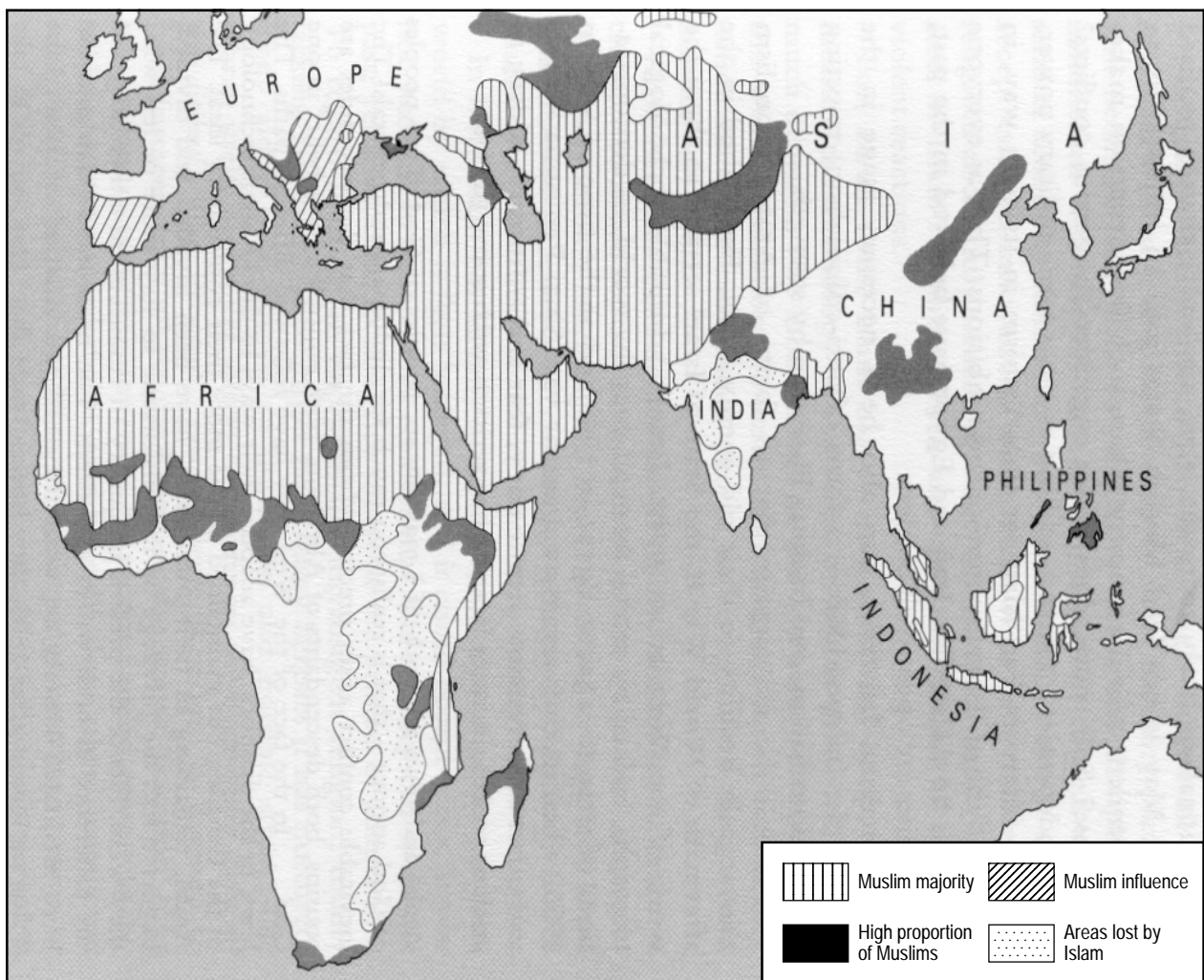


# Christianity & Society

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COVER PICTURE:

"Muslims in the world today," a map showing areas of Muslim dominance and influence in the modern world, from *The History of Civilisation* by Fernand Braudel (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1994), p. 97.

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# EDITORIAL

## WESTERN HYPOCRISY AND THE ISLAMIC SCOURGE

by Stephen C. Perks

THE inability to recognise the chastening hand of God in the events of September 11, 2001 represents a major failure of leadership in the West, both in the political and the ecclesial spheres. Throughout the history of Israel God raised up evil and tyrannical foreign powers to punish the children of Israel for their apostasy. Those who like to argue that analogies of this nature are not valid, that God does not deal with nations today in the way that he dealt with the nation of Israel, must concede that the major part of the Bible, the Old Testament, is worthless and might as well be thrown away because it has nothing of much value to teach us that is actually relevant to life. Of course, this is precisely the position of much of the Church today, evangelicalism included, certainly in practice if not in theory. But if it is recognised that the whole of the Bible is God's word to both men and nations, as it claims to be (see for example Ps. 2), then we must be willing to apply the lessons it teaches.<sup>1</sup> These lessons are often not easy or pleasant, but they are necessary.

It has become rather fashionable in the West to view all religions as equally valid or, perhaps more accurately, as equally repulsive. All that is, except one, namely secular humanism, which is deemed so obviously to be not "religion" but the truth that only the mad or the bad can be seriously opposed to the new secular humanist and politically correct world that is now in the making. But it is a religion, and it is a vicious and destructive religion that has dismantled Christendom and flung open the gates of the Western nations to the neo-pagan and Islamic hordes waiting to invade.

Islam is a violent religion that will not stop until all the infidels are either converted or killed. This is at the heart of Islam. Jihād is the second most important duty in Islam. Our political leaders choose to ignore this fact and insist that it is only certain extremists who have this militant interpretation of Islam. Undoubtedly, naïve scholars of comparative religion have often reinterpreted the notion of jihād while wearing their Christian spectacles, and many Muslims in the West make similar interpretations. But it should be remembered that this is a *re*-interpretation that seeks to accommodate itself to Western, i.e. *Christian*, sensibilities about justice and mercy, and would last no longer than it had to in order for Islam to get a strangle hold on the nations of the West. History bears out the truth about Islam. One has to shut one's eyes to miss it. Unfortunately, this is just what our politicians choose to do. We should be in no doubt, however, about Islamic objectives worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

1. See Stephen C. Perks, *The Christian Philosophy of Education Explained*, Appendix A, "Scripture and the Covenants" (Whitby: Avont Books, 1992), pp. 131–149 and *A Defence of the Christian State* (Taunton: Kuyper Foundation, 1998), *passim*.

2. See F. W. Schnitzler, "Islamic Objectives Worldwide" in *Cal-*

Another important religious duty of the *imām* and the Muslim community is the holy war against unbelievers—the *jihād* (i.e. "to take trouble," "exert oneself," striving "on the way of Allāh" [*fi sabīl Allāh*])—in order violently to convert the heathen to the true faith, or at least to subject them to the yoke of Islām. In the earliest period of Islām, Muslims were forbidden to take measures against the unbelieving inhabitants of Mecca who persecuted and ill-treated them, but after the *Hijrah* the position was altered. In Qur'ān xxxii. 39–42, Allāh declared that in future Muslims should be permitted to defend themselves if they were attacked, and that in so doing they could count on God's support . . . This permission to offer defence against attacks was soon afterwards changed into a command actually to attack the unbelievers, and, since the various expeditions for robbery and pillage on both sides brought about a state of perpetual war between the inhabitants of Mecca and the Muslims at Medīna, the *jihād* gradually became one of the most important duties of Muhammad's adherents . . . Those who could not personally take part in the campaign must at least assist in the *jihād* by payment of money according to their means. Even after Mecca was taken, and the inhabitants had been converted to Islam, the *jihād* against unbelievers remained a religious duty . . . The doctrine that all heathen must be subjected to Islām "because of their unbelief" first arose in the time of the Great Conquests, after the death of the Prophet, when the Muslim armies succeeded in conquering an extensive territory outside Arabia, and in making tributaries of many unbelievers. At that time the Prophet is said to have declared: "I am commanded to fight against men until they bear witness that there is no God but Allāh, and that Mohammad is God's messenger; only by pronouncing these words can they make their property and blood secure from me."<sup>3</sup> The *jihād* is a duty of every male Muslim who is free, of full age, and not only in the full possession of his intellectual powers, but physically fit for service and able to obtain the necessary weapons.<sup>4</sup>

The goal of Islam is the same as that of biblical Christianity: conversion of the whole world to the faith. But the means appointed for this could not be more different. It is true of course that Christians have engaged in unjust wars and abused their power. But this is just the point. From a Christian perspective murder and robbery are always abuses of power, crimes, and they are not Christ's appointed means of winning the world to himself. The preaching of the gospel and the healing of the sick along with works of charity are Christ's appointed means of winning the world to himself. The sword and oppression, war and conquest are the means appointed by the founder of Islam for those who refuse to submit to Allah. And the popular notion that the so-called "people of the book" were treated better than other non-Muslims by their Islamic conquerors is a myth that has been exposed by Bat Ye'or in her book, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam*.<sup>5</sup>

If the nations of the West permit Islam, or indeed any other false religion, to take root in their societies they will inevitably have to face some fearful consequences. We have

*vinism Today*, Vol. III, No. 2 (July 1993), pp. 19–23, reprinted in this issue of *Christianity & Society*.

3. This is a saying of Muhammad's that is recorded in a number of different hadiths: see *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. 1, Bk 2, §24; Bk 8, §387; Vol. 4, Bk 52, §196; Vol. 9, Bk 84, §59; *Sunan Abu-Dawud*, Bk 14, §2635; Bk 19, §3061.

4. Th. W. Juynboll, "Law (Muhammadan)" in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), Vol. VII, p. 881a.

5. Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihād to Dhimmitude* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996). See the review by John Peck in *Christianity & Society*, Vol. x, No. 3 (July 2000), p. 28ff.

already had in Britain a situation in which book shops have been firebombed by Muslims for selling books critical of Islam. This problem can only get worse while the present institutional indifference and even antipathy to Christianity and the *laissez-faire* attitude to other religions prevails. In a Christian society tolerance is a virtue. But when a society's understanding of tolerance is stripped of any Christian content this virtue becomes a vice. There must be limits to a society's willingness to tolerate influences that will ultimately overturn its religious foundations and, consequently, undermine its very existence. Islam understands this. The West, drunk on secular humanism, is no longer able to see the obvious. Islam, unlike Christianity, is not a religion that makes a virtue of tolerance. Opening the doors of our nations to the religion of Islam is folly, indeed madness. But as the proverb says, "Those whom the gods would destroy, they first drive mad."

Nevertheless, despite this fact, and despite the fact they we must resist Islam and bring to justice those who perpetrate murder in the name of their religion, the truth is that the Western nations ought to have nothing to fear from Islam or any other false religion. What they do have to fear, or should fear, is rather their own apostasy from the true religion, Christianity. Trusting in her chariots will not save America or Britain any more than such misplaced trust saved the nation of Israel. The real challenge for President Bush and Tony Blair on September 11 was not whether they would have the determination to bring down the Taliban. Rather, the real challenge they faced was whether they would recognise the real problem, namely the apostasy of the West and God's hand upon their nations, and whether they would show the courage to call their nations to repentance and faith in Christ.

This should have been the first item on their agenda. The second item on their agenda should have been *leading* that repentance by their own example. What we had instead was self-righteousness on stilts. The British government responded by attempting to create one of the most Draconian laws imaginable, a religious hate law that would effectively have banned free speech and evangelism for Christians. Parliament defeated this attempt to silence the gospel, but that it was even attempted was a sobering testimony to the state of apostasy into which the nation has fallen, as exhibited by her national political leaders in their rebellion against God.

Of course those who destroyed the World Trade Center on September 11 should be brought to justice, and it is the duty of the American State to make sure that they are brought to justice and punished for their crimes. But we if are to win the war against terrorism and stop such evil acts from being committed we must recognise evil for what it really is: disobedience to the God of the Christian Scriptures, the transgression of God's law. And this applies every bit as much to the peoples and governments of Western nations as it does to the Taliban and the terrorists who planned and destroyed the World Trade Center. If we are really going to reform the world we must start with our own hearts and our own nations. Being self-righteous about the sins of other people and nations will not excuse our own sins and the sins of our nations. And it is here that the hypocrisy and self-righteousness of the American and British political leadership is shown up so vividly.

On the day of the World Trade Center bombings Tony

Blair, the British Prime Minister, stood up and said of terrorism: "This is the new evil in the world." What a truly fascist sentiment this is! What it means is that evil is *out there*. The problems in the world are *other* people. It is other groups who commit evil acts. Ridding the world of evil means dealing with *them*. There's no evil in Blair's administration you see. The evil is committed by other people. But evil is a human problem, and the West is not righteous. There is plenty of evil for Bush and Blair to deal with at home, but will they? It is much easier and more convenient for politicians to tell us that the evil in the world is the result of what other people are doing. Such propaganda is an old fascist strategy and very useful in deflecting attention away from the evils committed by our own politicians. Let us look at just a few examples:

First, how many World Trade Center bombings would have to take place each year before those who were killed by them would equal the number of those slaughtered in our abortion clinics each year? Well, in the UK we murder around 200,000 unborn infants each year in the abortion clinics. In the USA it is many times more than this. Our nations commit crimes against God's law every bit as heinous as those committed by the Muslim terrorists on September 11. And what do we do about it? Our political leaders use perverse arguments and crude sophistry to justify their unwillingness to stand against such evil.<sup>6</sup> What kind of justice do these unborn children get? None. This does not excuse what the terrorists did of course, nor does it mean those who did it should not be brought to justice. It means our nations should *repent* of their sins and stop the abortions. "God bless America"! How can America ask God to bless her war on terrorism when she is committing acts just as horrendous as those she claims to abominate? Will God look favourably on the USA while this is the case? Unfortunately, in the UK few of our politicians and rulers will even say "God bless Britain" any more. We cannot expect God to bless and protect our nations while we are committing such atrocities and excusing them with political duplicity. The Bible tells us that "Blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein except by the blood of him that shed it" (Num. 35:33).

Second, both the USA and Britain have been involved in acts of terror very similar to that committed by the Muslims on September 11. I refer of course to the deliberate bombing by NATO forces of a TV tower staffed by civilians in Serbia. Now, doubtless the argument will be that this TV tower was a strategic military target because it was controlled by the Serbian government and was used for propaganda. Very true no doubt. But to the Muslims who bombed the World Trade Center their target was every bit as much a strategic military target. If the Muslims can bring down the financial power houses of the Western economies this will enable them to win their war against the West. The arguments are precisely the same for both bombings. And the arguments are precisely the same *against* both bombings. So what are Bush and Blair going to do about this? Are they serious about bringing to justice those who commit such acts? Of course they are not. They are only serious about bringing to justice those who commit such acts against their own nations. They are only interested in "victor's justice."

6. See my editorial article "Political Duplicity" in *Christianity & Society* Vol. XI, No. 4 (October 2001) for more on this.

Do they really expect people to accept such shallow sophistry? How they have deluded themselves!

Third, on the same subject of the situation in the Balkans, we must remember that NATO gave support to the KLA. But the USA has now admitted that the KLA is a terrorist organisation. According to President Bush, the war on terrorism will pursue not only the terrorists themselves but those States that protect and shelter terrorists. Well now, does this include the USA and Britain? US foreign policy is continually shooting itself in the foot in this regard. The ghosts of previous foreign policy come back to haunt subsequent administrations constantly. NATO supported the KLA in the Balkans. What does Bush propose to do about this now?

Fourth, there is another situation that must be dealt with while we are considering this issue. The IRA received much support from communities with strong Irish connections in the USA for many years. I found Tony Blair's rushing to the side of the American President to offer his unqualified support for the "war on terrorism" quite nauseating because of this. Bush said that "America has no better friend than Britain" or words to that effect when Tony showed up in the USA soon after the bombings. Unfortunately this sentiment cannot be reciprocated very well. America did not stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain while it fought terrorism in Northern Ireland. Where was the USA when Britain was having to deal with the situation in Northern Ireland? No war on terrorism was deemed necessary then. Members of the IRA are seen as "freedom fighters" and convicted IRA terrorist are classed as "Republican political prisoners" by many Americans and America harboured these supporters of terrorism without any problems. What was needed in Northern Ireland was a "peace process," not a war on terrorism. How convenient for American politicians whose constituencies included large Irish communities that supported the IRA!

Well, perhaps all the USA needs now is a "peace process" with the Muslim terrorists who are targeting their land. Perhaps we can offer to send them an envoy to broker it for them. Perhaps Bush should get round the negotiating table with the Islamic men of blood just as our government was expected to get round the table with the IRA. What's sauce for the goose is certainly not sauce for the gander in the USA. Before we signed up unconditionally to Bush's war on terrorism I think our political leaders should have asked a few searching questions about these issues. What did the US government do about NORAID?

But of course the problem is not only that America has these double standards regarding terrorism. British politicians have also been hypocritical in this matter. Blair's self-righteous posturing over the war on terrorism issue following the September bombings took place against the backdrop of almost total compromise with the IRA terrorists in North Ireland. The so-called "peace process" is nothing but a surrender-process instigated by a British Conservative government and thoroughly endorsed by Blair's New Labour government when it came to power.

If the governments of the USA and Britain are going to condemn terrorism they should condemn all acts of terrorism and they should be just as ready to deal with the atrocities committed in the USA and Britain by terrorists and atrocities committed by the USA and British governments. Of course Tony will say that he does condemn all acts of

terrorism. But then we must ask why IRA terrorists have been released from prison in Northern Ireland. In one respect, though, the absurd logic that seems to fill Tony's head did get an interesting outing following the fall of the Taliban, and I wonder what Americans made of it, namely the concern that was exhibited over whether British citizens ultimately convicted of complicity in the September 11 bombings would receive the death sentence.

Our political leaders are blind guides. They say that the war on terrorism is not a religious war. But this is ridiculous. Of course it is a religious war. It is a war motivated by two conflicting religious world-views. The leaders of the Western world are committed to the idea that governments should be completely neutral when it comes to matters of religion. But religious neutrality is impossible. What they are really committed to is the notion that government should not take sides with one of the recognised or dominant monotheistic religions, i.e. Christianity, Judaism or Islam. They think if they avoid declaring themselves for any of these they have maintained their religious neutrality. But they have not. They have simply nailed their colours to another religious mast, namely secular humanism, and they are just as dogmatic, just as "extremist," about the necessity of this religion being the religion of State as any Christian, Jew or Muslim "extremist" might be. The only difference is that they are so thoroughly indoctrinated by this religion that they do not realise it is a religion. They deem it the indubitable truth. This is the very worst form of religious extremism, because when one fails to recognise the religious nature of one's world-view it will function all the more effectively as religious dogma that cannot be challenged, except of course by those who are mad or bad. The establishment of secular humanism as the religion of State, despite the fact that it is not recognised as a religion, is one of the most repressive and extremist forms of religious establishment. The Gulag is testimony enough to that. But in the West now we have our own form of Gulag, or perhaps I should say a new form of Inquisition, the secular humanist Inquisition, namely political correctness, which is far more effective than the Russian Gulag ever was because it is, for the most part, self-policed, i.e. the result of effective indoctrination. Nevertheless, our government is willing and eager to put the whole weight of the coercive machinery of State behind this new Inquisition when the religious dogma of secular humanism demands it. This is precisely what the proposed religious hate law demonstrated. Religious neutrality is a naïve dream.

