). The self-government of the Christian who self-consciously seeks the rule (Kingdom) of God and His justice (righteousness) in his own life is the basic form of Christian government. Such self-government, which is no more than another way of saying obedience to God, is the prerequisite of a godly society.

The alternative to self-government under God is frequently a government by others apart from God. When men reject God and His right to govern them, they leave a void, a need for government without a transcendent source thereof. Government then becomes humanistic because man is the only authority left. Men who abandon God are left with government without God. Humanism makes man supreme. Because civil government is the highest collective voice of men, it tends to assume the transcendent authority its citizens deny God.

Man’s slavery to sin makes him reject the source of his freedom. As he embraces sin, he embraces the lust of the original sin, the desire to act as gods determining good and evil (Gen. 3:5). Those who would presume to be as gods end up being ruled by those who role-play as gods more aggressively. Individually, the growth of sin means personal evil. Socially, the growth of evil means the increasing prominence of evil in all facets of the public arena. In a democratic society devoted to humanistic aspirations, the prominence will be

particularly felt through the institution of civil government.

Similarly, as redemption is manifested in the lives of God's people, His grace will be manifested. This begins, of course, with the individual, but extends outward from each individual as he displays the grace of God and his own self-government in terms of that grace.

Redemption is more than the entrance of man's soul into the Kingdom of God, for He calls us to be born again as new creatures. Redemption is our entrance into a fullness of life. Christ promised us life "more abundantly" (John 10:10). We are called to serve God and testify to His grace and mercy. Rather than separating spirit and matter dualistically, we see family, school, work, law, civil government, and all things in terms of Him. Rather than rebels, we are now adopted children and heirs, who seek every opportunity to exercise faith and faithfulness. Because we are recalled to service by our redemption, we must look to God for our eternal life and for the conditions of our mortal life; we see all things as under His governance. His grace and law within us becomes our essential governing force.

We often hear correctly that the basic unit of society is the family. Some other social units are church, school, vocation, and civil government. The individual is not properly a social unit but the component of all social units and so his self-government is fundamental to the character of every aspect of social organization.

Beyond the individual, the family is the basis of most government in Scripture. The elders and tribes of Israel were extensions of the families. Four of the Ten Commandments directly protect the family (requiring the honoring of parents and protecting the family from adultery, theft, and covetousness), and two of the commandments (the second

and fourth) reference their application to family members. No other institution is so prominently addressed by the law of God.

Other social institutions were given spheres of authority over man, most notably church and civil authorities. Yet many other institutions have become legitimate law spheres over man and hence areas of government. A school has its own authority and area of government over students. Vocations involve a form of government by their chain of command. Many vocations have their own licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary bodies as well as codes of professional ethics. These are certainly forms of government.

In addition, our communities and culture have traditions and rules of etiquette that govern us. Hobbies and recreational activities even have rules of conduct. Sports at every level have governing rules and organizations. Those familiar with backpacking know what the unwritten rule of "leave no trace" means, and treasure hunters have an unofficial rule against leaving open holes, among others. These are all forms of government over us, and many are dependent on the self-government of the individual. During the California Gold Rush groups of miners, in the absence of a state government, would determine the rules for a particular mining area. These eventually became the basis of our modern mining laws.

Self-government is still a bigger part of our social organization than we sometimes realize. In all forms of government we must obey God rather than man, but most of these lesser governments over us are no more than applications of the Golden Rule.

Government that is a self-imposed rule necessitates less imposed rules. Most people will go their entire life without any need for the intervention of

a civil law enforcement officer. The purpose of such "magistrates" in Scripture was to be a terror to evildoers (Rom. 13:3), not a regulatory bureaucracy over all of society. This is the basis of the requirement of "probable cause" before an arrest can be made. The police are required to have a "probable cause" that criminal activity has occurred before they intervene in the exercise of liberty by an individual. Civil government becomes oppressive when it interferes with the self-government of its citizens.

## Christ Is King

The promise of Isaiah 9:6-7 was that the Messiah would be the Prince of Peace, that government would "be upon his shoulder," and that "[o]f the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who Revelation 1:5 says is "the prince of the kings of the earth" (said in the *present* tense) who has "made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (v. 6). We are kings because we are given to rule under His royal banner and law. We are priests because we are ministers of His grace. Man in Adam's rebellion rejected self-government in terms of the Word of God. The "judgment and justice" (Isa. 9:7) with which Christ established His Kingdom was repudiated in favor of man's desire to determine good and evil. All who refuse the government of Jesus Christ repudiate His justice and judgment in favor of another. It is the inevitable progression of humanism that it moves to establish false justice and judgment in terms of a kingdom of man.

God gave man an impulse toward dominion, though man's desire for it is now corrupted by and sometimes dominated by sin. The Christian must remember that apart from submission to God's justice, all man's attempts at dominion are doomed to failure. This

*Continued on page 31*

# Historical Revisionism: Why All the Fuss?

Roger Schultz



“History is a conflict between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots.’” That was the theme of history, my young friend earnestly explained,

as she had been taught it at the local community college. Without realizing it, she had soaked up a simplistic albeit common interpretation of history and had accepted it as fact.

Everyone approaches history with some assumptions, biases, and preconceptions. Even the most objective and detached historian must make judgments about the material to be studied and the facts to be analyzed. Those judgments are anchored in fundamental presuppositions about truth, historical significance, and the meaning and direction of history.

For the Christian historian, the ultimate meaning of history is tied to Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16–18). For the homosexual historian, the deepest issues of the past involve sexual liberation and gay identity. For the atheist and secularist, religious issues can never be genuine—they simply mask economic, political, and psychological issues. For all, basic presuppositions guide the study and understanding of history.

## Liberal Orthodoxy

Unfortunately, the reigning orthodoxies of today’s historians are liberal and humanistic.

Fifteen years ago, a Christian member of the local public school board asked me to review history textbooks. The district was adopting new texts, and the board member did not want to purchase books hostile to Christianity.

I developed a rubric for evaluating the texts. How did they treat the Puritans? (Usually negatively.) How much attention was given to the Salem witch trials? (A lot. The twenty lives lost at Salem pale in comparison to the millions of lives lost to abortion, but you wouldn’t know it from the comparative treatments of Salem and *Roe v. Wade* in school textbooks.) How much attention was given to religion in general, or to the Awakenings in particular? (Not much.) How was the fundamentalist movement depicted? (Usually with derision.) Textbooks reveal much about the worldview of modern statist education.

The biases and bizarre speculations of higher education are even worse. For years I have attended meetings of the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association, the largest organizations of professional historians. Papers and panels often feature weird topics. At one conference, for instance, the unsuspecting historian could witness the following curiosities: “Latina Butch/Femme: The Reemergence and Submergence of an Urban Marginal Identity”; “Endocrine Perverts and Derailed Menopausics: Homophobia and the Creation of Lesbian Citizenship in Debates over Federal Maternal and Infant Care, 1917–1929”; “Hillbillies and Queers: The Southern Lesbian-Gay Experience”; and “Lies My Teachers Told Me: The Multicultural Challenge to Traditional Texts.”

I watch for these strange sessions—and accordingly I encounter strange people. As near as I could tell, I was the only heterosexual attending a frisky session dealing with gender and transgender identity at one academic

conference in San Francisco. I was one of the few males in a session on “feminist pedagogy”—where a scary lead paper was presented by the butchy dean of a prestigious school of education.<sup>1</sup>

I attend these sessions purposefully, believing that they represent the cutting edge of humanist theory and the direction of the history discipline. What is now considered bizarre will in a decade or two be accepted as normal.

These strange approaches often reveal the influence of Marxist thought. While few academics embrace all of Marx’s dogmas, many have absorbed a neo-Marxist or Marxist view of history.<sup>2</sup> These Marxist-influenced perspectives see an ongoing struggle for liberation against various bourgeoisie forces—economic, cultural, sexual, and religious. Communism may be dead, but in academia communist types still abound!<sup>3</sup>

Some leftists try to make their quirky views mainstream and mandatory. The attempt to impose new National History Standards in the mid 1990s is a frightening example. The Standards were marred by sloppy scholarship, a liberal bias, and multicultural exuberance. Critics noted a lack of balance (multiple references to Harriet Tubman, but no reference to Robert E. Lee) and a fixation with darker elements of American history (the Ku Klux Klan and McCarthyism). Rush Limbaugh and Lynne Cheney led the charge against the Standards, and Pat Buchanan referred to the authors as a “sandals-wearing group of leftover sixties radicals.” The U.S. Senate eventually voted 99-1 to deny funding for the leftist initiative.

A leader of the Standards move-

ment was liberal historian Gary Nash, a university professor in California, and I heard him speak shortly after the debacle. Though wounded by the opposition, he joked about Buchanan, lifting up his trousers so that he could set the record straight: he was wearing shoes—not sandals! It is a sobering thought: a decade ago, the United States came close to having a California-twist on history made national historical orthodoxy.

## Secular Gatekeepers

Believing that spiritual realities do not matter, liberals often ignore Christian dimensions of history. “Having lost faith in a personal God,” Rushdoony notes, “man’s view of reality today is basically impersonal. As a consequence, he sees history, not in terms of a personal God, and personal man and his faith, but in terms of impersonal forces and drives.”<sup>4</sup> Spiritual questions are dismissed. Anti-religious presuppositions inevitably push history in a secular direction.

Iain Murray begins *Revival and Revivalism* with an observation on historical methodology. One historian, attempting to distance himself from the providential interpretations of earlier generations, pledged himself to interpreting revivals in “purely secular terms.” Murray notes, “This is tantamount to saying that if God is in history at all that the fact lies outside the bounds of serious historical discussion.”<sup>5</sup> In essence, the “objective” historian embraced an agnostic and deist view of God. God might be out there somewhere, but He cannot be involved in history, and His hand and influence cannot be traced. The focus on “secondary causes” and the exclusion of God’s historical working characterizes the secularist approach.<sup>6</sup>

The humanistic worldview is especially prevalent in the humanities and social sciences. I recently attended a

historical conference, where a group of young, conservative academics voiced concerns. All had recently earned history Ph.D.s. All were frustrated with liberal hegemony. “There is no place for an alternative perspective,” one noted, to the general agreement of the group, “as academia and publishing houses are dominated by leftists.” Another added: “There is no discourse. Academia is like an echo chamber. The liberals only hear themselves talking, and they are all saying the same thing.” It was an excellent summary of academia: an echo chamber of the Left.

Secular academics serve as gatekeepers and bouncers of the historical profession. As I completed my doctoral degree, I asked a professor to proofread my curriculum vitae. The man was a lefty, but he was a good professor and had always been helpful. “You might want to take this out,” he said, noting the line in my professional experience indicating that I once taught at a Bible College. “I probably shouldn’t say this,” he continued, sheepishly, “but if a committee knew you taught at a Christian college, it would probably prejudice them against you in a job search.” The message was clear: secularists were not interested in hiring Christians—and certainly not those serious about the faith.<sup>7</sup>

## The Embattled Christian Heritage

New movements in academia are particularly hostile to Christianity and the West. In 1993, I was a Jesse Ball duPont fellow at the National Humanities Center, participating in a seminar on multiculturalism. The seminar included college and university faculty from around the United States and focused on different world religious traditions, especially Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The seminar was interesting and offered excellent insight into other cultural traditions.

The seminar also offered insight into the pluralistic drive of modern liberalism. Christianity was compared unfavorably to other religions, and the Western civilization was invariably depicted as corrupt. Monotheism was particularly bad because it stressed “one god” and “one truth” and was intolerant of other traditions. Hinduism was a far better paradigm for the postmodern world, the seminar leader instructed us, because it had “many gods” and “many truths” and was thus more tolerant and flexible.

Seminar fellows were encouraged to be “political” as teachers. Since education is a vehicle to raise consciousness and empower people, it should push goals of “the equitable distribution of wealth” and “ecological sensitivity.” This thinly veiled appeal for socialism and the Green Party activism resonated with the assembled professors. Christianity, with its emphasis on private property and Biblical dominion over the earth, was considered the enemy of the reformist pedagogue.<sup>8</sup>

When Christian history is not vilified, it is simply ignored. Rushdoony once commented on the lack of primary source material available for the great American patriot John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Witherspoon was long-term president of Princeton and “his teaching guided a generation or more.” Yet his works were rarely available in university libraries; Witherspoon had slipped into the dustbin of history.<sup>9</sup>

Sometimes historians even tinker with the documents of the past. Religious elements simply vanish. The Treaty of Paris (1783), for instance, officially concluded the American War of Independence. For decades, a standard documentary reference work on American history was Henry Steele



Commager's *Documents of American History*. Most any college professor or student doing historical research would check Commager, whose entry for the Treaty of Paris says, "... ART. I—His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States [a listing of the several states follows] to be free sovereign and independent states, that he treats with them as such ..."10 The ellipsis before "ART. I" indicates that something has been left out—and presumably it is something unimportant. For decades those consulting Commager would consider the Treaty of Paris to be a secular document.

The complete document, however, gives a different sense. The Treaty begins: "In the name of the most holy and undivided Trinity. It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the heart of the most serene and most potent Prince George the Third ... to forget all past misunderstandings and differences ..."11 Britain's recognition of American independence not only begins with a reference to the triune God, but it specifically states that God disposed the king's heart to reconciliation and American independence.

I don't know why Commager left out the religious language. He may have deliberately suppressed evidence of the Christian past. Or, as I suspect, he may have believed that the Trinitarian language was unimportant—simply filler verbiage that could be excised without consequence. Whatever his motivation, religious terminology was edited out, and a portion of America's Christian past was obscured.

### Reviving Christian History

Over the past quarter century, Christians have become more active, writing about the past and reclaiming their history. The Internet has made primary sources widely accessible. Homeschooling has allowed students to

learn history without a secularist cant. Excellent resources are now available.

M. Stanton Evans' *The Theme Is Freedom*, for instance, focuses on religious influences in America's founding history. In "The Rise of Neopaganism" Evans notes the impact of materialism, naturalism, and economic self-determination. With a clear indebtedness to Rushdoony, Evans argues that "always and everywhere, the governing system that is adopted will reflect the underlying religious presuppositions of the culture." Evans closes his work with a strong appeal for renewed Christian commitment.<sup>12</sup>

A surprising affirmation of America's Christian history was made in 1954 by Earl Warren, the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Warren was no conservative, but he knew American history: "I believe no one can read the history of our country without realizing that the Good Book and the spirit of the Saviour have from the beginning been our guiding geniuses. Whether we look to the first Charter of Virginia ... or to the Charter of Massachusetts Bay ... or to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut ... the same objective is present: a Christian land governed by Christian principles ... I believe the entire Bill of Rights came into being because of the knowledge our forefathers had of the Bible and their express belief in it ... I like to believe we are living today in the spirit of the Christian religion. I like also to believe that as long as we do so no great harm can come to our country." Even the arch-liberal Warren was honest enough to recognize America's Christian roots.<sup>13</sup>

Early in 2007, I participated in a conference at the University of Virginia with a political scientist from the University of Milan. The Italian professor was not a Christian (as far as I could tell), and he was hostile to Calvinism

and New England Puritanism. Yet he insisted that America is "the last thoroughly Christian nation." Europeans are "statist," he argued, seeing "salvation coming from the government." Americans, especially those in the South, are Christian, judging by obvious factors like church attendance and religious profession. There is a "fundamental difference between America and Europe." It is strange that a foreign professor could state what American academics are unable to see.

