

*Faith for All of Life*  
July/August 2011

# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

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

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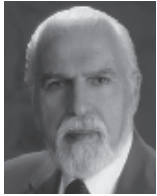
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# The Warfare State

By R. J. Rushdoony

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A few years ago, a writer described the modern American order as “the warfare state.” His argument was a faulty one, but his term was a very apt one. The age of the state has led inescapably to the warfare state. An important and central aspect of the life of the state has been war.

Now St. James makes clear in his epistle (4:1–3) that the source of conflict and war is in the heart of man; it is a product of his sin, and he cannot therefore blame war on the capitalists, a military-industrial complex, other nations, the communists, or anything else. The basic and essential cause of war is the sin of man. This does not rule out secondary causes; it does make it morally necessary to avoid giving primacy to secondary causes, for then we absolutize circumstances over man and man’s freedom and responsibility. We must also hold that the secondary cause always rests in the primary cause, sin.

A theorist of the last century said that war is the continuation and extension of diplomacy into military action. A state is continually seeking the advantage by one means or another, so that diplomacy and war are alike instruments to a continuing evil.

The fact of warfare gained prestige when Darwin set forth his theory of evolution. The struggle for survival was widely assumed to mean warfare in one form or another, economic and class warfare, warfare for resources, warfare in every area. When Darwin published his *Origin of Species* on November 24,

1859, a waiting world was delighted with his thesis and the entire edition sold out on the day of publication. Two of the happiest of the earliest readers were Marx and Engels, who rightly saw in Darwin the confirmation of their beliefs: they correctly held that Darwin’s success would ensure the triumph of socialism. The reason is an obvious one. If evolution rather than creation by God is true, then two things follow: first, life is a struggle for survival, and, second, if God is eliminated, nothing morally binding remains to ensure private property, Christian marriage, and religious authority in any realm. Life is then an amoral struggle for survival, and in that amoral struggle mass man has the best chances for victory, supposedly.

The age of the state, already firmly geared to warfare as an instrument of politics, thus turned warfare, with Darwin and Marx, into the holy crusade of humanism on its march to utopia. Much is said about “holy wars” in past history, and most of it is nonsense. The true holy wars in the fullest sense of the word are after Darwin and Marx. World Wars I and II were holy crusades “to make the world safe for democracy,” and to “end war and ensure peace,” and so on. The terminology of communist warfare is the most intense example of holy warfare in all history.

Since accepting the necessity of struggle for survival, our humanism of today has in it the grounds for the holy war of our evolutionary faith. The established humanistic religion of modern states sees conflict as always the means of progress; every struggle against

a reactionary, racist, or fascist enemy is by definition an act of faith and a step toward peace and freedom. The evil is war by the enemies of a particular socialist state, or by any who oppose the religion of statism.

Thus, despite all the pious bleatings about a love of peace, ours is an age of warfare, and of holy wars. These wars serve two purposes: first, a war always consolidates greater power over the citizenry in the hands of the state, so that a victorious state emerges not only victorious over its enemies but over its people as well. Thus, whatever losses the Germans, Japanese, North Koreans, and Vietcong or North Vietnamese may have suffered at American hands, this much is certain, that, since 1917, the major and consistent losers have been the American people. By their sinful propensity for the cult of the state, they have seen their freedom diminished and economic slavery emerge: the state has been the consistent winner. A huge bureaucracy has developed in Washington and in every city and state; from a standing army of a few thousand, we now have an army of millions; from almost inconsequential taxes, the citizens now pay taxes which are almost equal to a rent on their property and a permit to live. Second, warfare is more and more a way of life, and a basic philosophy of progress. The result is class warfare.

How does labor see progress for itself? The answer is clearly by means of warfare, war against management, and against the consumer. It is unthinkable for labor negotiators to assume that anything but conflict can assure prog-

ress, and benefits for the working man. As a result, labor is committed, by virtue of its religious faith in the evolutionary humanism of our day, to a warfare philosophy.

This is not less true of capital. Very early, in men like Carnegie, industry committed itself to social Darwinism, and the result was a growing breach between capital and labor. In this grim warfare, having a religion of conflict, concession is sin, and even elementary decencies must be fought for by both sides, since both maintain a hostility to concessions. There have been notable exceptions on both sides, but, basically, the philosophy of warfare governs them. We have thus, in every area, a warfare state.

In all this, of course, the state is the gainer. Warfare works to the disadvantage of industry and labor; it is destructive of the economy and of society, since progress rests on a harmony of interests. For the state, however, progress in its march to power rests on warfare, which greatly increases power. The greater the hostility between capital and labor, the more both will turn to the state for an ally, so that the real victor in all cases is the state, which gains steadily in its power over both capital and labor. The state emerges as the victor, and capital and labor as the chained and controlled servants of the state.

The state thus has an advantage in promoting class warfare, and statism inevitably promotes it, because its interference furthers conflict. Progress in race relations in America was real, until statist legislation turned it into class warfare and riots in the streets. Neither blacks nor whites have been the gainers, but the state's powers over both, and over labor and industry, are greatly increased.

But the state cannot profit by its victories. When the state steps beyond its God-appointed realm as the ministry of justice, the state begins to fail in its

ability to function effectively. The state is not a producer. For the state to gain vast powers over society is about as fruitful of good as for a mule to gain power over a corral full of mares; it is a sterile victory which can only embarrass the victor. The result is even greater tension and conflict.

The greatest powers for the state are just ahead of us, and its greatest defeats, its inability to keep its promises and a consequent disillusionment of peoples. Already, everywhere, the state is failing in its ability to maintain an elementary and basic need of the people, security in their homes and safety in the streets; failure here will only increase in the days ahead. Already, a sum equal to 50 percent of all federal, state, county, and local police costs is spent for varying forms of private protection, and this sum will only increase. As controls over the police increase, and public morality declines, lawlessness will become more open and extensive.

The more power and money an individual or an enterprise gains, the more effectively it functions, because, normally, people and businesses have a productive function which thrives on further capitalization. However, this is not true of the state. The more power and money a state gains, the less effectively it functions, because it feeds on power and money, not to function in terms of a productive end but to enhance its power and wealth. Power and money give muscles to men, businesses, and organizations, but they feed a cancer in the state.

The modern state is thus a sick enterprise which resents health in its midst and penalizes it. It grows in wealth, but regards wealth in others as an evil. Its senators vote for busing for the masses and send their own children to private schools to avoid busing. The state has a double standard of morality, one for

itself, and another for the people.

A deepening disillusionment with the state is ahead of us, and a growing decline in its authority. However, because the warfare state rests firmly on the foundation of the warfaring man, *disillusionment will not change the world*. As long as men believe, after Darwin and Marx, in a warfare world as the way for progress, they will create and perpetuate a warfare state. A man spent some time recently telling me how bad socialism, controls, and statism generally are. Then he concluded his random remarks by saying, "Well, it's a dog-eat-dog world." His perspective ensures precisely the kind of world he has. It is not a dog-eat-dog world: it is God's world, and His law prevails. All who violate it will sooner or later suffer the consequences. Those who insist that it is a dog-eat-dog world are debasing life, the world, and themselves, and they are the losers. *To live on the foundation that this is God's world* may not give us as many bones as this man has, but, instead of a dog's life, *we live a rich life under God*.

Jesus Christ is declared to be "the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), but this does not mean surrender. He came to bring a sword (Matt. 10:34ff.) of moral division in terms of Himself and His law-word, but an offer of peace to all men of all classes. His peace is more than a cessation of warfare: it is a way of life and a relationship to Himself. Progress is not through a struggle for survival or warfare but by means of obedience to His law-word and its application to every sphere of life.

The warfare state sees progress through the destruction of its enemies or their subjection to the state; it sees conflict as the essence of progress. The Biblical perspective is radically different: there is no progress unless there is, first of all, *regeneration; a change of heart, life,*

*Continued on page 16*

# Why Liberty is Part of Christian Doctrine

Mark R. Rushdoony



Man is a moral being because he was created in the image of God. Man's basic problem, however, is that he is a *fallen* moral being, a sinner, and thus separated from his Creator. The core message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that, despite our fallen nature, the forgiveness of God gives us the most essential liberation possible, freedom from both sin and guilt.

The unregenerate reject this freedom from sin and guilt when they reject forgiveness through the atonement of Jesus Christ. The forgiveness they seek is only from the consequences of sin, and the freedom they seek is that which allows them to continue in sin without condemnation.

Forgiveness by God is a legal, judicial act. The indictment against the sinner is dropped and he is pardoned: he is no longer liable to prosecution or the penalty for sin that was paid for by Christ. He remains a sinner, but his legal relationship to God's justice has changed. The redeemed man is no longer wanted and on the run; he is not only free but restored to full citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

## The State and Forgiveness

Sin and guilt are commonly used as manipulative tools of social and political power. Both religion and morality are particularly useful to the state. Religion makes some things reprehensible and other things morally sanctified. Politics has always invoked what is "just," "good," and "right," while it has

condemned what its practicing faith calls "sinister," "unjust," "hurtful," etc. The term "justice," which in Scripture is synonymous with "righteousness," is particularly abused by modern courts to convey a moral sanctity to frequently very immoral legislative law.

At the same time, the state has often self-consciously promoted sin in the name of freedom in order to distract people from their political enslavement. Liberty is then defined as freedom from morality and slavery as a moral standard. Today, freedom of sexual activity is considered the measure of liberty. Any talk of Christian law is quietly met with modern man's first objection: the specter of laws against some sexual perversion and "righteous" indignation at the thought. Such a people are slaves to sin but fail to see the servitude in higher taxes, lawless government that rules at will, fiat money, or the police state.

All this favors the state. Guilty men are less likely to judge when they are themselves liable to judgment. An immoral people have no moral courage to stand up for anything. What could they possibly stand for? *Righteousness* is a Christian concept. *Justice*? By what standard can a depraved society define justice? *Liberty*? They think they have it.

Sin creates a moral bondage. Ask any wife whose husband is addicted to pornography. Why desire freedom when you can only use your freedom for immorality? How can a sinner war against sin? He might complain about tyranny, but is himself a slave to evil.

## Christianity and Forgiveness

Guilty men, as with Adam and Eve, flee from God and His righteousness, but forgiveness gives us boldness in approaching Him (Heb. 10:16–25). A man who knows he has the privilege of standing before God will be able to stand before men. The freedom we have in our redemption is not one of license, but of restoration to communion with God, to our calling, and to dominion. Man is liberated from judgment and restored to be a child of God, even a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

## Creaturehood and Liberty

The liberty of man is limited in three fundamental ways. *First*, man is a creature and cannot be more than God made him to be. Only the Creator has total freedom. Our freedoms of action and will are dependent on those of God. We are limited because only God is sovereign.

We are not free to act like a god any more than we are free to be a god. Our real freedom is in being what God made us to be, and this comes through forgiveness, restoration, and accountability to God.

A *second* reason man's liberty is limited is sin. Even in Eden, Adam's liberty was limited to his created nature. He was, moreover, accountable to the law-word of God. In disobedience, he rebelled against that role and followed Satan's temptation that he could "be as gods" (Gen. 3:5). Adam not only rebelled against God, but he also rebelled against himself, what God

created him to be. Man has never been freer than Adam was in Eden. He rebelled at once against the moral nature of God and his own created purpose.

A *third* reason man's liberty is limited is related to creaturehood and the fall. The redemption of Jesus Christ limits man's liberty because it acknowledges the lordship of Jesus Christ. Because only Jesus is Lord, our liberty as sinners must necessarily be secondary and derivative.

## Church Councils and the Creeds

The early church councils and creeds were an attempt to subsume man to the claims of God. They were not academic exercises by theologians, but responses to pagan Hellenic philosophy, which was attempting to infiltrate the church while claiming to be orthodox. The "orthodoxy" of these Hellenic churchmen against which the councils contended was that of the prevailing philosophy of the ancient world. Chief among these was the idea of the oneness of all being, the idea that all being, mortal and divine, is one and that divinity is accessible to man. The orthodox rightly read the Scriptures as describing a discontinuity, a distinction between the human and the divine and Jesus Christ as the unique link between God and man.

The issue was thus the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This was the core of theological struggle through the sixth century. Hellenic thinkers tried to define the incarnation in such a way that Jesus was a man whose will, nature, or both were absorbed into the divine Christ. Some specifically held that other men might follow the same path of becoming divine. Against this, the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, held that Christ was

*in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union,*

but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and *coming together to form one person and subsistence* ...

This was a complete break from Hellenism's attempt to allow for man's absorption into the divine. It meant Jesus was the unique link between God and man, not an example of man's access to divinity.