The war on terrorism is thus a religious war in every sense. And necessarily so. However, the nature of this religious war is not apparent to most people, least of all politicians. Let us spell it out clearly then. The war on terrorism is a war between two false religions, secular humanism and Islam, over the right for a third false religion, Judaism, to set up a State in Palestine and in the process deny the former Palestinian inhabitants of that land any right to their own State. Now, this statement needs some qualification because in one sense modern Israel is a secular State, not a Judaistic State, though of course it is Jewish State. And its continued existence is only made possible by the support of the secular humanist American State. Yet in another sense Israel is a Judaistic State because it exists as a result of the claim by large numbers of Western Jews that it is their rightful homeland, and underpinning this claim is the fact that what identifies someone as a Jew is in large part their

religious heritage. This is all rather complicated and confused however. Some religious Jews will not even recognise the State of Israel because it is a secular State.

This is further complicated by the fact that the secular humanist religion of the Western world, of which Israel is in one sense an outpost, is a parasite living off the rotting flesh of the host it has destroyed, namely Christendom, the cultural benefits of which it lays claim to as if these were the product of secular humanism's own genius. But this is not so, and the West will eventually discover the hard way that virtually all of what made the West both a civilised culture and a civilising influence on other cultures, the secular humanist State has illegitimately inherited from the host it has so cynically destroyed: Christianity. The modern secular State abominates the fanatical extremism of Islam and other ideologies that seek to propagate their message and lifestyle by acts violence and terror, yet it has abandoned and now persecutes in its own insidious and subtle way the only true religion, Christianity, which bequeathed to it all the virtues it claims to cherish, and which alone has the answer for the malaise that the modern world finds itself in, a malaise that the secular humanist States of the West are increasingly seeking to remedy by means the very same acts of terror that they supposedly abominate: *bombing*.

But the politicians are not the only problem. The situation is further complicated by the fact that large segments of the Church, particularly evangelicals, believe that the modern State of Israel is somehow connected with the biblical nation of Israel. What does the setting up of the modern State of Israel have to do with the Israel of prophecy? Now, I know that many Christians believe that "Israel is the apple of God's eye." But surely this is a misunderstanding of the Bible. Modern Judaism is not the Judaism of biblical times. It has travelled a long way from its roots in the first century. Did Western Jews really have any greater moral and legal right to the land of Palestine in 1947 than that of the Palestinians? Did not the God of Abraham himself spew the Jews out of the land in the first century for their rebellion just as he had turned the Canaanites out of the land? On what basis then do Christians claim that the modern State of Israel is the fulfilment of prophecy? On the basis of bad exegesis only. This hardly constitutes a moral or legal basis for Israel's claims to the land of Palestine.

Furthermore, the establishment of the modern State of Israel took place amidst a conflict in which Israel committed acts of terrorism against Palestinians and also against the British occupying forces. This is another aspect of Western hypocrisy regarding the terrorism issue that dominates modern international politics in the middle east. How far does Bush intend to go with his commitment to deal with those States that harbour and commit acts of terrorism? We can be assured that he will not do anything that might threaten the Jewish vote come the next Presidential election.

Well, where does all this leave us? Osama Ben Laden is a terrorist who should be brought to justice. But the West has a greater enemy to fear: her own apostasy from the Christian faith. We have nothing to fear from enemies without if we are faithful as a nation to the God of the Bible. But when sin and corruption become institutionalised in the way that they have in the West today, and when the nation casts off God's law as Britain and the USA have done, we must be prepared to face the chastening hand of God on our nations. God raises up evil men and nations to scourge those nations that

apostatise from the faith. War is certainly the correct response to what happened on September 11, war, that is, against the moral corruption and sinfulness of our own nations. Trusting in our chariots will not save us ultimately. We must turn to God in repentance.

Jesus gave us a very pertinent lesson that our politicians and Church leaders need to heed: "Those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem?" (Lk. 13:4). Of course not. Such calamities are not to be construed as personal judgement in this way. But this does not mean that there is no lesson to be drawn from such events. Jesus went on the say "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (v. 5). The people who were killed in the World Trade Center bombings were not sinners above all others in the West. But the West has now turned its back on God. Unless the nations of the West repent, they shall all likewise perish. And Islam may well yet prove to be the scourge that God uses to punish our apostate nations. *C&S*

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# ISLAMIC OBJECTIVES WORLDWIDE

by F. W. Schnitzler

[This essay was originally published in *Calvinism Today*, Vol. III, No. 3 (July 1993). We have taken the unusual step of reprinting it in this issue of *C&S* because of its particular relevance to current events in the world. The governments and peoples of the Western nations needed to heed the message of this essay when it was originally published almost a decade ago. It is all the more relevant now.—SCP]

FIVE times a day, with their faces turned toward the “sacred” city of Mecca, the birthplace of Islam, the devoted followers of Mohammed begin their prayers reciting, “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.”

Until recent decades, the religion of Islam was largely confined to Arabia, western Asia, northern Africa and southeast Europe. It was, and was regarded as, a regional religion: its boundaries imposed and unchanging; its devotees forever isolated, or so it seemed, not only by barren rock mountains and seas of sand, but by a vigorous and resolute Christianity that would not allow Islam’s further expansion.

Following the famous battle of Tours in 732, after a century of conquest, the Mohammedan advance and invasion of France was checked by Charles Martel and his Christian army. This defeat signalled the end of Islam’s northward thrust. The declining but able Byzantine powers still controlled Asia Minor at the time and Charlemagne, a Christian and one of the greatest warrior-kings of the period, was to rule central Europe. These plus additional factors, determined by the providence of God, forced and kept the Mohammedan peoples out of Europe altogether. And although Christendom later suffered a number of internal disturbances destined to weaken its unity and strength, it nevertheless continued, despite division, to oppose Islam uniformly and to keep Islamic influences from re-entering Europe unchallenged. With nothing of any importance left to conquer easily, the Mohammedan armies ceased their excursions and forays into foreign lands and settled down to consolidating their rule over subjugated territories, where they remained for many centuries. The only exception to this were the Ottoman Turks who, after successfully besieging Constantinople in 1453, sought to extend their empire into western Europe, but were eventually repelled. As Western civilisation developed and became more powerful, the Mohammedan civilisation stagnated and became less threatening.

The Industrial Revolution changed everything, however, and a world once dominated by agriculture and craftsmanship was transformed into one dominated by factories and machines. Remarkable developments occurred in every imaginable direction, not the least of which addressed the problem of power. Steam engines were operating in Britain, Europe and North America by the early 1800s. But

the discovery of petroleum revolutionised the Revolution. Initially petroleum was used merely for lighting, heating and lubrication, but as petroleum by-products multiplied so did its usage and the ever-growing consumption of petroleum by-products generated even greater demands for “black gold.” The insatiable demand for one particular by-product, gasoline, used to fuel a staggering number of internal-combustion engines worldwide, has fuelled political, economic, social, cultural and religious unrest as well.

There was a time when the industrial nations of the world fulfilled their own need for petroleum products. In 1939, for example, the United States supplied sixty to sixty-three per cent of the world’s demand. Texas alone produced about two-fifths of America’s domestic supply. But when it was discovered that much of the world’s vast petroleum reserves were under Arab sand, production shifted to that part of the world. The ensuing and inevitable nationalisation of petroleum production stripped the industrialised world of its self-sufficiency and in 1961 the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was set up to protect oil producing countries, mostly Arab, from exploitation by the major oil companies and oil consuming nations, mostly Western. OPEC ended the era of inexpensive energy when in 1973 it decided to double its margin of profit from oil exports (thought by many an act of exploitation itself). Despite higher consumer prices, petroleum consumption continued and continues to soar upwards.

Paralleling the demand for Arab oil by consumer nations throughout the world was a novel and growing power realised by Muslims. Michael Youssef, author of *America, Oil, and the Islamic Mind*, provides data for consideration: “In a world economy dependent on oil, countries fortunate enough to possess a superabundance of the coveted black gold can become fantastically wealthy almost overnight. This is precisely what happened with the Arab oil-producing nations. If oil dependency had a negative effect on the world in general, quite the opposite was felt by nations belonging to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Their staggering profits skyrocketed from \$50 billion in 1974 to \$200 billion in 1980, and now it is over \$1 trillion. In 1981, Saudi Arabia alone earned \$110 billion from the sale of oil. In 1990, with the price of a barrel reaching nearly \$40, thoughts of the net profit stagger the imagination.”



The seemingly endless flow of “petrol-dollars” pouring into Arab bank accounts resuscitated the Islamic world and huge amounts of money were, and continue to be, channelled into domestic development programmes, military expenditures, foreign investments, terrorist activities, and missionary and proselytising endeavours, the result being that peoples once thought to be beyond the pale of Islamic influence and insulated from Islamic objectives are now expressing concern over the growing presence, pervasiveness and power of Islam in and over historically non-Muslim communities and countries.

Are such concerns warranted? Recent figures show that Muslim concentrations in historically non-Muslim countries, especially in the West, are already quite large (due primarily to open immigration policies and higher birth rates), growing, and that the proportion of power held by what may appear to be insignificant numbers of Muslims minimises their minority status. The Muslim population in France, for example, is nearly three million and growing; in Germany, two million and growing; throughout the rest of Europe, substantial and growing; in the United States, six million and growing. Many of these Muslims hold an impressive amount of economic power (through investments and controlling positions in many firms, companies and corporations) purchased largely with Arab money, which, it is feared, may someday be used against the better interests of the West. But not to be overlooked is the kind of power associated with the demands of an imposing, unified, vocal and potentially violent people. Nor is it to be forgotten that the Islamic world, having been transformed from an impoverished, almost forgotten society to a proud, aggressive, self-confident power via an explosion of material wealth, now seeks to impose its political, economic and religious will globally.

Since the declared intent of Islam is to create a universal empire marked by a universal faith as envisioned by Mohammed (and evidence clearly suggests that this objective remains constant), then the aforementioned power of Muslims in and over historically non-Islamic countries becomes a genuine source of worry for those believing the aphorism “One prophet, one faith, for all the world!” to be more than just an empty halloo by an insignificant few Islamic zealots.

It was once thought Muslims would modify their views with the passing of time, perhaps even forced to do so in order to participate in the modern world, but it is quite obvious that has not yet happened. On the contrary, the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism has re-ignited traditional aspirations, quelled moderation and exerts its influence wherever Muslims are found.

Muslims are taught and believe their religion is to be extended throughout the world and that it is their sacred duty whenever they come into contact with non-Islamic society to subjugate that society by whatever means necessary and reshape it into an Islamic society. By whatever means necessary? Yes! Economic force, political force, military force, terrorism, violent protest—by whatever means necessary. To quote Michael Youssef again: “Such a philosophy grows from the desire of Mohammed himself to create a society in which religion encompasses everything. Muslim extremists demand a society controlled, pervaded, and purged by religion and established on and maintained by Arabic culture. They are willing to use every conceivable force to achieve this so-called ‘Divine objective’.”

It is more than interesting that those things most commonly associated with Islamic fundamentalism—*jihād* (holy war), *fatwa* (death sentences), terrorism, hijacking, the taking of hostages—all have violent connotations. It is not surprising, however. Mohammed is portrayed in the Koran as a divinely inspired military leader credited with having said, as tradition has it, that “the key to heaven and hell is the sword; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer.” Mohammed’s seventh-century successors taught that the earth was divided between the *dar ul-Islam* (realm of Islam) and the *dar ul-harb* (realm of war), suggesting to those catechised that violence was essential to forwarding Islam. Violence characterised the followers of Mohammed in the beginning, and his modern-day followers appear to be good practitioners of their religion.

The characteristically violent and hostile nature of modern-day Islam, which has been televised and publicised intermittently over the past few decades, has reinforced Western assessments of Islam as a religion with a historically brutal legacy. The assassination of the moderate President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt on October 6, 1981 by Muslim extremists focused Western attention on what appeared to be an inherently violent strain within Islam. Against a backdrop of terrorism and innumerable anti-Western demonstrations by thousands of maniacal Muslims in Damascus, Tehran, Tripoli and Baghdad are memories of Berlin, Beirut, Lockerbie and the Gulf War. But again, Islam is no longer an impoverished regional religion; therefore its violent eruptions are no longer restricted geographically.

Consider the series of events brought about by the publication of Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*, in which Islam and its founder were poked at in a fashion not appreciated by devout Muslims. The book was banned in India to appease Muslims in that country. Alerted to the book by India’s move, British Muslims protested its publication, demonstrated publicly, burned copies of the book and bombed bookstores. British Muslims then deferred to the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran who in turn issued his infamous fatwa against the book’s author, publishers and distributors. Rushdie has been in hiding ever since. Many such examples of Islamic hot-headedness could be cited, but a significant number of people are already convinced that wherever Muslims are found the likelihood of violence exists and wherever large concentrations of Muslims are found the likelihood of violence is probable. One concerned citizen referred to the situation in Britain metaphorically by comparing it to “sitting on a volcano.”

According to Richard John Neuhaus, editor-in-chief of *First Things—A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, Europe, but especially Britain, is where the question of “Islam in the West” is taking on proportions referred to as an unprecedented crisis. “The British,” writes Neuhaus, “by virtue of historical experience, are a people (actually, three or four peoples) in the sense of being—to use a term no longer in favor—a race. But now the patriotism and imperial glory of ‘Rule Britannia’ has been transmogrified into a threadbare Commonwealth that entitles Muslims from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Africa to British citizenship. Britain has never experienced anything like this before.” Indeed! The mass immigration of Muslims into Britain threatens to press hard upon what comprises British identity. The presence of a minority culture that separates and insulates itself is a ticking time-bomb, whatever the situation.

Britain's particular situation is one in which a minority culture not only refuses to adopt the norms of the majority culture, but threatens to subdue the majority culture by becoming the dominant force politically, economically, socially, culturally, and religiously. What this means for Britain is that its Christian heritage, the laws and liberties connected with that heritage, are under attack and are fully capable of being overthrown by a strident, self-confident Islam which demands that all the world subject itself to Allah, Mohammed and the teachings of the Koran.

What is occurring in Britain is occurring also throughout the remaining countries of Europe to varying degrees. Anthony Hartley, in his article, "Europe's Muslims," appearing in the Winter 1990/91 issue of *The National Interest*, noted four conclusions to be drawn from the present situation:

First, European countries already have considerable Muslim communities. These are likely to grow and to acquire greater political influence as immigrants and their children become citizens of the states in which they are domiciled.

Second, these communities, in so far as they can be judged by their political spokesmen, appear not to be taking the path of integration trodden by other types of immigrants. Their Islamic identity carries with it beliefs and practices that separate them from their adopted societies. Their demand, therefore, is for a special status, privileges additional to the ordinary rights of European citizens.

Third, European societies are finding it hard to resist such a demand. Indeed, there have already been occasions when host societies have had to abandon their prevailing social norms and defer to the customs of Islam, even when these run contrary to cherished beliefs.

And fourth, these Muslim communities have also become a conduit through which movements of opinion in the Islamic world are conveyed into the host country. The governments of Muslim countries and the leaders of Islamic religious sects can, therefore, to a certain extent, exert influence on European societies.

And one can only wonder, given the recent move by the British allowing a Muslim Parliament to serve British Muslims independently, if the European Community will be forced to do likewise and what the consequences would be for such an allowance.

Elsewhere, such as Asia and Africa, Muslims are zealously engaged in proselytising endeavours. These backward "third-world" regions are fertile ground for Islam's well-financed and well-organised missionary programmes.

Islam's Asiatic successes are little known to Westerners, perhaps because Westerners are little concerned with what happens in nations like Singapore, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. From these "out-of-the-way" Islamic strongholds, however, Muslims are venturing further into Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, where they are gaining converts daily.

The African story is better known. Islamic advances into central and southern Africa are to those interested a matter of making use of a world almanac. Check the Muslim populations of Somalia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and Zaire. These are growing figures. A Christian friend from Uganda told this writer of Kuwaiti attempts to place a Koran in the hands of every student in that country. Another acquaintance from Nigeria told of Muslims in that country voting as a block in order to gain control over the political, educational and cultural dimensions of Nigerian

life. Confrontations in Algeria between Islamic fundamentalists and the more moderate State government are widely known, having been newsworthy events occasionally making headlines. Subtler "evangelistic" measures, however, though more productive, seldom make "the news."

Saudi Arabia routinely selects and sponsors many of the brightest "third world" students to be educated at Saudi universities hoping to convert them to Islam before they return home, knowing full well these bright new converts will take Mohammed's message back to their native countries and to their own peoples, where and among whom their "sophistication" as "world-travellers" and their "education" will render positions of power more accessible and attainable to them, from which they can further Islam. A similar evangelical measure was once employed by what were once Christian nations, was it not?

Wherever a sufficient number of converts are gained mosques are built, prayer leaders are supplied, Arabic is taught, conferences are scheduled, and Islamic literature is distributed widely and generously. These Islamic establishments then become proselytising centres for wider efforts. Cost is not a consideration, for obvious reasons. In fact, Islam's reputation as a wealthy religion, attractive to the impoverished peoples of poorer regions, enhances Islam's evangelistic endeavours. Many converts are simply impressed by Arab wealth, believing also, perhaps, that a religion so obviously "blessed" must have God on its side and that they too may benefit likewise from such a faith. Means and motives aside, Muslims are successfully proselytising throughout the world.

Muslims in America amount to an insignificant number given America's diversity and population, but that is not to say the United States has little knowledge or experience regarding Muslims. Americans have been threatened, terrorised, murdered, and drawn into war by Muslims who speak of America as the "Great Satan" and get their jollies from burning "Uncle Sam" in effigy before a host of foreign correspondents and camera crews, despite America's untiring efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. Islamic fundamentalists believe the humiliation of America necessary to the establishment of Islam as a global power, the reason being that radical Muslims perceive the United States as a Christian powerhouse from which the West derives its energy—a weakened America, they presume, means a weakened West, which translates in their thinking into an unchallenged, victorious Islam.

America's support for Israel is another thorn in Islam's side. Israel, hated by the Muslims for a number of reasons old and new, also considered to be America's bulldog in the Middle East, equally possessed, must be destroyed, radical Muslims believe, if Allah is to be served faithfully. But let us return to broader issues.