### Christian "Revisionism"

Secularists now disparage Christian historians as "revisionists." Christians rewrite history, secularists charge, to sacralize the past, bolster "American exceptionalism," and promote a Christian "city on a hill."

Yale religious historian Jon Butler has made this charge and has minimized America's Christian past. As I was coming to the end of a course on colonial history in graduate school, I realized that the professor had never mentioned the Great Awakening. Why? "It never happened," the professor replied, referencing Butler's 1983 work "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretative Fiction." Using this as a justification, my professor quietly erased a major event of America's religious and cultural history.<sup>14</sup>

Evangelicals on the left have also attacked America's Christian history. In 1983, three leading historians collaborated on *The Search for Christian America*. They argued that "early America does not deserve to be considered uniquely, distinctively or even predominantly Christian." They further argued that "the idea of a 'Christian nation' is a very ambiguous concept, which is usually harmful to effective Christian action in society." Eager to separate themselves from the Christian Right (the Reagan

administration, the Moral Majority, and Jerry Falwell), the evangelical-lefties became vocal advocates of an *un*Christian America.<sup>15</sup>

They were especially hard on John Witherspoon, who was something of a hero to the Christian Right. Because Witherspoon was a Christian patriot, *un*Christian America historians berated him as a hyper-patriot whose political zeal eclipsed his interest in the gospel.<sup>16</sup> “In his zeal for American rights Witherspoon was making the new American nation a supreme value in violation of the Christian’s obligation to put first the Kingdom of God. He allowed self-righteousness to triumph over charity.”<sup>17</sup>

A careful reading of Witherspoon’s “The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men,” a famous political sermon in 1776, shows a different picture. While Witherspoon was obviously committed to the cause of American freedom, his primary concern was spiritual and evangelistic.<sup>18</sup> While temporal and political concerns were important, they were nothing compared to eternal salvation. In short, historians on the left, eager to disparage Christian historians and debunk the Christian Right, committed colossal blunders in doing history.

Recently *Harper’s Magazine* focused on the new Christian reconstruction of the past. “Through a Glass, Darkly: How the Christian right is reimagining U.S. history” warns about fundamentalist “maximalism”—the desire to “conform every aspect of life to God.”

The chief culprit was Rousas Rushdoony, who had “laid the right cornerstone of modern homeschooling” in his books and “Christian jihadi lectures” on American history. Here is how *Harper’s* describes it: “Rushdoony took the vague sentiments of early twentieth-century fundamentalism and found sources for them in American history,

creating an intellectual foundation for the movement’s political ambitions . . . The Christian conservatives of his day, Rushdoony believed, had let themselves be bound by secularism. They railed against its tyranny, but addressed themselves only to issues set aside by secularism as ‘moral’—the best minds of a fundamentalist generation burned themselves to furious cinders battling nothing more than naughty movies and heavy petting. Rushdoony did not believe in such skirmishes. He wanted a war, and he summoned the spirits of history to the struggle at hand.”<sup>19</sup>

### Presuppositionalism and History

The greatest concern in the *Harper’s* article was that Christians were reclaiming history through a presuppositional approach to the past. Drawing upon Cornelius Van Til and Abraham Kuyper, Rushdoony emphasized “presuppositionalism, which maintains that everybody approaches the world with set assumptions, thus ruling out the possibility of neutrality.” As Kuyper had put it, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human experience over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry ‘Mine!’”<sup>20</sup>

Rushdoony’s own words are instructive: “Behind the writing of history is a philosophy of history, and behind that philosophy of history are certain pre-theoretical and essentially religious presuppositions. There is no such thing as brute factuality, but rather only interpreted factuality. The historian’s report is always the report of a perspective, a context, a framework; man is not, like God, beyond time and circumstance, condition and place.”<sup>21</sup>

Historians do have presuppositions. Some will candidly acknowledge the framework that informs their research and colors their perspective. Historians readily note the philosophical and cultural commitments of other histori-

ans. Some have researched the cycles of historical interpretation and the shifting topical approaches in textbooks.<sup>22</sup> Everyone approaches the past with basic assumptions and judgments.

But the Christian historian is unique. He readily admits that he views history from the lens of faith. He can be clear about his presuppositions, the commitments of his worldview, and the scriptural source of his standards of justice and truth. He believes that there is a sovereign God who rules over nations and their destinies (Acts 17:26). He believes that all history works toward God’s foreordained ends and that history culminates at the judgment seat of Christ (Acts 17:31). He believes that history is meaningful because it is ordained by God for His purposes and His glory. ■

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1. This was the weirdest session I’ve ever attended. What made it “scary” was that I was the only conservative, Reformed Christian in a roomful of rabid feminists and New Agers. The butchy dean pantomimed kneeling a man in the groin. I was rather glad they didn’t know who I was! The chairman of my division wanted to attend this session, saying that what I heard seemed far more interesting than what he was sitting through. But when a Latina professor stood up with fists clenched saying that “the Revolution must continue!” my chair made a hasty retreat from the session and didn’t hear the papers.
2. For a good discussion of Marxist and quasi-Marxist approaches, see Ronald Nash, “The New Face of Marxism,” *The Meaning of History* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998).
3. In the early 1990s, shortly after the arrest of Jeffrey Dahmer, I read an article by a revolutionary homosexual activist who had obviously been influenced by Marxist categories. The author called for a revolution

against “heterosexism.” Heterosexism was “the exploitative, oppressive and inherently violent subordination of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and other sexual minorities by the non-gay elite, as by rewarding heterosexuality and bashing homoeroticism. It is thus an emergent structural phenomenon endorsed, legitimized and buttressed by cultural homophobia. As such, heterosexism is the fundamental form of inequality; from this elementary form, all other forms of oppression are constructed.” The author urged “womyn” and other oppressed minorities to revolt and work for “heterosexist patriarchy’s destruction.” Dahmer murdered, dismembered, and devoured his homosexual companions, and the revolutionary gay community somehow managed to blame heterosexuals for the crime.

4. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 128.

5. Iain Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750–1858* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), xx.

6. Scripture gives frequent examples of God’s working in history and explains His purposes. Outside of scriptural accounts, however, historians must deal cautiously in describing divine purposes. In Luke 13:1–5 Jesus talks about two calamities—one a human atrocity and the other a natural disaster. Jesus warns his listeners not to guess about God’s overarching purposes (judgment on sinners), but instead to use these disasters as an opportunity for repentance and salvation. For a new book dealing with God’s judgments in history, which argues for the possibility of knowing God’s work in history, see Steven Keillor, *God’s Judgments: Interpreting History and the Christian Faith* (IVP: 2007). I don’t know if I agree with Keillor’s approach, but I am encouraged to see a professionally trained historian tackling the issue. A Reformed Christian, Keillor is not as well-known as his brother Garrison of Lake Wobegon and *A Prairie Home Companion* fame.

7. When I went for my first interview, the dean asked several questions about my Bible College background. Even though I was

applying for a position at a Baptist-affiliated institution, the dean didn’t want someone who was *too* religious. (This was not at Liberty University, but a different school.) My experience was mild compared to what happened to a friend, who was a graduate of Bob Jones University. An outstanding teacher and scholar, my friend was ostracized because of his connection with the fundamentalist school.

8. I also learned about the horrifying limits of multicultural toleration. The seminar discussion one day centered on the lingering African practice of female circumcision. It is a barbaric custom, and I expected the most vocal feminist in our seminar to be enraged by the discussion. Instead, she refused to condemn the practice, arguing that we must respect other cultures, even though we might have some reservations about their practices. A short while later, however, she admitted that she despised “rednecks” and expressed her loathing for Pat Robertson, who contributed to the oppression of women. Unfathomable as it seemed, this multicultural apologist refused to make a judgment of the most brutal third world practices, involving the ritual mutilation of young women, but didn’t hesitate to savage Robertson’s Christian views.

9. Rushdoony, 129. I have been frustrated in the past by the lack of availability of Witherspoon’s materials, even in major research libraries. Lloyd Sprinkle is reprinting Witherspoon’s *Works*, and they are available from various online sources.

10. Henry Steele Commager, *Documents of American History*.

11. “The Paris Peace Treaty of 1783” <http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/paris.shtml> (accessed January 26, 2007).

12. M. Stanton Evans, *The Theme Is Freedom: Religion, Politics and the American Tradition* (Washington: Regnery Gateway, 1994), 118, 323. Evans lists excellent sources for further study, and he specifically notes his indebtedness to Rushdoony (pp. 346–347). Evans’ conclusion: “Recovery of our religious faith and its teachings must be our first and main concern. Without it, nothing much by way of practical improvement can be accomplished. With it, all the

rest might readily be added.”

13. Roger Schultz, “A Christian America: Earl Warren and Our Christian Roots” *Chalcedon Report* 451 (April 2003), 21–22.

14. “Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretative Fiction,” *Journal of American History*, 69 (1982–1983), 302–325. My Ph.D. qualifying exam in colonial history dealt exclusively with the Butler article. (I think my professor wanted to see if I had read it, and I am glad I had.) In 1992, at a joint meeting of the American Historical Association and the American Society of Church History, Butler spoke to a packed auditorium on the topic of “Born Again History.” Butler’s thesis was clear—the significance of religion in American history has been overrated. Historians have exaggerated the influence of evangelicalism, he insisted, creating a “born again” history of America. The chief culprits were evangelical historians, such as Mark Noll, George Marsden, and Nathan Hatch, who forged a “neoconservative, consensus view of American religion.” Evangelicals, then, had been conspiring to create a Christian version of the past and had distorted history.

15. Mark Noll, Nathan Hatch, George Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983), 17.

16. There is a special appendix on the historical methodology of the *unChristian America* historians in Roger Schultz, “Covenanting in America: The Political Theology of John Witherspoon” *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 12:1 (1988), 260–268.

17. *Ibid.*, 90.

18. Read Witherspoon’s “Dominion of Providence”—especially his evangelistic application. It is available online as sermon 17 in Ellis Sandoz’s *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era* [http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/LF-Books/Sandoz0385/0018\\_Bk.html#hd\\_lf018.1.head.064](http://oll.libertyfund.org/Texts/LF-Books/Sandoz0385/0018_Bk.html#hd_lf018.1.head.064).

19. “Through a Glass, Darkly: How the Christian right is reimagining U.S. history,” *Harper’s Magazine* <http://www.harper.org/ThroughAGlassDarkly-12838838.html>. The article is filled with errors. Francis

*Continued on page 31*

# The Dollar's Decline and American Prosperity

Timothy D. Terrell



Americans traveling overseas or buying imported goods are finding that bargains are not as plentiful as they once were. It takes approximately \$1.30 to buy a euro today; five years ago a euro could be had for about 88¢. Such a decline in the dollar, along with a growing current account deficit (a current account deficit means that Americans are borrowing more from foreigners than foreigners are borrowing from Americans), has many people worried that the United States is inflating and spending itself into oblivion.

As with many popular notions about the economy, there is a mixture here of truth and misconception. The dollar has lost its value against other currencies, and we do have a current account deficit. But how much of this is bad news? A bit of an investigation into exchange rates and trade should clear away some of the haze.

## Value and the Dollar

Why does the dollar have value? Since the last vestiges of the gold standard were eliminated in the early 1970s, the dollar holder cannot claim that the dollar is valuable because of its redeemability in gold. The dollar is usually made up of ones and zeros in bank computers, and at most it is just an unusually strong and decoratively engraved piece of paper. The “legal tender” statement on the dollar does not exert enough force to guarantee widespread acceptability—after all, people can still barter or use other currencies if they wish. In the United States, the dollar is

useful for paying taxes, so the fact that dollars serve as “get out of jail free” cards around tax time is of some value. But there is more to the value of the dollar than that.

The dollar is valued because it is customarily accepted in exchange for goods and services. That customary attachment to the dollar has roots in the fact that it was once a substitute for gold, and gold itself was valued partly because it served the same purpose in monetary exchange. If we could go far enough back, we might see how the wide demand for gold as an ornamental metal made it unusually useful in exchange. At some point, gold changed from an ordinary commodity to a form of money—when its demand began to come from its wide acceptability in addition to whatever use it might have served.

The dollar becomes more valuable when more people around the world want to use it as money. To put this another way, the market value of dollars depends largely on how many other people are using dollars, just as the value of a fax machine depends largely on how many other people use fax machines.

For a long time, the U.S. economy has been a relatively large share of the world economy, and this makes it desirable to have dollars so that people can deal with the U.S. Not only do foreigners want to buy American goods and services, but also dollar-denominated assets (like U.S. corporate bonds and Treasury bonds). The stability of the dollar has contributed to this demand.

Compared to many other countries, the risk of inflation in the United States has been lower. When a foreign inves-

tor buys an American corporate bond paying 8 percent every year, he does not have to worry as much that inflation will sharply devalue the dollars being paid as interest and at maturity. There is of course some inflation in the United States, and it may get worse. However, foreigners are willing—to some extent—to take a hit on inflation so that they can have the dollars necessary to do business with people in the United States. The U.S. economy is friendlier toward business than much of the rest of the world, so that investments in the United States can be expected to perform relatively well.

## Exporting Deficits

The widespread desirability of trade with and investment in the U.S. allows the U.S. government to export more of its debt than would be possible otherwise. Not only do American corporations find it easier to sell dollar-denominated bonds overseas, but the U.S. government does as well. This means that the costs of America's oversized government are harder for Americans to see. But the costs are still there.

Any government has three ways to raise money—taxes, borrowing, and inflation. The truth is that all three are taxation of one form or another. Borrowing is merely a postponement of the taxation, with the assurance that when the taxes are collected to repay the debt, they will be higher because of the interest paid to bond holders.

Inflation is a tax on dollar holders. Here is how the tax works. Imagine that there are four people in the economy, A, B, C, and D. Each has \$250, so that the total money supply is \$1000. Prices

of goods and services in this economy correspond to this money supply. Now imagine that government enters the picture and creates a central bank. The government borrows \$250 by issuing bonds, which are then sold to the central bank. The central bank buys the bonds by issuing \$250 of newly created money, which is used by the government to pay for its purchases. Now the money supply is \$1250, a 25 percent increase. Prices rise by about 25 percent. Whereas A, B, C, and D once each had 25 percent of the purchasing power in the economy, they now have only 20 percent each. They have the same number of dollars in their pockets but face higher prices. Twenty percent of their wealth has essentially been transferred to the government. No tax agent withheld taxes from a paycheck, or demanded payment by April 15. But the tax is there nonetheless.

Inflation is a particularly pernicious form of taxation because it is more easily hidden, or at least passed off as the responsibility of some other entity besides the government. When the Nixon and Ford administrations saw rising inflation in the United States, they blamed businesses and OPEC rather than the Federal Reserve. Price controls were their misguided response. Inflation also distorts the entire economy, creating the illusion that borrowing is cheap. Businesses respond to the lower interest rates by borrowing more to fund investment projects. When the central bank reduces its rate of money creation (as it eventually must if it wants to avoid hyperinflation), interest rates rise, and the once-sensible investment projects become unsustainable. Layoffs, bankruptcies, and the other earmarks of a recession are the typical consequence.