The creeds put man in his place *theologically*. They clearly defined the faith in non-Hellenic terms, specifically professing the scriptural doctrines of the Trinity, soteriology, the work of the Holy Spirit, the church, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. They were thus a *life view*.

The creeds also put man in place historically, clearly holding to the events of creation, the fall, redemption in the atonement of Jesus Christ under Pontius Pilate (a specific event in time and history, not a process), the accomplished resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day as a promise of our own, the final judgment, and eternal life. The creeds were thus a view of world history, its beginning, end, and direction. This "world and life view" of the creeds assures redeemed man's purpose is a recall to dominion and triumph over sin and death. Christ changed man's state legally before God and made him more of the creature he was meant to be. He did not merge humanity into the divine nature. The ecumenical creeds represent a great triumph of the church over Hellenic thought.

## Hellenic Liberty

The sinner's liberty is a freedom from God, which Satan's temptation (Gen. 3:5) makes clear in a *de facto* attempt to be a god. Man's every desire to be free of God and His Word represents a repetition of that first sin. In sinning we show, as Paul said, that we

are "in Adam," that is, in his fallen state.

The sinner, like Adam, defies God's Word and demands that his own will, logic, reason, experience, or common sense should determine his norms. Humanism is the elevation of man to the position in which theism holds God. When God is eliminated from man's life and thought, some other entity must take that vacated position. Other religions may have deities, but they leave man in charge and are humanistic. An obvious example is Islam, which ostensibly has a powerful supreme being, but which has always operated on an entirely humanistic basis through the power of the state. Islam's Allah does not act, his followers do. Being an external religion of works, it can be instituted by force, and this has historically always been its method of expansion.

Man makes a lousy god, though it's not for lack of trying. All humanism tends toward one of two extremes: lawlessness or authoritarianism. Lawlessness is the rejection of all moral standards and the elevation of *individual* man to supremacy. Authoritarianism seeks to impose some standard of men on others. Thus humanism elevates the needs of the *group* to supremacy and justifies coercive behavior. In the political sphere these two extremes are exhibited as anarchism and statism. In anarchism, each individual is the source of sovereign right and establishes his own norms. This never lasts long. In statism, sovereignty resides in the group, in collective man, in the form of the state, which identifies and enforces norms for all. Historically, humanistic statism has always prevailed over humanistic anarchism.

The alternative to humanism and its placing of man as the focal point of power and right is Biblical faith, which sees sovereignty as belonging solely to

God, and man at every point subject to Him and His law. It is important to note, however, that even though this submission to God's law is absolute, submission to enforcement by men is not. God's absolute sovereignty is never transferred to man. Many laws of Scripture carried no civil penalty (and others would have been difficult to prove given the requirement for two or three witnesses). Laws were given by God, but without a civil penalty were a test of obedience to God, but not a test of obedience to man. Though morally constrained by God, these were not enforceable by human authorities. Responsible to God, man had freedom either to obey or disobey and face the consequences. Biblical law does not allow for a "nanny state."

## The Nature of Liberty

Liberty involves the interaction between the prerogatives and responsibilities of men in the areas of law and ethics. Both law and ethics are religious in origin and practice. Law is an enforced morality, a standard of right and wrong. No culture has ever claimed its ethics were purely arbitrary. Ethics are by definition authoritative, because they are a "higher" standard. Likewise no regime has ever claimed its laws were random, they are always to promote "fairness," "justice," "what's right," etc. The source of its ethics and law is the god of a society, the higher, authoritative way that cannot be challenged. For humanistic orders, that god may be man individually (anarchism), collectively (democracy), or institutionally (state, church, oligarchy, academia). For the Christian, that source of law must be God and His Word. Liberty is always at risk in any humanistic order; man has too many false claimants to supremacy, and all are subject to the elevation of self-interest over justice.

## Who's in Charge?

Every law order is an enforced moral order, religious in nature. Political religions see politics as the source of morals and law. In political religions, ultimate accountability is to the state; no area of human activity is thus outside the state's jurisdiction, and man may, at the state's demand, be constrained in any area. No room is left for liberty but the state's willingness to test its practical limits.

In Biblical faith all human authority is limited, including that of the civil magistrate. All men and institutions are accountable to God, and the civil authority is limited to an administration of a higher law. Only Biblical faith limits all human authority and thus allows a realm of human liberty. The sovereignty of God precludes the sovereignty of any man or group of men.

Sovereignty is a necessary concept. Though some have derided it as though it were an invention of Calvin, it is an unavoidable concept. Sovereignty must reside somewhere. The common thread among all ancient political regimes was their claim to either divinity or exclusive access to the gods. Christianity produced the first attempts to deny absolute authority to the state. Theologically, this attempt to deny men access to divine claims was fought in the ecumenical councils. Later, it was a battle against the "divine right" of kings, a revival after feudalism of the ancient claim. The English Civil War under Cromwell partially accomplished what the U.S. Constitution did more openly—limit the power of the state. It is the return of the U.S. to a humanistic, anti-Christian faith that has caused it to revert to the ancient pattern of absolutism by the state.

*Transcendent* sovereignty means that sovereignty is in God and is not

the prerogative of men. This is the only limitation that works, but it is itself an article of religious faith and cannot be enforced by humanistic, legislative law. Today, the faith of the U.S. is a thoroughly humanistic one, so that sovereignty is seen as immanent, within man and his affairs. A sovereign is a god, and one does not limit, but submits to that god. The rule of men is often a very harsh one, but throughout all history, that has been the end of humanistic faith—some men control other men. Without any real divine ability, all that is left to man is force or threat of force. The predictable result is absolutism—do as we say or you are a criminal, an enemy of the state.

## Recognizing the Issue

America has changed because its faith has changed. It has denied the sovereignty of God for a humanistic law and morality. When the faith was attacked, the church retreated to the "fundamentals" and the "simple gospel." Humanism met little resistance in the sciences, law, economics, art, education, and more until humanism had won the day. Even then, the defense was a "conservative" approach—let's save what was because it was good. Individual issues are addressed when the real problem is the ideological/religious supplanting of Christianity with humanism. Conservatism often ends up defending forms and traditions and criticizing the opposition for their blindness to the harm they are doing.

The opposition is not blind. They believe the ultimate good is the casting down of Christianity and its moral influence. Because they see theirs as a higher way, a more enlightened path for the future, all else should be laid waste so that their glorious future might emerge.

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# Cornelius Van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony, Part 2: Defenders of the Faith

Michael J. McVicar, Ph.D.

In the May/June 2011 issue of *Faith for All of Life*,<sup>1</sup> I provided a brief overview of the thought of Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987), the Reformed theologian whose ideas directly shaped Rousas John Rushdoony’s project of Christian Reconstruction. In this article, I pick up where that previous article left off and offer a history of Rushdoony’s relationship to Van Til from the late 1940s to the 1960s. For readers interested in the early career of Rushdoony, this essay (and the next in this series) will provide a background for understanding how and why Van Til’s thought resonated so deeply with Rushdoony’s religious convictions. It will illustrate not only that Van Til was a pivotal figure in Rushdoony’s theological and ministerial development, but it will also demonstrate that Rushdoony played a pivotal role in bringing Van Til’s ideas out of seminaries and colleges and into the wider Reformed community in the United States.

During the twenty-year period covered in this essay, the friendship and collaboration between Rushdoony and Van Til grew slowly. Their relationship started with Rushdoony’s gushing praise for Van Til’s philosophical system and, over time, it grew into a mature collaborative partnership in which the two men supported one another’s work. In this essay we’ll see how the two men began corresponding in the 1940s; we’ll follow Rushdoony’s career as a popularizer and expositor of Van Til’s difficult ideas; and, finally, we’ll watch as the two men developed into mutually self-rein-

forcing thinkers and friends determined to aid each other’s careers through collaborative publishing projects.

## The Uttermost Reaches of Hell

In the 1940s and early 1950s R. J. Rushdoony and his wife served as missionaries on the isolated Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Owyhee, Nevada.<sup>2</sup> As a theologically conservative Presbyterian minister, Rushdoony served the Paiute and Shoshone Indians on the reservation with what he called a “harsh and ruthless ministry.”<sup>3</sup> He unflinchingly preached “[a]tonement, justification by faith, the two natures of Christ and His virgin birth, the congenital evil inherent in all civilizations and culture, the despair of man, the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant”<sup>4</sup> to the reservation in a tireless effort to “wage war in God’s name.”<sup>5</sup> If his message was unsparing, it was because he felt that the environment on the reservation cried out for the most forceful and aggressive gospel message. For Rushdoony, the reservation represented a microcosm of the spiritual problems facing all modern men: he observed the collision of the non-Christian worldview of the Indians with a deteriorating Western civilization that sustained only the barest remnants of its Christian heritage. As he wrote a friend in 1946,

Our decadent Western culture, despite its degeneracy, has the fragments and habits of its Christian heritage clinging to it, but here [on the reservation] there is nothing. The Indian culture is virtually a dead letter, with nothing but its disease surviving, while the Western

culture is only a corroding influence. And so I preach salvation amid ruins, and deal with an often sick heart with miserable drunks, with incest, rape, and the uttermost reaches of Hell.<sup>6</sup>

Worse still to Rushdoony’s mind was the challenge posed by the federal government’s administration of the reservation. The state regulated all aspects of life on the reservation. As Rushdoony wrote to a friend, the state “is the giver of all things, the source of power, of land, and (having built a reservoir for irrigation here) even of water . . . The government hospital delivers the children, and the government army taketh them away . . .”<sup>7</sup> Between the ascendancy of the state and the collapse of two cultures, Rushdoony believed he was waging a three-front war—he was simultaneously struggling to bring religious meaning to an occupied and militarily defeated culture, while battling a metastasizing federal bureaucracy, and trying to galvanize a defeated and defeatist Christian church. Not surprisingly, this spiritual warfare took a physical and emotional toll on Rushdoony. He was frequently ill, and a deep melancholy pervaded his correspondence during his missionary years. To press on in the fight, Rushdoony needed a more hopeful and helpful theological message.

In part one of this series, I recounted how Rushdoony accidentally ran across a copy of Cornelius Van Til’s *The New Modernism*<sup>8</sup> during a leave of absence from the Duck Valley reservation. Van Til was a professor of apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary

in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and far removed from the sort of on-the-ground pastoral work with which Rushdoony was struggling. Nonetheless, when Rushdoony took up Van Til's critique of the post-Kantian dialectical theology of Swiss theologians Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, it immediately convinced the missionary that something could be done to improve the spiritual condition of the Native Americans on the reservation and also to revive a moribund Western Christendom.

At the heart of Van Til's book was his primary insight that the "given presuppositions of any philosophical position predetermined and governed much of its later outworking."<sup>9</sup> For Van Til this meant that all orthodox Christians must begin with the presupposition that God is the origin of all creation. With this basic presupposition in place, Van Til built a vast theological system. He insisted that human beings could not think a single thought independently of God. Intellectual *autonomy*—self-rule of the mind—is a sin because it rejects God's authority; whereas *theonomy*—God's rule of the mind—is the only source of legitimate knowledge. Christians must begin with the ultimate reality of Jesus Christ and the Trinity as the source of *all* knowledge. Any other point of apologetic departure implicitly rejects God's sovereignty over all of creation.

From his isolated mission in Nevada, Rushdoony realized that he could apply Van Til's presuppositional system to the problems he faced on the reservation. By presupposing the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over every thought, Rushdoony believed that he could reinvigorate Christianity against the growing threat of the state. A proper Christian education could bring one's thoughts into accord with Scripture and provide a foundation for resisting what he saw

as the defeatism of modernist Christianity and the dangers of the paternalistic state. Thus, Rushdoony embraced Van Til's theology in part because of its political implications: Van Til's "antithesis" between Christian and non-Christian forms of knowing justified separatism and secession as a strategy for the political reformation of a rapidly secularizing American republic.

Van Til's presuppositionalism posits a struggle between those who think God's thoughts after Him and those who do not. During his college and missionary years Rushdoony had himself been struggling to recognize the sovereignty of Christ in his own thought. This struggle took the young minister on a tour of the "uttermost reaches of Hell" embodied in the philosophical systems he grappled with in his college years. Before he could stand with Van Til, he first had to realize the power of presuppositions in the philosophy of others.