Although Muslim concentrations in historically non-Islamic countries differ in numbers, places of origin, degrees of education and types of employment, Muslim demands are not dissimilar. A separate legal code and sovereignty over familial, educational, economic and religious matters are central to their demands. (Dilip Hiro, author of *Islamic Fundamentalism*, assures his readers that all Muslim endeavours and demands are steps toward a world system free from non-Islamic influences). And although the countries wherein Muslim concentrations are found differ as to how Muslim demands are handled, host nations appear uniformly con-

cerned with creating autonomous Islamic communities within their countries.

But it is feared Muslim influence cannot be curtailed by government without appearing unfair, undemocratic and discriminatory. Western constitutions especially, were not framed with this sort of problem in mind. There are many, therefore, of questionable intelligence, unprepared or unwilling to grapple with the issues at hand, who seem ready and willing to “dance with the devil” rather than expose the genuine limitations of democracy.

Multiculturalists, considering every culture inherently equal to every other culture (except for that of the West, which they usually characterise as the lowest form of cultural expression known to man), regard the aforementioned concerns unreasonable and reactionary. Apparently, multiculturalists are unaware that a country within which the political, economic, social, cultural and religious divisions have gone too far is a danger to itself and is no match for a determined, well-organised coup.

Whether multiculturalists are willing to admit it or not, Muslims are not interested in multiculturalism. Muslims are not particularly concerned with balancing pluralistic societies, nor are they concerned with establishing harmonious relationships between themselves and non-Muslims except where it benefits and furthers Islam. Muslims are primarily concerned with toppling existing orders and establishing their own totalitarian system wherein dissent is not tolerated. Another wave or two of Islamic fervour sweeping over Muslim concentrations worldwide should be enough to stimulate a general discussion of what cultural responsibility in a democracy necessitates and whether secular democracies are in and of themselves capable guardians of the laws and liberties inherited from what were essentially Christian republics.

Many Muslims, to be fair, are not radical fundamentalists. There are those secular and nominal Muslims that regard the practice and observance of Muslim customs, rituals and obligations indifferently. These Muslims are generally attracted to and influenced by modern culture and are not inclined to participate with Muslims of a more radical nature. It must be pointed out, however, that these Muslims are embracing a culture in many ways as repugnant to evangelical Christians as is Islamic fundamentalism, and that these “progressive” Muslims are merely exchanging one error for another.

The remaining, overwhelming majority of Muslims hold closely to their religion and appear easily actuated by its leaders and theologians (a very disturbing reality not only to non-Muslims concerned with Islamic objectives and the typically violent manner in which Muslims often attempt to realise their objectives, but also to the more moderate political leaders of Muslims worldwide). Islamic fundamentalists tend to overshadow and overwhelm the views of less acerbic Muslims; which does not mean a moderate Islam is acceptable, but only, perhaps, that it is preferable to its alternative.

Reasons for rejecting and resisting the encroachments of Islam are many. They are not constructed on subterfuge, but upon observation, investigation and presentation of clear historical facts. Consider the following. Islam is not Christianity. Islam is not another way to God. Islam is not a revealed religion. It is a man-factured religion, a religion of works adapted to the abilities of fallen man, a religion betraying a

totally inadequate apprehension of sin, redemption, regeneration and sanctification. It is marked by an unambiguous intolerance towards anything foreign. Its tendencies are backward and violent.

Islam’s apologists claim that the rapid expansion of Islam throughout the world testifies to its divine nature and truthfulness, but most historians credit Islam’s expansion to an articulate use of the sword. Why does Islam tend towards violence? Some would have us believe Islam’s hostilities are merely expressions of latent animosities, the consequences of Colonialism and the Crusades. Perhaps, but only in part; were it not for the fact that Islam’s violent behaviour precedes either of the two aforementioned episodes we might be forced to concede they are wholly responsible for Islam’s unsavoury conduct. As was mentioned in the earlier part of this paper, the characterisation of Islam as a violent religion is founded upon both internal and external evidence: (1) Islam’s own literature recommends violence as a way to forward Islam, and (2) historical facts show that Muslims have faithfully employed the recommended measure.

At this point some may argue that Christianity too has exhibited similar behaviour. True, but not on the recommendation of its founder or its literature. It cannot be denied that Christendom has at times manifested intolerance to such an extent as to seem equally as violent as Islam, but, according to Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch Reformed theologian and statesman, such tendencies were *not* suggested by Scripture, but, rather, were common to the times. Christianity’s apologetic and evangelical methods are to be communicative, that is, they are to find their expression in preaching, teaching, dialogue, argumentation, reasoning and polemics. Islam’s apologetic and evangelistic methods, on the other hand, include violence as well.

Islam’s apologists also claim that Islam’s cultural achievements and contributions testify to its divine vibrancy, but, as a study of the assertion suggests, the ransacking of an extremely creative Byzantine culture (a Christian culture!) by sword-bearing Muslims and absorbing, thus benefiting from, that culture’s creativity, does not constitute anything but a “borrowed” vibrancy. The Byzantine Empire emerged from what was the eastern Roman Empire and lasted for over a thousand years, long after the western Roman Empire had crumbled away. Byzantium not only is noted for its preservation of the civilisations of Greece and Rome, but, during the reign of Justinian (sixth century), extended the empire with all of its cultural energy and achievements from southern Spain to the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, and from the Danube to northern Africa. Muslim conquests eventually swallowed up much of the Byzantine Empire and in so doing ingested much of its learning and cultural fire. But under the totalitarian rule of Islam that burning creativity was first dampened, then extinguished, and the Islamic world summarily succumbed to centuries of stagnation. Islam’s resurgence appears equally as dependent upon others as was its first period of “glory.” Just as Islam past benefited from Byzantium, so Islam today benefits from the West—particularly from the West’s petroleum needs. It may be safe to say, therefore, given this line of reasoning, that there is nothing culturally dynamic with Islam, rather, that Islam is aggressively opportunistic—it does not create, it plunders.

Should this negative assessment of Islam be true, it may be asked, what possible explanation could there be for

Islam's recent successes? As was mentioned, the transformation of Islam from an impoverished religion into one able to channel huge amounts into furthering its agenda accounts for some of its triumphs. Additionally, in an age of collapsing empires, confusing philosophies and contradictory voices, Islam's strength and appeal is its strident self-confidence. Islam's resurgence, however, cannot be separated from God's sovereignty over the development of history.

Given the history of Old Testament Israel and God's dealings with that nation we can safely surmise that the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is directed by God against a declining and decadent Christianity. The real problem then is not an advancing Islam, but a retreating Christianity. The Church of Christ needs to rediscover its purpose, repent of its transgressions, pray for renewed enthusiasm, reverse the declension of power within its community, and reassert its influence and leadership in all of life. Only then will it be able to march forward in the name of its King. Only then will it be able to resist and reverse the encroachments of Islam. Awareness is critical. Islam must be exposed as a dark and devious deception. Christianity must

be appreciated as a liberating and illuminating necessity. Muslims must be evangelised.

Government, too, must be encouraged to conduct its affairs biblically and responsibly. It seems unlikely that the secular humanistic bias now governing what were once predominantly Christian nations will be overturned anytime soon (God, however, can accomplish in a day what man considers impossible!), but residual Christian influences and tendencies are still evident and these governments occasionally, if unintentionally, arrive at biblical positions regarding some issues. Christians must capitalise on this inconsistency to advance a more biblical form of government. Rather than accommodate Islam, government must move, must be moved, to curb Islamic influences through appropriate means. Concessions will only complicate an already problematic situation. Alternatives to Arab oil, also, would lessen the amount of money available to Muslims financing an Islamic agenda. Energy independence is central to limiting some of Islam's influence and power.

May God enlighten our leaders, strengthen our Churches and overcome our enemies. Matthew 7:15. *C&S*

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# PERPETUAL REVOLUTION<sup>†</sup>

by Derek Carlsen

THE world renowned Russian writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, was warned not to write about the atrocities committed by the Marxists who were ruling the Soviet Union. The warning was, "If you bring up the past, you will lose an eye." His response was that if you ignored the past, you would lose *both* eyes. Knowing the past and making sure the *truth* is known about the past, is a vital ingredient in helping us and others to be wise in the present and future. One thing that becomes very clear when you compare our situation in Zimbabwe today with the times Solzhenitsyn wrote about, is that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9).

At the forefront of Lenin's grasp for power in 1917 was his deceptive tactic of promising the peasants land and allowing them to ruthlessly seize it on their own, telling them it belonged to them. This they duly did, becoming a law unto themselves. The reality, however, was that the previous land owners had much less land than the peasants had been lead to believe. Furthermore, it wasn't long before Lenin claimed *his right* to everything that the peasants grew on their newly acquired land. The revolution had been achieved, that is, Lenin had assumed the position of supreme power in the nation and that was all that mattered to him—the peasants had served their purpose. Whatever promises Lenin needed to make in order to attain his ambitions, or whatever promises needed to be broken later to secure his position

didn't matter, he did whatever was necessary to maintain his grasp on power—nothing else had any value or virtue.

Lenin correctly perceived that he needed the peasants' support if he was to retain his precarious hold on power and so he gave them what they wanted, even though it was diametrically opposed to the teachings of Marxism. Why did he do this? Because once he had consolidated his power, he knew he could take it back whenever he liked. How, one might ask, could Lenin so easily do a complete turn around and trample all over the principles he had previously espoused (i.e. that under Marxism, only the State can own the land)? In order to justify his reversal, Lenin appealed to the Marxist philosophy of *dialectical materialism*, which holds contradiction to be the central point in dialectics and therefore at the very heart of Communism. Since contradiction was at the core of Lenin's philosophy of life, when he acted in complete contradiction to his own previous views, he merely attributed this to how life, by necessity, must work. Such a philosophy is very convenient for oppressors, for it allows them complete freedom in their actions and policies, whereby they can "justify" (in the name of dialectics) anything they have to say and do in order to retain their hold on power. Though, as Lenin's ruthlessness quickly made clear, the "privilege" of using contradiction in this way is reserved for the elite leaders alone—everything is remade in accordance with the desires of the rulers and for the express purpose of their staying in control. We see this absolute control used to redefine the much used term, "the dictatorship of the

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proletariat” which in theory meant that the masses were to be the rulers of the nation (this is the Marxists’ selling point, in other words, the way they try to make their philosophy attractive to the masses). In practice, however, it was/is always “the dictatorship of the Party.” The Party assumes that whatever it imagines, that is what the people want, thus the Party’s wishes are said to be the same as if they had actually been given a direct mandate from “the people.” Eventually, what materialises and is established, is a situation whereby what the Party wants is determined merely by the wishes of a few or even one person; thus in reality, this supreme goal of “the dictatorship of the proletariat,” becomes in actuality, the dictatorship of the one. There is nothing new under the sun!

Death and death threats were an essential ingredient in Lenin’s leadership strategy. His friend, the writer Maxim Gorky, said soon after the Revolution that Lenin and Trotsky were already intoxicated by the foul poison of power and this was evidenced by their disgraceful attitude towards freedom of speech, the individual and all the other rights for which the democracy fought. Gorky was murdered! (Stalin, himself a mass murderer, attributed Gorky’s murder to Trotsky).

What we see with Lenin is also true in every other case, namely, that when a political party resorts to violence in an attempt to hold onto power, it confirms by these actions that it is only supported by a minority of the people. The only avenues open to power hungry minorities are deception and violence, which they use with relish and great personal satisfaction. Lenin’s seizing of power in 1917 was achieved with a *very* small number of supporters and thus Lenin, from the beginning, reigned with a vicious, iron fist.

Despite the fact that Lenin nationalised the produce from the land he had earlier “freely given” to the peasants, some of the more hard working and enterprising peasants were still able to do more than just survive. However, their success as farmers made them into a class that was distinct from the rest of the peasants who worked the land, and in time they were labelled “kulaks.” The kulaks were now called the exploiters and were blamed for all the economic problems the nation and individuals were enduring—which was music to the ears of their envious neighbours. Marxism ultimately promotes and institutionalises envy and covetousness.

The step following the false charge of calling the kulaks “exploiters” was Stalin’s implementation of a specific *policy* to eliminate them as a class and so he set about turning all private land and private belongings into collective farms and collective property. (As a point of note, it is no surprise when we see how the Communists seized power in China either: the elite leaders promised the poor that they would be given land and all their debts would be cancelled. The landlords were wiped out and the land was given to the previous landless peasants, who began working the land with great joy. Yet once the Chinese leaders had consolidated their grip on power, the poor were of no more value to them and so all land was nationalised and every person who worked the land became a slave of the state).

The term kulak was never defined. However, if someone hired labourers, or owned two horses or had a nice house he probably would be called a kulak; that is, if the revolutionary cause needed to define him as such. Why would the “people’s revolution” call people kulaks? Because the only way Marxism can survive is if it perpetuates a never ending revolution

and to have a revolution one needs to have an enemy who can be blamed and then eradicated—with the *consent* of the rest of the nation. A Marxist country’s hardships and gross inefficiencies are never the fault of the philosophy of Marxism or of their greedy leaders. No, the fault is always the kulaks—whoever or whatever they might be. Thus, there is a constant cycle of identifying and then isolating another group of people who are said to be exploiting the nation. Once this is done, war is declared against them (the perpetual revolution), though what is always promised is that with the eradication of this particular group the revolution will finally be completed and then everyone will have whatever they desire—“from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” The road of Marxism is perpetual revolution, because the fruit of Marxism is perpetual failure and thus new kulaks have to be constantly invented, identified, blamed and eliminated—“all for the good of the people,” which is what the State propaganda machine urges everyone to believe.

Another fundamental aspect in the philosophy of Marxism is the belief that life, health and prosperity are birthed out of the revolution—out of chaos, it is claimed, will come paradise. This is held to with religious zeal and is clearly seen by the mindless destruction that is so commonly carried out by radical revolutionaries—past and present (if you look around you will see that there is nothing new under the sun, or under the Party).

The main reason for the perpetual revolution, though, is to secure power for the elite rulers. This revolution is in essence a civil war. However, it is a civil war that is focused and contained within an area or among a certain class of people so that the rest of the nation does not get roused and drawn in—the strategy is to isolate, divide and destroy. The elite rulers could never hold back the whole nation if it rose up together, but they can deal with isolated groups, one at a time. Thus, the rest of the nation is neutralised towards the plight of the targeted kulaks, either due to their envy or their indifference about true justice after succumbing to the State’s propaganda about the kulaks, which “reveals” how evil and exploitative the kulaks are and how their intention has always been the destruction of the nation. The general feeling, therefore, while the kulaks are being oppressed, is that they are a greedy subversive bunch of people who are merely getting what they deserve. The rest of the nation separates themselves from the “subversive” kulaks and believes that the sooner this latest disturbance is settled the better for everyone. Even if this means the destruction of the kulaks, that’s just too bad since life needs to go on and once the kulaks are out of the way, it is thought, things will get back to normal. However, after the unhindered destruction of the kulaks, things do *not* improve. Why? The reason is obvious: another sinister group of kulaks has arisen and is exploiting the masses, thus there will be no prosperity or peace until they too are eliminated.

In Zimbabwe, our elite rulers have adopted the slogan, “Land is the economy and the economy is land.” The final revolution, we are told, is now taking place whereby the landless will be given their own, rightful land. Is it mathematically possible for every Zimbabwean to own productive land? Maybe we will need to colonise some land from neighbouring countries in order to fulfil this “dream”? If every Zimbabwean cannot possibly own such land, then doesn’t the slogan imply that some Zimbabweans will be

prevented from sharing in the “economy” of the country? Who then is going to determine who the privileged ones will be, i.e. who can own land and thus be part and parcel of Zimbabwe’s “economy”? Be warned though, and remember, today’s landless are tomorrow’s kulaks! The “Land is the economy . . .” slogan being used to fuel and justify the present chaos is nothing but blatant deception—as deceptive as Lenin’s promise to the peasants in his day, which was designed for only one purpose: to strengthen his grasp on power.

Those who don’t see what is happening in our day will reap the reward the Russian people reaped in Lenin’s day and become enslaved to a perverse, greedy and severely intolerant elite group of leaders. Lenin promised land and peace, but what he delivered was slavery and suffering—on a massive scale. Lenin, together with our present leaders, will only be remembered as perpetrators of a new and more despotic intolerance. Ever greater intolerance is always the

policy adopted by those who lust after power, but only have minority support.

Perpetual revolution, which is inseparable from Marxism as we know it, has one objective: to keep tyrants in power. Vital to the success of this, is preventing the rest of the nation from becoming involved when civil war is unleashed against the targeted kulaks. Even those who are only slightly awake, however, ought to ask who is going to be identified as the next kulak class and become the chaff for the next purge cycle (Gukurahundi), since such purges are a tyrannical State’s life-blood. Marxists have to constantly orchestrate some kind of class conflict and they do this by lying, then inciting and justifying both envy and covetousness. In reality, the source of our national woes is not the latest “kulak” group, but our tyrannical leaders and thus there will be no relief from our calamities until they are removed from office and Christ is truly honoured as Lord over every area of life. *Think about these things! C&S*

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## “ATOMS OF DELIGHT”

by Alan Wilson

I was reading a book of haiku poetry called *Breathmarks* written by Gary Hothan. It was a delight to read poetry by a Christian who didn’t confuse his art with evangelism, a failing of so many Christian artists, musicians and writers. In his short introduction he reminds his readers of the centrality of language to humanity; that it is central to civilisation because it is the primary medium for thought. Francis Shaeffer would have said it was a revelation of the “mannishness of man.” Hothan starts with Adam “naming” the animals in Genesis as proof of this unique mannishness because it is in the “naming” that man’s authority over nature is seen. Dominion (God’s cultural mandate) is associated with a process of “naming,” of using a symbol or sign system to subdue the world *and* to express that other dimension of our life:—that we are made in God’s image. We are imaginative and creative creatures and without these attributes we could not develop and open up the potential within creation.

Poetry is a particular use of language tied to the imagination and creativity because it *shapes* language differently from a text book or how we speak on the telephone. Hothan tells us that the poetic shaping of language “is the energy inherent in the words and their arrangement.” He gives the example of the biologist, geographer, anthropologist and historian all describing a river: their “naming” the river clearly involves a different kind of language arrangement from that of the poet. Unlike them the poet uses words to “give some sort of delight or pleasure or excitement or insight or wisdom or feeling or wonder.” Of course, such things may be found in the writings of these other occupa-

tions, “but not as a primary focus. For them, it’s not in how the words tell but what the words tell. In poetry, it’s how the words are combined that’s most important . . .” He goes on to describe interesting stuff about the “spacing” involved in the phrases which intensifies the words and how we “hear the spaces.” This is certainly true of haiku and concrete poetry.

Haiku poetry, with its simplicity of form, is an excellent method in the hand of a gifted poet to highlight the fingerprints of God in the ordinary, concrete experiences of life. In its most fundamental form of seventeen syllables divided into three lines of 5, 7, 5 it can incredibly highlight the minutiae of our everyday existence. Although it has origins in Japanese Zen, haiku can be a suitable vehicle for the Christian poet because we, more than anyone, should appreciate the commonplace—like Durer’s magnificent masterpiece of a clump of grass!