Finally, inflation is not subject to the usual legal constraints on taxation, and therefore is subject to even more

abuses than other forms of taxation. While Congress has to go through a legislative process to raise taxes, the Federal Reserve can raise the “inflation tax” without such barriers. It is not clear that giving Congress influence over the Fed is the solution. In fact, international comparisons suggest that legislative influence over central banks only makes inflation worse. The legislators who spend money would love nothing more than to be able to pay for their excesses with a hidden tax.

### The Costs of Borrowing

For years, American legislators have been able to sell substantial amounts of government debts to foreigners, largely in Asia.<sup>1</sup> While this may make borrowing relatively attractive compared to inflation or current taxes, this does not mean that Americans have escaped the consequences of a big-spending government. When the government sells a bond, it is competing with private companies that also want to sell bonds to the same investors. By soaking up some of the available investment dollars, the government makes it harder for the private sector to borrow. Businesses have to offer higher interest rates to attract buyers for their bonds. Economists call this the *crowding out* of private investment, and it happens whether the buyers are domestic citizens or foreigners. Those Asian buyers of Treasury securities might otherwise have bought GE or IBM bonds.

A large part of the desirability of American investments has to do with the friendly environment for business in the United States. For many decades, the United States has been one of the freest economies in the world, and that has meant a high demand for American corporate bonds, American stocks, and other financial assets here. But the world is catching up. Large and small economies around the world have liberalized

their economies, allowing markets to do their work. China, India, and the formerly communist countries in Eastern Europe are notable examples. These economies are not as free as the United States yet, but around the world, regulatory barriers to business are loosening. This increased freedom is certainly not a bad thing, but it does mean that unless the United States reduces its restrictions on business at a similar rate, the United States will have less of an advantage in the business environment. Globally, U.S. investment has more competition, and the U.S. dollar is losing its attractiveness relative to some other currencies, particularly the euro.

To get foreigners to buy a dollar-denominated asset like a Treasury bond, the U.S. government may have to start offering higher interest rates. Alternatively, the Federal Reserve could make the dollar more appealing by reducing the rate at which inflation eats away at its value. This is what Fed chairman Paul Volcker did in the early 1980s, and it worked.

Either way, there are problems in store. If the government offers higher interest rates, this will mean that the government can either tax more to pay the interest, or reduce its spending. If the Federal Reserve reduces its rate of dollar creation, the higher interest rates might trigger a recession. Depending on the magnitude of the interest rate increase, the recession might be quite significant.

### Competitiveness and Freedom

A better way to maintain the desirability of trade with the U.S., and therefore maintain the value of dollars, would be to bring greater economic freedom to the U.S. economy.

But we find tremendous resistance to economic freedom. Economic freedom means American manufacturers would have to do without tariffs and

other barriers to trade that protect them from foreign competition. Farmers would have to do without subsidies. College students and their parents would have to do without their federally subsidized student loans. Doctors would have to do without the restrictions on medical schools that limit the number of new physicians and thereby limit the number of their competitors. Academicians and scientists would have to seek funding or employment from the private sector instead of depending on government grants. Professional sports teams and their promoters would have to give up their subsidized arenas and stadiums.

With virtually everyone a beneficiary of some form of government intervention, even the slightest move toward freedom generates an outcry from some special interest that stands to lose. Economic freedom generates enormously improved well-being—the sticking point is that we all have to get our hands out of each other's pockets. However, no one wants to remove his hand from the pockets of others if they still have their hands in his. What is needed is an overhaul of American attitudes toward freedom, and the will to reduce the intrusion of government wherever it may be found. Unfortunately, it is often crisis that brings about these sweeping changes.

### **Competing Currencies**

Without comprehensive reform, the U.S. economy may lose its key role in the world's economy, followed by a further decline in the dollar. The dollar's slide may accelerate if there is a sudden change in confidence in the dollar's continued acceptability.

A loss of confidence may occur if key markets in which dollars are the dominant medium of exchange switch to euros. Since a 1975 agreement with OPEC, the foreign oil market has been

denominated in dollars, which means that countries that want to buy oil need to hold dollars, or at least dollar-denominated assets. This may change if the Euro zone has its way. William Engdahl suggests that a partial motivation for the Iraq war may be so that the United States can force the oil market there (and thus elsewhere) to continue to trade in dollars.<sup>2</sup> In November 2000, at the inducement of the French, Saddam Hussein began to sell Iraq's oil in euros. The switch set a precedent for similar action from others, and could have turned into a serious problem for the value of the dollar.

If major world markets and central banks begin using euros rather than dollars, the lower demand for the dollar will show up as a lower price of the dollar in currency markets. This "price" is just the exchange rate between dollars and another currency. A lower price of dollars means Americans will find that it takes more dollars to buy foreign goods and services. People who buy foreign goods (equivalent to "selling" dollars) will be less well off, and people who sell goods to foreigners ("buying" dollars) will be better off.

In general, a lower demand for the dollar will reduce the value of dollar-denominated assets, hurting those who hold those assets or depend on selling them to others. But not all the news is bad. The economic success of the United States has not resulted from the widespread acceptance of the dollar. As I have tried to show, the situation is quite the reverse. The dollar is widely accepted because the United States is a large, prosperous economy with which many countries wish to trade.

There is then no reason why the U.S. could not grow very rapidly even if the dollar loses its reserve currency status around the world. A recession might occur initially, if the marketability

of dollar-denominated assets takes a hit. But we need not worry that the United States will be forever consigned to the economic backwaters of the world if the dollar loses its international standing. There are many countries that have expanded rapidly even without a widely demanded currency, such as postwar Japan, South Korea, and, more recently, China. There are other countries that have maintained at least respectable growth rates, such as many European nations, including some outside the Euro zone. Economic success depends less upon the acceptability of the government's currency than upon how much the government has intervened in the market.

### **The Current Account Deficit**

At the beginning of this essay, I mentioned the worries over the U.S. current account deficit. It is sometimes the case that a falling dollar is accompanied by a reduced trade deficit, or a trade surplus. This is because a falling dollar makes it cheaper for foreigners to buy American goods and more expensive for Americans to buy foreign goods. However, we have seen trade deficits in the United States that are quite high. This has contributed to the U.S. current account deficit, since the trade balance is the most important part of the current account.

Most of the worries over the trade deficit are misplaced. When Americans buy goods from foreigners, Americans provide them with dollars. Those dollars may be used in trade among other nations (e.g., in the market for oil), but if the foreign stocks of dollars are not to rise forever, they eventually must be brought back to the United States.

The trade deficit indicates that foreigners are not using their excess dollars to buy goods—otherwise there would be no deficit. So where are the dollars going? The only remaining possibility is

that foreigners are using their dollars to buy American assets. That means stock in American corporations, bonds, real estate, and other assets. The availability of this capital means that the American economy can grow more rapidly.

In short, foreigners fund American businesses and locate their factories on American real estate, in exchange for which Americans get cars, electronics, clothing, and steel. Since American workers can use that foreign-provided capital, Americans benefit from higher rates of productivity—and higher incomes. Without trade deficits, the beneficial flow of foreign capital into the United States would stop.

The evidence supports the idea that trade deficits (and, it follows, current account deficits) are often good for growth. A Cato Institute study by Daniel Griswold<sup>3</sup> suggests that when trade deficits increase, growth increases as well.

But a qualification is in order. Current account deficits mean that American firms are borrowing more from foreigners than foreigners are borrowing from Americans. This is a good thing if the borrowed funds are used to make productive investments, but a bad thing if the borrowed funds are used only to expand immediate consumption or unproductive investments.<sup>4</sup> Just as there is a substantial difference between borrowing money to start a business and borrowing money to gamble in Las Vegas, the current account deficit can be a marker of a society on the rise or a society in deep trouble.

There is some reason to be concerned. Much of the American borrowing is being done by the U.S. government, which has racked up huge budget deficits in recent years. Part of the current account deficit, then, is being paid for with Treasury borrowing. Americans will eventually have to be taxed to pay

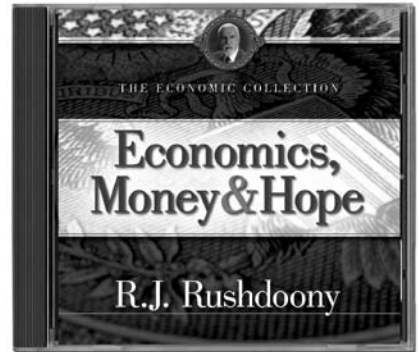
for that borrowing, especially if a dollar decline raises interest rates and thereby makes it harder to “refinance” the government’s debt in the future. Yet the fact that foreigners continue to lend to Americans indicates that on the whole, Americans are probably using their borrowed funds wisely.

The key to maintaining economic prosperity in the United States is to appreciate Biblical limits on the power of government. Christians would do well to remember that there is blessing that follows keeping God’s commandments—including those that pertain to the civil magistrate. When individuals, families, and churches turn over inordinate amounts of power to the civil authorities, they are practicing a form of idolatry. This civil idol cannot save America or provide unlimited prosperity. To the extent that the dollar decline and the current account deficit are problems at all, they are problems created by an idolized government that has lost its boundaries. ■

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1. China is the second-largest holder of U.S. government debt. On this and the U.S.-China exchange rate controversy, see Daniel Ikenson, “Currency Controversy: Surplus of Politics, Deficit of Leadership,” Cato Institute *Free Trade Bulletin* No. 21, May 31, 2006.
2. F. William Engdahl, “A New American Century? Iraq and the Hidden Euro-Dollar Wars,” *Current Concerns*, no. 4 (2003).
3. Daniel Griswold, “Forget Trade Deficits: Go for Growth,” Cato Institute *Commentary*, February 25, 2005.
4. See Stefan Karlsson, “What Are We to Make of the Trade Deficit?” Ludwig von Mises Institute *Daily Article*, March 21, 2005.

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# The Emperor's Continued Nudity: Jeff Sharlet's Critique of Christian Historiography Examined

Martin G. Selbrede



In some respects, Jeff Sharlet's recent essay in *Harper's Magazine*, "Through a Glass, Darkly: How the Christian right is reimagining U.S. history,"<sup>1</sup> seems to play to his base. Many sections read like exposés received from an embedded journalist, one providing disturbing information from inside the belly of the beast, viz., fundamentalist Christianity. His characterization of fundamentalists can't be missed since he frames the article by way of a repeated theme:

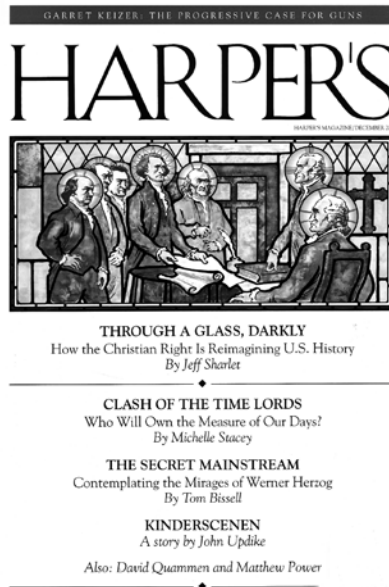
Who would worship such a god? His followers must be dupes, or saps, or fools, their faith illiterate, insane, or misinformed, their strength fleeting, hollow, an aberration. A burp in American history. An unpleasant odor that will pass.<sup>2</sup>

We can't conceive of the possibility that the dupes, the saps, the fools—the believers—have been with us from the very beginning.<sup>3</sup>

The dupes, the saps, and the fools—the believers—prefer their re-enchanted past, alive to the dark magic with which all histories are constructed.<sup>4</sup>

One suspects that Sharlet would hesitate to apply the above statements to Islam. Disrespect evidently has its limits.

While Sharlet, a savvy observer who knows how to write colorfully sharp prose, depicts some of his subjects as fools,<sup>5</sup> it is evident that there's some-



thing more to this article than what's on the surface. Sharlet's *other* theme is that fundamentalism needs to be taken seriously and that it's not going away. In fact, he is quite clear that efforts to "explain away" and dismiss fundamentalism have collapsed: "The old theories have failed."<sup>6</sup> A careful, dispassionate reading of his article (letting perceived insults slide off our back) leads us back to a conclusion Chip Berlet voiced to his fellow secularists regarding their contempt of Christian activism: "Your sneering at them is part of why we're losing."<sup>7</sup>

The problem Sharlet faces is that he's scrambling for alternatives to sneering. He desires the ammunition to make a substantive response to stem the tide of Christian fundamentalism in general

and its incursion into the field of historiography in particular. Sharlet wants to keep the secularists' hand on the tiller of history and its interpretation. He was miffed to report that he couldn't grab the Orwell hammer to bludgeon the fundamentalists with it: the fundamentalists had gotten to the hammer first.<sup>8</sup> George Orwell was being wielded against the secularists by the Christians. Worse, Sharlet knows the massive expansion of the modern state makes his secularist vision the more likely culprit to be caught in Orwell's crosshairs.

The article's title is the key: "Through a Glass, Darkly." Sharlet seems to think that American history is being hijacked by wrong-headed revisionists and that a revisionist history is a dangerously heady brew, potent enough to galvanize people against secularism. Such revisionism (termed "a re-imagining" in the title) dispels the light in order to deepen an advancing darkness of ignorance. In actual fact, though, Sharlet acknowledges that the fundamental question is, *Who is really guilty of revisionism?* He implicitly acknowledges that there is *some* basis for the "revisionist" claims. While the Christian and Biblical heritage in our history has been successfully leached out of the public schools over the last century, there was some tacit acknowledgment that many disparate threads pointed away from the established secularist hypotheses. But threads do not a cloth make. The only unification of history



now taught (essentially by default) is the secular unified vision of it.

What Christianity did was reintroduce a unifying element: the same unifying element that shaped America for the century and a half beginning in 1620. This reunion is disturbing to Sharlet because he recognizes that two contending unified visions of American history are now on the field. While he lamely excuses his own secularist vision for looking comparatively dull (due to “the perfunctory processes of secular democracy”<sup>9</sup>), his actual problem is very different. It’s not that he’s backing a serious heavyweight contender in the far corner of the ring, one plagued merely by an unexciting demeanor; rather, his contender in this heavyweight fight is Pee Wee Herman Lite in an iron lung.

The unplugging of the iron lung keeping Pee Wee (the secularist’s unifying vision of history) from officially flatlining was recently disclosed by Richard A. Shweder (Professor of Human Development, University of Chicago).<sup>10</sup> Shweder undertook to answer the question, Why so many barbed attacks (by book or by crook) against religion lately? “The most obvious answer is that the armies of disbelief have been provoked.” But Shweder probes below that deceiving surface:

[T]he popularity of the current counterattack on religion cloaks a renewed and intense anxiety within secular society that it is not the story of religion but rather the story of the Enlightenment that may be more illusory than real.

The Enlightenment story has its own version of Genesis, and the themes are well known: The world woke up from the slumber of the “dark ages,” finally got in touch with the truth and became good about 300 years ago ...