### From Mysticism to the Reformed Faith

About a year after reading *New Modernism*, Rushdoony began corresponding with Van Til. In one of the earliest surviving letters of this correspondence, Rushdoony opened up about his evolution from a theologically eclectic spiritual seeker to a theologically conservative Calvinist. This early letter is important for two reasons. First, it is perhaps the clearest and simplest statement of how Rushdoony grew into the theologian, preacher, and activist who eventually articulated the project of Christian Reconstruction. Second, the letter is worth lingering on for a moment because it shows how and why Van Til's presuppositional apologetics resonated so deeply with Rushdoony.

Rushdoony wrote Van Til a spiritual autobiography of his progression from mysticism to theological modernism, to

medievalism, and finally to the form of Calvinism refined by Van Til and others at Westminster Theological Seminary. In his early college years Rushdoony struggled with mysticism, believing that union with the divine was the answer to the problems of modern faith. Eventually, however, he told Van Til that he rejected mysticism because, "I found that in mysticism one began with the soul and ended with it also: neither the world nor God were ever penetrated."<sup>10</sup>

With the failure of mysticism to answer his questions about the proper relationship between man and God, Rushdoony turned to modern philosophy. Again, he found it wanting. Similar to mysticism, modern philosophy was prisoner to a damning circularity: it ended where it began. "[T]he given" of modern philosophy, he wrote to Van Til, "is the individual ego, and ultimately the Cartesian world was no larger than the ego. In other words, a man's world included ultimately only as much as his given included at the start."<sup>11</sup>

Since modern philosophy collapsed into the black hole of the individual ego, Rushdoony then turned to medieval scholasticism because, he believed, it managed to prove the existence of the Trinity. But again, he perceived only failure. Scholasticism may have proved the existence of the Trinity, but it did so "with an impersonal world-pattern as its given and ended with that same structure analyzed into Substance, Structure, and Act, still impersonal and still no more than the given analyzed."<sup>12</sup>

As Van Til had done in *New Modernism*, the college-aged Rushdoony looked to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) as the primary problem that contemporary Christians must overcome in order to resist the temptations of neo-orthodoxy. For Rushdoony, this struggle coincided with his convalescence in a Bay area hospital:



Turning to the university again, I took a course on Kant, finished it and had most of my paper ... written, when a week in the hospital gave me a chance to think it through carefully, and I realized [Kant's system was a] return to the same dead end as mysticism: the ego became God and the world, lacking them both ... I walked out of the hospital on a Sunday afternoon and left Kant permanently behind, without bothering to type my paper and complete the course. I had come to the conclusion that God had to be the given, because He alone could encompass a complete world and complete man.<sup>13</sup>

Although Rushdoony instinctively understood the difficulty with Kant, he was not fully able to appreciate it until he read Van Til. "In your writings I am finding," he wrote to Van Til, "to my ever-increasing joy, the implication of [Kant's] position and an answer to its problems."<sup>14</sup> From this sentence we can begin to understand why Rushdoony became so invested in Van Til's ideas: for Rushdoony, theological regeneration was part of a wider bodily and spiritual healing process. His bond with Van Tillian thought transcended mere philosophical rigor to become a visceral and deeply personal experience of the truth. Van Til's ideas—especially as embodied in *The New Modernism*—gave Rushdoony the language to express his own spiritual and intellectual journey. It allowed him to systemize and clarify an understanding of Calvinism that made immediate sense to him, but had previously resisted easy exposition.

By the end of the 1940s Rushdoony made Van Tillian presuppositionalism the foundation of his ministry. The first vague hint of Van Til's influence appeared in an April 1946 letter to Lorna Logan, a Presbyterian Mission official. Rushdoony told Logan, "I have been doing considerable studying since my coming" to the mission and "am

increasingly convinced that without a doubt our present day Biblical studies are grounded, not on sound scholarship but on philosophical presuppositions."<sup>15</sup> By this Rushdoony meant that modern theologians looked not to the Bible to ground their philosophy, but instead used the philosophical insights of thinkers such as Kant or the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) to frame the way they approached Scripture. Even ostensibly Christian thinkers learned non-Christian presuppositions from an early age. "Our schools," he argued, "in their educational philosophy are completely anti-Christian, despite their claim of religious neutrality."<sup>16</sup> The result of this pedagogical failure? "[T]he Church becomes sand," he warned, and "God and Christ are obscured."<sup>17</sup>

Rushdoony's engagement with Van Til's ideas prompted him to double down on a theologically systematic Calvinism and a rigorously Christian education as the twin pillars necessary for defending Christianity and providing an orthodox alternative to the problems facing modern men. As he wrote to one friend, modern philosophy had fragmented man's nature: "Environment, the subconscious, capitalism, communism, fascism, social mores, the State, and a hundred other things all hold man in sway."<sup>18</sup> No modern system of thought allows man to stand as *man*. But, Rushdoony insisted, the sixteenth-century vision of John Calvin (1509–1564) does: "Only Calvinism is still able to stomach men and yet give glory to God."<sup>19</sup> As a consequence of this line of thinking, Rushdoony affirmed his acceptance of Calvinism and his growing theological conservatism. "In thinking," wrote Rushdoony, "I am more conservative than ever. I was always a fundamentalist at heart and in prayer, and now I am one intellectually as well. Since most 'fundamentalism'

today is Arminian and includes a variety of sects and sins, I prefer to call myself a Calvinist in theology, but I do believe literally in the inspiration of scripture in the narrow sense of the word."<sup>20</sup>

## Defending the *New Modernism*

If Rushdoony had simply allowed Van Til's ideas to remake him into a theologically conservative Calvinist, then Rushdoony might have gone on to a productive career as a preacher or, perhaps, served as an academic theologian at some small, conservative seminary. But Rushdoony wasn't content simply to *think* as a presuppositionalist. He longed to *act* according to the program implied in Van Til's system. This meant that he must become an active agent in the defense of the Christian faith. And, if Van Til's presuppositional approach to defending the faith was the most viable available to modern men, then Rushdoony realized that he must enter into the theological arena and take a principled stand on behalf of Van Til's ideas.

Rushdoony started small, but eventually became a recognized authority on Van Til's thought. He became a sought-after author and speaker who could clarify Van Til's ideas and make them relevant to the lives of the Christians he encountered. With his defense of the faith and his defense of presuppositional apologetics, Rushdoony became Van Til's close friend, a relationship that unfolded in stages as the two men developed a complex and symbiotic relationship, with Van Til's ideas providing the foundation for the project Rushdoony would eventually call "Christian Reconstruction." Simultaneously, Rushdoony taught a generation of conservative Christians how they could apply Van Til's difficult and abstract ideas in their own lives.

Rushdoony's role as Van Til's cheerleader and defender began slowly and built in stages. First, he pitched Van Til's

ideas and books to his close circle of friends whom he had befriended during his seminary days at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley, California. To his friends Orval Clay and Dave Stowe and his former teachers Ernst Kantorowicz and George Huntston Williams, Rushdoony unequivocally endorsed *The New Modernism*. To Williams, a faculty member at the Harvard Divinity School, Rushdoony proclaimed, “It is one of the best books I have ever read.”<sup>21</sup> In spite of his limited missionary income, Rushdoony bought multiple copies of Van Til’s book and sent them to his friends.

As his conviction in the profundity of Van Til’s method grew, Rushdoony developed into something of a watchdog for his theological mentor. Although Rushdoony had been reading and privately suggesting Van Til’s texts to friends and associates for nearly two years, by 1947 he had neither contacted Van Til nor had he offered a public statement in defense of Van Til’s presuppositional theology. That all changed in the fall of 1947 when Rushdoony wrote a scathing response to the editors of *Crisis Christology Quarterly* regarding Stuart B. Coles’s review of *The New Modernism*.

A “shocked and dismayed”<sup>22</sup> Rushdoony took Coles to task for failing to show “the slightest awareness of the subject-matter” of Van Til’s text. After dismissing Coles’s review as “a pointless and puerile digression,”<sup>23</sup> Rushdoony offered the editors three tightly argued pages outlining Van Til’s demolition of the post-Kantian dialectical theology of Barth and Brunner.

With Coles excoriated and Van Til defended, Rushdoony sent a copy of the review along with an introductory note to Van Til at Westminster in Philadelphia. In his brief introduction, Rushdoony lavished praise on Van Til’s work.

“I would like primarily . . . to pay my respects to your truly great work,” Rushdoony wrote.<sup>24</sup> The missionary regretted the “ignorance of the reviewers of your book” and noted that the theological liberals who assaulted the book hardly understood *The New Modernism*, and “the conservatives were little better.”<sup>25</sup>

For his part, Van Til was truly grateful for Rushdoony’s spirited defense. Van Til “heartily” thanked Rushdoony for his defense against Coles’s negative review and went on to note that men like Coles “stick by the words of philosophy . . . and insist that just so something is called theology, all is well, even though it came from Kant rather than from Scripture.”<sup>26</sup> As he noted in a later letter, “There have been a couple other reviews of the sort that appeared in *Crisis Christology*.”<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, the response to Van Til’s text was apparently so nasty that it rose to a level of heated invective more commonly reserved for barroom bravado rather than for academic disputes. For example, during a trip to the eastern U.S. during the late 1940s, Rushdoony personally overheard Joseph Haroutunian (1904–1968), a noted Presbyterian and neo-orthodox theologian who taught at the University of Chicago Divinity School, declare, “The only thing to do with Van Til’s book is to use it to wipe the s\*\*t off my a\*\*.”<sup>28</sup> Years later, Van Til recalled a similar run-in with Karl Barth at a lecture in 1962. When the Swiss theologian—and primary target of Van Til’s criticism in *The New Modernism*—was introduced to Van Til, Barth “became quite excited and repeated the question, Are you Van Til, three times. Then he added that I had said terrible things about him . . . , but Barth also added, ‘I forgive you, I forgive you.’”<sup>29</sup> When a friend of Van Til’s gave Barth a ride after the lecture, Barth again became excited and said to

the driver: “Do you know Van Til? He is a bad man. He called me the greatest heretic of all ages. You tell him that he is a bad boy and won’t go to heaven.”<sup>30</sup> From published reviews to anecdotal accounts of off-the-cuff vitriol, Van Til’s ideas elicited passionate responses, and, after his 1947 letter to the editors of *Crisis Christology*, Rushdoony voluntarily enlisted as a combatant on Van Til’s side of the dispute—a fact that much “encouraged”<sup>31</sup> the embattled theologian.

Given this background it’s hardly surprising that Rushdoony’s support for Van Til took a personal and professional toll on the young minister. When Rushdoony decided to leave the reservation in 1952 and accept the call to a pastorate at the Trinity Presbyterian Church (affiliated with the mainline body of the Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.]) in Santa Cruz, California, Rushdoony hoped to free himself from the crushing physical demands of a frontier mission so that he might devote more of his time to studying and writing. He intended to use his ministry at Trinity to embody his Van Tillian commitments and hoped to do so through a new journalistic publication, *The Westminster Herald*.<sup>32</sup>

Although Rushdoony had strong support from some in the 300-member church, many more in the congregation immediately attacked his theological and political conservatism. They were particularly angered when Rushdoony solicited support for his *Westminster Herald* project and voiced his unwavering support of Van Til’s presuppositional apologetic method.<sup>33</sup> Others in the congregation remained fiercely loyal to Rushdoony. The result was a schism. Rushdoony’s supporters petitioned to separate from Trinity and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). At least sixty-six members left Trinity and joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a seces-

sionist church founded by J. Gresham Machen.

If Rushdoony had any misgivings about his loyalty to Van Tillian apologetics after the Trinity controversy, he never showed it publicly or privately. Instead, over the next two decades he became one of Van Til's most lucid and capable defenders, and in the process he helped form Van Til's reception by many academics and preachers in the second half of the twentieth century. Rushdoony decided to take his defense of Van Til straight to the people whom he believed needed to hear it most: academic theologians, philosophers, and students in Reformed seminaries. To this end, Rushdoony began writing his first book, *By What Standard? An Analysis of the Philosophy of Cornelius Van Til*.<sup>34</sup>

### By What Standard?

The publication of *By What Standard*, Rushdoony's introduction to Van Til's philosophical system, was an important turning point for both men. For Rushdoony it marked the appearance of his first book and indicated his willingness to go on the record as a defender and interpreter of Van Til's ideas. On his end, Van Til saw that the book might go a certain length toward clarifying his ideas for a general readership. The theologian believed that Rushdoony's prose was vivid and highly readable. As we'll see, Van Til often struggled with his prose, frequently sacrificing clarity and readability for philosophical precision. This often led to confusion and frustration when lay readers approached his work for the first time. Thus, for both men, *By What Standard* represented important opportunities, and they spent considerable time collaborating on the text. Rushdoony took great effort to hone a readable synthesis of his mentor's oeuvre while Van Til carefully edited Rushdoony's text to make sure it offered

the clearest possible representation of his ideas.