To read the great Japanese master of haiku, Basho, is to be confronted by this art form at its most acute. His sparseness of form as he sketches up piercing images of the phenomenal world only enhances the reader’s awareness that all of life is pregnant with meaning; that the world, like God, is one and many, unity and diversity. As Kenneth White, the Scots poet says, “The idea is to grasp a moment in such a way that it opens out onto the whole field of culture, the entire space of the cosmos.” A haiku vision should mean, “You look at a pebble, the branch of a tree, a gesture in the street, and you have the impression that the entire world, the whole of life is being revealed to you.” And so we find Basho’s crystallized and distilled moments illuminate all of life:—

Breaking the silence  
Of an ancient pond  
A frog jumped into water—  
a deep resonance.

Personally, I find such poetical expression places within me an experience that unfolds God's natural revelation at a profound level. It is Dooyeweerd's "naïve experience" heightened in a definite poetic form which reflects concrete reality.

Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, the Gaelic poet, also points minds to enlightenment and wisdom, only his worldview is grounded in theistic Calvinism. It is his firm belief in the doctrines of creation and providence that undergirds his conviction that illumination can be sought in the here and now of daily life. He would readily admit that *only* Christianity provides the preconditions of intelligibility for man's experience and reasoning—and imagination. Like Basho, MacFhionnlaigh's poetry uses the fewest words possible because as Hothan points out, "Too many words would mean more moments and diffuse the sharp edges of a single moment." In his beautiful *Eagle, Robin, Pine*, Fearghas strings many moments together, each self-contained yet connected:—

The anonymous  
is tamed  
by its name . . .

The Eagle soars  
The Robin consoles  
The Pine-needles spiral down . . .

A single leaf is big enough  
to form a life-raft of the mind.  
A tree a looming ship may be . . .

In the woods tonight—  
Moon, Aurora Borealis, Plough,  
an oyster-catcher's fading cry . . .

Hothan's haiku is equally focused and celebratory. It is full of emotional energy centring upon the "small events, the brief moments of life":

more darkness  
more fireflies—  
more darkness than fireflies . . .

my move  
their move  
morning clouds . . .

on our way back—  
nothing left in the sky  
of the hawk's circle.

Finally, I'd like to introduce you to a few poetic attempts of my own:—

#### THREE HEBRIDEAN VISIONS

I look down standing on a Lewis croft  
it strikes me this grass echoes all grass  
kindred spirits dancing the same dance  
with the gentle wind orchestrating  
their bodily jive.

I look up and see a gull fly—  
up down, up down, up down  
its wings in energetic unison:  
strange, it looks as if it's trying.

I look down to a ruin  
a blackhouse with an erased story  
like some palimpsest  
a text etched in stone.

#### CELTIC EPIGRAM

As a flea confronts a mountain  
man contemplates God

#### CONCRETE HAIKU ON HAIKU

Inconsequential  
Momentous  
moment.

#### AWAKENING

I found that love again  
looking at the northern sky  
in the summer's gleaming  
with nature's scent.

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# THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

by Jean-Marc Berthoud

## INTRODUCTION

SOME preliminary remarks are in order before entering into the heart of our subject. They will deal with the second of the two terms of our title: *The role of the family in Christianity*.

What do we mean by “Christianity”? We must clearly distinguish between what can be called “historic Christianity” and, for want of a better expression, what we shall call “modern Christianity.” Whatever we have to say regarding the role of the family in Christianity will be in relation to the historic Christian faith and not to its “modern” counterfeit. The latter today all too often masquerades as the genuine article. The distinction we here draw your attention to is not the vertical (or denominational) differentiation between various branches of the Church (Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism or evangelicalism) but a horizontal demarcation which cuts thorough each of these segments of the Christian faith. Within each Christian denomination you will find partisans of the historic Christian faith as well as proponents of its “modern” critical travesty. I shall be speaking of the genuine Christian faith, not of its travesty, of its apostasy.

The question we must now answer is how to distinguish between the travesty and the genuine object. We shall give four answers.

The first is the attitude towards the Bible. Does the Bible the Jewish *Tanak* (the Old Testament) and the *Apostolic Witness* (the New Testament) constitute the inspired Word of God, and as such is it the final authority for the teachings of the Christian faith? Or is the Christian and Jewish Bible a mere human word, useful and inspiring no doubt, but necessarily (as are all human achievements) fallible and in no sense normative for all men, all places and all times. This question of final authority is at the heart of whatever religious faith we hold. Is this final authority merely human, as in the fraudulent “modern” version of the Christian faith? Is it thus merely rational, scientific, experiential, in short “critical” of God’s revelation? Or is the authority of the *Tanak* and

*Apostolic Witness* fully divine, as affirms the historic Christian faith whose final authority is inscribed in the very verbal texture of Divine Scripture? The historic faith of Eastern Orthodoxy (Saint John Chrysostom and Father Justin Popovitch, for example), of Roman Catholicism (Saint Thomas Aquinas and Pope Pius Xth, for example), of Protestantism (John Calvin and Cornelius Van Til, for example) and of evangelicalism (John Bunyan and Louis Gaussen, for example) all hold to the divine infallible authority of the Bible.

So, from the perspective of the historic Christian faith the final standard for defining the role of the family will be found in the teachings of the Bible, both *Tanak* and *Apostolic Witness*. This normative Truth is not, in the final resort, to be discovered in the independent experience of the Church or in the autonomous experience of man, in the lessons of history or in the descriptions of sociology. I hasten here to add that whatever useful information can, in the light of Holy Scripture, be gleaned from these various fields must by no means be neglected.

The Christian faith, in the second place, bears a historic character. By this I mean that from the beginning of history the confrontation between the historic Christian faith and the errors which have, at all times, attacked it, have led to a better understanding both of its fundamental beliefs, and of the errors which constantly seek to destroy it. The historic Christian faith thus confesses with one voice the fundamental Creeds of the early Church: *The Apostolic Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, the *Formulations of Chalcedon*, which have in time all been found faithful to their Scriptural foundation. The definition we shall give of the role Christianity assigns to the family takes into account this accumulation through history of carefully defined doctrinal wisdom. For example, the attacks directed against the family, both today and in the past, lead us better to understand its nature, character and function.

Thirdly, the historic Christian faith holds to a realist epistemology. This means that the intellectual content of the faith can be determined by the formulation of carefully defined concepts. Thus if these concepts are true dogmatically then their contrary formulations are necessarily false. Thus, with regard to the family, it is possible, from the point of view of the historic Christian faith, not only to define with precision the origin, character, role, obligations and religious finality of the family, but also to refute the deformations

1. This is the text of a paper read at the *Second World Congress of Families* held in Geneva, Switzerland, between the 14th and 17th November 1999. A fuller exposition of the views developed in this paper can be found in Jean-Marc Berthoud, *L'école et la famille contre l'utopie* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1997) and more particularly in the first part dealing specifically with the family.



and travesties which over the centuries have attacked it and which are seeking utterly to destroy it today.

Finally, the historic Christian faith is not just a doctrine, a theory, but life, a way of life, an ethical obedience, both social and personal, received as a gift from God. It thus seeks to conform to the revealed will of God, the law of God, contained in the whole Scripture, *Tanak* and *Apostolic Witness*. This means that within the context of the historic Christian faith the role of the family must be acted out in history and that it must prove its truth by its concrete manifestation in the day to day life of society. It is clear that this restoration of the creational structures and functions of the family will be accomplished at the expense of those counterfeit deformations which appear again and again in history.

Having put these preliminary remarks out of the way, we shall now turn to our theme: *The role of the family in Christianity*. The role the historic Christian faith assigns to the family cannot adequately be grasped without an understanding of its origin and character, its obligations and its final end or purpose. We shall briefly deal with each of these aspects.

### 1. THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY<sup>2</sup>

Scripture, both *Tanak* and *Apostolic Witness*, tells us that the family, like man himself, the stars, the earth and the sea and all that they contain, is a *creature*; that is a social form directly created by God and that its members each and every one of us are finally accountable to him for the way we treat this institution. The family thus bears the character of a permanent substantial form (like biological *species* or chemical *elements*) and as a result, like all created forms, cannot in the long run be destroyed by man.

This allows us to draw the following conclusions: that the created family is constitutive of the human race and, even if it is today under dire attack, cannot be abolished; that all men and women, by their very nature, belong to the family; that all human beings irrespective of their religious (or irreligious) beliefs can no more escape this divinely established framework than they can stop breathing, or refuse to use their digestive system, or reject the circulation of their blood. This inescapable stability of the family explains our meeting here in Geneva (in former times, citadel of an exemplary expression of the historic Christian faith), for what has brought us together is our common conviction of the foundational nature of the family, which, as a creational institution, includes us all within the scope of its authority. What can comfort us in the battle we are all waging in defence of the created family is its indestructible character, as indestructible as the order of the universe itself. This shows us the utter futility of the efforts of those who seek to destroy it. They are, by the very nature God has given them with every new generation born to themselves, forced to reestablish the family. It is fitting for us to begin our considerations of *the role of the family in Christianity* by hearing, first the witness of the

2. On the biblical base of the family I recommend two brilliant detailed expositions of the concrete application of the Ten Commandments: Pierre Viret, *L'Instruction Chrétienne en la Loi et l'Évangile*, shortly to be republished for the first time since 1564 in five volumes by L'Age d'Homme in Lausanne and Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, Vol. I (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973), Vol. II, *Law and Society* (1982) and Vol. III, *The Intent of the Law* (1999), from Ross House Books, Vallecito, California 95251.

*Torah*, as it is given us in the book of Genesis, then that of the Messiah himself, as faithfully reported by the *Apostolic Witness of Mark* on the divine origin and creational character of the family.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him . . . And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; and she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:18 and 21–24).

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Gen. 1:27–28).

So much for the *Torah*. Let us now look at the *Apostolic Witness*.

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them: What did Moses command you? And they said: Moses suffered us to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them: For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh; so then they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put apart (Mk 10:2–9<sup>3</sup>).

So both the *Torah* and the *Apostolic Witness*, both Moses and Jesus Christ, witness to the divine origin of the creational family, to its fundamental unity and to its strictly exclusive and monogamous character. For the created family is a true substantial form, “one flesh,” which “no man” (this includes of course the Population Council of New York and the homosexual lobbies the world over!) dare “put apart,” that is to say destroy. What the text of Genesis reveals is the dual aspect of the family: (a) the communion and mutual support of husband and wife so wonderfully and delicately described in the Song of Songs, in the final chapter of the book of Proverbs and in the fifth chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians; and (b) the natural consummation of marriage in the procreation of numerous children, fecundity universally considered by the Bible as a divine blessing.<sup>4</sup> Such teachings from the *Tanak* are abundantly echoed by the writings contained in the *Apostolic Witness*, the New Testament.

### 2. THE CHARACTER (OR STRUCTURE) OF THE FAMILY

The idea that the modern cellular Western family consisting of two parents, seen as functionally interchangeable, and accompanied by one or, at most, two children, whose conception has been explicitly desired and carefully “planned,” constitutes the Christian model of the family is very far removed from the truth. The Christian biblical family has a very different character. It is above all a complex and highly organised institution. In some respects it is

3. See also the following texts: Mt. 19:3–9; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 6:31.

4. See in particular Psalms 127 and 128.

monarchical, in others aristocratic, and from another angle it can even be considered to have a democratic character.

Firstly it is basically monarchical. If husband and wife are both created in the image of God, because of the fall they are also both sinners and the objects of God's mercy. In this respect there is no basic spiritual difference between man and woman.<sup>5</sup> This in no way implies the exclusion of hierarchy from the structure of the family. The family institution is in fact strictly monarchical in structure, in the sense that the husband, far from being the mathematical "equal" of his wife, is very definitely her institutional superior. Both the *Tanak* and the *Apostolic Witness* are very clear on this count: the man is legally the head of the wife. The explanation of this conjugal hierarchy is fundamentally religious: both the *Tanak* and the *Apostolic Witness* teach us that the relationship between husband and wife constitutes an image of the relation between God and his creation, between the Lord God and his covenant people and between Jesus Christ the Second Person of the Trinity and the people of the renewed covenant, the Christian Church. The latter is made up of men and women of all nations who, by faith in the Messiah, have become heirs to the promises given to Abraham. The restoration of the biblical structure of the family must thus be accompanied by the total rejection of our pseudo-mathematical equalitarianism, particularly that posited by contemporary society between man and wife. We must resolutely return to the hierarchical structure of the biblical family.

Of course, as the whole Bible makes abundantly clear, this structural and institutional hierarchy in no way condones any kind of tyrannical domination of the husband over his wife. But equally abhorrent to the biblical family is the feminist domination of the man so common to our Western societies. Worse still is a family (or a society) ruled by the whims of children.<sup>6</sup> The question here is one concerning the way in which institutions, in this case the family, are structured and does not concern the intrinsic inferiority or superiority of different human beings. The reading of the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs and a careful examination of the vital role played by women in the ministry of Jesus Christ and of the Apostle Paul should make this abundantly clear.

But the biblical family is also structured in a hierarchical, aristocratic manner. If the father is, as we have seen, the family's king, then his wife is his queen. This is the reason why the Christian marriage ceremony was for so long (until the time of Breughel the elder in the sixteenth century) celebrated as a coronation. This is still the case today in the Orthodox tradition. Together, husband and wife form the government of the family. Thus the Christian family is not governed by the sole monolithic (monist) authority of the father and husband, but by a kind of bi-cameral system of government. The authority of the wife counterbalances that of her husband. But she always remains under his final authority. That is why the *Apostolic Witness* speaks of the first sin not as that of Eve but as Adam's sin, for he as husband

5. This spiritual "equality" applies also to other social categories. It does not abolish creational and social distinctions and hierarchies such as those which exist between slaves and freemen, Greeks and Jews, Chinese and Africans, soldiers and officers, children and parents, etc. See Gal. 3:28 and Col. 3:11.

6. See on this vital subject the teaching of the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 3.

was, in the final resort, personally accountable to God for all that transpired under his authority. The theological reason for this dual form of government, a guarantee against arbitrary male absolutism, lies in the fact that if, on the one hand, man is personally created in the image of God, the family, on the other, is made after the image of the heavenly family, the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three divine persons, one God.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, in the Christian perspective the family has, to a certain degree, a democratic character. Not that in the family, as happens constantly in the perverted form of democracy everywhere prevalent in the West today, the majority of votes establishes the truth. This is nothing else but the divinisation of man and of number. All the members of the household (the enlarged family) children as well as the parents, servants and employees<sup>8</sup> being all created in the image of God have their appropriate say (according to their age and condition) in the life and direction of the family. This, of course, under the direction of the parents and the final authority of the father.

Here again we see the beneficent effects of the divine model of the family, the Trinity. For we see in the structure of the biblical family an emphasis both on its unity and its diversity. The children's say in the affairs of the family will grow as they become older until such time as they will in turn, each . . . *leave his father and mother, and . . . cleave to his wife* [or husband]; *and they shall be one flesh*. Thus they will themselves establish a new family on the basic model of that of their parents. In passing let me add that this detachment of the new branch of the family from the patriarchal trunk allows for innovation. Its attachment to the basic model, ensures continuity. The result of the highly structured and diversified nature of the biblical model of the family is the constitution of an extraordinarily resilient and flexible institution capable of acting in common (orders must be obeyed!) and endowed with the strength to offer lasting resistance to the totalitarian pretensions of the wider institutions of society, whether they be of a political or a religious character.

### 3. THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Having examined the origins of the family and its basic character or structure, let us now turn to its fundamental role, or rather to the numerous roles it is called to play. We must first note the extremely limited present function of the family in Western society. This model of the family, because of the political, economic and cultural domination of the West over the whole planet, exercises a dominant attraction for the families of the world. Now this Western model, when compared to the family as revealed in the teachings of the Bible (and to the widespread practice even of non-Christian nations until a recent period), is a fundamentally truncated image of the true character of the family, and of the potential achievements of this institution. The actual Western model of the family, a temporary, fragile and unstructured grouping of atomised and equal individuals, has in fact very little to do with the family as revealed in the teachings of the Scriptures. This Western reductionist view of the family is a

7. See, among other texts, Eph. 3:14-15.

8. In biblical society, and at other times in the history of Christianity, the enlarged family or household would include the slaves.

sociological and historical anomaly,<sup>9</sup> a philosophical aberration,<sup>10</sup> and is, from the point of view of the historical Christian faith, unquestionably heretical theologically. As such this model must be rejected if we are to begin solving the innumerable problems it has brought upon our civilisation.

(a) *The family as the basic unit of society*

As is clearly witnessed by the *Torah* the family has a temporal priority over every other social institution. God created Adam first, then from Adam he made Eve and together they brought forth children into the world. All social institutions, religious, political, economic, cultural and whatever, have their root in this original family. This in itself justifies the purpose of this Congress and explains its motto: *The natural family is the fundamental social unit.*

But we must say more. With the diversification of society the functions once exclusively held by the family in the religious, political, economic and cultural fields have come to be delegated to larger institutions deemed better able to accomplish their function such as the State, the Church, business organisations, schools, etc. Many of these functions are nonetheless still substantially part of the vocation of the family. Delegating them out to other organisations is one thing. Abandoning the political, economic, educational and religious functions of the family to the State, to the Church, to Business organisations or to schools constitutes the vocational betrayal of the family's true functions. The Western family has in fact given up almost all its divinely ordained functions to the almighty State. It has thus become an empty shell, a temporary and insignificant assemblage of individuals, soon to be durably dispersed. These atomised individuals are, for all their pretension to personal liberty and autonomy, in fact totally dependent for their very existence on the functioning of our new Leviathan, the modern bureaucratic State. How far removed we are today from the social reality expressed by the English proverb which affirms so pithily that: *Every man's home is his castle!* We will now examine what such a biblical vision of the family means.

(b) *The family as a miniature political order*

The word *government* in the biblical perspective does not first apply to the government of the State. Men and women must first know how to govern themselves before they can think of governing others. Husband and wife can then together seek to govern their household. Then comes the government of wider organisations such as the Church, the business enterprise, and all kinds of voluntary associations. Only in the final resort can we speak of *government* as the government of the society at large. It is useful to remember that in the beginning (that is at the time of the creation of the world), the biblical family constituted the first political order. By its very nature it represents an independent political society. It has a presiding authority in the person of the father; a differentiated government in the form of the com-

mon direction of the family by the parents. Placed as they are under the supreme and overarching authority of God's law those who govern the family establish the rules by which it functions. In this way the family exercises a legislative function. Further, within the bounds of the family the parents constitute a judicial authority which can, of its own prerogative, judge cases where the family's laws have been infringed. Finally, the family exercises clear police functions having the biblical authority to punish acts contrary to the laws of its modest polity.