As people opened their eyes, religion ... gave way to science. Parochial and tribal allegiances gave way to ecumenism, cosmopolitanism and individual-

ism. Top-down command systems gave way to the separation of church from state, of politics from science. The story provides a blueprint for how to remake and better the world in the image and interests of secular elites.

Unfortunately, as a theory of history, that story has had a predictive utility of approximately zero.

Shweder’s subsequent explanation makes clear that we’re witnessing the death paroxysms of the Enlightenment story of history: the unplugging of Pee Wee Herman Lite’s iron lung. Sharlet recognizes he can’t fight something with nothing. I suspect he’s embarrassed that he’s bemoaning nebbishes blowing shofars<sup>11</sup> or children brandishing 51-inch war blades<sup>12</sup> because these are diversions from the primary problem he faces. To the extent his examples are relevant (most aren’t), they represent incidental symptoms of the core issues driving Christianity forward.

But does Sharlet’s article cloak “a renewed and intense anxiety within secular society?” It seems Sharlet has pulled the cloak back somewhat, has opened the kimono, to implicitly acknowledge the crisis. Shouting “Demagoguery!” in a crowded theater won’t suffice if the opponent has the academic and scholarly goods to put across a compelling philosophy of history. R. J. Rushdoony, for one, has done precisely that.<sup>13</sup> In his book *The Biblical Philosophy of History*, history is no longer denuded of meaning and purpose but is seen in transcendent terms, within a perspective in which people live for something bigger than themselves. One cannot truly grasp the significance of Rushdoony’s other books on history without laying the foundation here. *This* volume contains the 800-pound gorilla that was lined up to face Pee Wee Herman Lite in the ring.

Sharlet did listen to the entire eighteen-lecture cassette series that Dr. Rushdoony recorded on American His-

tory. Curiously, Sharlet uses more ink describing his bizarre encounter with a police van on the Brooklyn waterfront while listening to the tapes than actually interacting with their content.<sup>14</sup> It’s become as true for Rushdoony as it was for B. B. Warfield: the safest way to deal with such a powerful protagonist is to ignore him, or hurl imprecations drive-by style.

But the problem Sharlet faces is a compound one. Not only is his preferred theory of history coming up short, *modern educators are miserably incompetent to propagate it*. This truth is being aired in some very uncomfortable places (at least from Sharlet’s vantage point): not in stuffy scholarly tomes or journals nobody reads, but in places where plain folk can get their hands on it. For example, there’s nothing more populist in bearing than old-time gospel music, and Bill and Gloria Gaither are about as folksy and friendly as gospel musicians come. But a recent edition of the Gaither house publication *Homecoming* features an article calculated to give Sharlet a coronary. Former U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett sat down for an interview with Gloria Gaither, as recorded in an article entitled “Raising A Ruckus.”<sup>15</sup> The problem Dr. Bennett outlines, regarding American education, is letter simple:

Our worst subject is history. People have heard *ad nauseum* the reports and the scores of our reading and math. Our kids actually do better in reading and math than they do in history, American history particularly. Many kids from other countries know American history better than we do. That’s a stunning fact.

And second—if we do not teach it to them, they will not pick it up, unless they watch the History Channel, which a lot of kids don’t do. It’s the obligation of one generation to pass on to the next things of value. There’s hardly anything

of greater value than passing on the legacy of this country. We're not doing it. Our schools are teaching social studies, which is not history. When historical subjects are taught, they are often taught either: A) in a very tendentious, politically correct way, or B) in a very boring way, or C) both of the above.

The very vehicle (public education) intended to propagate the secularist outlook is an international disgrace. But what children *do* imbibe history and grasp it? Those in conservative Christian schools and homeschools.

Frederick Clarkson, lecturing at the same New York secularist seminar as Chip Berlet in October 2005, made some pertinent observations that corroborate this difference. Clarkson held that Christian Reconstructionists “know where they stand in history” and the role they’ll be playing in it. Clarkson contrasted this with the rest of society, which “is pretty much disconnected from” history. The value and power of Rushdoony’s unflagging application of the Bible to *everything* has never stood more clearly revealed.

Elsewhere, Rushdoony notes that the *Humanistic Education Sourcebook*, an anthology “used in training teachers,” contains an essay “entitled ‘Humanism: Capstone of an Educated Person.’ This title is revealing. For our statist educators, a truly educated person is a humanist.”<sup>16</sup> This academic reality is confirmed by the secular scholar Karl D. Uitti, thus:

What is the purpose of humanistic scholarship? What, in fact, does the humanist scholar do? The job of the humanist scholar is to organize our huge inheritance of culture ... to clear away the obstacles to our understanding of the past, to make our whole cultural heritage ... accessible to us.<sup>17</sup>

The problem, as Bennett and Clarkson have noted, is that this entire program *has failed*. The Enlightenment heritage

that secularism sought to perpetuate has *not* been made accessible. And from all accounts, the program is not even worth saving because the secular view of history must now compete with the Christian view of history. In 1965, prior to Rushdoony’s influence on the infancy of the homeschool and Christian school movements, there may have been an abstract, hypothetical chance for secularism to concoct some attractive theory of history in the absence of serious competition, but the reality is that we’ve moved from an allegedly post-Christian era to the early dawning of a new post-humanist era.

The flaw in history education is a simple one: “In the long run humans do not bear up well without meaning.”<sup>18</sup> Sharlet recognizes that the Christian worldview is suffused with meaning. He may not agree with that meaning, but that’s irrelevant to the impact that the possession of meaning, transcendent meaning and purpose, has on human beings. I believe Sharlet barks up the wrong tree when he classifies all the appeal under the exclamation, “Intensity!”<sup>19</sup> Intensity is merely *how* something is done (consumed with zeal versus phoning it in). The appeal is in the *content*. A Biblical worldview delivers history from meaninglessness. It also delivers us out of the cold hands of what most informed Christians (including myself) would regard as an expurgated version of history, a tale denatured by educational necessity given the exigencies of public policy. Ironically, Sharlet grasps the sense of the situation well (although he does so with a measure of cynical sarcasm—he doesn’t buy any of it, but acknowledges this approach’s supposedly delusional power and appeal):

The Christian nation of which the movement dreams, a government of those chosen by God but democratically elected by a people who freely accept His will as their own, is a far country.

The nation they seek does not, at the moment, exist; perhaps it could in the future. More important to fundamentalism is the belief that it did exist in the American past, not in the history we learn in public school and from PBS and in newsmagazine cover stories on the Founders but in another story, one more biblical, one more mythic and more true. Secularism hides this story, killed the Christian nation, and tried to dispose of the body. Fundamentalism wants to resurrect it, and doing so requires revision: fundamentalists, looking backward, see a different history, remade in the image of the seductive but strict logic of a prime mover that sets things in motion.<sup>20</sup>

The movement now sees that to reclaim America for God, it must first reclaim that tradition for Him, and so it is producing a flood of educational texts with which to wash away the stain of secular history.<sup>21</sup>

Now, “revision” is a dirty word if you’re defending the status quo historiographies and hagiographies. All “revision” is spurious to the stalwart old guard. To be called a “revisionist” is a slur one tier below “extremist” in today’s environment. The problem is simply this: if the Christians are correct about God and history, then God Himself is a revisionist, and His story cannot ultimately be buried, let alone countered. In fact, this is precisely the problem secularists like Sharlet face: their opposition is buried under an embarrassment of riches in terms of original source material and documentation. The secularists maintain a gaunt facade of studied neglect, but they fail to discern that *if the Christian history proponents didn’t have a seemingly infinite storehouse of evidence for their view*, but only shallow and easily exhausted resources that paled next to the evidence for the Enlightenment/secular version of history, *the Christian history movement would have long ago died*.

Perhaps the most significant Christian historian of early American history was Verna M. Hall (a fellow researcher of Rushdoony's at the Volker Fund). Her mission, in her own words, was to equip Christian schools to train up individuals who could read and understand the Federalist Papers. I had the privilege and honor of working with Miss Hall in the early 1980s (primarily on production of the 1983 volume *The Bible and the Constitution*)<sup>22</sup> and was able to tour her foundation's massive library in San Francisco several times to survey its surprising contents while asking questions of the scholars working there. A semitrailer truck was ultimately needed to move the 300 boxes of resource material from San Francisco to Virginia after her death. Unpublished volumes of hers included a *four-volume* historical study of Samuel Adams, almost completely typeset, the proofs filling seven large boxes. Sharlet has no idea that he's been spared a good part of the "flood of educational texts" that he fears. But the flood is only made possible *because the historic source material to compose that flood actually exists!*

Sharlet knows better than to link Chalcedon and Rushdoony to disparate groups with distinctly different theological agendas. Lumping all such movements together under "fundamentalism" or "maximalism" has become a growth industry, and many critics of Christian activism are notorious for making irresponsible representations. Sharlet, who juxtaposes Rushdoony with such diverse strands, does not sufficiently distinguish between his chosen targets. I suppose it's hard to aim straight when you're running away from your targets.

However, Sharlet's sloppiness<sup>23</sup> misses a key point concerning Rushdoony's position regarding history. Rushdoony never saw history as normative:

During the many years of my life, I have more than a few times been disappointed in men whose knowledge at first glance made them notable. Their problem was a past-bound vision. Their focus was on the early church, or the medieval church, or the Reformation church, and so on and on. If their interest was political they often looked backward to a particular era in history.

Now such interests can be good, but too often such people idealize the past and want a return to something no longer tenable. The modernist, on the other hand, wants a continual revision of the content of the Faith in terms of the spirit of the age. Those of us who hold that it is God's enscripturated word that is alone authoritative must recognize that it must transform and govern our todays and tomorrows.<sup>24</sup>

What does this mean? It means that Jeff Sharlet has failed to recognize that Rushdoony is future-oriented and is *not* seduced by idealistic notions of an alleged "romance of American fundamentalism" as Sharlet describes it (see endnote 12). Even if Sharlet's side painstakingly succeeded in recovering the past for the Enlightenment, Rushdoony's *sola scriptura* message would slice through that like a hot knife through warm butter: an omnipotent God shapes the future on His terms, being one who isn't limited by what transpired before.

In other words, Sharlet laments that his secular history message (1) isn't competitive, (2) is so far from attractive it's positively stultifying compared to Christian historiography, (3) is a complete bust in terms of predictive utility, (4) inspires nobody to live for something greater than themselves, and (5) has led to attempts to remediate one through four that are manifestly futile since Christian Reconstructionists are latched onto the future. How completely pervasive this last point becomes is clarified by Rushdoony:

Because time is predestined, and because its beginning and end are already established, time does not develop in evolutionary fashion from past to present to future. Instead, it unfolds from future to present to past. In Wood's words, "The future is the source, it is the reservoir of time which some day will be present, and then past." Better stated, eternity is the source; time is predestined, and therefore it moves from the future to the present to the past. "The future is logically first, but not chronologically."<sup>25</sup>

Rushdoony acknowledges that "for evolutionary time, the past is determinative." But Biblically considered, God, not the past, is determinative of the future. Abraham was not determined by the fact that his father Terah was a pagan: *God* was the determiner of Abraham's future. If God determines Abraham's future, surely He can determine ours.

God's willingness to use foolish things to confound the wise, to use weak things to confound the strong, to subvert humanistic expectations about credentials and knowing one's place, seems to nettle Sharlet. Describing a graphical mockup of George Washington kneeling in prayer "with an anonymous soldier in fatigues—just another everyday hero" leads Sharlet to the putative punch line this image allegedly puts across: "That could be you, the key-man theory of fundamentalist history proposes."<sup>26</sup> It's apparently okay to tell kids they could grow up to be president. It's apparently not okay to tell them that if they grow up to be something other than president, it can be just as important to God's purposes for history.

There is a wry irony here: modern society is manipulated against the rich by inculcating envy against them: what makes them think they're better than everybody else? Let's equalize everything: soak the rich, the financial elite, and cut

them down to size. But when cultural elitists are confronted with egalitarianism such as is unleashed among Christians who take the priesthood of all believers seriously, it's suddenly a bad, disorderly idea. But Jeremiah 33:22 makes the promise firm: "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me." That's a lot of priests and kings, as one would expect from Revelation 1:5-6's assertion that this is precisely how God constitutes His Kingdom on earth.

So, what's the worst that Sharlet and the secularists can hypothetically do? If they could cut godly men and women off from their Christian past, they'll still fail to cut us off from the future that God has created. It's beyond the range of their fiat. We are blessed that they're *unable* to cut us off from our past. "[L]ook unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you" (Isa. 51:1-2). God would not bid us to do the impossible. I get the impression that when scholars like Verna Hall "look unto the rock whence [we] are hewn," it gives the secularists shudders. Their worst nightmare isn't that her scholarship is atrocious: it's that her scholarship is too accurate.

Sharlet's final comment, a lament on the consequences of any significant success of the Christian history program, is a plaintive one:

Fundamentalism is writing us out of history.<sup>27</sup>

If someone appears to be writing Sharlet out of history, of cutting him off from history, Sharlet should closely examine the knife that's doing the cutting. He may be surprised to find that the only fingerprints on that knife are his own. ■

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1. Jeff Sharlet, "Through a Glass, Darkly: How the Christian right is reimagining U.S. history," *Harper's Magazine*, December 2006, 33-43.
2. *Ibid.*, 33.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, 43.
5. Sharlet can't resist describing William J. Federer's red tie as being "marred by a stain" (p. 34), or mentioning Federer's inadvertent substitution of "Orson Welles" for "Orwell" (p. 35).
6. Sharlet, 34.
7. Chip Berlet was a featured lecturer at a seminar held at the CUNY Graduate Center October 21-22, 2005, entitled "Understanding Dominionism, Political Power, and the Aims of the Theocratic Right." He directed this comment at his own secularist camp.
8. There's some disingenuousness in Sharlet's attempt to raise the name of Orwell because he proposes this action in direct response to a book published by Chalcedon (James B. Nickel's *Mathematics: Is God Silent?*) where the topic is fundamental ontology, not historiography or power politics. Orwell's categories of falsified speech and doctored definitions were crafted to perpetuate tyranny and amass greater control over man. Nickel was affirming the ultimacy of God the Creator over the things He created, while Sharlet assumes mathematical truth is uncreated and more ultimate than God. Sharlet would pit man's definition against God's, man's being the superior one. The trouble is, Orwell directed all his firepower at human definitions. More charitably, Sharlet apparently refers to Orwell's notion that to control the future, one must control the past. Humanists having taken control of the past, they resent attempts to repatriate it. They repudiate the idea that Christians are restoring a history since rewritten and distorted to serve the secular party line. Sharlet

implicitly denies the existence of secular revisionism of U.S. history: hence each side's appeal to Orwell.

9. Sharlet, 33. Compared to secular democracy, the Christian vision, says Sharlet, "seems to some great portion of the population more compelling, more just, and more beautiful."

10. Richard A. Shweder, "Guess who's unwelcome at dinner? Nonbeliever elites may as well get comfortable with God in conversation," Outlook section of the *Houston Chronicle*, December 3, 2006, E1 & E5. Shweder, a Guggenheim Fellow and winner of the AAAS Socio-Psychological Prize, was president of the Society for Psychological Anthropology. Sharlet would need to grant that Shweder's credentials are impeccable, even on Sharlet's own principles. Shweder's piece first appeared in *The New York Times* on November 27, 2006, under the title "Atheists Agonistes." This title, with its intriguing literary allusion, was apparently adjusted by the *Houston Chronicle* to be intelligible to Texans. The entire article can be found on the Web at <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/citations/06/061127.shweder-nyt.html>.