The book grew out of a threefold collaboration between Rushdoony, Van Til, and Charles "Hays" Craig. Hays Craig was the son of Dr. Samuel D. Craig, a conservative Presbyterian and friend of J. Gresham Machen. The elder Craig founded the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company (P&R) in 1930 in Philadelphia and used his press to produce books written from a theologically conservative Reformed perspective. Dr. Craig published *The New Modernism* and other texts by the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. Craig's son, Hays, continued to publish Van Til's works through the remainder of the twentieth century. During the 1950s Hays Craig directed much of the work of the press and recruited Rushdoony to write a popular study of the philosophy of Van Til to complement the press's other texts by the theologian. When Rushdoony sent his manuscript to the press, Craig reported, "I have seldom seen my father so pleased with a new title. He is very enthusiastic with the [manuscript]."<sup>35</sup> Rushdoony's work with Craig started a collaboration that eventually culminated with P&R publishing the first volume of Rushdoony's mammoth *The Institutes of Biblical Law*.<sup>36</sup>

With the publication of *By What Standard* in 1959, the careers of Rushdoony and Dr. Van Til became inextricably entangled. Van Til immediately recognized that the book would likely help define the public face of his presuppositional method. He hoped that the text might provide a solid rejoinder to his critics in the wider evangelical movement. "No doubt," he wrote to Rushdoony, "the enemies will seek occasion from it for renewed attack. Even so they may be challenged by it to think things through for themselves."<sup>37</sup>

It is possible that the "enemies" of which Van Til wrote conspired to suppress distribution of the text. The book clubs and bookstores that Craig hoped would expedite the distribution of the text resisted its sale. For example, when the manager of one book club placed its order for *By What Standard*, he only ordered 100 copies—as compared to his usual orders of 500 to 1000 of new books from Craig's press—"claiming it won't sell." Rushdoony suspected that the reluctance to take the book had less to do with potential sales than it did theology: "This may be a businessman's evaluation, and, as such, he has a right to protect himself from a bad investment . . . But I wonder if possibly this is more of the anti-Van Til spirit. Certainly, Craig has felt the book is well written and interesting and has sales possibilities."<sup>38</sup> Rushdoony worried this decision would leave the book "killed before birth."<sup>39</sup>

Despite these distribution worries, the book did find its way into the hands of its intended audience even if it didn't necessarily change perceptions of Van Til's theology. It was generally well-reviewed as a useful introduction to presuppositional thinking. *Christianity Today* declared, "In view of the obscure nature of the subject matter, Rushdoony is to be congratulated for having produced a highly readable book on a topic of vital importance to intelligent evangelicals."<sup>40</sup> Further, in a review of a condensed form of the book published under the title *Van Til, Christianity Today* called Rushdoony's work "clever" and noted that it outlined Van Til's significance to modern philosophy in "bold strokes."<sup>41</sup>

If the book didn't necessarily silence Van Til's critics, it did help establish Rushdoony as one of Van Til's ablest expositors. Nowhere was this fact more clear than in the minds of the editors of

*Christianity Today*.<sup>42</sup> When Van Til submitted an essay to “the flagship publication of mainstream evangelicalism,”<sup>43</sup> the editors came to Rushdoony for help in editing and clarifying the Westminster theologian’s difficult submission. Associate editor Dr. J. Marcellus Kik wrote to Rushdoony, “Both Carl Henry and myself have struggled with [Van Til’s manuscript] in order to clarify it. Since you have clarified the writing of Van Til previously, I thought the best thing we could do is to send it to you to work over. Please remember 95% of our readers have no knowledge what *geschichte* is. Anything you can do to clarify will be helpful.”<sup>44</sup> Such editorial requests and the more-or-less favorable reviews of *By What Standard* point to the slow but steady inroads Van Til’s ideas were making in the wider evangelical movement—and that Rushdoony helped facilitate that wider reception.

Rushdoony came to play an important role not only in popularizing Van Til’s ideas, but also in bringing some of Van Til’s works to press. In fact, Hays Craig began sending most of Van Til’s new manuscripts directly to Rushdoony so that he could clarify Van Til’s prose and prod the theologian when he failed to meet deadlines. As early as 1955 Rushdoony began working directly with Van Til as a proofreader and editor on his manuscripts. Rushdoony checked footnotes, confirmed quotations, and provided careful feedback on the organization and style of Van Til’s books. By the early 1960s, Van Til’s publisher sent new manuscripts directly to Rushdoony for initial reviews. In one typical note, Craig wrote, “Glad you are editing the [manuscript]. It is good to check on Dr. Van Til’s style as sometimes he gets himself misunderstood needlessly.”<sup>45</sup> During this period, Rushdoony worked over manuscripts that eventually became *The Case for Calvinism*<sup>46</sup> and *Karl Barth and*

*Evangelicalism*.<sup>47</sup> In response, Van Til frequently praised Rushdoony’s ability to clarify his opaque prose. For instance, when Van Til mused on writing a “popular” book on Karl Barth, he lamented, “Oh, for the pen of a writer such as you enjoy.”<sup>48</sup> That Van Til allowed Rushdoony such freedom to revise and hone his manuscripts points to how much the senior theologian trusted the younger minister and valued his feedback.

Besides establishing Rushdoony as Van Til’s primary contemporary interpreter and editor, *By What Standard* also succeeded in filling the useful niche of introducing Van Til’s complex ideas to students and preachers. Indeed, Van Til made it clear that he intended to use Rushdoony’s text in his courses at Westminster. “I have great expectations that my students will be helped by it,” he wrote Rushdoony. “First by a more readable statement of my views and second by the fact that one wholly outside my background has taken so deep an interest in it.”<sup>49</sup> Rushdoony’s publisher believed Rushdoony did a “fine job of popularizing and clarifying Van Til. I hope we can effect a wide distribution.”<sup>50</sup> Craig planned “to push it [the book] among professional philosophers who probably are not too familiar with Van Til and doubtless shy away from Calvinistic and/or Biblical material.”<sup>51</sup> They also saw the book’s potential as an introductory text for college courses and apparently had some success in persuading professors to adopt the text in seminaries such as Westminster.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

During the 1960s, Rushdoony turned some of his attention away from writing and editing to work as a researcher for the William Volker Fund,<sup>53</sup> a libertarian-oriented philanthropic organization based in Burlingame, California. It was during this work that Rushdoony engaged in one of his most

important efforts to popularize Van Til far beyond the narrow confines of the seminary or pew. While at the fund, he promoted Van Til’s ideas in his engagement with the activists and businessmen he encountered in the late 1950s and 1960s. In his interaction with men associated with organizations such as the William Volker Fund, Spiritual Mobilization, and the Foundation for Economic Education, Rushdoony consistently challenged these pioneers of the resurgent American libertarian and conservative movements to be more self-consciously Christian. For Rushdoony, this meant that they should also be presuppositional in their approach to economic and political problems.

Although Rushdoony didn’t convert many of his new associates from this period to Van Tillian presuppositionalism, he did manage to push many of them to think about their Christianity, and he challenged them to put their religious convictions at the foundation of their political activism. This interaction between apologetics and political activism eventually came together in the form of the Chalcedon Foundation. In the next essay in this series, I will relate how Rushdoony’s relationship with Van Til developed during the pivotal period of the 1960s and ’70s when Rushdoony was writing *The Institutes of Biblical Law* and outlining the project of Christian Reconstruction. ■■■

In 2010 Michael J. McVicar completed a dissertation exploring the relationship between the ministry of R. J. Rushdoony and the American conservative movement. He lectures at several universities in Ohio. McVicar is not a Reconstructionist. He can be reached with questions and comments at [mcvicar.2@gmail.com](mailto:mcvicar.2@gmail.com)

1. Michael J. McVicar, “Cornelius Van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony, Part 1: Every Thought Captive,” *Faith for All of Life* (May/June 2011): 14–19.

2. For a fuller treatment of Rushdoony's time as a missionary on the Duck Valley reservation, see Michael J. McVicar, "First Owyhee and Then the World: The Early Ministry of R. J. Rushdoony," *Faith for All of Life* (November/December 2008): 18–22, 31.
3. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 15 December 1944. All references to unpublished letters refer to material held in the Rousas John Rushdoony Library, Chalcedon Foundation, Vallecito, California.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. R. J. Rushdoony to Dave Stowe, 14 October 1946.
7. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 24 February 1945.
8. Cornelius Van Til, *The New Modernism: An Appraisal of the Theology of Barth and Brunner* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1946).
9. Quoted in Wesley A. Roberts, "Cornelius Van Til," in *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 124.
10. R. J. Rushdoony to Cornelius Van Til, 18 April 1948.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. R. J. Rushdoony to Lorna Logan, 4 April 1946.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 5 February 1947.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. R. J. Rushdoony to George Huntston Williams, 23 October 1947.
22. R. J. Rushdoony to Frederick Bronkema, 23 October 1947.
23. *Ibid.* Coles eventually responded to Rushdoony and apparently conceded some of his criticisms. Coles's response to Rushdoony is not available in Rushdoony's personal library, but Rushdoony's June 7, 1948, response to Coles survives. Rushdoony's note suggests Coles apologized for at least part of his review for *The New Modernism*, but the exact content of Coles's letter is unclear.
24. R. J. Rushdoony to Cornelius Van Til, 23 October 1947.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 4 June 1948.
27. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 29 October 1948.
28. R. J. Rushdoony to George Huntston Williams, 23 October 1947. Rushdoony referenced Haroutunian's coarse words in his October 23, 1947, letter to Van Til, but he spared Van Til the expletives.
29. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 7 May 1962. Roger Schultz first called the attention of readers of *Faith for All of Life* to this exchange in his essay "To a Thousand Generations: Rousas Rushdoony and the Study of History," *Faith for All of Life* (November/December 2007): 23n.5.
30. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 7 May 1962.
31. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 29 October 1948.
32. Rushdoony envisioned the Herald as a journal reporting on issues relevant to Presbyterianism and the Reformed movement more generally. He proposed a journal unapologetically committed to defending Presbyterian economic and political theory and hoped it would appeal to lay readers and church officials alike. For a fuller discussion of the project, see Michael J. McVicar, "Basic to Sound Action, Is a Sound Faith: The Westminster Herald," *Faith for All of Life* (January/February 2011): 13–19.
33. "Two Churches Organized in California," *The Presbyterian Guardian*, June 15, 1958.
34. Rousas John Rushdoony, *By What Standard? An Analysis of the Philosophy of Cornelius Van Til* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959; repr. Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1995).
35. Charles H. Craig to R. J. Rushdoony, 28 August 1958.
36. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law: A Chalcedon Study, Vol. I* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973).
37. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 10 January 1959.
38. R. J. Rushdoony to Gilbert, 30 September 1958.
39. *Ibid.*
40. William Young, "Apologetic," *Christianity Today*, November 23, 1959, 38.
41. Robert D. Knudsen, "Current Mood of Our Century: Alienation," *Christianity Today*, 1961, 53. Knudsen's essay is a lengthy review of a series entitled *Modern Thinkers Series* published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company in 1960. Knudsen is generally positive about the whole series. Rushdoony's *Van Til* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960) republished chapter 3 of *By What Standard* with a short introduction. The text was one in a series of eight short essays that also included introductions to Nietzsche, Sartre, Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann, Niebuhr, and Dewey.
42. For an in-depth study of Rushdoony's troubled relationship with the editors of *Christianity Today*, see Michael J. McVicar "Working with Pygmies: R. J. Rushdoony, *Christianity Today*, and the Making of an American Theologian," *Faith for All of Life* (July/August 2008): 14–18, 32.
43. William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 42.
44. J. Marcellus Kik to R. J. Rushdoony, 30 January 1959.
45. Charles H. Craig to R. J. Rushdoony, n.d.
46. Cornelius Van Til, *The Case for Calvinism*, International Library of Philosophy and Theology (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964).
47. Cornelius Van Til, *Karl Barth and Evangelicalism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964). Correspondence between Van Til and Rushdoony frequently references the latter's function as an editor. One of the clearest references to Rushdoony's work on *Case for Calvinism* is Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 23 July 1962.

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# How Lobsters Expose the Achilles' Heel of the Conservative Movement

Ian Hodge, Ph.D.



A group of rugged Nova Scotia fishermen met at 8:30 a.m. to discuss their future. They were being ripped off, they said. They

worked hard on their boats netting lobsters, sold them to a local wholesaler, who then sold them to someone else in the world, who then sold them to ... You get the picture.