These are the privileges and duties which from a biblical perspective constitute each family as an independent political order. Of course this political microcosm does not exist in a vacuum independently of a wider political order, that of the State, itself placed under the overarching authority of God's law. The State must, wherever necessary, punish whatever crimes are perpetrated within the political microcosm of the family. But the intervention of such an external authority must be strictly limited to *bona fide* crimes and be always undertaken with prudence. For it is one of the functions of the State, as defined by the Bible, to see to the preservation of the independence of these miniature familial political orders. What we can today observe in the West is the persistent action of the secular (i.e. atheistic) State aimed at usurping these political functions of the family and reducing them to nothing.

In my country, Switzerland, for example the paternal authority has been legally abolished in the name of a functional equality (even interchangeability) between husband and wife. Indeed the very names of "husband" and "wife" no longer appear in our federal matrimonial law. They have been replaced by that of "partner." In some European countries biblically sanctioned corporal punishment applied by parents on their own children can lead to their being sent to prison. We are in the process of going one step further in the devaluation of the biblical family by the proposition put forward by our authorities to institute a legal status for so-called "homosexual couples." This total moral and natural aberration has very recently passed into law in France, which in this followed the example of the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. It is very clear today that our "post-Christian" nations have lost all sense of the nature and purpose of the family. Non-Christian nations are not in such a state of intellectual, moral and social corruption. Amongst other things they still preserve a sense of the creational meaning of the family.

(c) *The family as a miniature economic order*

The biblical vision of the family also implies a high degree of autonomy on the economic level. The family is essentially conceived as an independent economic organism. Thus, from a Christian point of view, the basic economic unit of society is familial. In this sense all the members of the family have a decisive, if differentiated, role to play in the economic welfare of the whole. The father bears the brunt of the task of providing the material welfare of the family. Here he is helped by the highly varied activities of his wife, her work being principally related to home building; but the children also, as they grow up, become ever more effective aids. Servants, and in certain societies slaves, are, from the biblical point of view, to be considered as forming a part of the household and must in consequence be treated

9. J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1934); *Hoplusia, or the Sexual and Economic Foundations of a New Society* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1940).

10. A philosophical aberration in its nominalist rejection of universals, here the universal of the family. See the study by Georgette Papacostoula, *Les conceptions d'Aristote sur la famille et l'éducation morale* (Athènes, 1956).

as such. Of course on marriage the children leave their parents to constitute their own new independent families. But the lateral bonds between families remain strong. These outgrowths of the original family constitute new political and economic organisms, functionally independent of the parents but not forgetful of their responsibilities towards them. This relative economic autarchy of the family farm in Europe, for example, was until a recent period, a very common phenomenon. This was also true of the small artisan shop.<sup>11</sup> As a family we have experienced the effectiveness and power of such an independent family organism, particularly in the battle we have waged over the past twenty-five years for the defence of the traditional family in French speaking Switzerland. Without the constant help of my wife and children, all cheerfully working together in the framework of our *Christian Parents' Association*, much less would have been accomplished.<sup>12</sup>

But this is not all. Such a highly functional view of the family implies a very positive attitude towards the birth of children. In the biblical perspective the birth of a child is seen as a great blessing and the growth of the family perceived as growth in effective power. A well organised, hierarchical and disciplined family is indeed a very powerful organisation. That is why the modern atheistic State is so determined to destroy it. Such a family is not only a highly productive institution but it also constitutes a basic and extremely efficient unit for the exercise of social welfare. In such a family the elderly parents are not cruelly excluded from a productive function in society by retirement at an arbitrary age but, as their strength weakens, gradually diminish their activities. The welfare of the parents in old age is assured, not by fragile and impersonal State pension schemes, today being destroyed by our declining birth rate, but by personal support provided by the existence of numerous children who understand what it means to *honour father and mother*. Within such a strong and flexible structure it is also easy to integrate into the household the unmarried members of the family. They can thus all, old and young, married and unmarried, play an important role in the multifarious facets of the life of the family. Such a family constitutes an organism whose resilience makes it able to support its members in situations of crisis, such as sickness, bereavement or loss of work. Such a flexible and strong social institution is a powerful bulwark against the totalitarian pretensions of the modern bureaucratic State.

(d) *The family as a cultural and educational organism*

In the West it is considered normal for the family not to be directly involved in the schooling of its children. This task is usually delegated to the State educational system. The biblical teaching on this matter is very clear. This task is the duty of the parents who are accountable to God for the

11. On the nature of the European family in the nineteenth century see the works of Frédéric Le Play.

12. A detailed account of the way such a family functioned in Europe in a period as recent as that just before and after the Second World War is to be found in the epic novel *The Red Horse* by the Italian Roman Catholic novelist Eugenio Corti. This book, already in its fourteenth printing in Italy (this in spite of the total blackout by the secular media!), should be available in English by the end of the year. [This novel is now available in English from Amazon (published by Ignatius Press, San Francisco, ISBN 0-89870-747-1)—SCP.]

religious, moral, intellectual and practical education given to their children.<sup>13</sup> If the parents may delegate this authority to organisations external to the family such as private schools who teach their children in a framework of belief of which they can approve, they nonetheless remain personally accountable for the education their children receive. The *Christian Home School Movement* which has grown so vigorously since its inception in the United States some twenty years ago and is today burgeoning in many countries has done much to restore this vital educational function to the family.<sup>14</sup>

The academic and educational results produced by this restoration of formal instruction to the family have been remarkable. But, in addition, the restoration of this function to the parents has had an exceptional effect on the very life, structure and cohesion of the families involved. The return of the parents to this aspect of an active obedience to the conditions of the biblical covenant has brought with it very great blessings. Not only are the children brought up in the Christian beliefs of their parents, but the parents themselves rediscover the great and unsuspected riches of the institution which God has entrusted them with. This path leads to the restoration of the family as the foundational institution of society and to the dethroning of the religious, in this case cultural and educational, pretensions of the State in its bloated unnatural domination of the living institutions of society. The return to such a path of obedience to God will no doubt lead to the building up of healthy social structures in our nations.

(e) *The family as a religious institution*

It is clearly impossible to speak of *The role of the family in Christianity* without mentioning its religious role. As we have already pointed out the family is indestructible, for as a creational institution it bears the image of the heavenly family, the Holy Trinity, one God in three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In addition, we have seen that the loving authoritative and submissive relationship between husband and wife constitutes a living image of the relation which unites Jesus Christ to his Church, the Church being the harbinger of the new creation. In the historic Christian perspective, whether Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, evangelical or Reformed, the family is a covenantal institution. The family is thus seen as an institution placed under the special protection of God.

Since the end of the sixteenth century this covenantal character of the family has in the West been replaced by the secular notion that the family is simply a contractual institution and, as such, dissolvable at will. This means that the vision of the family as a stable created form (like *species* in biology or the *elements* of chemistry) has been abandoned in favour of the notion that individuals (like the isolated atoms of Newtonian physics governed only by mathematical laws) can make (or unmake) the family at will. Thus the West has abandoned all sense of the sacred character of the family.<sup>15</sup> This secularisation of the family is the fruit of the atheisation

13. See for example Dt. 6:4–9. The book of Proverbs is full of indications on the essential responsibility of the family for the formal education of its own children.

14. See Samuel Blumenfeld, *Homeschooling: A Parents Guide to Teaching Children*, Citadel Press (120 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus NJ 07094: Carol Publishing Group, 1997).

15. See, Alfred Dufour, *Droit de l'Homme, droit naturel et histoire*

of Western thought. Today, with the legal recognition of so-called “homosexual marriages” we have gone a step further. We no longer even recognise the normativity of the *natural* character of the family.

As a religious institution the family has a temporal and practical, if not spiritual, priority over the Church. In the beginning, in the persons of our first parents, Adam and Eve, the family represented the Church. It is interesting to note that the first sacrifices, those of Cain and Abel, were offered in the context of the family. This is seen also with Noah at the time of the universal Flood as well as in the sacrifices offered by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This state of affairs changed to some degree with the instauration of the ceremonies of the Mosaic law and much later in the ecclesiastic form of worship practiced in the apostolic Church. We can observe in the apostolic Church how the biblical household often serves as the nucleus for the establishment of local Churches. But even today in the Christian family the father retains a spiritual authority which makes him not only the political, judicial and economic leader of his social microcosm, but its religious head as well.

We have seen that the Christian view of government is first personal; then there is the government of the family by the parents; finally we come to the political government of the nation. Likewise, the relation of the Christian to God is first intimately personal; then it is exercised in the wider context of family worship; finally it is formally ecclesiastical. We have gradually discovered to what extent from the Christian perspective *the natural family is the fundamental social unit*. We find now that this is equally true in the religious sphere. For if the family is disordered spiritually, then the wider religious community will manifest very similar disorders. Such religious disorders will very soon cause serious damage to the society at large.

#### CONCLUSION

It is time to conclude our rapid survey of *the role of the family in Christianity*. What I have briefly tried to evoke before you is clearly not a sociological description of the present state of the family in what is left today of a formerly vital, creative and beneficent Christendom. The picture I have endeavoured to draw before you is that of a model to be imitated, a social purpose that all who wish to see the restoration of the family must seek to put into practice. This purpose is nothing less than the realisation of that original model of the family established for all men at the creation. This model is deformed by our sin, our wilful disobedience to God’s holy law as it is revealed in the *Torah*, indeed in all the commandments contained in the *Tanak* and in the *Apostolic Witness*. It is what still persists of this model in our nations which the powers behind the atheistic (and pantheistic) utopian globalism everywhere dominant today seek utterly to remove from the face of the earth.

But the present worldwide assault on the family, a cultural, political, economic and spiritual war, to which this Congress provides ample witness, must first be seen as a sure sign of God’s holy displeasure with the present condition of mankind. Because of the tremendous growth of evil in the

world God, in faithfulness to his judgements for stubborn perseverance in sin set down in his covenant with men, is today clearly (particularly in our apostate West) withdrawing his protective hand from the families and the nations of the earth. We must confess that this divine judgement on the families of the world strikes first and foremost, and most severely, at our Christian nations, the nations of an impious, immoral and apostate Christendom. As always, God’s judgement can be turned aside, but only by the true and sincere repentance of men from their evil ways and by their return to the worship and obedience due to the only true God. The path of our deliverance is revealed in the divinely inspired Scriptures of the *Tanak* and the *Apostolic Witness*, and publicly manifested in the person of his Son, the Messiah of Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The covenant established in the beginning with our first parents, Adam and Eve, was broken by their wilful disobedience. But God, in his mercy and long-suffering patience, through the history of the patriarchs before the Flood and with the descendants of Abraham after, worked towards the re-establishment of his covenant with men. And to this work of redemption, which includes the deliverance of the family from all its enemies, the Christian family must bear a clear witness. For this covenant established with Adam and renewed in Noah and Abraham, Moses and David, was finally, fully and definitively established through the incarnation, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through the humble return of all men to the witness of this immemorial covenant that we can hope to see the total defeat of those evil powers which, in their constant ambition to usurp the throne of God, manifest their hatred of the divine family through their efforts to destroy utterly its image, the human family. In such dangerous times we draw our comfort and our hope from the words of the prophet Isaiah so faithfully set down for us all in the *Tanak* of Israel:

According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the West, and his glory from the rising sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. (Isaiah 59:19–21) C&S

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE!

The email address for *Christianity and Society* was changed some time ago from “C&S@kuyper.org” to “cands@kuyper.org.” However, many people are still attempting to email us at the old address. Please note therefore that the email address has changed. The ampersand sign (“&”) is no longer used and has been replaced by the word “and,” and all letters are now lower case letters. This change was necessitated by a change of service provider last year, and the fact that the ampersand sign can no longer be used in our email addresses.

# THE PREACHING OF THE MORAL LAW

by Paul Wells

## §1

“PERHAPS no phase of the study of Christian ethics is shrouded with such confusion today as the treatment of the law in its relation to the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup> This seems to be quite remarkable, for perhaps never before has there been such a need for the preaching of the law in opposition to the frank nonconformity to divine standards as exists in the present day. It would appear that in spite of the abundance of sinfulness there is a failure on the part of the Church to understand the supremacy of the divine commands and to make clear application of them to the decadence of the permissive society.

In the context of the Reformed tradition, the recent revival of the works of the Puritans has led to renewed interest in what it means to preach the law of God in relation to the grace of salvation in Christ. This is a rediscovery of the doctrine of the Reformers concerning the usefulness of the law to the preacher, which we find reiterated by Melancthon in the *Loci Communes* and elaborated in Calvin’s *Institutes*. With respect to preaching to the sinner Melancthon is very explicit and he calls preaching the law “preaching the wrath of God.”

These two factors, the sinfulness of our day, with its open denial of divine righteousness, and the revival of interest among some in the way our forerunners in the faith brought the commands of God to bear upon the men of their day, cause us to ask this question: what does it mean to preach the law of God, particularly to sinners outside of Christ?

This is not to be considered a matter of secondary importance, for it is the duty of the pastor to instill in his hearers an awareness of their need of salvation. It is doubtful this can be done apart from the law and the knowledge of sin which it brings. The pastor’s ability to preach the law both with respect to the holiness of God and the need of man is important for the efficacy of his ministry. Discernment in the interpretation and application of the divine standards is essential. Error in this issue means not only distortion of God’s word and the besmirching of God’s holy character, but also leading the blind blindly. Incorrect preaching of the law will lead the sinner either into the slough of despair or the fool’s paradise of false assurance. When the eternal destiny of souls is in the balance, it is as well for the preacher to examine his position to ensure that the law is being “preached

strictly” to make men aware of their sinfulness and need of grace.<sup>2</sup>

Because the law of God is given to man in the form of revealed propositions issued by the Almighty, man is unable to come into contact with the law without coming into contact with God himself. For the law is an expression of the moral perfectness of God. As such it places a demand of obedience upon man, which cannot be bypassed. When man does not measure up to God’s standards of perfection then it is by the law that the disobedience of sin is known. As the Heidelberg Catechism says, in this case it is “out of the law of God” that we know our misery.<sup>3</sup> Our knowledge of sin and misery, which arises from the contrast between the perfection of God and the disobedience of man, comes by the law. It is the law which reveals the nature of sin to man.

Therefore with respect to the sinner the law functions in two ways. As the standard of God the law condemns and places the finger on unrighteous disobedience. At the same time it shows what the nature of obedience is. Each single command of the law both condemns sin by showing what sin is and directs by showing the sinner what is required in terms of obedience. In the “Thou shalt nots” of the command the standard of both obedience and disobedience is given. The knowledge of sin obtained from the law shows the sinner’s need of the gospel and salvation. The law discloses and even increases sin in the light of God’s holiness, and only subsequently can the meaning of divine forgiveness be fully understood. Does this mean that we should preach the law before the gospel to prepare men to accept Christ? How does the law function as the sinner’s teacher in relation to the gospel?

## §2

The use of the law for the sinner has been traditionally described by Reformed theologians and confessions in terms of the disclosure of his sin. By means of the revelation of the perfection of God and his will for man, he who hears the law has knowledge of sin. The law gives information with regard to sin precisely because it reveals the character of the law-giver and his holiness, justice and goodness.

Nor is it to be thought that the revelation of the law of

1. C. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (1957), p. 350.

2. Cf. Heidelberg Cat., Lord’s Day 44.

3. *Ibid.*, Lord’s Day 2.

God by means of specific commands places upon man a constraint which is unnatural to the character of the creature. For man in the image of God in spite of the fall into sin has “the work of the law written in his heart” (Rom. 2:15), which causes him to “do by nature the things of the law.” As Professor Murray says, regarding the Gentiles’ knowledge of the law, “they themselves, by reason of what is implanted in their nature, confront themselves with the law of God.”<sup>4</sup> To do that which is the work of the law is that which is written on the heart of man, and even those who are not under the law in the sense of the special revelation written on tables of stone are confronted with the necessity of rendering obedience to God in a way which their conscience will excuse. Man then, as a creature of God, operating in God’s creation, possesses in his very character a knowledge of the command of God which gives him information of how he should act in order to fulfil his task as creature.

Thus the preaching of the law in the form of the specific prescriptions of the Ten Commandments is not directed to the sinner as though he knew nothing of it or as though it were entirely foreign to him. Already, as a fallen creature, he has the foundation laid in his creatureliness upon which the revealed commands can take effect. Considered in this light, there can be no objection to the giving of commands in the form of revealed words, since they do not add a new law, but make the revelation of God more specific.

So it is that the Westminster Confession can say “the moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience therefore; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it.”<sup>5</sup> As the revelation of God, the law applies to all men in bringing information as to God’s will, and it can be preached with a confidence which rests upon its divine origin, authority and consequently its relevance to all men.

Granted the acceptability and the relevance of the law of God to all, what function does the preaching of the law exercise with respect to those who are in rebellion against God? Calvin in the *Institutes* speaks clearly and eloquently on this subject (II.vii.6–9). The law’s function, he says, is to recall to man his state of unrighteousness by instructing him as to the nature of his disobedience to God. Thus the law functions as a scale upon which the unrighteousness of man is weighed (II.vii.6) or as a mirror which reflects sin (vii.7), by which iniquity is made manifest.

At this point a question arises, which has regard to the work of the law and is crucial to preaching. What is the effect of hearing the law upon the sinner? Can the natural man put to good use that which he hears and learns from the law by accepting its instruction as just and true? Does it arouse receptivity to the preaching of the gospel? Is the preaching of the law necessary as the first step in the salvation of the sinner? The answers to these questions are to be determined by a clarification of the educational function of the law, whether the law is to be taken as an “instructor” or as a “slave-driver,” as that which teaches the sinner to maturity or as that which keeps the sinner in custody without hope of release. Exactly how is the law serviceable on the road to grace?

The two passages which speak the most clearly to this matter are found in the writings of Paul in Galatians chapter 3 and Romans chapter 3, and it is largely by these that we will be able to determine whether Paul thinks of the law as preparatory in the process of salvation.

In Galatians chapter 3 the function of the law as a custodian (v. 24) is much discussed. How does the law as a schoolmaster bring us to Christ? Some have taken this to indicate a positive function of the law, and that the law is the educator to instruct man in the knowledge of the perfection of God and his own disobedience, until such a time as he is brought to Christ. However, it seems clear that Paul thinks of the function of the schoolmaster described here not as that of an educator, but as that of a strict governor imposing an oppressive yoke.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as subject to the law, the sinner is not groomed for liberation but experiences the destitution and impotence of being its subject. As a means of preparation, the function of the law is entirely negative, removing man’s hope of release from the bonds of sin. The law binds man up in sin, making his condition hopeless and revealing the true meaning of bondage. So the sinner is “confined” by the law which increases transgressions (Gal. 3:19).