11. Sharlet, 41. The "nebbish" is Lane Medcalf, one of many that Sharlet sees as being swept up in the (apparently delusional and likely destructive) notion that they have a God-given part to play in God's big picture. Medcalf is an interesting character influenced by some peculiar strains of fundamentalist thought, and one cannot blame Sharlet for choosing subjects that would gratify any writer searching for material. In doing so, though, Sharlet is *still* cloaking the weakness of his theory of history. In the Spielberg film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, a serious press conference on UFOs is derailed when a grizzled mountaineer stands up to proclaim that he saw Bigfoot once. Medcalf becomes a similar point of focus for Sharlet: a diversion. But Medcalf and the dawning of an embryonic awareness on his part aren't Sharlet's problem: a full-orbed, fleshed-out model of history that has documentary teeth is the 800-pound gorilla he needs to contend with.

12. Sharlet, 37, n. 2., Sharlet refers to the

Vision Forum Family Catalog, and decries the martial tone of the offerings between its covers. He sees the emphasis on purpose and courage (based on historical exemplars) as indicative of the “romance of American fundamentalism, the almost sexual tension of its contradictions: its reverence for both rebellion and authority, democracy and theocracy, blood and innocence.” Concerning the Braveheart-inspired 51-inch long war blade (which Sharlet humorously observes “is still a lot of knife for a kid”), its implications are far from positive. The marketing of such weapons to children promotes the teaching of “history at knife-point—a theology of arms.” Since Sharlet is coming up empty on a theory of history to successfully compete with the Christian’s rediscovery of his actual heritage, he trots out the old war horse Isaac Asimov alluded to: armies marching in the night. He appears more concerned that a Christian child might pick up the values of William Wallace than that a secular child might pick up values from Grand Theft Auto. Given Sharlet’s worldview, the former is immeasurably worse: the Grand Theft Auto kid is well on his way to becoming a subservient drone given his “enlightened” schooling.

13. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Biblical Philosophy of History* (Phillipsburg, NJ: 1979). Reprinted by Ross House Books, Vallecito, CA: 2000. This is a critical study that exhibits precisely how the secular vision of history is like unto the emperor who has no clothes.

14. Sharlet, 36. Sharlet can’t resist juxtaposing the presence of a target for terrorists (a Coast Guard chemical depot) with “the Christian jihadi lecture” he was listening to on headphones (Rushdoony’s lectures). He elsewhere (p. 41, n. 5) calls Rushdoony a bigot: a pointless vilification that apparently didn’t merit a position in the main text.

15. “Raising A Ruckus.” Gloria Gaither’s interview with Dr. William J. Bennett. *Homecoming*, Vol. 4, Issue 5 (September/October 2006), 25–28.

16. R. J. Rushdoony, “Education: Today’s Crisis and Dilemma” *Journal for Christian Reconstruction* 11.2 (1987), 69.

17. Karl D. Uitti, *Linguistics and Literary Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall,

1969), vii.

18. Robert Erwin, *The Great Language Panic and Other Essays in Cultural History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 75.

19. Sharlet, 34.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 36.

22. Apart from my working association with Verna M. Hall and Rosalie Slater, I played a significant part in the publication of the nearly 500-page volume *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School* by James B. Rose (Camarillo, CA: American Christian History Institute, 1987), even extracting the Scripture index for the volume. I can speak with considerable familiarity about this and related material (having played a part in the publication of the expanded edition of Marshall Foster’s *The American Covenant* and knowing firsthand the work of Ronald W. Kirk and Christopher R. Hoops). The historical scholarship of Miss Hall was peerless, and it was primarily grounded in original source material. Dr. Gary North’s position that Miss Hall used secondary sources from the nineteenth century is only half-true: if she found original material and later historic narratives that corroborated each other, she’d use the one that told the story better. But the groundwork in original sources was never absent. North’s view that Miss Hall’s research petered out around 1777 because the Constitution represented a secular revolution against the “Christian” Articles of Confederation is a faulty conclusion because her published output is the tip of the iceberg. More than half of Miss Hall’s research has never seen the light of day, the thousands of typeset pages (and yet more typewritten manuscript pages) still remaining in storage.

23. I regard the blatant misstatements and errors Sharlet makes concerning R. J. Rushdoony and Christian Reconstruction to be distractions that should be ignored. We should expect such misrepresentation to worsen when scholars and journalists far less qualified than Sharlet take up the humanist cause and write about Chalcedon’s work. If misguided Christian opposition to Chalcedon’s distinctives is marred by reliance on

faulty secondary sources, there’s little sense in expecting better of our secular opposition and our culture at large.

24. Andrew Sandlin, ed., *A Comprehensive Faith* (San Jose, CA: Friends of Chalcedon, 1996), 15, quoting Rushdoony’s article, “Unconstructive Religion,” first appearing in *Chalcedon Report*, no. 362, September 1995, 2. Another evidence that Christian Reconstruction doesn’t stand or fall with regard to recovering a Christian history of U.S. can be seen in the minority opinion of Dr. Gary North expressed in volumes like *Political Polytheism*. Dr. North’s iconoclastic adoption of the secularist thesis regarding U.S. history hardly impedes his future-oriented message. He has merely moved the locus of betrayal into the Constitutional Convention, thereby acquitting the secular historians. While I sharply disagree with Dr. North, his thesis is reported both for the sake of completeness, and to serve notice that Sharlet’s mission is beset with more difficulties than he may have imagined.

25. Rushdoony, *Biblical Philosophy of History*, 11.

26. Sharlet, 37.

27. Ibid., 43. This is the final conclusion Sharlet reached having spent multiple paragraphs discussing Sergeant York, Stonewall Jackson, and the alleged mythologies being cooked up by fundamentalists around these and other figures of history. Since no Anti-Rushdoony has risen up to counter the Christian worldview and close the Pandora’s Box that God so thoughtlessly opened, Sharlet ultimately closes his screed with a halfhearted counsel of despair.

# Rape or Sexual Abuse and the Victim's Sexual Purity

Derek Carlsen



One of the scourges of our day is the crime of rape or sexual abuse. Many live in fear of becoming the next victim. The horror and trauma of being sexually abused is known firsthand by an excessive number of people. Even worse, the shame and stigma that society associates with such crimes means that the victims suffer in almost solitary confinement. This ought not to be!

My desire in this article is to address the sense of guilt and moral pollution that often attaches to victims of rape or sexual abuse. I believe God's Word provides instruction so that these victims might be set free from their feelings of guilt and moral pollution (John 8:32). For the church to be able to minister to these victims in a godly way, believers need to have their thinking conformed to the mind of Christ. While what I say will appear obvious, the stigma that too often follows the rape victim shows that the church's understanding of this matter is in need of reformation. My position comes from my own wrestling with the Scriptures to find healing balm for those who have been sexually violated. There is a great need for it today.

## Thesis Stated

If a maiden—that is, a virgin—be raped, believers ought to look upon her and treat her as a virgin. Why? Because, according to Scripture, she is still sexually pure.<sup>1</sup> I believe this is what the Scriptures teach. It is then a natural and necessary consequence to apply this same reasoning to other forms of sexual abuse.

## Thesis Defended

Scripture teaches, “If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins” (Exod. 22:16–17 NKJV).

We see that when an unmarried couple engages in intercourse, both the man and the woman are guilty before God. According to Scripture, fornication, on the civil level, results in shame for the girl and her family and legal/financial ramifications for the man, who is fined. The fine is a way of making restitution for dishonoring the girl and her family and also helps to secure her future, which the seducer's actions have threatened. The girl's father has the responsibility to decide whether to allow his daughter to marry this man or not. The seducing man has no choice about marrying the girl at this stage—his responsibility was to have said no long before this. If the father says yes to the marriage, then the seducer has to marry the girl and is not allowed to divorce her all his days (Deut. 22:28–29).

If a virgin is seduced and her father refuses to give her in marriage to the man who seduced her, the seducer still has to pay a dowry. The dowry is the “bride-price of virgins” (i.e., the price of a virgin's dowry) and is to ensure that the girl's lack of sexual purity would be outweighed by the economic gain to be had. The dowry would make the girl, who was no longer a virgin, “attractive” to some future husband who would be

marrying a fairly rich wife, and these riches would benefit the whole family unit. Or, the dowry penalty would serve as security to help the girl survive should no man want to marry her due to her lack of sexual purity.

Deuteronomy 22:25–29 records two sexual cases next to each other—one dealing with rape and the other with seduction. Scripture does not regard rape lightly, but places it on a par with murder. Murder and rape are both capital crimes, worthy of the death penalty.<sup>2</sup> At the very least then we should expect rape and murder to receive the same penalties in our societies.

In the above passage we see that if a man rapes a woman, he is to be executed; but what is interesting is that no monetary payment is given to the raped woman, no restitution given to her. It makes sense in the case of murder that the murdered person gets no restitution—other than the murderer being executed. The victim doesn't need restitution since he is dead. In contrast, the raped person still has a life to live and yet shall receive no economic restitution in a society where sexual purity is held in high regard.

In the Bible, when the living are actually defrauded, the guilty party is forced to make restitution to them (Exod. 22:1–4). We even see that when a maiden is seduced, she has been defrauded and thus receives restitution to help her deal with the real-life ramifications of her loss. Despite the fact that a fornicating girl defiled herself, Scripture still made provision for her in her impure state—she received a dowry.

Here is the dilemma: if rape sexually defiles the victim, then why is the girl who is raped not compensated for her real-life loss? Why does she have no dowry to make her attractive to a future husband or to provide for her should no man want to marry her? If the raped girl and the fornicating girl are both tainted with sexual pollution, then why does the innocent rape victim end up worse off (in an economic sense), than the fornicating girl? The girl who commits fornication is “rewarded” while the rape victim is not.

My explanation for *no* dowry (restitution) being given to the rape victim is because she has not been polluted. She is still regarded by her family and the community as sexually pure—there is no difference between her and any other virgin. According to Scripture, the rape victim does not need an extra dowry to make her attractive to a possible husband. Let me try to explain why this is so.

## The Spiritual Nature of Sexual Purity

Sexual purity is spiritual not physical in nature. Sexual purity applies to both the married and the unmarried. When sexual activity is conformed to God’s Word, then it is pure, and those engaged in such activity remain sexually pure even though they are sexually active. On the other hand, impurity in the sexual realm involves the giving of oneself in a way that is outside of God’s ordained boundaries for sexual expression.

A virgin is someone who has not given herself sexually to another person. Virginity applies to a state of sexual purity prior to legitimate sexual activity. A person’s sexual purity is lost when he or she consents to sexual activity that is outside God’s defined boundaries.

When someone is seduced, that person consents to the seduction; but when someone is raped, no consent

is given. Because virginity is primarily spiritual rather than physical, when a girl is raped, although she has been violated physically, she has in no way been polluted spiritually. Thus the maiden who is raped cannot but continue to be sexually pure, for if she was a virgin prior to this act of violence against her, that act doesn’t change her state in God’s eyes. She remains sexually pure as far as God is concerned and therefore ought to be regarded as such by those who call upon the name of the Lord.

Sexual purity and virginity have to do with spiritual and moral integrity in the sexual realm. The way this purity is preserved is by not giving oneself sexually to another person until it is morally right to do so. When unmarried people give themselves sexually to each other, they violate their sexual purity and are no longer to be regarded as virgins—they are sexually polluted. On the other hand, when a man and a woman give themselves sexually to each other on their marriage day, they remain sexually pure because their actions are in accordance with God’s ordering. The term *virgin* then ceases to be applicable or relevant in their context, though their sexual purity continues, to the degree that their sexual expression remains within God’s defined boundaries.

To lose your sexual purity, you have to self-consciously give it up—it is not something that can be taken from you without your consent. A person’s sexual purity cannot be lost without that person having willingly embraced an illicit sexual union. This is something the church should proclaim loudly and clearly.

There is great comfort here too for those who have been sexually molested as children. In the case of children who are sexually molested, the “consent” aspect is not exactly the same as in the case of adults. The reason for this is be-

cause mature people can easily manipulate children due to their immaturity.

Some might look back upon their own experience of being sexually abused as a child and feel that they allowed it to happen or willingly participated in it. The reality is that, in most cases, the victims’ immaturity at the time of the abuse “overpowered” them. Due to their intellectual and emotional immaturity, they were unable to resist the advances, manipulation, or threats of the older person. A child’s natural respect for and trust or fear of adults as well as a natural desire to want to please adults, renders the child extremely vulnerable—vulnerable because children are unable to effectively resist a perverse adult.

In a real sense, the molested child’s situation is comparable to that of the adult who is physically overpowered and raped. This issue requires further explanation and development, but this is not the place to do it. All that I want to make clear is that there is an accountability difference between a child’s consent and an adult’s consent to sexual activity. I am convinced that sexual abuse of minors is comparable to the rape of adults, and thus the same Biblical perspective applies to both; namely, their sexual purity has not been violated.

## Spiritual Pollution Moves in Only One Direction: From Inside to Outside

Paul’s point to the Corinthians is that spiritual pollution leads to the pollution of the body. He says, “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her?” For “the two,” he says, “shall become one flesh” (1 Cor. 6:16 NKJV). The man who has sexual intercourse with a prostitute is as defiled as the prostitute, since both came from the same “spiritual cloth,” so to speak. From Paul’s words we learn that the pollution brought about by illicit sexual union is both spiritual and physical. But

this is when they both seek that perversion. When our hearts consent to sin, our whole being is polluted, resulting in both spiritual and physical pollution. The reverse, however, is not true: something done to us physically does not automatically taint us spiritually.

While Christ applies such ideas to the question of clean and unclean foods, His words are clearly applicable to the sexually abused victim. He says, “There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man ... Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him” (Mark 7:15, 18 NKJV; see vv. 15–23).

It is not possible to be polluted if your heart does not first turn toward the perversion (Prov. 4:23). For example, we are in the presence of evil spirits often (if not always); but until we turn our hearts toward them, we remain undefiled by their touching and enticing (Lev. 19:31, 20:6; Eph. 4:27, 6:11; James 4:7).

Likewise, Christ’s death in our place further supports this idea. Consider the great difference between the animal sacrifices in Leviticus and Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. The animals had to be without physical blemishes in order to qualify as suitable sacrifices for sin (Lev. 22:20–25, esp. v. 24; Deut. 17:1). The law said any imperfection, wound, etc., on the animal’s physical body rendered it defiled. These animals were a picture of Christ’s spiritual perfection, and the way they pictured this was by being physically perfect. When they did not correctly portray this (i.e., by being physically imperfect), they were disqualified from serving as suitable sacrifices.

Christ’s sacrifice was in stark contrast to the animal sacrifices, for when He was sacrificed, His body was almost unrecognizable due to its being so physi-

cally disfigured (Isa. 50:6, 52:14, 53:4–6; John 19:1). Despite being so physically broken, Christ maintained His moral and spiritual purity. His moral perfection is exactly what sinful people needed; thus Christ, despite the great physical abuse He endured, is the perfect sacrifice to make atonement for sinful people. No amount of mistreatment of Christ’s body could affect His spiritual integrity. All the humiliation and brutality against Christ’s physical body did not pollute Him in any way. The only way He could have been defiled was by His heart turning toward sin.