The fishermen were up in arms because they sold their lobsters for \$4.50 a pound, but found those lobsters fetching \$10, \$12, \$15, or more a pound in New York or someplace else.

They were being ripped off, they said. To prevent it, they appointed a representative group that went to Europe with the purpose of bypassing the local wholesaler. They would sell their lobsters themselves directly to the foreign buyers.

But they returned empty-handed, and soon found themselves in a meeting that had been organized by the local wholesaler. He called the meeting so I could address the fishermen.

"How much of that \$10 or \$12 selling price do you think you're entitled to?" I asked.

Various responses. Six dollars. Half of it. Most were quiet. There was no answer with which they all agreed.

I gave them one.

"You're entitled to the full amount of the selling price. If it's \$12, this is yours. After all, it's your lobster."

Stunned silence. They didn't expect that answer. I continued.

"But, in order for you to get that \$12, you're going to have to pay for holding tanks here at home so the lobsters can clean themselves (which makes them ready for the dinner plate), then transport them to a major airport. Someone has to organize this. Do you think that person should get paid for his time and facilities that make the sale possible?"

They nod, affirmatively.

"Good. In addition there are the freight costs to some geographical location such as New York, Spain, or Korea. Should these be paid?"

"Yes," again.

"Where will the money come from to pay for this?" They are silent, because they know the freight costs have to come out of the final selling price.

"At the other end of the air freight delivery there's unloading, holding, and distribution again. Should people who handle these activities so your lobsters can be sold be paid for time and effort?"

"Yes," they agreed.

"Now how much of that \$12 is left for you?"

Pause.

"As I said, the lobsters are yours, the last price, the retail price is yours. But you have to pay all the people in the middle who make the ultimate sale possible. What you get is what's left after everyone gets paid—by you."

"But we're getting ripped off," they claim.

"By whom?" I ask. "Which one of these people in the middle is 'ripping you off'?"

Silence, again. They're afraid to point the finger at the local wholesaler, my client.

I continue: "When you catch your lobsters and bring them in, there's a price that consumers are willing to pay—*today*. Your lobsters have to be in holding tanks for at least forty-eight hours before they can be eaten, so your catch cannot be sold today. It will be sold two days later. The wholesaler cannot sell them today, since buyers want them shipped ready to eat. They don't have holding tanks, so it makes sense for them to buy when the lobsters are ready for the dinner plate. And the ones you've just landed cannot be sold in their present condition.

"Over the next forty-eight hours the price can go down. Are you willing to hand back some of the money you were paid today because the price goes down forty-eight hours from now? In other words, are you willing to take on the risks that the wholesaler here in Nova Scotia, and the risks that other middlemen he sells to, take on board?"

Once more there's silence, this time with a little feet-shuffling. There's *angst* in the room and everyone can feel it. This is all new to them. Well, maybe it's not new, but to bring all the issues together in this way begins to paint a different picture.

No, they were not willing to hand back money forty-eight hours later. They expect the local wholesaler to take the risk on price movements. They had a guaranteed payment at today's prices, whereas the wholesaler had to wait

forty-eight hours to find out what the market would pay. On some deals, he lost. At some times of the year, he was lucky to break even. In the good season, he could make money as demand sent the price up during that forty-eight-hour holding period.

Now, jump from Nova Scotia lobster fishing to poverty in Central America for a moment. The solution to poverty has been the life work of Peruvian Hernando de Soto. The poor are poor because the legal framework does not permit them to use assets for growth. De Soto's book *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else* is based on the story of property rights. Or, at least, the "rule of law"—whatever that might mean—and its *failure* to release capital in third world countries.

My interest in the issue of property rights is to tie together the story of the fishermen and de Soto's view on property rights and to highlight the *missing ingredient* in property rights theory. It explains why property rights as they are understood are a failure, and do not, nor can they, relieve poverty. Without all the proper ingredients, property rights become a myth, a slogan, a mantra. This missing ingredient is the Achilles' Heel—the weakness—of the conservative movement.

"Do not oppress or rob your neighbor; specifically, you are not to keep back the wages of a hired worker all night until morning" (Lev. 19:13, Complete Jewish Bible translation).

That missing ingredient is here in the text from Leviticus 19:13. Specifically, it is money and the ownership of money.

About two centuries ago, the British High Court ruled people have no ownership in their money. And that ruling has made its way around the world. Money is owned by the political order, and you

use it because government money is determined to be "legal tender." This is why legal precedent allows the banks to take "your" government money and do whatever is "legally prudent" for them to multiply money through the fractional reserve banking system.

It is easy to believe that in Western countries you have "property rights." But what does this mean? You have title to some land, perhaps. But under the auspices of "eminent domain" you can be removed from that land at government whim. To be certain, you can argue about the price you are paid and seek redress in the courts. But in all other respects, you are a tenant of the state.

Money, among other things, is a store of wealth. It is property in the same sense that any other physical property is an asset. You can touch it, feel it, smell it, and see it. More importantly, because it is money, it is the most "marketable" of all property because it is easily exchanged for other goods.

The text in Leviticus clearly ties money and theft together. To hold back the wages of a hired person overnight is theft. The corresponding passage in Deuteronomy 24:15 connects this with the needs of poor people. They cannot wait, so pay them today. But here in Leviticus the payment of wages is linked to property ownership and theft.

In the example of the fishermen, I suggested they were entitled to the full price of the lobsters at the end of the supply chain. But they would have to pay, out of that price, *all* the activities that took place in order for lobsters to end up on the consumers' plate.

Now they may be entitled to it all, and they could keep all of it—if *they did all the work*. But as soon as someone else gets involved, that portion of the selling price no longer belongs to the fishermen. It now belongs to those who do the work.

It is the same in many other businesses. An automobile dealer does not "own" all the money he collects from the buyer. There are suppliers of raw materials, subcontractors, and employees involved in getting that vehicle to the consumer. Each contributor "owns" a portion of the selling price. The auto dealer may collect all the money, but all of it is not his. It needs to be paid to the true owner(s)—*today*, not tomorrow.

Your economic system currently depends on a violation of this principle. If business owners were really collecting on behalf of staff, contractors, suppliers, they would take that portion of the money that did not belong to them and put it aside out of reach, or better still, immediately pay for the goods and services they receive.

And this is also the explanation for the failure of property rights to release capital in third world countries. True property rights don't exist in those countries. The worker is not perceived to be the *immediate* owner of his wages, nor is the employer perceived as a trustee on behalf of his employees. Instead, the employer is perceived to own the money *until such time* as he makes the payment to his hired hands. Meanwhile, employers go bankrupt, or some simply pocket the money, and the employee does not have capital released to him.

As at home, there is no legal requirement that a portion of money earned belonging to the employee should be placed in a separate bank or escrow account. So the employee's earnings get mixed up with the corporate funds and get extracted only on the day the wages are paid.

Political issues only make things worse. Since the political order claims entitlement to everything, it demands its portion of the sale price—taxes. Civil governments do not recognize Scripture and its principles. But they do know the

meaning of ownership of money: pay now!

Without property rights in money, individual property rights are watered down to the point where “eminent domain” by the political order reigns supreme.

Another passage of Scripture says: “A curse on anyone who moves his neighbor’s boundary marker. All the people are to say, ‘Amen!’” (Deut. 27:17 CJB).

From this it can be seen that property rights are not a small thing in God’s eyes. All the people are to say “Amen” to the curse that is placed on those who move boundary markers.

Have you helped to remove your neighbor’s boundary mark? Politicians, judges, professors, and clergymen have been removing the boundary markers for a long time—centuries—if not overtly, then covertly by their silence and acquiescence. Yet people continue to vote for them. The boundary marks of property (wealth), especially money, have been moved time and time again.

The difficulty, however, is that many people are *unwilling* to say “the system” is the problem. They act as if individuals are the problem, so they select a “good guy” to vote for. And then they become perplexed when the “good guys” do the same thing as the “bad guys”—move the boundary marks of money. They may do it slower rather than faster, but move the markers they do.

And after all these decades people continue to believe in fairy tales ... that “Prince Charming,” or sometimes “Princess Charming,” will arrive with a kiss on the cheek, and they’ll awaken as if this were all a bad dream.

It is not the person, however, that is the problem. Toyota’s recent eight-million-vehicle recall was not a person problem: it was a problem of their manufacturing “system.” And our nation-states are also a “system”—a sys-

tem of government that begins with the idea that Christ will not reign on this earth. This is the “system” from hell. It’s sometimes called democracy—rule of the 50 percent plus one. Or it could be called monarchy—rule of the monarch.

No “system” of government, *as a system*, is noted for its protection of property rights. In fact, to the contrary, it is the single distinguishing mark of government of any kind: control of property in some form, especially money. It might be through “eminent domain,” or it might simply be through the process and control of money, defining what will constitute “legal tender,” and the control of its volume. In every instance control of property is designated in taxation laws.

The battle for property rights was lost over eight centuries ago, almost as soon as the ink had dried on the Magna Carta, the Great Charter of 1215. Money and taxes were the issue then as they are now.

What makes you think you can turn your economy—and your culture—around, without a return to property rights in money as a key ingredient of reform?

And to do that, “the system” needs to be eliminated and a new one put in its place. A godly system, and nothing less. 🏰

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*Rushdoony ... Warfare cont. from page 5 and nature through Jesus Christ; and then obedience to His law-word. Men may hope for peace through other means, but they will instead feed the forces of war.*

Conflict, instead of being a force for progress, is an aspect of man’s fall and

a product of his sin. It is unfortunately sometimes necessary in a fallen world, but it is not the norm, nor is it the means of progress. Sometimes good very definitely does come out of conflict, and sometimes conflict is morally necessary, but this still does not mean that conflict is the way to progress. A man who lost his sight in an accident was led, step by step, to a forsaking of a reprobate way of life and to a useful and godly existence. This does not mean that we should all blind ourselves in order to make progress! Neither the source of change, nor the thing changed, are in the environment or in accidents, but in the relationship of God and man. Man’s basic war is with God and God’s law-order, and man’s true peace begins with peace with God.

In all this, the state is futile. To hope for political salvation is like hoping for a colt from a mule. The state will change when men change. The warfare state will give way to a godly state when men are godly men, not the warfaring men St. James describes (James 4:1–3). Meanwhile, the age of the state is what we deserve. In fact, it is better than this generation deserves. 🏰

*McVicar ... Defenders cont. from page 13*

48. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 25 December 1955. Van Til was likely referring to Rushdoony’s work on the pamphlet *Karl Barth and Evangelicalism* cited above.

49. Cornelius Van Til to R. J. Rushdoony, 10 January 1959.

50. Charles H. Craig to R. J. Rushdoony, n.d.

51. *Ibid.*

52. C. H. Craig to R. J. Rushdoony, 2 March 1959.

53. For a history of Rushdoony’s work at the Volker Fund, see Michael J. McVicar, “Aggressive Philanthropy: Progressivism, Conservatism, and the William Volker Charities Fund,” *Missouri Historical Review* 105 (July 2011): 191–212.



# Don't Plant Churches, Build Covenant Communities

Bojidar Marinov



A missionary to a Muslim nation recently wrote me that a great deal of the discussion within his missionary organization

is devoted to the concept of “insider movements.” The term means that new believers should remain within the cultural and religious tradition of Islam while at the same time professing saving faith in Christ. “The whole thing,” wrote the missionary, “is predicated on the idea that Christianity is not a religion.”

The missionary himself—a longtime reader of Rushdoony’s books—disagreed with the approach and said that it is going about the issue of community the wrong way. He lamented the fact that missionaries “are generally resistant to the idea that we are advancing a new culture, and one that will conquer the existing cultures of this world.” Apparently, his coworkers in the missionary organization believe that the cultural practices of a convert don’t need to change according to the requirements of his new faith. Christianity, in their view, requires no change of behavior, and therefore it requires no change of culture. If it is “not a religion,” then it doesn’t address the whole of man, and therefore the whole of man can remain unchanged; *ideas do not have consequences*.

It is worthy to note that Christianity is the only religion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that has such discussions within itself. Muslims do not believe that a man can be a Muslim

and remain faithful to his non-Muslim cultural practices. Neither do Communists believe that a conversion to Communism can leave a person unchanged in his cultural ways. Every other faith looks at itself in a comprehensive way and has comprehensive requirements for its adherents. It is only Christians who willingly abandon the comprehensive demands of their own faith and surrender the new converts to the cultural traps of their old faiths. Christianity cannot and should not build a culture, they believe. A culture, in their view, is something given and fixed; we shouldn’t try to change it. All that is necessary is individual salvation; that individual salvation is not supposed to nor expected to produce cultural changes.