In other words, the law makes guilt and evil greater by making rebellion conscious and manifest. Under the bondage of the law sin is multiplied, for man deliberately rebels against God (cf. Rom. 4:15; 5:20). Thus the reality of sin and disobedience is fully revealed. The law is added, as Paul says, in order that “sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure” (Rom. 7:13). This passage does seem to describe rather well the function which the custodian-law exercises. The law itself is not sinful and was ordained with a gracious means in view, but man being sinful finds occasion in it for sin, and the depravity residing in him is roused to activity. The power of the law is then to incite sin, its weakness lying in the fact that it cannot free man from sin as a means of his salvation.

These considerations seem to lead legitimately to the conclusion that, as a preparation for the hearing of the gospel, the law has a negative function, which removes every other avenue of salvation from the sinner. No doubt can be entertained that in Galatians chapter 3 Paul is speaking of the function of the law in its relation to the gospel from the perspective of the history of salvation. Nevertheless the principles which he is setting forth, namely the negative function of the law as custodian, applies to the preaching of the law to the sinner today. The disobedient sinner is under the law and its judgement until liberated by regeneration.

This fact is illustrated by Paul’s synonymous use of “under the law” and “sin’s dominion” in Rom. 6:14. To be under the law is to be the bondservant of sin, and to be the bondservant of sin is to be subject to the judgement of the law.

In Rom. 5:20 we read further details of the function of the law, to which we have already alluded: “law came in, to increase the trespass.” So it is that “through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). The purpose of the law is described by Paul not primarily as leading to Christ or preparation for the reception of grace, but as “increasing

4. J. Murray, *Romans* (1959), Vol. I, p. 73.

5. Westminster Confession, XIX.5.

6. Cf. G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin* (1971), p. 168ff.; H. Ridderbos, *Galatians* (1953), p. 143ff., and *When the Time had Fully Come* (1957), p. 66ff.

sin” which results in a practical knowledge of the working of a sinful nature.

This knowledge of sin which comes from the inclusion of the law in salvation history is a demonstration of the grace of God. In convincing men of their sin and inability to keep the law, its purpose is to show that justification does not come by the law. The presence of the law produces not justification but the contrary—the increase of trespass (5:20) and the fact that by God’s standards of holiness set out in the law “there is none righteous, no not one” (Rom. 3:10). All those who are under the law, being bondservants to sin (that is, everyone), stand defenceless before God (3:19). Therefore, sin is seen for what it is and the reality of guilt is brought to bear on the sinner. Sin is made alive by the law (Rom. 7:8) and the vitality of sin in the life of man ensures his spiritual deadness (7:11). When sin lives in the life of man in the face of the holiness of God revealed in the law (7:12), man is dead to God, and incapable of finding life apart from the new birth by which he is made alive in the Lord Jesus. The law does not contribute to the spiritual regeneration of the sinner, but on the contrary reveals the full reality of his guilt and deadness in relation to God.

#### §4

The implications of this cursory examination of the function of the law with respect to the sinner are quite obvious for the preaching of the law to the unregenerate. It must be admitted first of all that to preach the law is not to hold up a mirror before the sinner in which he can see his spiritual bankruptcy and need of the gospel. As we have tried to point out, the law does not prepare the sinner in such a positive way to receive Christ. The law does not pull the sinner up from the mire of transgression and set him in a place where he can firmly see his need of, and desire his salvation in, the Son of God who has fulfilled the law. On the contrary, the law and a knowledge of it force the sinner deeper in the sinking sand of his own iniquity. It shows him that there is no possible way he can struggle out of the mire in which he is floundering.

This is the reason why an incorrect use of the law in preaching to the lost can at times produce unwarranted and unrelieved despair. A knowledge of the law alone cannot bring the sinner to the place where he actively decides to seek his salvation in Christ. Furthermore, it must be remembered that when the law is preached, what is being wrought in the sinner is not primarily a desire to turn to Christ, but a knowledge of the law which increases the sinner’s sin. It lends meaning to this sinfulness in that it describes it in terms of rebellion against God, and actually increase sin, for it incites the unregenerate to flaunt deliberately the required standards of God. Knowledge of the law makes man’s rebellion and depravity a reality by provoking the sinner to rebel against the commands with full realisation of what he is doing.

Considering these things, it cannot be said that the law is a guide which leads the docile sinner to Christ, but rather it leads him to a fuller knowledge of his sin, guilt, and the justice and judgement of God against unrighteousness. To preach the law with love for the lost souls of humanity, the preacher must not on the one hand seek to encourage the sinner to prepare to receive the grace of God by maintaining an outward conformity to the law.

On the other hand he must not drive men so deeply into their despair or confirm them in their rebellion by preaching the law *apart from* its fulfilment in Christ. The law is to function solely as a signpost which points negatively to the total inability of man to procure his justification by obedience to the law and hence to seek the solution to his rebellion *beyond* the law in God’s one way of salvation—faith in Christ as the “end of the law.”

It is in this sense that “the preaching of the law is not a relativizing of the Gospel but the proclamation of salvation.”<sup>7</sup> It is the fulfilment of the law by Christ in his obedience even to death which interprets the meaning of salvation. What man was not able to do for salvation, God has done in Christ. Man’s rebellion against the law can be resolved only in terms of the law, but this not in the sense of man’s conformity to the commands, but in that of the obedience of Christ to the law. The use of the law in preaching, then, is to get sinners to look outside the law, which handcuffs them in their criminality, to Christ for salvation. It does not merely give man a knowledge of the law and its legal demands in an intellectual sense, but by removing every other way of escape it shuts the sinner up to Christ as his only hope of salvation. This is the essence of the matter—when we preach the law we must at the same time shut up men with Christ as their only hope, for apart from him their condition is increasingly hopeless.

A further warning to those who would preach the law must also be issued on the basis of the description of the function of the law and the relation it sustains to the sinner. We must not make light of the sinfulness of the unregenerate man who hears the preaching of the law. Such a man is “wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.”<sup>8</sup> This means that not only does man rebel against the law in his actions, but also in his mind and heart. Therefore the law, which is holy and good, and was given graciously to further God’s plan of redemption, is manipulated by the sinner for his own ends. Consequently, that which is in itself holy is abused in sinful fashion.

So it is that when the law is used as a means of self-justification or when the sinner claims that his sin is too great for God to pardon, the law is used in an unlawful way. This unlawful use of the law is typified in the sinner who shuts himself up to the law and shuts himself off from Christ. In the first case, Christ’s offices on behalf of the sinner are thought to be unnecessary as the sinner claims that his own righteousness meets the standard of the law, or at least he aims at this mark. In the second case, the sinner who takes his sin to be too great considers his transgression apart from the costliness of the sacrifice of Christ, which is sufficient to make the foulest clean. In both cases Christ is excluded from the reckoning. But this is not the purpose of the function of the law as custodian, which is to make us over to Christ alone for salvation, for in him alone have we hope. The law is neither the point of departure for the establishment of our righteousness, nor for our own despondency, but only for salvation in Christ. This is the reason why it is so important to preach the law with constant relation to its fulfilment in Christ, which alone will curtail the possibility of the sinner making sinful use of the law.

7. Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

8. Westminster Confession, VI.2.



## §5

The preacher must realise that the law as the sinner's custodian functions negatively. One fault with some Reformed theology in this respect is that this negative function of the law has not always been recognised. The law unmasks the nature of rebellion, not preventing it but increasing it. The law binds man up in his sin with divine authority, but it does not procure man's release. The law is weak, for while it meets sin with prohibition and condemnation, it cannot overcome sin and give life (Rom. 8:3–4). The sum of all this is that since the law cannot justify anyone or relieve their bondage to sin its function is to excite and incite sin and to confirm bondage.

To say then that “the most ordinary way in which many are brought to Christ, is by a clear and discernable work of the law, and humiliation”<sup>9</sup> is an unwarranted and optimistic view of what the law does. The law does not bring man to Christ, but confirms him in his sin. It places “No through road” signs at all apparent avenues of escape, and only the message of the gospel of Christ can bring the sinner from condemnation. In the light of the unmistakable New Testament evidence, is it possible to speak of the preparatory work of the law in Guthrie's terms?—“Where He so convinceth of

9. Guthrie, *The Christian's Great Interest*, I.4.

10. J. Murray, “The Sanctity of the Moral Law” in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. I, p. 199.

sin, corruption and self emptiness, and makes a man take salvation to heart as the one thing necessary, and sets him to work in the use of that means which God hath appointed for relief. I say, such a work rarely shall be found to fail of a good issue and gracious result.” I think not. The law does not prepare a man to become regenerate in this way. Rather, we must say that there are no preparations antecedent to the first beginning of regeneration. The preaching of the law must not be taken as one of these preparations. New birth comes only with the gospel of Christ, and the gospel must always accompany the preaching of the law.

In conclusion, then, from the preaching of the law the sinner is prepared in a negative sense to receive the gospel, since he realises from the knowledge of his sin that his position without Christ is a hopeless one. Positively also the law as the expression of the moral nature of God who is just, holy and good, places upon the sinner the obligation to match up to the standards of God. It brings with it the command “You shall be holy, for I am holy” as the context of that which it requires. So from the preaching of the law a sinner gains a knowledge of his helplessness and also of the perfection of the Judge. This knowledge, however, and the obedience one might render, are not sufficient to save the sinner. Only the righteousness which comes from faith in Christ apart from the law is sufficient for this, and only when the sinner is made regenerate by grace can he be truly obedient to God. For, as Murray says, “we are not saved by obedience to the law, but we are saved unto it.”<sup>10</sup> C&S

## JOHN BUCHAN'S NOVELS—*Real Men*

by Stephen Hayhow

I have recently been reading some of John Buchan's novels, namely *John MacNabb*, *The Three Hostages* and *Island of Sheep*. His famous ones are *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Mr Standfast* and “*Greenmantle*.” Everyone's heard of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.

Buchan depicts men in a very interesting way, one that reflects the world pre-World War One. The men in the Richard Hannay and Leithan novels are solid men. They are men who love adventure, who are up for a challenge, even if it entails some personal danger and cost.

But they are unlike the modern men-heroes, for they are in no way “macho” (Bruce Willis). They are three-dimensional men, men with appetites (note how often Buchan refers to hunger, meals, food and wine), men who will face a challenge, men with real courage; men who are usually doing all this to help someone else in trouble. They are often family men, married with children (like Richard Hannay). They are not social misfits or isolated oddballs like Morse or Frost.

Related to this is how Buchan gives wonderful descriptions of creation, whether a hunt, a bird in flight, or the chase. There is a deep appreciation and observation of creation in many of his stories (see *John MacNabb*).

The main characters in Buchan's tales are usually upper class men with means. The wives of these men are firm, strong, but supportive. The “ordinary” men who appear in the stories are sympathetically and lovingly portrayed, whether a Scottish gamekeeper or an English butler. There is no class-ism here, each man's occupation is important. Each is carefully portrayed with appreciation.

All in all, the depiction of men in Buchan's novels is robust and realistic, and this is a wonderful antidote to the loss of masculinity. Buchan was the child of a Free Church manse and a life-long member of, and elder in, the Church of Scotland. The view of men in these novels is Calvinistic, and that is their value for us. C&S

# Book Reviews

THE SKEPTICAL ENVIRONMENTALIST:  
MEASURING THE REAL STATE OF THE WORLD  
BY BJØRN LOMBORG

Cambridge University Press, 2001, 514 pages,  
paperback £17.95, ISBN 0-521-01068-3,  
hardback £47.50, ISBN 0-521-80447-7

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REVIEWED BY MATTHEW WRIGHT

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THERE'S something quite disturbing about the fact that a well-intentioned work such as Lomborg's *The Skeptical Environmentalist* can arouse such wrath in the scientific and political community. This book has brought to light the utter bigotry that currently passes for "impartial science" in the civilised world. Having said that, there is a kind of perverse satisfaction in seeing the flustered reactions of the "Scientific Institution." The poor guy has even had pies thrown at him<sup>1</sup> for questioning the established doctrine.<sup>2</sup> What is becoming obvious is that the scientific community has degenerated into a kind of dogmatic club, which hates any questioning of its conclusions. Consider, for example, the following quote, cited in a letter sent to the *Economist*<sup>3</sup> in February this year:

There is no scientific periodical that out-shines or is more critically edited than *Nature*, *Science* and *Scientific American*. In science they speak with almost the same authority as the Bible of Christianity and the Koran of Islam. If all three periodicals pass the same severe judgement upon Lomborg, I personally would take it for gospel truth.

In another letter:

Mr Lomborg is not a scientist, he is a statistician. The statistics he uses are based on an extremely selective reading of the data and widespread, and presumably deliberate, misinterpretation of decades of authoritative scientific work. Only in this way is he able to conclude the exact opposite of what everyone else—scientists and environmentalists alike—has long been saying about biodiversity, forests and climate change. That, by the way, is why I threw a pie at him.

So what has Mr Lomborg been saying that could cause such resentment? *The Skeptical Environmentalist* is a thorough examination of the statistics which *the environmentalists themselves* have long been using to demonstrate the progressive decay

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1. By an academic, no less.  
2. His views have also been compared in moral terms to a denial of the Holocaust. Pimm, Stewart and Jeff Harvey, "No need to worry about the future," *Nature*, Vol. 414 8th Nov. 2001. Careful when you read this article. The acid drips off the page.  
3. The *Economist* is very favourable to Lomborg's book, as a result of which their journalistic standards have been attacked.

of the environment. Lomborg himself was once a left-wing member of Greenpeace, and this book is a result of his attempts to discredit the right-wing environmental views of Julian Simon. In this attempt, however, his views radically changed, having found that the statistical data actually supported some of Simon's claims.

The book attacks what Lomborg calls "the Litany," a set of popular assertions about the state of the environment which often go completely unquestioned, especially in the media.<sup>4</sup> Lomborg's description of the Litany will sound familiar to everyone:

We are all familiar with the Litany: the environment is in poor shape here on Earth. Our resources are running out. The population is ever growing, leaving less and less to eat. The air and the water are becoming ever more polluted. The planet's species are becoming extinct in vast numbers—we kill off more than 40,000 each year. The forests are disappearing, fish stocks are collapsing and the coral reefs are dying.

We are defiling our Earth, the fertile topsoil is disappearing, we are paving over nature, destroying the wilderness, decimating the biosphere, and will end up killing ourselves in the process. The world's ecosystem is breaking down. We are fast approaching the absolute limit of viability, and the limits of growth are becoming apparent.<sup>5</sup>

Lomborg's main point is that if governments and other organisations are going to attempt to solve the world's problems, they ought to realise that the resources available for such a task are limited. It follows that they ought to be careful about prioritising any given environmental problem. If, for example, deforestation is not as severe as it has been made out to be (if it even occurs at all), then a lot of money could be wasted which would be better directed toward more urgent problems.

The problem is that environmental science has become highly politicised. Publicly funded research, as Lomborg says, has a "built-in lopsidedness." Researchers who find that a problem is insignificant or non-existent will soon see their finances disappear. Where they find serious problems, funding is likely to become more available. Furthermore,

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4. The questionable relationship between the media and the environmental lobby is wonderfully encapsulated in this quote from Stephen Schneider: "... we are not scientists but human beings as well. And like most people we'd like to see the world a better place, which in this context translates into our working to reduce the risk of potentially disastrous climate change. To do that we need to get some broad based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have." This is cited in a letter to the editor of *Scientific American* by Richard S. Lindzen, Alfred P. Sloan Professor of Meteorology at MIT. The letter is currently available at Lomborg's website, [www.lomborg.com](http://www.lomborg.com).

5. Lomborg, p. 4.

public funding has the effect of institutionalising scientific research. The field of research becomes more specialised, and consequently it becomes more difficult for those within the field to question its fundamental axioms:

For one thing, a natural tendency to secure funding for their own special field will encourage scientists not to criticize the overall field of research. For another, many participants only investigate problems *within* the field and will not challenge the premises of the field. In this way, the field achieves a certain degree of independence and begins to define its own reality.<sup>6</sup>

The dubious role of politics in these matters is demonstrated by the IPCC's (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) 2000 *Summary for Policymakers* which were rewritten by a government-appointed scientist on their approval. By the third draft, the statement that there had been a "discernible human influence" on the climate had changed to say that "*most* of the observed warming" was down to human influence. This despite the fact that there was no new scientific evidence, and deliberately in order to manipulate the policymakers.<sup>7</sup> A statement which mentioned possible benefits of global warming was also manipulated to downplay these positive effects and emphasise the negative.

Lomborg also points out the deceptive view of the world the media tend to produce. It is, of course, through the media that the vast majority of the population receive their notions of politics and science. The problem with this is that the media does not provide us with a smooth picture of real events. It selects events that stand out from the crowd. Great disasters are far more likely to sell newspapers than mundane everyday occurrences. Lomborg cites the example of the Ethiopian situation in 1984. This situation, of course, had been developing for a long time, and "only actually became news because a team of BBC journalists stayed over-night in Addis Ababa on their way to another job and sent home shocking pictures of children literally dying in front of their cameras."<sup>8</sup> Long term situations, however, generally get much reduced coverage in the news.

The actual content of Lomborg's statistical exposition is something you have to work through. Having said that, he has put a great deal of effort into making it accessible to the layman, without compromising on depth. This, I suspect, is behind the accusations levelled by Pimm and Harvey that Lomborg's book "reads like a compilation of term papers from one of those classes from hell where one has to fail all the students."<sup>9</sup> This is a completely absurd statement—Lomborg's research is anything if not thorough. He has meticulously checked his sources, all of which are carefully documented in the back of the book. I wish I could have written term papers as good as this.

But this furious attack on a very genuine attempt to extend the environmental debate is far more important, I think, than the actual content of Lomborg's argument. Lomborg has shown himself to be nothing short of a gentleman in his real concern for the issues at stake, and in his willingness to be proved wrong. He has even set up a website in which he corrects some of the errors present in the book. The vehemence and arrogance of the attacks on him have to be seen to be believed, for which reason I have provided references to the "debate" at the end of this review. It poses

very difficult questions about the nature of the scientific endeavour, and we can only begin to ask ourselves what *else* we are being told that is misleading or downright deceitful.

Lomborg has published all the major critical articles about his book, with his own comments, at [www.lomborg.com](http://www.lomborg.com), except where *Scientific American* has forbidden him to reproduce their text. The February 2nd issue of the *Economist* contains a leader and an article which are highly critical of Lomborg's opponents. The February 16th issue contains some amusing letters regarding his work.

A precursor to Lomborg, who dealt with the issue of HIV and AIDS, was Peter Duesberg. The story of the suppression of his work is a fascinating one, and thoroughly documented at the Rethinking Aids Homepage ([www.virusmyth.com/aids/](http://www.virusmyth.com/aids/)). *C&S*

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## THE ATOM IN THE HISTORY OF HUMAN THOUGHT

BY BERNARD PULLMAN

New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998,  
392 pages + index, cloth, £13.95, ISBN 0-19-511447-7

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REVIEWED BY COLIN WRIGHT

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THIS book is a good example of how not to write the history of anything, be it atomic theory, Church politics, or even cigarette cards. Furthermore, it is a timely reminder of the danger of taking too seriously what we read about the past without a severely critical, if not sceptical, mind. Why? Because, as someone once pointed out to me, truth in history becomes what the victors in history say it is. I shall come back to these two issues later.