While there is a clinical, physical definition for “virginity,” this doesn’t have anything to do with God’s focus and standard of moral purity. His focus has to do with the heart and holiness! True virgins are persons who have not given themselves sexually to someone else outside of God’s boundaries. Others cannot defile us no matter what they do to our physical bodies. We are defiled by our own hearts lusting after strange flesh, not by strange flesh lusting after us or even abusing us (Matt. 10:28).

It is our own fleshly lusts that war against our souls and defile us (Mark 7:21–23; 1 Pet. 2:11). We are to fight against these lusts (Titus 2:12) because it is these that lead to sin and death (James 1:14–15, 4:1). Christ’s people need to communicate this message to those who have been the victims of rape and sexual abuse as well as relate to them in a way that demonstrates this truth. If Christians communicate any kind of stigma toward those who have been sexually abused, then they ought to feel the same toward Christ’s abused body that hung on the cross. They will also need to feel the same sense of disgrace about the memory of innocent people who were murdered. The Bible, however, compares the raped person with the murdered person in the sense that

they are both without fault. That is, they are completely innocent of the wrong committed against them and therefore cannot be regarded as defiled or polluted by it in any way (Deut. 22:26).<sup>3</sup>

### Doesn’t the Bible Call the Rape Victim “Defiled”?

There is a danger that some passages about rape could lead us to think that the victims are actually polluted by what is done to them. This is because the words *humbled*, *afflicted*, *defiled*, and *violated* are used for both the rape victim and the fornicator/adulterer (Deut. 21:14, 22:24, 22:29; Lam. 5:11), and this can cause us to place them both in the same “pollution” category.

It is not a simple matter to translate what is being communicated by these texts because in Hebrew, as in English, words can have more than one meaning. This means that our own perceptions will often influence which meaning we will give to a word in a particular context. The King James Version, for example, uses the word *defile* in connection with what some commentators regard as rape in Genesis 34:2, 5, but is this telling us that the raped person has been spiritually defiled?

The broader evidence, I believe, shows that we should not rush to such a simplistic understanding. Greg Bahnsen alludes to the difficulty of determining the meanings of such words when he writes, “The Hebrew word *anah* (“humble, afflict,” ...) used in Deuteronomy 22:29 can sometimes be used for forcing a woman (Gen. 34:2; Judg. 20:5; 2 Sam. 13:12, 14, 22, 32; Lam. 5:11) but need not indicate a forcible rape, which is clear from the Deuteronomy passage itself at verse 24. It can simply mean to dishonor, mistreat, or afflict (e.g., Exod. 1:11; Gen. 16:6; Exod. 22:22; Deut. 8:2; Ps. 119:67), and in sexual settings can denote other kinds of sin than rape (Ezek. 22:10–11).”<sup>4</sup> So, does the word



defile in Genesis 34:2, 5 mean “spiritually polluted” or could it mean “afflicted” or “humiliated”? Our understanding of the rape victim’s purity or lack thereof must rest upon more than words whose meanings may have been shaped by our misperceptions and prejudices.

## Conclusion

As members of Christ’s body, we need to live and relate in terms of God’s Word. This means that those within our communities who have been violated sexually must not be made to carry around shameful skeletons, dreading the day when others might find out about them. For the innocent who have been violated to be healed, both physically and psychologically, they must know that what happened to them is nothing to be ashamed of. They have not been polluted in God’s eyes, and therefore mere men must not regard them as polluted. Christ’s people must insist on holding to a Biblical definition of shame and thus show unwavering support for and total acceptance of those who have been sinned against sexually. The victims of such abuse need to be assured that no distinction is made in the eyes of Christ’s followers between them and others who have not suffered such things.

The Biblical perspective is that the virgin who has been raped is as attractive and accepted as the virgin who has not been raped. Christian men, when looking for a wife, ought not to look upon a sexually pure person who has been raped any differently than they would look upon a sexually pure person who has not been raped. No distinction is to be made between such people with respect to pollution or stigma. God saw no need to increase the incentives for men to marry girls who had been raped (i.e., through an extra dowry).

The Christian’s view of people who have been sexually abused or raped

should be no different from his view of those who have been assaulted, mugged, robbed, persecuted, or tortured. The pollution associated with rape or sexual abuse rests wholly upon the rapist/abuser—no pollution from that perverse act is communicated to the victim. Since God does not distinguish, with respect to sexual purity, between someone who has been raped and someone who hasn’t, we are foolish if we contradict His view on the matter.

We ought to offer help, show compassion, and manifest real understanding toward people who have been raped or sexually abused. This will include strongly communicating to them that they have nothing to be ashamed of. Our way of relating should demonstrate to them that no stigma follows them around and that they have nothing to be embarrassed for. The reason for this is simple: the raped person’s heart was not turned toward the sexual perversion committed against her and so she cannot be polluted by the physical abuse committed against her body. An external act done to a person against his will cannot defile his spiritual integrity. Virginity and thus sexual purity are ultimately spiritual in nature. That means a person’s heart and will must consent to the perversion in order for him to be polluted by it.<sup>5</sup> This is God’s eternal perspective, and all people are expected to bring their thinking into line with Him about all things, including how He views the victims of rape and sexual abuse.

Finally, it is necessary to restate that those who engage in sexual activity within God’s boundaries remain sexually pure—they are undefiled. The celibate Christian is no more holy or sexually pure than a Christian man and woman who are engaged in sexual union within the bounds of marriage. “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed unde-

filed; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4 NKJV).

It is vital that Christians clearly promote the beauty of sexual expression that takes place within God’s boundaries. In a society where sexual perversion is rampant, there is a danger that Christians might develop a negative perception or suppressed expression of the godly gift of sex. We do great harm to ourselves, our children, and those we seek to minister to, if our communication about sex is only about God’s righteous condemnation of the world’s perversion of sex.

Perversion we must condemn, but the beauty of sex must also be held up as something to be cherished, treasured, and truly enjoyed. God’s law defines what is beautiful and glorifies Him and what is perverse and destroys lives—both of these need to be spoken of without shame or apology.

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1. In this essay I am not looking to deal with the real counseling needs that sexual abuse victims require. This does not mean that I

*Continued on page 31*

# Review of *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America*

by Chris Hedges (New York: Free Press, 2007)

Review by Lee Duigon

Those arrayed against American democracy are waiting for a moment to strike, a national crisis that will allow them to shred the Constitution in the name of national security and strength ... Debate with the radical Christian Right is useless ...

The movement is based on our destruction. —Chris Hedges (p. 202)



Where are we to begin, to review such a hysterical, hate-filled book?

Keeping track and taking note of published

attacks on Bible-based Christianity is a dismal business. We only bother to answer this particular attack because the writer calls our good works into question, and that demands an answer.

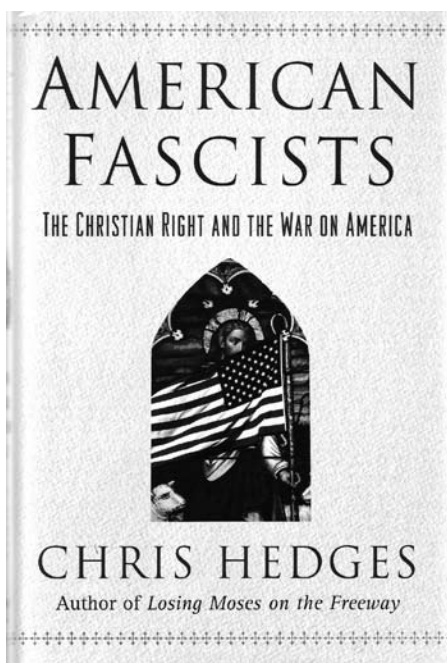
Chris Hedges' book features error piled on error, prejudice on prejudice. Maybe we ought to expect this from a writer who left *The New York Times* to work for *The Nation*. Hedges' new employers have been bashing Christianity and boosting Bolshevism for decades. Hedges' latest book is standard *Nation* fare.

## Shredding the Bible

Which of our good works would Mr. Hedges overthrow, if he could?

"Church leaders must denounce biblical passages [denounce the Bible, from the pulpit?] that champion apocalyptic violence and hateful political deeds," he says (p. 6), and "repudiate the apocalyptic writings in scripture" (p. 7).

"The Bible was not the literal word of God" (p. 21), Hedges learned from his father, an ordained minister of the gospel who taught that the gospels are "filled with factual contradictions" (p.



3). And, "As for the question of God's true nature, there are many substantive contradictions" (p. 3).

Hedges detests the Pentateuch because it contains God's law, which he finds oppressive, sexist, racist, anti-gay, and superstitious (pp. 3–4). He doesn't have much use for the New Testament, either, especially the Gospel of John ("Hatred of Jews and other non-Christians pervades the Gospel of John" p. 4) and the Book of Revelation. In short, he says, "There is enough hatred, bigotry, and lust for violence in the pages of the Bible to satisfy anyone bent on justify-

ing cruelty and violence" (p. 5).

As for God Himself, Hedges, following his father's teaching, says, "We had no ability to understand God's will" (p. 2), and "God is inscrutable, mysterious, and unknowable" (p. 8).

Convicted out of his own mouth, Hedges functions as an atheist. If we cannot know God or His will in any way, then we can have no relationship with Him and, as far as we're concerned, there might as well be no God.

If we think we can know God by studying the Bible, Hedges tells us the Bible is not God's Word and cannot enlighten us. If we think we can know God by studying the life of Jesus Christ, Hedges answers that the gospels misinform us. In not acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Lord and Savior of all mankind, as He said He was, Hedges tacitly accuses Christ of being either a liar or a lunatic.

If we think we can know God through His grace applied to us, and through the Holy Spirit, Hedges will not allow us that, either. He describes God as cruel, vengeful, sadistic, unloving, and so on.

So which of our good works does Hedges call evil?

He is against us if we preach all of God's Word, instead of just the parts that please him. If we were to delete from the Bible everything that offends

Mr. Hedges, it would have fewer pages in it than an issue of *The Nation*.

He is against us if we preach the Lordship of Christ, and the exclusivity of Christ as the means of salvation. If Christians are right about this, and the Bible is telling them the truth, then non-Christian religions must be wrong; but Hedges won't allow that. One wonders what he learned as a Harvard Divinity School student.

Finally, he castigates "radical Christians" for trying to influence Congress to pass laws that displease him—laws to protect the special status of marriage, to restrict abortion, to combat illegal immigration, etc. Of course, he doesn't mind if unbelievers lobby for legislation that they like. It's only wrong if "Christians" do it.

He does not want us to preach the whole Word of God. Any effort we make to foster a better understanding of God's will for us, as expressed in the Bible, Hedges sees as futile, destructive, and wrong.

If Hedges is right, then we are worse than divorced from God: we were never united to Him in the first place. And we can't answer Hedges out of the Bible because he rejects the authority of Scripture.

When we turn to the Bible, we can hear the voice of God. "Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" (Isa. 50:1, the Lord gives His people credit for enough intelligence to appreciate irony). We are not divorced from God, nor has He sold us out. It is this comfort, this connection to God, that Mr. Hedges would deny to us.

### What Are "They" Up To?

What does he think "radical Christians" are actually hoping to do?

- "The goal of the movement is to create a theocracy" (p. 86).
- "Should another catastrophic attack occur [like Sept. 11, 2001], what will prevent these preachers [Pat Robertson, et al.] from calling for the punishment, detention and quarantine of gays and lesbians ... What will stanch the hate crimes and physical attacks against those deemed immoral...? And most ominously, the fringe groups of the Christian Right believe they have been mandated by God to carry out Christian terrorism" (p. 106).
- The Christian Right, says Hedges, is plotting to "dismantle the federal government and unleash the fetters on corporations" (p. 180), and "to use the United States to create a global Christian empire" (p. 194). How these herculean tasks are to be accomplished, we are not told.

Christians are also plotting to abolish "truth." For Hedges, "truth" consists of Darwinism (p. 115), the assertion that homosexuals are "born gay" (p. 103), the claims of the man-made global warming crowd (p. 203)—and this from a man who declares that we must "reject absolutes, especially moral absolutes" (p. 9)! His absolutes, of course, are to be accepted without question.

### The Usual Suspects

Who are these Christian villains, who inhabit the "brutal, masculine world of this ideology, a world that knows little of tenderness, personal freedom, ambiguity, nurturing, and even pleasure" (p. 79)?

They are, says Hedges, "dominionists," a small minority, "a core group" within a broader "evangelical" movement (p. 21), who are scheming to take over the church. And, "They can count on the passive support of huge numbers of Christians" (p. 21) who, alas, don't

allow *The Nation* to guide them.

We are told "the [dominionist] movement has seized control of the Republican Party" (p. 22), which comes as news to us. Who can justly accuse Arlen Specter, John McCain, Orrin Hatch, Mitt Romney, or the *National Review* editorial board of taking marching orders from "preachers"?

Who are the dominionists? Hedges' list of culprits includes the Southern Baptist Convention (America's largest Protestant denomination), "virtually all of the nation's more than 2,000 religious radio stations" (pp. 10–11), and adherents of Christian Reconstruction (p. 11). He accuses Christian Reconstructionists of "racist and brutal intolerance" and a "lust for repression," and of plotting to create "a Christian society that is harsh, unforgiving, and violent" (p. 12).

As he warms to his topic, Hedges widens his cast of villains to take in Reformed and dispensational theologians, the ubiquitous assorted fringe groups, cults, the Trinity Broadcasting Network, conservative Roman Catholics, Jews for Jesus, Jews who defend the Christian Right—indeed, anyone who doesn't rate a World Council of Churches seal of approval. From a small core group, his conspiracy grows to number in the millions.

### Paranoia and Projection

But then the whole book is a conspiracy theory. Hedges accuses the Christian Right of promoting wacky conspiracy theories to manipulate people by fearmongering. On page 25 he accuses the Diebold Corporation (manufacturers of modern voting machines), in cahoots with the Ohio secretary of state, of stealing the 2004 presidential election from John Kerry. A few paragraphs later, on page 28, he says the dominionist movement is "marked ... by its obsessions with conspiracy theories ... a deep paranoia ..." He

wants us to believe only in his conspiracy theory.

Everything he accuses bad Christians of doing, he does. In psychology, this is called “projection.”