The majority of modern missions—and the seminaries that train the missionaries—are based on this approach to the relationship between the Christian faith and the culture. Missionaries are never instructed in a comprehensive worldview that builds a new Christian culture within the old pagan culture. They leave their churches illiterate about the Biblical answers to the multitude of questions other cultures are asking. Mission organizations insist that their goal is nothing more than “planting churches.” Some even boast that they are working “within the context of the local cultures,” which translated means the same thing as the term “insider movement” mentioned above. Seminaries never offer courses about the broader applications of the Christian faith in areas like family, business and econom-

ics, history, education, civil government, welfare, etc. A missionary seldom has any answers beyond the elementary level of personal salvation and church worship.

Ironically, while this approach to missions and culture is predicated on the idea that Christianity is not a religion, its result is exactly a religion—and that in the limited pagan sense of the word. The truncated view of the missionaries drives them to focus on “planting churches” with little else to do. Since these churches are not there to change the culture, their mission becomes very limited—only to “dispense religion” on Sunday morning. In a very real way, such a church is no different from a pagan temple in antiquity, a specialized institution that provides for a specific need of the worshippers, the need for religious experience.

People go to the grocery store when they need groceries, to the auto repair shop when they need their car repaired, to the theater when they need entertainment, and, when they need some religion, they go to church on Sunday morning. The grocery store, the auto repair, the theater do not claim to change the culture; they only provide a specific service for a specific need. The church, by refusing to address the whole culture, becomes like them, simply another outlet for services in the community. That was the use of the temples in pagan antiquity: people went to the temples to get their daily portion of religion and religious experience, or to tell the gods what they needed so that the gods knew better how

to serve the humans, or to perform rituals designed to manipulate the gods to act in favor of the worshipper.

By default, modern missionaries act as if the culture without Christ contains everything it needs and is good per se, or at least morally neutral. All it needs is individual salvation and an institution for dispensing religious experience, and the missionary is there to provide it with the least repercussions on the culture itself. History thus is independent of the gospel; it runs its course no matter what the religious faith and commitments of the people in the culture. Culture becomes a product of historical forces, or material forces, or chance; faith—and specifically faith in Christ—has no bearing on it: it is only an external addendum to the culture. This is exactly the view of materialistic determinism, and specifically Marxism. Thus modern missions are in essence Marxist and materialist in their philosophical outlook.

In a previous article for *Faith for All of Life*, “The True Origin of Foreign Missions,”<sup>1</sup> I made the case that foreign missions did not originate with Paul; they were part of the very culture and life of the Jewish nation. Foreign missions were a program for conquest, for converting the world to the Word of God in its entirety. Proselytizing was part of the very culture of the Diaspora; Jews outside of the Holy Land had a mission: bring the nations to God by offering them the law of God, superior to all laws of men. That law of God was not only meant to convert the life of the individual; its scope of work was to bring all of life under the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

I am not the first to make the connection between Christian and Jewish missions. In his book *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, J. H. Bavinck also traces the origin of foreign missions to the Old Testament. He then devotes

a half chapter to the Jewish missions in the Roman Empire before and in the time of Christ. In it, he makes a very important observation about the nature of the Jewish missions and what he calls its “power of attraction.” Quoting from Axenfeld, “As a philosophical religion, Judaism indeed touched the isolated educated individual. But as a religious and social fellowship, with a unique way of life, it appealed to the masses of people,” Bavinck comments:

By entering into the Jewish communion a convert was brought into union with a world fellowship, and he thereby enjoyed all sorts of political and social privileges ... A Jew enjoyed many civic advantages. The Jews who lived in the cities had a sort of government of their own and were states within the state. To a certain extent they even had their own administration of justice, so that to belong to such community was desirable for many.<sup>2</sup>

Foreign missions, in their original form, not only addressed the culture, they also *built an alternative culture* to the worldly culture. And that alternative culture of better justice and righteousness than what the world could offer was the “power of attraction” for the multitudes of people. The formal religion, the synagogue and the Sabbath services, had no attraction in themselves; the very essence of the life preached and *practiced by the covenant community* was what attracted many Gentiles to saving faith in God. While the pagan temples tried to attract worshippers with the majestic beauty of their buildings, statues, and altars, the Jewish missions had only the life of the Jewish community. In fact, so pronounced was the difference that Bavinck felt compelled to add the following:

Since the common people, the unthinking masses, could not think of a religion without idols, they might indeed say

that the Jews were atheists. But those who came into a deeper understanding of Jewish worship were in one way or another influenced by it.<sup>3</sup>

The attraction of a new culture of justice and righteousness was much stronger than the visible trappings of the mystical religions that sought to escape time and matter. It was the invisible power of the comprehensive worldview of the law of God that drew the masses to God, not the visible worship of the temples. Foreign missions were meant to be cultural conquest, not an “insider movement” of converts who stayed in the cultural practices of their pagan religions. The Christian church after the Resurrection continued the same practice, as is known from the examples in Acts, and then from the examples of the early church. And people flocked to the Jewish synagogues, and later to the churches. When a religion has all the answers to the cultural questions, people are naturally drawn to it.

The approach of modern missions is exactly the opposite to this: visible trappings and no cultural alternative. And it has abundantly proven its inadequacy. It is a failure; in many places missionaries waste time and money and effort to produce only meager results. It is time to return to the Biblical model of missions, as exemplified by the synagogue, and then by the early church.

To do that, our missionaries must shift their focus from “planting churches” to a program of cultural conquest. This cultural conquest can’t be anything less than the building of a *covenant community*—an alternative culture within the broader culture, an alternative economy within the broader economy, and, by extension, a civil jurisdiction and government within the broader political and civil settings of a society. Our mission organizations and seminaries must abandon their truncated approach and

teach and empower the missionaries to build *comprehensively*, to offer solutions to the destruction of the pagan religions and culture in a community built on the comprehensive demands and blueprints of the Word of God.

While the detailed breakdown of the work a missionary should do will require a book rather than an article, here we can at least sketch the necessary steps:

*First*, a missionary should work to build the *intellectual foundation* for a future Christian civilization. This means he must make available to his flock the richness of the Christian literature we have accumulated throughout the ages on the application of the gospel to every area of life. He may need to engage in or organize a long-term program for translation of Christian materials. He must start building libraries in the nation that is his field. No missionary effort can succeed long-term unless there is knowledge about Jesus Christ and His Kingdom; and no knowledge is possible without a constant connection with the rest of the Christian world through the books Christians have written.

That might also mean that the missionary should spend time teaching whole populations to read; although a program for literacy shouldn't be independent from the effort of making Christian books available to the new converts.

*Second*, a missionary must build the *leadership* of the covenant community. This doesn't mean appointing "pastors" or deacons or any other ecclesiastical offices; in fact, the institutional ecclesiastical form must come only *after* there is an established community, *out* of that community. A missionary should work to raise and train *elders* and *judges* who will be the foundation for building the alternative economic and judicial life of the Christian community. When a missionary is appointing pastors and dea-

cons without trained elders and judges, he is only building a baptized version of a pagan temple, an institution limited to dispensing religious experience.

*Third*, a missionary must work as a "legislator" who helps the newly formed Christian communities establish their own *covenant rules* for acceptable conduct and relationships. The law of the community must be based on the Bible and must reflect the justice and the righteousness of the law of God, taking into account the general rules (the Ten Commandments), the case laws (the Pentateuch), and the judicial and moral applications (in the rest of the Bible). Unbelievers clearly see the goodness and the majesty of God in His law (Deut. 4:5–8); without God's law applied in the community, there isn't much that can attract the masses of people to Christ.

*Fourth*, a missionary must preach and work to establish an ethics of rewards and charity in the new converts. A strong pro-business attitude and appreciation of the problem-solvers—that is, the entrepreneurs—is an integral part of a Christian community that plans to survive long-term in a hostile environment. At the other end of the spectrum, a missionary must be able to help form and establish a system within the covenant community for helping the poor and the needy. Both must be based on a Biblical understanding of value—relational, economic, intellectual, moral, etc. No person should be rewarded for laziness, and those who work hard to solve problems must be given honor.

And *fifth*, a missionary must establish a system for *transferring* the faith, the commitment, and the wisdom of the covenant community *to the next generation*. No Christian community can survive and thrive and fight the good fight without specifically Christian education of its children. A missionary

who leads his listeners to Christ but lets them send their children to pagan teachers and schools is undermining his own effort. Christian homeschooling or institutional Christian schools must become the focus of the missionary's effort from the very beginning of his work with the local converts. Only when the children are safely accommodated into a system of Christian education under the control of their Christian parents can there be hope for the survival of the covenant community through the generations.

Building a covenant community that is an alternative to the culture is the only way to evangelize the world. The "insider movements," just like the other piecemeal approaches we have seen in the last 200 years, are only a retreat before the enemy, an acceptance of the legitimacy of Satan's power over the earth. Preaching Christianity while legitimizing cultural traditions of pagan religions is only a denial of the Great Commission. It's time for us as Christians to change our approach to missions to the comprehensive, victorious approach of the early church missions—and redirect our mission financing accordingly. 🇺🇸

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1. <http://chalcedon.edu/faith-for-all-of-life/worldview-contamination/the-true-origins-of-foreign-missions/>
2. J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, trans. David H. Freeman (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960), 28–29.
3. *Ibid.*, 29.

# Rethinking Childbearing - Part 2

Andrea Schwartz



“Natural” childbirth came into fashion in the 1970s with the practice of husbands or other support persons being present dur-

ing the labor and birth of their children while assuming the role of labor coach and companion for the birthing mother. Many heralded this as a great advance, and hospitals began to provide nicely decorated birthing rooms so that women could labor and deliver their babies in an atmosphere much closer to a bedroom than a hospital room. Previous hospital practice had involved a woman being moved to a delivery room once she had dilated fully, so this was a big change. The hope was that women would regain the capacity to deliver babies without unnecessary interventions, as they were deemed to be detrimental to both mother and baby. The idea was to let nature take its course.

One would expect that this change would have established “natural childbirth” as the norm, rather than the exception; allowing a woman to have someone of her choosing present was supposed to be a sure way to relax and comfort her. However, there has been an *increase* in the number of women requesting non-emergency medical interventions during the process of laboring, resulting in an increase in the use of electronic fetal monitoring (to note the vital signs of the baby in utero), epidurals (spinal medication used to numb the woman from the waist down), Pitocin (a synthetic form of the hormone oxytocin to speed up the first stage of labor), rupturing of membranes

(in cases where the amniotic sac has not done so spontaneously), episiotomies (a surgical cut to expand the opening from which the baby passes), and cesarean sections (major surgery to deliver a baby in place of vaginal delivery).

The first issue that needs to be addressed is why these interventions are best avoided. If in the end it doesn't matter *how* a baby is born, just *that* it is born, why make this a concern at all?

Simply put, these interventions have consequences for the long-term relationship between mother and child. Because today there is an unrealistic expectation on the part of parents and medical personnel as to how long labor should take, especially a first labor, the many “helps” that are available from the hospital “pain reduction” menu often are the very factors that lead to eventual C-sections.

Michel Odent, a French obstetrician, gets to the heart of the matter when he says,

Oxytocin is the hormone of love, and to give birth without releasing this complex cocktail of love chemicals disturbs the first contact between the mother and the baby. The hormone is produced during sex and breastfeeding, as well as birth, but in the moments after birth, a woman's oxytocin level is the highest it will ever be in her life, and this peak is vital. It is this hormone flood that enables a woman to fall in love with her newborn and forget the pain of birth.

What we can say for sure is that when a woman gives birth with a pre-labour Caesarean section she does not release this flow of love hormones, so she is a different woman than if she had given birth naturally and the first contact between mother and baby is different.<sup>1</sup>

As it turned out, the push for natural childbirth didn't materialize into a significant change. The woman still was placed in a bed on her back with feet in stirrups, a very unnatural position for giving birth. That in itself intensifies the pain and lengthens the labor. Given these “accepted practices,” over time women resorted to the pain meds that were readily offered as the only way to endure.<sup>2</sup>

Add to that the artificial time schedule assigned to “normal” labor that made it so birth had to occur at the convenience of the hospital staff, who would have a tendency to rush things along if a shift change were approaching, or to accommodate a doctor's schedule, or should there be a need for the hospital bed.

So, what happened to the *natural* part of childbirth? What does the term even mean?

## Natural Childbirth

Obstetrician Grantly Dick-Read is credited with coining the term “natural childbirth,” which he used in his books *Natural Childbirth* (1933) and *Childbirth Without Fear* (1944). His philosophy centers on the idea that women are innately able to give birth to children, without external intervention. He took a stand against the pathological model modern medicine had adopted, and he feared practitioners were rapidly forgetting what a *normal* birth even looked like.