In the meantime, to the book itself. Bernard Pullman was until his death in 1996 Professor of Quantum Chemistry at the Sorbonne, Paris. His book is a popular history of the development of atomic theory from its earliest rise in ancient Greece with Democritus to its full flowering in the ideas of Albert Einstein, Werner Heisenberg and others in the twentieth century—a tortuous journey of some twenty-five centuries.

There are many good things we can say about Pullman's volume. Firstly, it is well written (though the translation is at times poor, confusing *conscience* and *consciousness* at one point! p. 279) and ideally suited to an educated lay audience. Even in the later stages, when some mathematics has to be included, it is kept to an absolute minimum and can be worked around without losing the thread. Anyone who has read this book will have a thorough grounding in all the major and even some of the minor personages involved in the debate over the centuries.

Furthermore, it is obviously built on a genuine interest in the subject that is allied to a wide and penetrating study of both the primary and secondary source material.

Again, it is neatly divided into reasonable sized portions on each topic or person, with few sections larger than a few pages. Interested readers in their mid-teens should be able to cope easily with the bulk of this work, and it strikes me as one of those topics that ought to form part of a wider curriculum for all students in secondary education.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

9. Pimm and Harvey, *op. cit.*

As to production standards, it is decently printed on quality paper with properly sewn ligatures. All in all a quality hardback at less than a third of what one would pay, even from the same publisher, for a similar-sized volume aimed at the academic market. Sadly, it adheres to the modern abominable practice of including endnotes rather than footnotes, so that every time the reader wants to refer to something he has to turn to the back of the book instead of merely glancing to the bottom of the page. There really is no typesetting or economic justification for this and it makes one's reading a very irritating experience at times.

But now to get back to the severe strictures voiced at the beginning of this review. Why is it such bad history? Pullman's problem is that he cannot distinguish between recounting the development of an historical movement and his fervent commitment to one side of the argument. This leads to a distortion both of the case for the theory and of the case against it. Naturally one would expect his commitment to have some influence on the outcome. But one would expect it to be kept under control. Rather than producing an historical work Pullman has produced an apologetic one. The key to this work is to be found, clearly expressed, on the dust-jacket blurb: it is the history of a *Quest*. Pullman is not concerned with the scientific debate, the rational arguments pro and con, the detailed investigation of nature and the attempt to understand it as it is. No, this is the tale of the goodies fighting against the baddies throughout history—almost another *City of God Against the Pagans*, but without the equivalent attempt at a rational justification. The quest is a struggle to establish atomic theory as the ultimate truth about life, the universe and everything against the opposition of blinkered, ignorant and bigoted fools. From the start there can be no doubt that the atomic theory is *the* truth, no doubt either that any opposition to it must be perverse. Whether aimed at “religious” or “scientific” opponents, his derisory and dismissive tone is insulting, unacceptable and unwarranted.

Pullman's absolute faith in atomic theory can be seen in his commitment to it against all he knows to be problematic about it. For whilst there just *may* be some justification in regarding modern atomic theory as having a basis in fact, there can be no justification for considering the bulk of its history as anything other than wishful thinking. As Pullman himself only too readily admits—but without realising the significance of what he is saying, so convinced is he of the truth of his theory—for nearly 2500 years there was no empirical justification *whatsoever* for atomic theory: it was pure speculation based on nothing but wishful thinking. Furthermore, as he also admits throughout the bulk of his work, there never was any agreement as to what an atomic theory should contain. Opinions were as diverse as the number of people expressing atomic views. Atomic theory during that time was—in the derogatory sense in which Pullman and most moderns would understand the term—*metaphysical*. It always was a sheer guess as to what the ultimate structure of the universe might be. But even this began from a dogmatic standpoint regarding certain ways in which the universe could and could not exist.

Pullman dismisses the medieval period as one of ignorance and bigotry. The first fifteen centuries of the Christian era receive short shrift because of their rejection of his pet theory. The odd person here and there who did during that time look favourably on atomic theory is regarded as a hero,

a shining light witnessing against the darkness all around, a figure of amazing foresight and intellectual integrity. Pullman is aware that Christianity had good reason to oppose atomic theory. It was a dogmatic claim supported by no empirical evidence whatsoever. That ought to have been sufficient. But far more important was the fact that it was expressed in a way that was thoroughly inimical to Christianity. The two were polar opposites. To take up any version of atomic theory would have been to explicitly renounce Christianity. There is no way accommodation could have succeeded. It is a complete misunderstanding of history to suppose that Christians have been unaware of the issues. (Today is a different matter. On the whole modern Christianity is either thoroughly retreatist and ignores everything that goes on outside the four walls of a church, or it succumbs and accepts paganism on its own terms except for one day a week.) The Christian opposition to atomic theory from 100–1500 A.D. was not based upon ignorance but upon a clear understanding of what that theory's implications were. And the Christians took steps to engage that theory in debate, as they did all other issues of the pagan culture in which they first found themselves and which they finally overcame, with a view to both exposing its anti-Christian nature and developing an alternate theory. And the fact that currently atomic theory is king of the heap does not warrant the belief either that it is true or that it is here to stay, as Pullman supposes.

What is instructive for us here is to recognise what Pullman significantly failed to recognise: that *all* theories are religiously based. Even modern atomic theories (not *theory*, for there is hardly any real agreement now either!) presuppose a world-view, a faith commitment to an understanding of the origin, structure, ends and meaning of the universe that precedes any scientific activity. If Christians are to accept any aspects of the modern theory they will need to re-interpret them in the light of Scripture before they can become acceptable. Strange that today Christians have abandoned any suspicion of, let alone any opposition to, a theory that for one and a half millennia they saw as inimical to their faith! It would be truly ironic and tragic if, while nobly defending the front door against the theory of evolution, they let the enemy slip in unnoticed through the back door and gain control of the citadel. For many of those anti-Christian presuppositions still inhere within modern atomic theories.

Now, there is a much better way than this to do history of science. It is superbly exemplified in the programme of thinkers such as Marshall Clagett of the University of Wisconsin, USA, whose aim has been to publish the source material in critical editions, with translations and commentary. In this he has been ably supported by renowned scholars such as Dr Anneliese Maier of the Vatican Library whose pioneering work into medieval scientific documents has been incalculable; Professor Ernest Moody of UCLA, who with Clagett has done much to make the University Press of Wisconsin series of *Publications in Medieval Science* a success, and Drs John E. Murdoch and Edward Grant of Harvard University.

Modern atomic theory is *exceedingly problematic*. As such the issue ought to be of serious concern to Christianity and Christians, if for no other reason than the modern non-Christian scientific community is attempting to pass off as absolute truth about our universe what is no more than conjecture. And they are aided in this by the foil that only the

experts can understand what they are up to. This would be plausible if what they were about concerned the application of high-tech engineering and arcane mathematics. But fundamentally these are only a smokescreen for a fierce philosophical and religious war regarding our view of the structure of the universe. Their faith in this project is currently exemplified in the crazy pursuit of the *God-particle*, as it has become known. For them, discovery of this particle would be the final piece in the jigsaw puzzle to understanding what the universe is all about. So far half a century of searching paid for by a billion dollars of taxpayer's money has failed to find the elusive particle. But faith remains unshaken and undiminished.

This faith is so strong that many Christians, if not all of us, are tainted by it. Even the otherwise excellent Dooyeweerdian scholar Roy Clouser abandoned his usual logical precision to defend it with the remark: "If a theory proposed the existence of an entity that could possibly be experienced directly although it has not yet been found, then finding it *would* prove the theory true." (*The Myth of Religious Neutrality*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1991, p. 294.)

Now this is palpable nonsense, and no doubt by now Clouser is highly embarrassed by his published gaff. Finding the entity concerned would prove nothing more than that the entity exists. Examples to demonstrate the illogicality of Clouser's assertion are not only easy to formulate; bad theories have historically given accurate predictions on numerous occasions. For example, assuming for a moment that atoms exist as such entities, most atomic theories over the last two and a half millennia have correctly predicted their existence, but no one would seriously suggest that those theories were true.

It is high time for Christians to take a renewed interest in these matters. They have profound implications for the future of the Christian faith in our society, now largely evaporated. This will not be an easy matter. But that is our own fault. We held the citadel once but abandoned it. Now we have the much more difficult task of re-taking it. It will be costly. But a start has to be made. *Somebody* has to be first over the ramparts. If we truly believe that Christianity speaks to all of life, then it will not do simply to reform personal ethics or attack an unbiblical evolutionism. We have to penetrate the inner sanctum of the enemy and destroy its gods. Currently those gods are *scientific theories*. Like the God of Israel, they are deemed eternal, immutable and infallible. For modern secular humanism they are the Way, the Truth and the Life; and only through them can one come to know the meaning of anything and everything.

If Pullman's book discovers anything to the perceptive reader, it is the religious undertow of all secular humanistic natural science. I have made this issue the leading one in this review because it seems to me that modern Christianity is enthralled by modern natural science as much as humanism is. True, it is difficult for modern Christians to question the accuracy or truthfulness of the knowledge that this science imposes upon them. Cultural pressures are, and always have been, a powerful force. But Christianity offers an alternative set of presuppositions on which it claims all life—and hence all thought, including scientific thought—must be based. If Christ truly is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* (John 14:6); if, as Paul maintained, Christ is the *Wisdom and Power of God* (1 Cor. 1:24); if, as Solomon maintained, the *fear of the Lord is*

*the fundamental principle, the starting point, of genuine knowledge* (Pr. 1:7), then it seems to me that all modern scientific theories must be recognised for what they are as outgrowths of the Lie. C&S

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## THE LOST LITERATURE OF SOCIALISM

BY GEORGE WATSON

Lutterworth Press, 1998, 100 pages, ISBN 0718829832

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REVIEWED BY ALAN WILSON

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THIS is a brilliant short book of just over 100 pages condensed into ten chapters. And despite the shortness of the chapters each is powerful in impact, Watson's analysis of his subject matter being incisive. The scope of his book is wide but his arguments are very focused, enabling the reader to cope with the wide range of references from socialist ideologues. It is a devastating exposé of the pretensions of humanistic politics, which seeks a worldly type of salvation. It ruins the all too popular idea of using socialism as a hermeneutic for reading Scripture, although it does this in an oblique way. In this respect it is very much like Igor Shafarevich's masterly study, *The Socialist Phenomenon*. Both reveal the tendency of the humanism of leftist ideology to absolutise one aspect of reality—the State.

Watson brings together many strands of socialist thought, highlighting the misconception that fascist ideology was the opposite of socialism. He certainly avoids the convenient trick of using the word "communism" for all that is bad in order to retain the righteous associations attached to the word "socialism." He knows too well what the lost literature of socialism actually says and he bases his argument on the assumption that "they said what they meant and meant what they said." Too often our present day intelligentsia have found it necessary to ignore Hitler's claim to be a socialist and the fact that his party had this name enshrined in its title. As George Watson writes in the opening chapter: "Who, for that matter, cared to remember the long socialist tradition of racial discrimination and genocide? In the writing of history what men choose to forget is as significant as what they strive to remember."

He certainly makes us remember what socialists have actually said, quoting straight from the horse's mouth as it were. He reminds us in the opening chapter that the socialist H. G. Wells envisioned a Statist elite of white men purifying mankind by eliminating the dark races. Then he surprises us by quoting other well-known socialist bed-fellows who promoted eugenic purity: the American writer Jack London, who combined "... revolutionary socialism with white supremacist views ..." and Havelock Ellis, who advocated similar racialist ideas in his book of 1913, *The Task of Social Hygiene*. Likewise Sidney and Beatrice Webb had no qualms about the supremacy of whites and Watson demonstrates that this made them "ultra-imperialist."

The most horrific revelations concerning this time of intellectual barbarity are documented in the chapter on "Marx and the Holocaust," where socialism's "killing by category" is shown to be the inspiration behind the Nazi exterminations. Lenin's concentration camps for "sweeping whole classes like kulaks out of the way" cannot be dismissed any longer in connection with the awful reality of Auschwitz and Belsen etc. Watson rightly connects this with Beatrice Webb's justification of "cattle trucks full of starving 'enemies of the state' ..." And all this social engineering can be traced to Engels' ideas about

genocide for small nations based on his Darwinian presuppositions of racially “acquired” characteristics.

Not surprisingly the issue of ruling elites is integral to such political tyranny. The whole myth of socialist democracy (which Solzhenitsyn once said was “as meaningful as boiling ice”) is traced to the theories of Plato’s *Republic*, “ruled by a just elite to whom property and marriage are forbidden . . .” Watson extends the arguments touched on by F. A. Hayek in his *The Road to Serfdom*. Both knew that small ruthless bands end up in control of life through their centralisation of power. Watson quotes Bertrand Russell, who compared the Bolsheviks to the “aristocratic superiority . . . of the British public school elite . . .” And what may surprise many readers is that this can be traced to the English literary giant John Ruskin. In an excellent chapter, “The Tory Tradition of Socialism,” the author discusses Ruskin’s socialism in relation to William Morris and how both despised the idea of the division of labour. But in their nostalgic harkening after an imaginary mediaeval past they could be sentimental and dangerously discriminatory at the same time. Ruskin could talk about keeping “the fields of England green and her cheeks red” as well as promote “the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others . . . to compel and subdue their inferiors according to their own better knowledge.” This vision has been worked out in socialist practice where the absolutising of the State has ruthlessly ruled over every human sphere.

Watson neatly sums up his brilliant book in a chapter aptly titled “the Great Amnesia.” For too long people have associated virtue with the word “socialism”; so much so that “the long socialist tradition of genocide” has been denied, forgotten or explained away. I therefore recommend Christians buy this book and use it against trendy, atheist left-wingers who arrogantly dismiss Christianity and religious belief as the source of all wars and conflicts. Religious history may be a bloody one, but equally, millions have died because of the idolising of secular political solutions, none more so than the mass murders perpetrated by socialism. Watson brings to light the literary sources which laid the foundations that would justify such ruthless solutions. No longer can these be suppressed or denied. Those who call themselves Christians must come to terms with this book’s revelations. *C&S*

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THE DESIRE OF THE NATIONS: REDISCOVERING  
THE ROOTS OF POLITICAL THEOLOGY

BY OLIVER O’DONOVAN

Cambridge University Press, 1996, paperback,  
304 pages, ISBN 0-521-66516-7, £17.95.

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REVIEWED BY JOHN PECK

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This is a desperately serious book by an acknowledged master of theological ethics. It involves, not merely formal theology, but careful biblical exegesis on the one hand, and some very perceptive characterisation of our contemporary culture. It also has an apologetic purpose. After two centuries in which any interaction between religion and politics became increasingly suspect, and the idea of Christendom has been replaced by the belief in a secular State, Christian theologians are looking for a genuinely contemporary political theology. In this book O’Donovan pleads for a method of doing political theology which enables the body of Christ to bear witness coherently and relevantly to the political implications of proclaiming Jesus

Christ as Lord. The first part of the book is devoted to demonstrating the fact that the Scriptures cannot be read in their entirety without taking their political language seriously. In particular, the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension and return of Jesus Christ demand that the kingdom of God, and the Church, be seen as a genuinely political entity. This means that we have to get some idea of how that kingdom relates to the kingdoms of this world. From the eschatological language of the New Testament, the writer argues for the existence of a dual authority in this present period of history in which two dispensations overlap. One is the old dispensation in which there is an exercise of law in judgement for wrongdoers; the other, the new dispensation in which God’s grace is creating a new *polis* under the law of generous love transforming penitent sinners by the Spirit. The rulers of the old dispensation will pass away, yielding place to the authority of the Christ ascending to the throne of God. But they are still called to obey the law of God for their task now, and to confess that Jesus Christ is their Lord. There is a useful analogy to this suggested in the Church’s attitude to slavery.

It is at this point that the book pleads for an appeal to the older traditions of the church. The Church, which is the community of the Spirit, the bearer of the Kingdom of God has the task of calling not just individuals, but also nations, to such obedience. This, it is argued, was the real motive behind the formation and maintenance of what we know as “Christendom.” But for reasons which O’Donovan carefully explains, the Church has often tended to see itself as a political community functioning by the methods of the old dispensation of force instead of the New dispensation of love. It is this which gave rise to the reaction of suspicion which allied itself to the spirit of the Enlightenment and the growth of the myth of scientific neutrality with which we have been living for so long. O’Donovan’s answer involves a stress on the Church as bearing witness, prophetically, to the “good news of the Kingdom” and its claims. And the paradigm of the Cross and Resurrection gives force to the implications of the Greek word for “witness”: *martyr*. The book ends with some indications of the kind of political principles which those claims would involve.

This summary hardly does justice to the enormous range of discussion in the book; themes such as the nature of the State, the special place of the Jews in salvation history, the meaning of ideas such as freedom, government, authority, the history of Christian political thought, the effects of secularisation in the past two centuries, and much else.

This is not an easy book to read. The argument is often extended, the reasoning is often condensed and requires considerably patient rereading to follow. This is not helped by sentences fraught with specialist vocabulary and complex syntax. Try this for size: “Jesus’ interpretation of the law, then, as St. Matthew presents it, challenges any reading which, expressly or by implication, excludes unjustifiable attitudes and acts from consideration.” Sometimes this is because the writer is in dialogue with several ideas at once, but sometimes one feels that a little more consideration might have been paid to the needs of the reader. It is useful, though not essential, to know some Latin. Some comfort may be taken from the fact that the second half of the book is easier to read than the first.

The writer’s appeal to the past concentrates on the period of church history up to the Reformation, and the Reformers are dealt with largely in its shadow. There are references to Calvinism, usually favourably, but only in the Genevan tradition. There is no interest shown in Dutch Calvinism; indeed people like van Prinsterer and Kuyper don’t get a mention. Which means that the writer takes us to appreciate the church as an authoritative witness to government, but gives very little guidance to Christian people in power as to what form an obedience to

the Law and Word of God might take in specific situations. The problem is that politics is largely about method; Christians have been able to witness to moral values and goals in their political critiques, but without reference to the lawmaking of Scripture as a divinely authorised sample in a specific situation, the lack of methodology has sometimes been counter-productive. One of the values of “law-aspect” theology is that it provides intellectual tools for making this reference effectively.