- He rails constantly about “the bleakness of life in Ohio” (p. 43) and “soulless” suburbs, projecting his own unhappiness onto millions of ordinary people.
- If there are no absolute moral values, why does he insist America embrace his values?
- He denounces the “apocalyptic visions” of the Christian Right, while writing a whole book to vent his own apocalyptic vision.
- He chastises dominionists for their “binary worldview” (p. 154)—but who has a more dualistic, “us against them” worldview than Mr. Hedges himself?
- He objects, repeatedly, to the Christian Right lumping all its opponents together as “secular humanists.” But anyone who can lump together R. J. Rushdoony, D. James Kennedy, the *Left Behind* novels, and the heretical eccentricities on daily display on the Trinity Broadcasting Network deserves a Nobel Prize for lumping. Hedges sees a monolith where there is only division. He fails to distinguish between orthodox, Bible-based Christianity and the host of man-made accretions tacked onto it by sinful, fallible human beings in our popular culture. He can see no difference between a sober Reformed theologian and a sleazy televangelist who promises to heal your cancer if you’ll send him a check for \$1,000.
- Most pitifully, Hedges allows his deep personal problems with his father to shape his outlook on life. In addition to teaching his son that

the Bible is not true and that no one can know anything about God, Hedges Senior comes across as self-righteous, unloving, and implacable. We learn from Hedges’ last book, *Losing Moses on the Freeway*, that his father forced him to spend most of his childhood at a rather unpleasant boarding school.<sup>1</sup> In *American Fascists*, pp. 2–3, we read again how, when Chris Hedges was a college student, his father became enamored of the gay-rights movement and regularly invited “gay” speakers to his son’s campus. He also compelled his son to found a homosexual students’ organization at the school, an act that earned the young man much ridicule and opprobrium from his peers.

Hedges’ attacks on the Bible reveal an implicit hatred for the God of Scripture, a hatred that spills over onto male authority in general, especially when wielded by Christians. Where his father planted false teachings and self-righteousness, Hedges now cultivates projection and paranoia. He turns away from God, refusing to be converted, and extends his joyless morose to all.

### A Dose of Coercion

We are alarmed by Hedges’ prescription for defeating this imaginary Christian conspiracy to destroy America. What does he propose to do to stop it?

1. “The radical Christian Right *must be forced* to include other points of view to counter their hate talk in their own broadcasts” (p. 33, emphasis added). This regulation, in effect from 1949 to 1989, when it was terminated by President Reagan, was known as the Fairness Doctrine. It was an FCC regulation, not a law. Currently, *The Nation* has been leading the charge on the Left to reimpose the Fairness Doctrine, this time as a law.

We know from experience that

there is no way “Fairness” would ever be used to inject a conservative Christian viewpoint into *The Nation*, a CNN newscast, or a *Desperate Housewives* episode. While it was in place for forty years, it was never invoked to reduce the monopoly of the liberal viewpoint in the media. The only purpose for bringing it back would be to muzzle conservatives and make it impossible for a conservative media to earn a profit.

2. “The hate-crimes legislation now stalled in Congress because of bitter opposition from the Christian Right must be made law” (p. 203).

In Canada and England, such laws have been used to intimidate, harass, and even punish anyone who dares to oppose the march of sodomy. If you publicly question the wisdom of allowing homosexuals to adopt children, you’ll get a visit from the police. If you decline to let out your hall for the celebration of a “gay marriage,” you’ll be slapped with a hefty fine.

These first two recommendations alone would constitute a heavy dose of coercion, aimed specifically at Christians; but Hedges proposes more.

3. “Church leaders” (whoever they might be) should publicly “denounce” politically incorrect portions of the Bible. We doubt this would make for very palatable sermons, but surely Mr. Hedges would enjoy them.

4. Church leaders, news media, Hollywood, academics, politicians, and schoolteachers should “confront” and “challenge” conservative Christians at every opportunity. In Hedges’ words, the Democratic Party, the media, “mainstream” churches, and universities—“The leading American institutions tasked with defending tolerance and liberty” (p. 33)—must aggressively take it to the Christian Right.

Where has Hedges been? These

*Continued on page 32*

# Community Education: How to Impact Your Town with Christian Education

Paul Michael Raymond



**D**r. Gary North once stated, “Protestant fundamentalist Christians have their eyes on the sky, their heads in the clouds,

their hearts in Egypt, and their children in government schools.”

While this statement is not universally true for all Christians, it does depict the majority of those professing the Christian faith. Many Christians talk of the culture war as if it is a television reality series where they can sit back uninvolved and watch the outcome, while flipping channels and eating popcorn from their easy chairs. Needless to say, this posture is a radical departure from the glorious commission given by Christ for an expressly Christian victory. Today’s “professing religionist” tends to be well satisfied with a nominal degree of doctrinal knowledge, but when it comes to marketplace, real-life action, anything other than possibly handing out a gospel tract here and there is rarely pursued.

## We Don’t Know How to Execute

It is painfully obvious that both our Christian liberties and our civil liberties are under severe attack by anti-Christian forces, including many elements of rabid secularism within our own government. Our nation, at every level (local, state, and national), is under the clear and intensive judgment of God. This divine judgment is the direct result of the blatant denial of the sovereignty of Christ and the abusive rebellion against the law of God by both church and

state. And among the community of the faithful, the problem of ecclesiastic and civil apostasy also looms large.

What is odd, however, is that we live in an age with an abundance of information available concerning the problem of Christian dominion. Consider the myriad of faithful Christian books, magazines, newsletters, websites, podcasts, blogs, Christian universities, seminaries, and homeschooling curriculums. While aiding to identify the problem and equip the Christian community with tools to address it, many of these resources feature a disparity between the *knowledge* of the cultural problem and the actual *implementation* of Biblical solutions. It seems that while our brethren are being equipped with doctrinal answers, many remain unaware of exactly how to strategically implement, and systematically apply, concrete methods for achieving results in the modern world.

The very idea of implementing a theonomically based Christian Reconstruction plan is an idea not readily embraced even in the mainstream of most Reformed churches, let alone those of an Arminian, premillennial persuasion. While the precepts of Scripture are foundational, they remain entirely void of power without being executed in real life.

## The Systematic and Unashamed Application of God’s Law

To state that an explicitly Christian education is the key to advancing the Kingdom of Christ and overcoming the onslaught of wickedness is an under-

statement. Profitable education must be solely based upon Scripture and not upon some form of “modern Christianity.” The only Biblically and historically valid education, which is able to bring about righteous change in any culture, is education based upon the revelation and authority of Scripture. All nations—including ours—are in dire need of the Christian Reconstruction of their depraved social order.

Throughout Scripture, the Lord commands and directs His people to educate their children in the law of God. It is that law that sets forth the plan of victory for those faithfully using it. The commandment to educate includes not merely learning, understanding, and loving God’s law, but also its systematic and comprehensive *application* to every area of life. The right application of God’s holy law to the societal order is what insures a Biblical, God-honoring culture—as it advances the claims of the crown rights of Christ within that culture. An education based upon the presuppositions of holy Scripture, as it is to be applied and executed in society, is an absolute necessity for every single Christian household (Exod. 18:20, 24:12; Lev. 10:11; Deut. 4:1, 10, 14; Deut. 5:31, 6:1, 11:19; Jude 3:2; Ps. 34:11, 51:13; Ps. 78; Jer. 32:33; Matt. 9:35, 28:20; Acts 28:31, etc.).

As long as the majority of professing Christians insist upon schooling their children according to the philosophies of antichrist, both the church and the state will remain under the severe frown of God’s providence. But I am con-

vinced that the faithful must do more than simply remove Christian children from the government school; they must also *properly educate* those children in a Biblical world and life view. If by some incredible act of God's mercy a mass exodus from the government schools were to take place tomorrow, parents, along with Christian educators, would be overwhelmed and subsequently fail to accommodate the students with Biblical leadership and scholarship. Proper provisions must first be made before any mass exodus could take place.

While we presently desire a Christian exodus from the government school system (as my dear friend and respected colleague Dr. Rev. E. Ray Moore from Exodus Mandate is laboring to accomplish), faithful Reformation-based Christian support must first be established through churches, Christian schools, institutions, home educators' co-ops, parental support groups, and colleges. This takes time and energy, not to mention money and commitment.

I believe the reason why God hasn't brought about a mass exodus yet is because there aren't enough theonomic, postmillennial ministries established to address the tremendous need produced by the inevitable future exodus from the government schools. The proper educational staging areas must be in place before the exodus occurs. This is why every covenant home, church, and Bible-based institution must be equipped in the science of "applied theonomy" so as to receive and properly equip those students delivered from the statist system.

### **What We Have—What We Need**

As a direct result of God's providential blessing toward this objective, the Reformed community has a wellspring of textbooks, journals, and symposiums dripping with strong doctrine. These

tools provide the foundation for victory in the generations to come. However, tools can only profit if used effectively. A Christian engaged in a cultural war must be well equipped in both the application and execution of the tools of warfare—the most notable instrument being the law of God.

Some venues where we may promote hands-on strategies, practical applications, and systematic tactics for cultural reform include local community think tanks, coalitions, or Internet blog sites. Ideas for the application of tactics can then be discussed and easily implemented. Perhaps a committee could be formulated that digests the theonomic principles from the myriad of Reconstruction textbooks and develops them into a "hands-on strategy playbook."

It has always been my desire to compile an e-book entitled *The Christian Strategy Playbook*. The content would be derived from the vast resources provided by Reconstructionist scholars over the years. Armed with these methods, the saints can effectively apply them to the benefit of their communities. Only theonomic principles can reverse the trends of a dying culture. The precepts contained in these strategy playbooks will profit society only when they are freed from their pages and used in this world.

Furthermore, there is a great need to galvanize our constituency into a nationwide network. This could easily be done with the Internet. This would provide Christians with a forum for sharing tactics, information, and ideas to work within a community. While we await such a network, allow me to speak specifically to one area that is dear to my heart: Christian education.

### **Start a School**

In the year 2000, with the cooperative efforts of The Institute for Theonomic Reformation ([www.hisglory.us](http://www.hisglory.us))

and the Reformed Bible Church in Virginia, a Home Educator's Academy was formed. This academy, though more refined and targeted in its mission, was patterned after a previous work implemented in New York between the years 1995 and 1998. Its primary goal is to encourage and support homeschooling parents in the education of their children.

Once a week the Reformed Bible Church Home Educator's Academy hosts approximately fifty-five students, teaching a range of subjects to children aged pre-school through the twelfth grade. A typical course list consists of The Glory of God in Art, The Glory of God in Music, Constitutional Philosophy, Biblical Law, Providential History from the Early Greeks through 1776, topical studies in science and literature, and/or math skills. A typical day begins at 9:45 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m.

This project runs smoothly because we have the constant support of the local church body and leadership. Sadly, too many churches oppose the historic principles of the Reformation, as well as the teaching of Christian Reconstruction. But of those churches that do agree, they should be willing to support a project geared toward cultural transformation.

You might begin with your pastor, and the people you already know. Some pastors are friendly toward the homeschool movement. See if he will allow the use of the church for meetings and classes. You can always begin in someone's home, as we did in 1994, or the local library conference room. Perhaps there are homeschooling families in your church or neighborhood willing to begin a Biblical Worldview Academy. Depending upon the state in which you live and its laws on home education, you may want to place an advertisement in the local newspaper. Hook up

with the HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) to protect yourself from any conflict with the local school board. You are welcome to call our office, and we will be pleased to assist you.

While it is beneficial to have a church-supported ministry, it is not necessary. Many who desire to engage the culture do not have such support. In that case, they must advance the Kingdom alone, or network with other like-minded saints in their local community.

Write out a mission statement, with Christian scholarship as the goal, and stick to it. Beware that your co-op does not turn into a free-for-all, or degenerate into a social gathering. Be disciplined. Make a schedule that will suit the parents. Try to get them involved whenever it's possible. Your goal is not to create a "Mom's Day Out"; it's to establish the Kingdom. Remember, you are there to encourage, support, and equip the parents by *sharing* the task of building a generation of Christian leaders. Your *greater* goal is to prepare for the exodus from the imploding government schools.

### Build a Library

Finally, a great way to influence your community via education is by creating a library. Every community should have a Biblical law library filled with great Reformed works, truthful historical books, commentaries, and a multiplicity of reference materials and homeschooling aids. Our fellowship is currently laboring to build such a library, hoping to inspire others to do the same in their community. There is no reason why God's people cannot pool their resources together so as to establish these places for Christian study and scholarship.

We at the Institute for Theonomic Reformation and the Reformed Bible Church are eager to assist and network with any serious-minded Christian

who desires to advance the Kingdom of Christ through Biblical application. You may contact us via email, [pastor@his-glory.us](mailto:pastor@his-glory.us), or telephone, 434-352-2667. May God be pleased to advance His cause through His saints on earth in our time and in our history. Deo Vindice! Amen. ■

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### Rushdoony ... Government cont. from page 6

submission by sinful man is only possible by God's saving grace and sanctifying power. Dominion that is not under God through grace will be man's evil dominion through sin. Abandoning His justice and judgment represents a repudiation of "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

The false dominion of humanistic man is an evil one characterized by the desire to control others. Godly dominion necessitates the prior submission of man to God and His Christ. This, naturally, cannot be politically achieved. The submission of men to God necessitates, individually, His saving grace, and, collectively, their covenantal submission in obedience in their family, church, work, school, and all other areas.

A false view of government as primarily a civil matter blinds us to our calling as the people of Jesus Christ. We must never presume that a godly social order will be initiated by the political process. The church arose in spite of the escalating power and corruption of the Roman civil government, and it can again grow in a statist age.

What the church cannot do is expect to exercise its responsibility through the agency of civil government. The best we can hope for is that the civil government will restrain evildoers and itself be restrained from interfering with the

Christian Reconstruction of our culture, which will happen through the power of God's Spirit in the self-government of individuals, families, churches, schools, and all areas of life and thought.

Christ is King; let His people govern themselves accordingly. ■

### Schultz ... Revisionism cont. from page 11

Schaeffer is listed as Rushdoony's student. Van Til is identified as a Dutch theologian. The article does point to the growing influence of Reformed writers.

20. Ibid.

21. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Nature of the American System* (Fairfax, Virginia: Thoburn Press, 1978), v.

22. For a look at how history textbooks have changed, based upon the presuppositions of historians of an era, see Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised* (New York: Vintage, 1980).

### Carlsen ... Rape cont. from page 25

minimize these needs. Rather, my objective is primarily to exhort those in the Christian community who are not victims to relate to victims with Biblical wisdom, understanding, and compassion and encourage the victims to view themselves through the lens of Scripture.

2. We live in an age that rejects God's revealed punishments for civil crimes, and often even rejects God's definition of right and wrong. Unfortunately, too many in the church are guilty of this too and reject the death penalty for those things God says are deserving of death. Nevertheless, one would think that since God decrees the same punishment for both murder and rape, believers would, *at the very least*, say that both of these crimes ought to receive the *same* punishment in our legal system.

3. This does not negate the need for exercising wisdom (i.e., God's wisdom) to help reduce the threat of harm being done to us—whether rape or murder. We are to take care where we go and whom we mix with. This means parents need to reevaluate their views on dating in the light of Scripture. Many "date rapes" would not have happened if parents were relying upon Bibli-

cal truth as their wisdom in helping their children find the right marriage partners.

4. Greg Bahnsen, unpublished paper, “Pre-Marital Sexual Relations: What Is the Moral Obligation When Repeated Incidents Are Confessed?” p. 4, no date.

5. It is important to be reminded of the distinction made above between an adult’s consent with respect to engaging in sexual activity and a child’s “consent” since it is possible for a perverse adult to manipulate a child through fear, lies, threats, etc.

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*Duigon ... American Fascists cont. from page 28*

people go Christian-bashing every day.