One of the most important factors in the production of complicated labour and therefore of maternal and infantile morbidity, is the inability of obstetricians and midwives to stand by and allow the natural and uninterrupted

course of labour. It may be an excess of zeal, or anxiety born of ignorance, but it is an unquestionable fact that interference is still one of the greatest dangers with which both mother and child have to contend.<sup>3</sup>

Dick-Read was addressing what Dr. Jo Loomis outlined in a recent *FFAOL* article<sup>4</sup>—the shift that had occurred in the practice of childbearing in the West in the early part of the twentieth century. The routine practice of home-birth attended by a midwife had given way to obstetricians (surgeons) and nurses overseeing the birthing process in hospital settings.

Had adopting the hospital model caused women to lose their innate instincts of how to give birth? Had the shift in thinking produced a generation of women who wanted “natural childbirth” but found it difficult to proceed because their own perspective (as well as the hospital’s perspective) of “natural childbirth” lacked a full understanding of the process? Was it inevitable that the trend toward natural childbirth would give way to the practice of unnecessary medical interventions?

Dick-Read sized up the situation back in the 30s and 40s:

Woman ... is adapted primarily for the perfection of womanhood which is, according to the law of Nature, reproduction. All that is most beautiful in her life is associated with the emotions leading up to this ultimate function. But unfortunately in the final perfection of these joys a large majority remember only the pain and anguish and even terror that they were called upon to endure at the birth of their first child. That is indeed a paradox. For generations, childbirth has been accepted as a dangerous and painful experience.<sup>5</sup>

He noted that medicine had placed too much focus in the direction of pharmaceutical relief, and not enough emphasis on adequately preparing

women for the birthing process.

Obstetric teaching has made great advances in the use of drugs, analgesics and anaesthetics, but little has been done to investigate the problem of pain from the point of view of its preclusion ... Anything that disturbs the confidence and peacefulness of the mother disrupts the neuromuscular harmony of her labour ... In childbirth, fear and the anticipation of pain give rise to natural protective tensions in the body.

Unfortunately, the natural muscular tension produced by fear also influences the muscles that close the womb and thus delay the progress of the labour and create pain ... The safest and most effective way to minimise the discomforts of childbirth is to enable a woman, by preparation for, and understanding attention at labour to have her baby naturally ... Education and antenatal instruction are important factors in the relief of pain in childbirth.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Systematic Theology of Childbirth**

In Part 1 of this essay, I explored what the Bible has to say about labor, pointing out that the travail of childbirth is an important component for women becoming committed to the task of motherhood. Jesus’s analogy to His apostles concerning their future sadness at His death being turned to joy at His resurrection drew comparisons to the process of labor and delivery, with the apparent implication that this travail was not something to be avoided (John 16:21) but rather one that would actually result in an exuberant outcome.<sup>7</sup>

Dick-Read made the observation based on his experience:

It is my custom to lift up the crying child even before the cord is cut so that the mother may see ... the reality of her dreams ... the first to grasp the small fingers and touch gingerly the soft skin of the infant’s cheek ... Its first cry remains an indelible memory on

the mind of a mother ... No mother and no child should be denied that great mystical association ... it lays a foundation of unity of both body and spirit upon which the whole edifice of mother love stands. Many times I have called attention to the wonderful picture of pure ecstasy that we see at a natural birth ... Is it just an accident that the brilliant sunlight of motherhood breaks through and dispels for all time the clouds of her labour? No change in human emotions is more dramatic ... Such an aura of beauty has filled the whole atmosphere of the room and such superhuman loveliness has swept over the features of the girl whose baby is crying in her hands ... I have experienced a sense of happiness myself much more akin to reverence and awe than to the simple satisfaction of just another natural birth.<sup>8</sup>

On its face, then, John 16:21 seems quite compatible with this firsthand observation by an experienced practitioner. In that light, it would seem to follow that to achieve the God-intended bond between mother and child, the first prerequisite to a “good labor” is for the mother to be spiritually prepared and bolstered for what lies ahead.

There are numerous Bible passages that speak to the reality that bringing a child into the world is not without intense emotion and physical discomfort (Rev. 12:2; Isa. 13:8, 21:3, 37:3). Given the concomitant realities—intense physical, often painful, exertion followed by equally intense emotional exuberance—women are well advised to look to additional passages of Scripture that, while not expressly written to a woman in labor, have a fitting general application to her estate as she moves through the normal stages of labor that culminate in the delivery of her child.

**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am**

gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matt. 11:28–30 NKJV)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me (Ps. 23:4 NKJV)

Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. (Ps. 55:22 NKJV)

As with every area of life and thought, approaching childbirth with the most Biblical mindset we can muster will surely maximize the blessings God intends for His people.

### The Husband's Dilemma

Dick-Read, in positing a better way to approach the process of childbearing and birth, noted,

I never left any woman alone during labour, a prey to the destructive forces of uncontrolled imagination. If I could not be there myself from the start, I made sure that someone was with her—her husband, mother, or sister, to whom I had already given a little instruction on what to expect.<sup>9</sup>

So, the resurgence of natural childbirth practices proved correct in attempting to create a safe, secure environment for the birthing woman, but some unexpected results came about with the introduction of the husband into the process.

Partly due to the breakdown of the trustee family, many couples in the 70s and 80s were living within the atomistic framework of family life. Women who wanted their mothers or other mother-like figures present were few and far between, and the hospital nurse, often a new acquaintance, was the major support a woman received. That left

the husband to fulfill a role that over the centuries usually fell to doulas and midwives, women with the position and experience to bolster a woman through successful labor and delivery. Most men would readily admit that they are at a deficit when it comes to achieving an authentic understanding of all the changes that begin for a woman at the outset of pregnancy all the way to delivery. The calm that is needed is one that is not a natural response to seeing the woman they love in such apparent pain.

Michel Odent, an obstetrician with thousands of births to his credit, points out that the last thing a woman in labor needs is adrenaline—her own or that of her support person. Adrenaline is a combatant to oxytocin, the hormone that is at play to encourage contractions and bring about a narcotic type relief between them. According to Odent, often the husband, inadvertently, produces such an adrenaline response that he lengthens her labor considerably.<sup>10</sup>

Peter Dunn, in his paper for the National Institutes of Health, summarizes Dick-Read's observations after Dick-Read had spent a considerable amount of time traveling throughout Africa in 1948. Through his travels, he discovered that childbirth was not a forgotten skill among the women he encountered.

[Dick-Read] found that well over 90 per cent of women in the tribes he visited had normal, natural births and needed no more convalescence than a few hours' rest. He noted how they automatically adopted an upright position which made passage through the birth canal both safer and easier for the child. He observed that in most tribes the mother was well instructed in the course of labour by old women in whom she had complete confidence and that she was never left alone when in labour. It was particularly interesting to him to see at first hand the profound respect that every tribe had for the afterbirth and the manner of its delivery.

Again, any interference with the work of nature was banned. A child was never separated from the placenta until that structure had been delivered. Only then might the cord be cut and the offspring delivered into its mother's embrace.<sup>11</sup>

### The Ultimate Athletic Event

Consider the woman who is pregnant with her first child. It is an understatement to say everything is new for her. Contrast her with a woman who is pregnant for a second or third time. This woman's body has already undergone delivery; she has a greater sense of the marathon before her, and has previously experienced the joy of holding, nursing, and loving the child she labored over.

Since every woman's birthing experience will be unique to her, physical, mental, and spiritual preparation is of vital importance, especially if she has to combat the images she's seen in film and television depictions of screaming, out-of-control women.<sup>12</sup> Having a mentor, an experienced doula, or midwife helping her maneuver her way through this strenuous, athletic process enables her to remain focused on the task at hand, not getting too far ahead of herself and taking each contraction as it comes, without a pre-determined agenda for how long her labor should take.

Dick-Read, in the preface to the fourth edition (1959) of *Childbirth Without Fear*, speaks to the importance of approaching the birth of a baby with reverence and respect.

[C]hildbirth is fundamentally a spiritual as well as physical achievement and throughout this book it must be read and understood that the birth of a child is the ultimate perfection of human love. In the Christian ethic we teach that God is love in which the blessing of sexual necessity and pleasure is but an essential part. Obstetrics must be approached as a science demanding the most profound respect. It must

maintain the poise and dignity of those whose estimate of values finds a place for all types and variations of women. It demands cheerfulness without frivolity and sacrifice without reward, for of itself no guerdon could be greater than the gratitude of those whom we are privileged to serve.

I am persuaded from long years of experience amongst women of many nationalities that good midwifery is essential for the true happiness of motherhood—that good midwifery is the birth of a baby in a manner nearest to the natural law and design—and good midwifery, next to wise and healthy pregnancy, sets the pattern of the newborn infant and its relationship to its mother.

For this sequence a sound and stable philosophy is a basic necessity. Materialism and atheism are not included in the make-up of motherhood. Neither can a robot lead a blind man across the road.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

Michel Odent, a strong proponent of gentle birth, points out the irony that if non-emergency medical interventions were to stop altogether, many women and children today would be put at risk—not because C-sections and other standard medical practices are good for mother or baby in the long term, but rather because women have lost their innate capacity to travail through the *normal* birthing process and need to learn how to regain that skill.<sup>14</sup>

Why have Western women seemingly lost the ability to proceed through labor and delivery without medical interventions when women from less medically advanced cultures seem to glide through the process? Could it be that with the humanistic thrust that has dominated the West, with science determining there is no longer any need for God and His Word, that women have become convinced that their bodies are incapable of doing precisely that task God has designed them to do? From a Biblical point of view, childbirth cannot

as a rule be seen as a pathology that demands massive intervention, but rather as a God-ordained process through which the command to be fruitful and multiply is to be fulfilled.

When people put their trust in materialistic philosophies in opposition to the triune God and fail to acknowledge the supremacy of Scripture over every activity and segment of life, the results are sure to be detrimental. R. J. Rushdoony hits the nail on the head when he notes,

The growth of non-Christian materialism had led to false and rather mechanical views of medicine. If our car needs oil or gas, we add these things to the car; if we need a new fuel pump, we replace the old one. In like manner, some people expect cure-all dosages and changes and are resentful when the doctor cannot work miracles. Their expectation, however mechanical, is still religious, but it is in essence paganism, not Biblical faith.

This, of course, is the heart of the matter. There must be a return to a Biblical view of medicine as a calling, and as a priestly-pastoral calling, but there must also be a return to Christian faith on the part of the people, or false and unreasonable demands will be made of medicine.<sup>15</sup>

Andrea Schwartz has been an active proponent of Christian education for over 28 years. She successfully homeschooled her three children through high school. Andrea lives in San Jose, CA, with her husband of 35 years and continues to lecture, teach, mentor, and serve as a volunteer doula. Visit her website [www.WordsFromAndrea.com](http://www.WordsFromAndrea.com).

1. Quoted in Emily Cook, “Women who have Caesarean’s ‘less likely to bond,’” *Mail Online*, July 13, 2006, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-395218/Women-Caesareans-likely-bond.html#ixzz1Oi15Fyh6>. Dr. Odent was speaking at a conference sponsored by an educational charity promoting a holistic approach to pregnancy, birth, and babyhood.

2. To be sure, there are other factors that

contributed to this and will be discussed in future installments.

3. Peter Dunn, “Perinatal Lessons from the Past,” *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 1994; 71: F145–F146, accessed via <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1061103/pdf/archdischfn00037-0073.pdf>.

4. Dr. Jo Loomis, “Important Considerations for Expectant Parents,” *Faith for All of Life*, May/June 2011.

5. Dunn, “Perinatal Lessons.”

6. *Ibid.*

7. This is in no way to posit that childbirth must be excruciatingly painful in order for it to be handled in a scriptural fashion, given the limited weight we can attach to any arguments drawn from an analogy. See Andrea Schwartz, “Rethinking Childbearing – Part 1,” *Faith for All of Life*, May/June 2011.

8. Dunn, “Perinatal Lessons.”

9. *Ibid.*

10. The subject of the husband’s role will be given further attention in a future essay on this topic.

11. Dunn, “Perinatal Lessons.”

12. A recent Lifetime Channel series called “One Born Every Minute” gave such a lopsided view of labor, to the point that in their opening trailer, woman after woman is shown screaming and groaning. Repeatedly, nurses offered epidurals the way waitresses offer water to restaurant customers. It was expected that women would want and need one.