The print is clear; I could only detect one misprint; and the layout helpful, especially with the use of a smaller typeface for sections which comment on the main propositions. Some will appreciate the complete absence of footnotes. There is a useful bibliography, indices of Bible references, authors, and (somewhat sketchily), subjects. All in all, a book to work through; and even when the thread is lost, there are plenty of pearls on it to pick off and treasure. *C&S*

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr Rickenbacher,

GREETINGS from Alaska, where ecological awareness is a way of life. I'm writing in response to your article, “God, Man And The World: Reflections On Ecology” (*C&S*, Vol. XI, No. 4). I agree with you that an anthropocentric vision of the world is theologically deficient and unable to answer the arguments of deep ecologists; that the monistic heresy of deep ecologists quickly reduces to political considerations and dimensions; and that a Christian ecology posits man as God's steward in creation, responsible to his definition of reality. But how do we get from that definition of a Christian ecology to here? It's one thing to abstractly define our categories; it's quite another to apply those categories to real-life situations, to give Christian solutions to time and space problems.

Here in Alaska, we have a host of ecological problems and questions with the hook-and-bullet crowd on one side of the debate and the tree-huggers and earth-muffins on the other. Specifically, relative to the animals, how do we get from an abstract definition of a Christian ecology to the use of animals under God in the 49th State? I can see three biblical warrants, and there may be more, that define man's relationship to the animals: (1) As food; (2) For domestic use; (3) Control. As regards the first point above, we have reached a place in human development where we no longer need wild animals as food. It is true that animals taken from the wild may be and usually are used for food, especially here in Alaska, but we no longer need them as such. By what warrant then, under God, do we continue to unnecessarily kill wild animals for food, wounding, wasting and maiming them in the process? Or killing them as trophies, for their horns and hides, using the meat as food as an afterthought?

Deep ecologists will tell us that a salmon is a man is a boy is a pig or some such nonsense. Most Alaskans, myself included, look on salmon as food, fun to get with rod or net, but food in the end analysis. My wife and I put up about 100 pounds of salmon a year. We don't need it in the sense that we'd starve without it—we could buy something to replace the salmon at our local grocery. Why not leave the salmon alone, allow them to swim back up the streams of their birth, to spawn, to die, allowing us to simply observe the wonder and wisdom of God in creation? How does a Christian ecology grant me warrant to kill that which I don't absolutely need? And if we accept that salmon are legitimate food, to whom then do they belong? They belong, of course, to God, but how do we get from there to here? In Alaska, we have Native tribes, commercial fishermen,

the sportfishing industry and sportfishing interests, and plain Alaska residents all contending for their fair share of the resource. Who gets what? Left to the free market, the commercial fishery with its five-mile seines, GPS devices, sonar and much more would wipe out the runs in a season or two. And, if it weren't for Russian and American colonial impulses, the Native tribes would still be in possession of the salmon. How does a Christian ecology answer the question of allocation of the commons? Can a Christian ecology or must a Christian ecology answer these questions in terms of primitive biblical warrants, warrants stated in the context of ancient social patterns? Or should a Christian ecology simply seek to acknowledge, respect and not violate the spirit of the ancient warrants? As I see it, we are left free and most terribly responsible before God to develop a Christian ecology that recognises and respects the biblical warrants in their original intent and that recognises and respects the members of the animal kingdom as participants in the ongoing interdependency of all life on earth?

In Christ, John Nelson

RESPONSE FROM BERTRAND RICKENBACHER

Dear Sir,

I am honoured by the interest you have shown in my article “God, Man and the World: Reflections on Ecology” and I thank you for having shared some of your thoughts on it. It is thus with pleasure that I return to the subject that interests us both. But before making any further remarks I must add that the context we live in here is no doubt very different from what you know in Alaska, as I live in a town within a small country at the very heart of Europe. Wild life is thus a field which is somewhat foreign to me. You will thereby understand why my response to your questions can but be very modest.

1. *Can we still continue to eat wild animals even though these are no longer vital for our survival?*

My answer is yes, but not on any condition. Wild animals, just as animals “produced” in animal factories are part of God's good creation over which man has the duty of stewardship. I don't see any biblical principle which would justify man eating animals produced in meat factories and condemning the consumption of wild animals. This, however, calls for a qualification: killing animals is not a game. The fisherman or hunter should not forget that in hunting or fishing he puts an animal created by God to death and this should produce in him feelings of sobriety, respect and moderation.

2. *Concretely, to whom do the animals belong?*

This is a difficult question and I cannot answer it in a normative manner. What I can nevertheless do is to explain the manner in which the Swiss resolve hunting problems in the Alps. This system seems to function quite well and might perhaps be applied analogically to the situation in Alaska.

First, to have the right to hunt or to fish one must obtain a permit delivered by the local State authorities. In order to obtain such a permit one must first show that one masters certain elementary theoretical and practical knowledge concerning the natural habitat and animal life. Then hunting is only allowed during a few weeks of the year, particularly in the autumn. This prevents animals from being disturbed at critical periods essential to their reproductive cycle. In addition, every kind of method of hunting is not authorised. Certain techniques which would unduly facilitate the hunter's task are forbidden, this in order to protect certain species. Finally, State gamekeepers are present in order to see to it that these rules are respected and to ensure the sanctioning of their eventual infringement.

The system I have described is no doubt imperfect but it functions quite well and is adapted to the situation we face here in Switzerland. The State plays the role of a pretty strict umpire but this has the advantage of preserving certain species and of taking into consideration the common good, good which includes that of the hunting population. I leave it to you to relate these remarks to the situation in Alaska and to the problems you meet with there.

Hoping that this response, in spite of its brevity, will prove of use, please receive the expression of my very best regards.

Bertrand Rickenbacher

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Sir,

Mr Faulds has written (*C&S*, Vol. XI, No. 3, p. 31, *Letters*) kindly about my series of articles on Alpha but his letter raises some issues. I hope that the "big thank you" continues in my response to these issues.

It appears that Mr Faulds is making allowances for Forrest's errors and pleading that we can know that Forrest is a Christian because of his fruits. Equally he argues that he has known Pentecostals whose experience does not match a professed holy living. This is a Charismatic approach to the issue, for does the gospel of Roman Catholicism become valid because there are Reformed Christians whose experience of grace does not match a professed holy living?

In approaching this issue I would assure Mr Faulds that I do not have a "built in opposition" to Pentecostals. However, I do have a "building opposition" to Charismatics. The difference between the Pentecostal movement and the Charismatic movement is important. For me the dividing line is David du Plessis and his ministry. To give two examples, drawn from the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*: "he counselled scores of newly baptised Charismatics to stay in their churches—to the unending consternation of established Pentecostals" and "nor was he thanked by many of his Pentecostal peers for favourable comment on the apparition of Mary reported at Medjugorje in Yugoslavia—which he personally visited."

With numerous other examples, it can be seen, as this dictionary comments, that "he [David du Plessis] stood firm for the ecumenicity of the Holy Spirit." To hold this position there must also be the ecumenicity of Christ Jesus. The Charismatic movement, from David du Plessis, is the syncretism of Pentecostalism and Ecumenicalism: the ecumenicity of Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit. (This Charismatic syncretism has developed further, for example, through the liberalism of John Rodham

Williams.) The established, or classical Pentecostals, could not hold to the ecumenicity of the Holy Spirit because they did not hold to the ecumenicity of Christ Jesus. But they did hold to "the *charis* of God [which] is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

That this understanding of a Charismatic continues through to today can be seen from Nicky Gumbel and Alpha. Although I have only indicated that he accepts the ecumenicity of the Holy Spirit, I have clearly shown that he holds to the ecumenicity of Christ Jesus. Here we come to a second issue: Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I know that there are differing views on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but I will put a classical Pentecostal view against a Charismatic view.

Mr Faulds says, of people such as Tom Forrest, that "we must not make the mistake of assuming their experience is faulty." [I would add here that I expect that any failure on my part would be my own downfall.] It needs to be asked why I cannot assume that their experience is faulty, if there is an ecumenicity of Christ Jesus and no *charis* of God through Jesus Christ the Lord. On the basis of the ecumenicity of Christ Jesus and of the Holy Spirit, Gumbel says, in *Questions of Life*, "open your mouth and start to praise God in any language but English or any other language known to you." He also says "believe that what you receive is from God. Don't let anyone tell you that you made it up." But Gumbel is not only sincerely wrong about matters of Scripture, grace, faith, Christ and glory to God, but also in the matters of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. His sincerity in these errors is not in question because his gullibility is not the problem.

What of the Lordship of the Holy Spirit? Does not the Holy Spirit proceed eternally from the Father? Did not God the Father by God the Holy Spirit "garnish the heavens"? Does not the Spirit of God give life to men? Did not the prophets and apostles speak "from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit"? Is not the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth"? Did not the Holy Spirit testify that Christ is Lord? Did not Christ "through the eternal Spirit [offer] himself without spot to God"? Does not the Holy Spirit convict men of sin, righteousness and judgement? And is not a Christian "born of water and of the Spirit" and if they are not they "cannot enter the Kingdom of God"? Can this same Holy Spirit, who is truth and is active in creation, the revelation of Christ and salvation, baptise people "in the Holy Spirit" who deny that he has these characteristics?

Classical Pentecostals would answer "no." Jessie Penn Lewis and her unabridged work *War on the Saints* was a standard reference for classical Pentecostals for most of the twentieth century. She was a Christian author of some influence, although she advocated such teachings as the trichotomist view of man. Regarding the baptism in the Holy Spirit, she says that it "is the time of greatest peril for every believer, unless he is instructed and prepared, as disciples were for three whole years by the Lord . . . Since evil spirits can counterfeit God as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, the believer needs also to know very clearly the principles upon which God works, so as to detect between the Divine and the Satanic workings."

She also states that "since Satan will endorse his teachings by 'signs and wonders' (Mt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13), 'fire from heaven', 'power' and 'signs' are no proof of 'teaching' being of God; nor is a 'beautiful life' to be the infallible test, for Satan's 'ministers' can be 'ministers of righteousness' (2 Cor. 2:13-15)." Thus, as I have also said earlier, the Holy Spirit "should bear witness to another, not to himself" (John 16:14); He should only speak what was given him to speak by another (John 16:13); in brief, his entire work would be so to lead souls into union with the Son, and knowledge of the Father in heaven whilst *he himself directed, and worked in the background*. Jessie Penn Lewis did not accept the ecumenicity of the Christ Jesus and the



Holy Spirit: “Every believer must test all teachers to-day, for himself, by the Word of God, and their attitude to the atoning Cross of Christ, and other fundamental truths of the gospel, and not be misled into testing ‘teaching’ by the character of the teacher. Good men can be deceived, and Satan needs good men to float his lies under the guise of truth . . . The *test* of all ‘thought’ and ‘belief’ therefore is its (1) Harmony with the written Scriptures in its full body of truth. (2) The attitude to the Cross, and sin.” This is classical Pentecostalism and not ecumenical Charismaticism.

But this issue of Pentecostalism broaches another area, for although it is not raised by Mr Faulds directly, it does arise from his letter being published as a Pentecostal. And that is Reconstructionism’s openness to Pentecostals. *Chalcedon Report* has published articles by Joseph McAuliffe, which were very well written, and is presently publishing articles by Craig Dumont, both of whom are Pentecostals. What is of interest is why Pentecostals turn from an Arminianism/Dispensationalism to the Reformed faith, which includes Reconstructionism. (This is true for me when, over twenty years ago, Romans 3:31 became a real issue.) But just as there are Pentecostals who show an interest and commitment to Reconstructionism, there are Reformed groups who are opposed to Reconstructionism. An example of the latter is *Christian Research Network*, which is opposed to Pentecostalism and Reconstructionism. It has recently been involved with *The London Declaration 2000* and the recent establishment of the *Alliance of Reformation Christians*. In its fourth affirmation, concerning “The Lordship of Christ,” it is stated that “we affirm the necessity of having a Christ-centred, biblically-informed approach to every aspect of human life, e.g. politics, economics, science, the arts . . . Nevertheless, we reject any form of Dominionism, theonomy or reconstructionism in which a simplistic identification is made between Christ’s will for the nations and the imposition of the non-ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament Mosaic law.” I cannot accept their explicit anti-Reconstructionism just any more than their explicit anti-Pentecostalism.

However, I have not approached the issue of Alpha’s “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” in my series of articles, because, through my investigation of the liberalism and ecumenicalism of Gumbel and Alpha, I also wanted to present the creedal Confession of the Five Pillars of the Reformation. In Part I of the series of articles I showed what where the primary truths of the Reformed Faith. I wrote that the secondary truths would include ecclesiology and eschatology. But although I did not include aspects of pneumatology as primary or secondary truths, I would actually include them as a secondary issue. This may be mistaken as a Pentecostal heresy but for me the issue is the Giver and not the gifts. For when push comes to shove, and such days may come upon us, I would rather hold fellowship with conservative Reformed Christians, who were not anti-Pentecostalism, than with liberal and ecumenical Charismatics. And from my study and fellowship with Reformed Christians, who hold to a secessionist position, they do not, and cannot, deny that God, because he is Sovereign, can still raise the dead, heal the sick and prophesy his word. As my Reformed secessionist friends believe this I am not going to argue the means of God’s sovereign interventions.

Peter Burden-Teh

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Dear Mr Perks

As a “new reader” I am trying to catch up with some of the more recent issues. In the July 2000 issue [Vol. x, No. 3], a footnote caught my eye—*Lex Aeterna* by Colin Wright, footnote 30 (page

16). He refers to a thesis on the origins of Greek architecture coming from Solomon’s temple.

I don’t know about the thesis itself, but I do recall several moments of rethinking when in the Holy Land in 1968. I had been sent to do certain studies at the Institute of Holy Land Studies (now the University College of Jerusalem). Those studies included a number of field trips throughout the whole of Israel, from the Lebanon boundary, the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley and south as far as the rainbow depression Maktesh Ramon, Gaza, the Mediterranean coast and many places within those limits.

These field trips were conducted by Dr (now Professor) Rainey. At a site between Jerusalem and Bethlehem he drew our attention to the discoveries from the era of the Kings of Judah. Traces of vermilion paint had been found adhering to various portions of the uncovered structures (cf. Jer. 22:14) and a complete capitol, Grecian in overall geometric form, and incised with a spiral scroll. In appearance, a simplified form of Hellenistic public building and temple architecture, but dating from several centuries before. Certainly, “traditional” thinking may well need revising.

Likewise, Gothic architecture was being used by the French in the Holy Land at the time of the first crusade. At Akko (Acco) on the coast, there is a large hall, built to gothic design, decorated throughout with the *fleur de lys* of the French King. What we call “Gothic” might well be more accurately be renamed “Palestinian.”

While in the line of this thinking, I am a little surprised that not more has been said about the image on the Plain of Dura (Daniel ch. 3). The proportions are given as ten units high by one unit wide. Having realised many years ago that Thor Heyerdahl had demonstrated the real possibility of ocean voyages by peoples in the past, I was struck by the proportions of images in other parts of the world. Those on Easter Island, for example. Some years ago I was convinced of a possible connexion by seeing the two that used to flank a broad stairway in the British Museum—same proportions. Or the Buddhas in Afghanistan recently damaged by the Taliban.

Not quite the same point that Colin Wright makes in the footnote,—but if we accept the veracity of the event of the Tower of Babel, then we ought not to be surprised if influences between peoples through trade and travel, and memories of and from recited tales from a partially remembered past, should produce links, and influences that are not analytically or “scientifically” recorded to Western secular standards have occurred, but are ignored or denied simply because of the absence of “our type of records.”

One further example: a Japanese pastor, a friend, has drawn attention to the likeness between aspects of Japanese culture and Judaism. This is more strongly presented in Japanese heraldry, where there is a remarkable absence of the portrayal of living creatures, of beasts or man. Though flowers, grasses, and sometimes trees, are included, the designs are essentially geometric and contrast significantly with comparable symbolism in neighbouring countries. The nearest likeness I can recall from memory is the Japanese heraldic designs being of an overall ambience of the decorations to be seen on the surviving remains of the Capernaum synagogue dating from after Christ’s time there. The Japanese designs have an uncanny resemblance to the descriptions in the Bible of the decorations on the pillars and capitols of Solomon’s temple. (There is one outstanding exception in Japanese heraldry: one *daimyd* (feudal lord) used the centipede as a badge for his messengers. A sense of practical humour, and so different as to be instantly recognisable.)

Yours sincerely,  
Anthony Robson

Dear Sir

This relates to Stephen Hawhow’s review of Martin Pate’s book on Revelation in [Vol. xi, No. 3 of ] *Christianity & Society*. I was brought up as a thoroughgoing dispensationalist, hearing many prophetic speakers and teachers, including those in a Dispensational Bible Institute, all declaring that the Lord’s return was very imminent. I recall going home from meetings wondering whether I would reach my home before the Rapture occurred. At one prophetic meeting in New York we were so convinced by a well-accepted speaker of the imminence of the Lord’s return that we actually thought we might be “raptured” from an underground train through the car roof, the tunnel roof and the river under which we were passing.

Now, that sort of Rapture talk has been going around since Albury-Powerscourt more than 170 years ago. We are still here. Thus at some time it should have occurred to some reasonable minds that the Premillennial utterances of Albury-Powerscourt and descendants thereof could not possibly have come from the Lord and cannot be justified.

Especially during the nineteenth century, many men of mature spiritually were wonderfully used of God, but as fallible humans did have a spot in their belief catalogue, the Rapture, which as taught could not possibly have been from the Lord. In this light, it is reasonable to think that Premillennialism is a blight which has hindered the spread of the gospel and of the Kingdom

I worshipped for some time at the church of A. W. Tozer in Chicago. I heard Tozer himself state that he was amazed that anyone could question Pre-mil belief. Tozer, a man of deep spirituality really was not interested in prophecy. Premillennialism was the belief of his denomination. He assumed it was scripturally correct. So he accepted it. What would he say of the revisionist studies which have come out since his departure for Glory?

Actually, our Lord can return in only one way and at only one time. Thus, since the end of the twentieth century was, eschatologically, a non-event there is no possible excuse for divergent views. As we entered the twenty-first century the prophetic teachers should have gotten together to determine what the Bible really says, knowing that wide divergencies must be unscriptural, hence un-Godly. “Victory over humility,” a Tozer term for evangelical leaders, prevented the gathering.

I did suggest something similar to the director of a prophecy conference in a Canadian city in the 80’s. Included was a suggestion (partly humorous) of locking the doors until agreement is reached. I was publicly excoriated by the director of the conference. The printed report of the conference confirmed my point. The conference was a waste of time and effort. Each man proclaimed his position and went back home feeling quite satisfied with his statement, forgetting that three fourths of the messages had to be wrong and unscriptural especially since matters discussed had to be related to the purposes of Almighty God.

How any Bible teacher or student of the word cannot understand that the Lord had not the slightest intention of coming at any time between Albury-Powerscourt and this time of writing boggles the mind. The conditions for the Lord’s return declared in the Great Commission and the Lord’s Prayer are very, very far, possibly centuries, from being met. Meantime in the Premillennial camp, same old leopard, same old spots (Jer. 13:98)

In deepest Christian concern  
Joseph M. Canfield

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