How far would he like to see “confrontation” go? We already have TV personalities (Bill Maher, Rosie O’Donnell, et al.) who mock, slander, and foment hatred against Christians every chance they get. TV shows and movies routinely depict Christians as bigoted, stupid, despicable, and dull. All the major news media give unlimited coverage to attacks on Christianity. And who would ever describe the climate at our great universities as Christian-friendly?

And yet with all this, Mr. Hedges doesn’t think it’s enough. Unable to read his mind, we cannot say what he’d like to see accomplished by “confrontation,” or what he’d be willing to do to achieve it.

5. Somehow he would like to separate “dominionists” from “evangelicals” (p. 20). Does he expect to accomplish this through mockery, name-calling, and Bible-bashing?

6. Hedges recommends that we all support Al Gore in his “valiant struggle” against man-made global warming (p. 203). We don’t see what this has to do with the rest of his thesis, but he thought it important enough to mention. After all, for him, global warming is an unchallengeable truth.

7. Finally, we are to engage in acts of civil disobedience against unjust laws passed by a Congress dominated by the Christian Right (p. 203). The only ex-

ample he offers is a call to aid and abet illegal aliens trying to evade immigration officials.

### Hard Times to Come?

We could go on, for many more pages, listing the inconsistencies, lapses of logic, special pleadings, unsupported assertions, and plain inanities of this book; but the reader has probably endured enough by now.

We are sorry for Chris Hedges. He’s looking for salvation in all the wrong places—the government, science, the media, all works of the flesh—and he isn’t going to find it there. In rejecting the Bible, he closes his heart to God. We are reminded of God’s Words to us, spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

*“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:*

*“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1–2).*

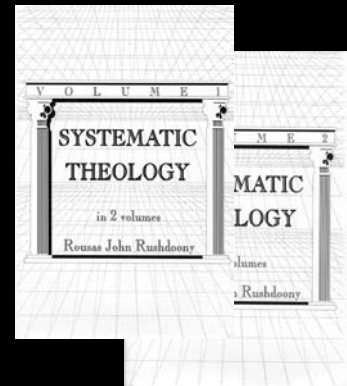
It is true that Christians have left themselves open to some of Hedges’ hyperbolic criticisms. There are crassly materialistic megachurches, and heretical twits on Christian television. There have been intemperate remarks from prominent preachers. Many on the Christian Right have been seduced into seeking political solutions to spiritual problems. It would be well for us to steer clear of such stumbling blocks.

While we pray that Mr. Hedges’ heart will one day be turned to God, and be healed, we wonder if his book is a harbinger of difficult times to come. If there are many among the public who fear and hate Bible-believing Christians as Mr. Hedges does, we’d better pray for ourselves, too—for the strength to endure, to follow God’s commandments, and to put all our trust in Him. ■

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for *Faith for All of Life*. He has been a newspaper editor and reporter and a published novelist.

1. See <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=142>.

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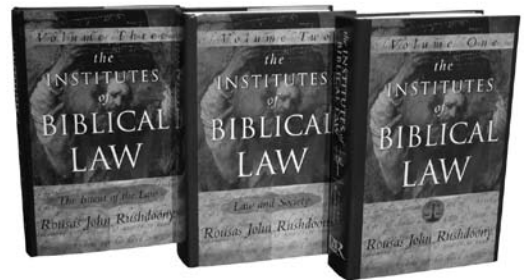
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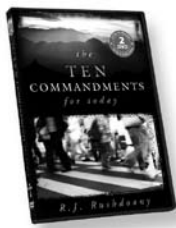
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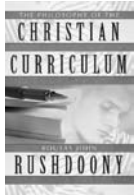
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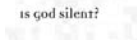
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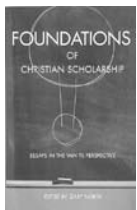
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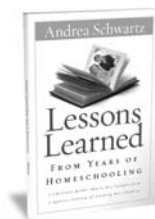


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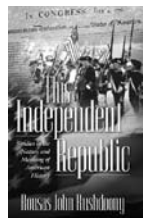


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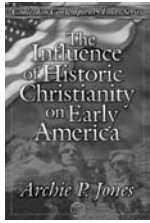
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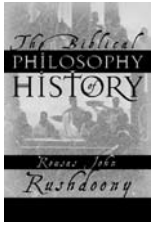
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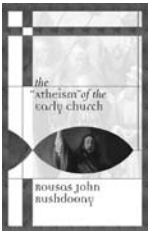
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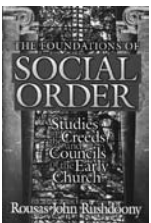
## Church History



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## Philosophy



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By Rousas John Rushdoony. For centuries on end, humanistic philosophers have produced endless books and treatises which attempt to explain reality without God or the mediatory work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Modern philosophy has sought to explain man and his thought process without acknowledging God, His Revelation, or man's sin. God holds all such efforts in derision and subjects their authors and adherents to futility. Philosophers who rebel against God are compelled to *abandon meaning itself*, for they possess neither the tools nor the place to anchor it. The works of darkness championed by philosophers past and present need to be exposed and repoved.

In this volume, Dr. Rushdoony clearly enunciates each major philosopher's position and its implications, identifies the intellectual and moral consequences of each school of thought, and traces the dead-end to which each naturally leads. There is only one foundation. Without Christ, meaning and morality are anchored to shifting sand, and a counsel of despair prevails. This penetrating yet brief volume provides clear guidance, even for laymen unfamiliar with philosophy.

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### **The Flight from Humanity**

By R.J. Rushdoony. Subtitled *A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity*.

Neoplatonism is a Greek philosophical assumption about the world. It views that which is form or spirit (such as mind) as good and that which is physical (flesh) as evil. But Scripture says all of man fell into sin, not just his flesh. The first sin was the desire to be as god, determining good and evil apart from God (Gen. 3:5). Neoplatonism presents man's dilemma as a metaphysical one, whereas Scripture presents it as a moral problem. Basing Christianity on this false Neoplatonic idea will always shift the faith from the Biblical perspective. The ascetic quest sought to take refuge from sins of the flesh but failed to address the reality of sins of the heart and mind. In the name of humility, the ascetics manifested arrogance and pride. This pagan idea of spirituality entered the church and is the basis of some chronic problems in Western civilization.

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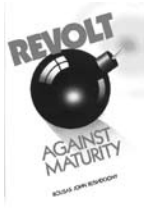
# Psychology



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By R.J. Rushdoony. From the foreword by Steve Schlissel: "Rushdoony sounds the clarion call of liberty for all who remain oppressed by Christian leaders who wrongfully lord it over the souls of God's righteous ones... I pray that the entire book will not only instruct you in the method and content of a Biblical worldview, but actually bring you further into the glorious freedom of the children of God. Those who walk in wisdom's ways become immune to the politics of guilt and pity."

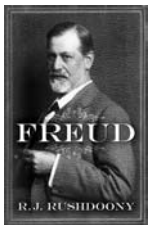
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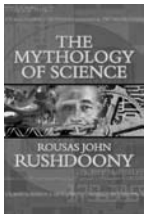


## **Freud**

By R.J. Rushdoony. For years this compact examination of Freud has been out of print. And although both Freud and Rushdoony have passed on, their ideas are still very much in collision. Freud declared war upon guilt and sought to eradicate the primary source to Western guilt — Christianity. Rushdoony shows conclusively the error of Freud's thought and the disastrous consequences of his influence in society.

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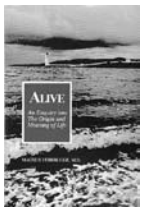
# Science



## **The Mythology of Science**

By R.J. Rushdoony. This book points out the fraud of the empirical claims of much modern science since Charles Darwin. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought, how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual paradigm, and how they are deferred to as sacrosanct by institutions and disciplines far removed from the empirical sciences. The "mythology" of modern science is its religious devotion to the myth of evolution. Evolution "so expresses or coincides with the contemporary spirit that its often radical contradictions and absurdities are never apparent, in that they express the basic presuppositions, however untenable, of everyday life and thought." In evolution, man is the highest expression of intelligence and reason, and such thinking will not yield itself to submission to a God it views as a human cultural creation, useful, if at all, only in a cultural context. The basis of science and all other thought will ultimately be found in a higher ethical and philosophical context; whether or not this is seen as religious does not change the nature of that context. "Part of the mythology of modern evolutionary science is its failure to admit that it is a faith-based paradigm."

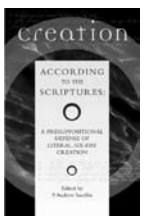
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## Economics

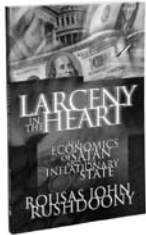
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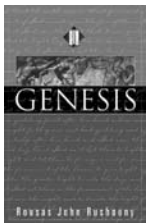
### **A Christian View of Vocation: The Glory of the Mundane**

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## Biblical Studies

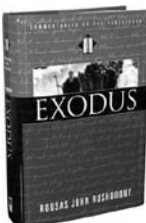
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### **Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch**

By Rousas John Rushdoony. *Genesis* begins the Bible, and is foundational to it. In recent years, it has become commonplace for both humanists and churchmen to sneer at anyone who takes Genesis 1-11 as historical. Yet to believe in the myth of evolution is to accept trillions of miracles to account for our cosmos. Spontaneous generation, the development of something out of nothing, and the blind belief in the miraculous powers of chance, require tremendous faith. Darwinism is irrationality and insanity compounded. Theology without literal six-day creationism becomes alien to the God of Scripture because it turns from the God Who acts and Whose Word is the creative word and the word of power, to a belief in process as god. The god of the non-creationists is the creation of man and a figment of their imagination. They must play games with the Bible to vindicate their position. Evolution is both naive and irrational. Its adherents violate the scientific canons they profess by their fanatical and intolerant belief. The entire book of Genesis is basic to Biblical theology. The church needs to re-study it to recognize its centrality.

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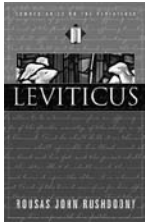
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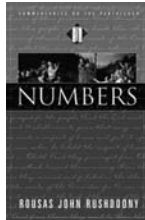


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Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God's law is readily shunned in pursuit of more "spiritual" studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God's image and is duty-bound to develop the implications of that image by obedience to God's law. The book of Leviticus contains over ninety references to the word holy. The purpose, therefore, of this third book of the Pentateuch is to demonstrate the legal foundation of holiness in the totality of our lives. This present study is dedicated to equipping His church for that redemptive mission.

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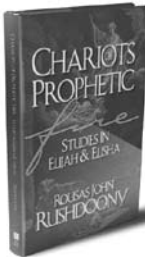


### **Numbers, Volume IV of Commentaries on the Pentateuch**

The Lord desires a people who will embrace their responsibilities. The history of Israel in the wilderness is a sad narrative of a people with hearts hardened by complaint and rebellion to God's ordained authorities. They were slaves, not an army. They would recognize the tyranny of Pharaoh but disregard the servant-leadership of Moses. God would judge the generation He led out of captivity, while training a new generation to conquer Canaan. The book of Numbers reveals God's dealings with both generations. The rebellious in Israel are judged incessantly while a census is taken to number the armies of Israel according to their tribes. This was an assessment of strength and a means to encourage the younger generation to view themselves as God's army and not Pharaoh's slaves.

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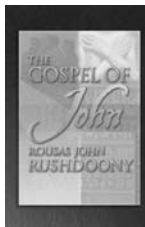
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### **The Gospel of John**

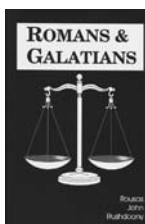
By R.J. Rushdoony. In this commentary the author maps out the glorious gospel of John, starting from the obvious parallel to Genesis 1 ("In the beginning was the Word") and through to the glorious conclusion of Christ's death and resurrection. Nothing more clearly reveals the gospel than Christ's atoning death and His resurrection. They tell us that Jesus Christ has destroyed the power of sin and death. John therefore deliberately limits the number of miracles he reports in order to point to and concentrate on our Lord's death and resurrection. The Jesus of history is He who made atonement for us, died, and was resurrected. His life cannot be understood apart from this, nor can we know His history in any other light. This is why John's "testimony is true," and, while books filling the earth could not contain all that could be said, the testimony given by John is "faithful."

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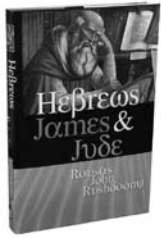
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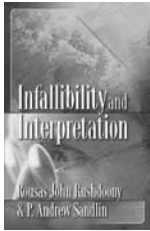
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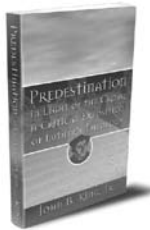
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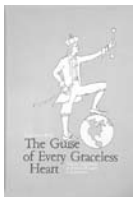
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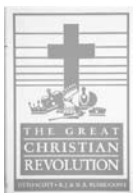
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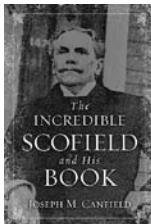
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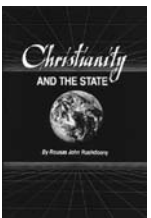
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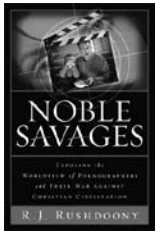
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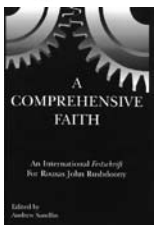
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Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R.J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical contributions in numerous fields. Contributors include Theodore Letis, Brian Abshire, Steve Schlissel, Joe Morecraft III, Jean-Marc Berthoud, Byron Snapp, Samuel Blumenfeld, Christine and Thomas Schirrmacher, Herbert W. Titus, Owen Fourie, Ellsworth McIntyre, Howard Phillips, Joseph McAuliffe, Andrea Schwartz, David Estrada-Herrero, Stephen Perks, Ian Hodge, and Colonel V. Doner. Also included is a forward by John Frame and a brief biographical sketch of R. J. Rushdoony's life by Mark Rushdoony. This book was produced as a "top-secret" project by Friends of Chalcedon and donated to Ross House Books. It is sure to be a collector's item one day.

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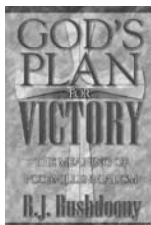


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Edited by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. Israel's misunderstanding of eschatology eventually destroyed her by leading her to reject the Messiah and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. Likewise, false eschatological speculation is destroying the church today, by leading her to neglect her Christian calling and to set forth false expectations. In this volume, edited by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., the reader is presented with a blend of Biblical exegesis of key Scripture passages, theological reflection on important doctrinal issues, and practical application for faithful Christian living. *Thine is the Kingdom* lays the scriptural foundation for a Biblically-based, hope-filled postmillennial eschatology, while showing what it means to be postmillennial in the real world. The book is both an introduction to and defense of the eschatology of victory. Chapters include contemporary writers Keith A. Mathison, William O. Einwechter, Jeffrey Ventrella, and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., as well as chapters by giants of the faith Benjamin B. Warfield and J.A.

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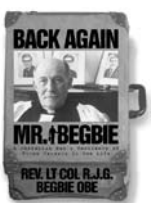
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