13. Grantly Dick-Read, *Childbirth Without Fear*, Appendix: Preface to the Fourth Edition (1959), 568–577.

14. “Michel Odent – on gentle birth [parts 1–3],” YouTube videos, from an interview by OWL productions, uploaded by [elmerpostleowl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBjZ5rMoHkU), November 3, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBjZ5rMoHkU>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x8ip4VVGAI>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXf1pcfKS1o>.

15. R. J. Rushdoony, “Chalcedon Medical Report No. 1: The Medical Profession as a Priestly Calling,” *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 459–460.

# Christian Radio Host's Project: Rebuilding Civilization

Lee Duigon



"We begin by molding our lives around the law of God. Initially, the Second Mayflower will have little to do with the civil government, but in the long run it will bear deep

socio-political effects on a nation—and many other nations at that. To a world which has lost any concept of true freedom from tyranny, it will return the notion of blessed freedom and the truly good life. It will return to many an understanding of and an experience with that which is of true value, something besides the cold materialism and the 'tranquility of servitude' embraced by modern man.

"If we prepare now, we will be ready in seventy-five years when God opens a door of opportunity for us ..."

—Kevin Swanson,  
*The Second Mayflower*<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible to rebuild America—starting in your own basement?

*Generations Radio* host, Pastor Kevin Swanson in Colorado, thinks so, and is trying very hard to prove it.

"Our country's future is going to be rough," he said. "Our social systems are collapsing, which means our economic system will not survive."

We have introduced this article with a quote from Swanson's book *The Second Mayflower*, published in 2008, to show that Swanson has been thinking seriously along these lines for years.

In January 2010 in his own home, Swanson opened his first—and so far, the only —Shepherd Center, taking in nine young men for mentoring by elders. The young men, from sixteen to twenty-four years old, study with their mentors for three days a week in

Swanson's basement. They also travel to special events with Swanson and help him produce his radio show.

"Our focus is mentorship," he said, "with an aim to networking these young men into the macro-economy. But in the meantime, instead of going off to college somewhere, they remain in their families and in their home community."

## But What About College?

This would seem to defy the conventional wisdom. After all, everybody has to go to college, right? A college degree is a must. Even middle-aged adults are urged to go back to college to update their skills.

What's wrong with the everybody-goes-to-college paradigm?

"Quite a bit, these days," Swanson said. "For instance, 50 percent of the 2009 graduating class is today either unemployed or working at something totally unrelated to the field they studied. And there's also a problem with the social context of college. The graduates are unlikely to grow up. They're into materialism, escapism, and irresponsibility—especially the men, much more so than the women. We see more and more of this with each successive generation. We can't just continue making the same mistakes."

But in our credential-happy society, wouldn't it be a serious handicap not to have a college diploma?

"I have no problem with anybody wanting to get a piece of paper that says he finished college," Swanson said—"but please, spend as little money on it as possible. You can get a college degree online, now, at a fraction of the cost of regular tuition.

"Here we offer mentorship. I'm not a plumber; I'm a pastor. So I'm training young men to be ministers, church elders, and fathers of families. My first 'guinea pig,' with whom I began three-and-a-half years ago, is now twenty-two years old and is expected to make over \$100,000 this year."

Without a college education? How can it be possible?

"He has learned how to be an entrepreneur," Swanson said, "and he has several successful businesses now.

"Look—college no longer offers corporate security, as it once did. You don't come out of college and get a good job, as you once did. You can't expect to spend \$150,000 on tuition and be out with a \$60,000 job."

With the cost of college going up and up, and the good job prospects for graduates going down and down, individual entrepreneurship is looking better and better as the way to go, Swanson said.

"True," he added, "for some of the professions, a degree will still be needed—especially if you have to get a license to practice that profession. But nowadays you can even get a law degree online. Yes, if you want to be a junior partner in a high-powered big-city law firm, they'll probably want a degree from Harvard Law School. But if you want to open your own practice in a small town, you don't need to spend a fortune on college tuition."

There's still just one Shepherd Center, "but mentorship is growing all over the place," said Swanson. "See the AME website at [www.ameprogram.com](http://www.ameprogram.com). They're offering mentorships in just about any field you can imagine."



AME is affiliated with Christian Home Educators of Colorado, serving some 45,000 homeschooled students across the Rocky Mountain states.

## Starting Out Like Early Christians

We have spent much time on this aspect of the Shepherd Center program because we expect such a departure from the conventional higher education model to spark protests. “How are you going to earn a decent living if you don’t go to college?” “If you don’t get a college degree, you’ll never be able to do anything but pump gas or clerk at a 7-Eleven®!” We hope we have at least planted the suggestion that “it ain’t necessarily so.”

But for Kevin Swanson the Shepherd Center is about much more than teaching young men how to make a living.

On the Shepherd Center website ([www.theshepherdcenter.com](http://www.theshepherdcenter.com)) Swanson explains, “Our intent is to displace higher education with a Proverbs model of discipleship, or better yet, ‘a Jesus model.’ Jesus refused to start a Christian college, or a seminary. But what did He do? Twelve disciples for three years ... Our hope is to renew relational living, relational education, and a God-centered life in a lost and lonely world ... Christians are now developing new forms of education or discipleship to replace the heavily institutionalized approaches used by the humanists.”

“Mentorship is the best way to salvage our present economy,” he told Chalcedon. “It’s a bottom-up approach to rebuilding the economy.

“We’re starting out small, like the early Christians started. We need a thorough rebuilding of our society from the bottom up. No president, no matter who’s elected, can do this job. It has to be done from the bottom up. We don’t need a carpet-cleaning for our country; we have to rebuild the foundations—which means we have to rebuild father-

hood. So I’m going to teach these young men how to be pastors, and fathers.”

Swanson himself is both a pastor and a father. Now forty-seven, he has five children, all homeschooled. His son, the eldest at nineteen, now participates with him in the Shepherd Center project. His four daughters, aged nine to seventeen, also do their share.

“My girls work together to make the meals for the young men,” he said. “They make the beds and take care of the housework. It’s a challenge for me, being a mentor and raising my own kids at the same time, but we’re all working together to make it happen.

“I want to see my mentoring result in the kind of young men who’ll be fit for my girls to marry when they grow up.”

## When Idols Fall

Although so far the Shepherd Center only mentors men, “We invite the young ladies to sit in with us during our formal training sessions,” Swanson said. “But we don’t have them travel with us. We all feel very strongly that men should mentor men, and women should mentor women.”

Someday, he said, he would like to see his trainees set up their own Shepherd Centers, with centers for young women, too, staffed by older women. Although it would be some years before any of that could come to pass, Swanson said, “We have to take the long view.”

For instance, the church today, he said, “is weak. It doesn’t have enough elders, which means it doesn’t have enough fathers. If the elders don’t know how to rule their own households, how will they know how to rule the house of God?” In time, he added, providing the church with a pool of real fathers, from which to select elders, will strengthen and regenerate the church.

The Shepherd Center doesn’t charge fees or tuition for its services. “I believe the master of any kind of craft or calling

is obliged by God to pass on his skills to the next generation,” Swanson said.

“We have no other options,” he said. As the nation’s economy continues to flounder, as “the various indices of social decay” (crime and delinquency, out-of-wedlock births, sexual anarchy, drug abuse, etc.) continue to climb, the old answers—materialism, political power, status, and wealth—no longer suffice.

“Those idols are coming down,” Swanson said, “and when they fall, you’ll hear a cry go up. But without training in character, and real Biblical scholarship, we as a nation are going to fail.”

“The joy of this is in building relationships, building community,” he said. And on his Shepherd Center website: “Our goal is to produce humble, mighty shepherds for future homes and churches in Colorado. Leaders, yes. But not as the Gentiles produce them. Leaders as Jesus would have produced them.”

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for *Faith for All of Life*. He’s the author of the three-volume *Bell Mountain Series* of Christian novels.

1. Kevin Swanson, *The Second Mayflower* (Parker, CO: Generations with Vision, 2008), 248.

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*M. Rushdoony ... Liberty cont. from page 6*

The issue is one of sovereignty, of ultimate authority. To whatever extent this is claimed as the prerogative of any man, group of men, or institution, the liberties of all others must be correspondingly limited or eliminated. Western liberty was a creation of Christianity, and its loss directly parallels the decline of Christian faith and the resurgence of humanistic statism. The only hope for freedom is the revival of Biblical faith and the repudiation of absolutism in man, whether individually or collectively.

## Biblical Law

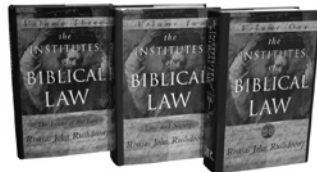
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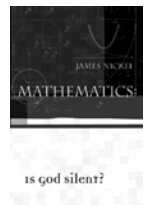
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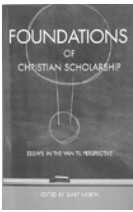
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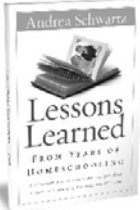
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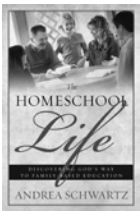
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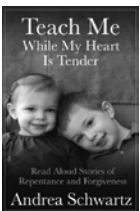


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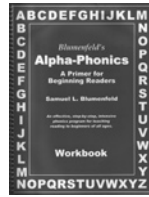
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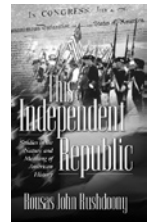


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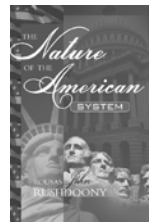
## American History & the Constitution



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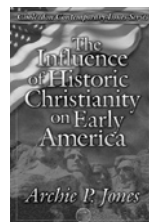
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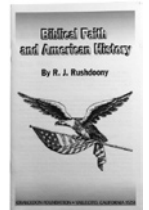


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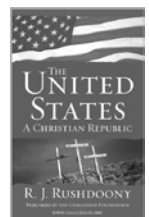
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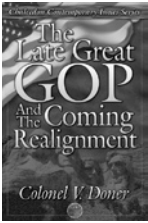
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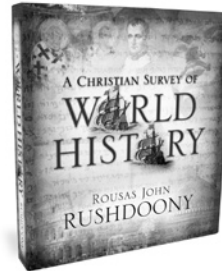
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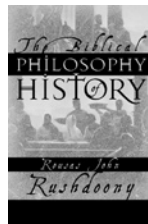
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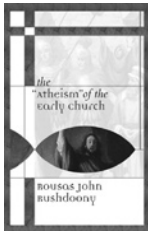


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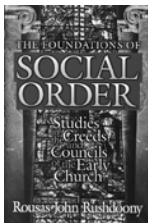
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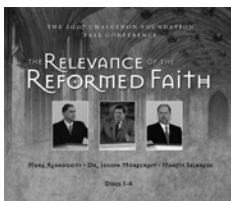


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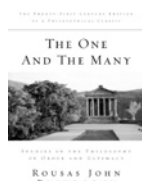
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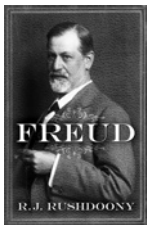


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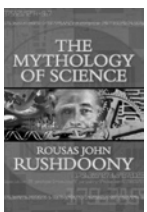
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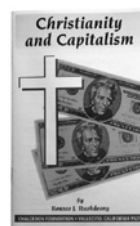
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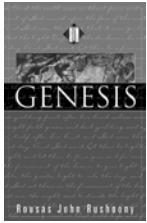
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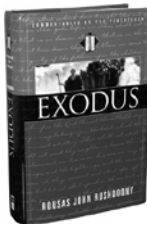


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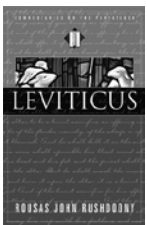
By R. J. Rushdoony. Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ,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

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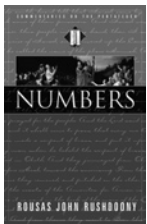
By R. J. Rushdoony. Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God’s law is readily shunned in pursuit of more “spiritual” studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God’s image and is duty-bound to develop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

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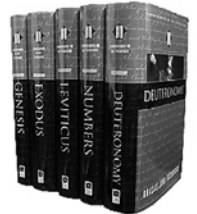
If you desire to understand the core of Rushdoony’s thinking, this commentary on *Deuteronomy* is one volume you must read. The covenantal structure of this last book of Moses, its detailed listing of both blessings and curses, and its strong presentation of godly theocracy provided Rushdoony with a solid foundation from which to summarize the central tenets of a truly Biblical worldview—one that is solidly established upon Biblical Law, and one that is assured to shape the future.

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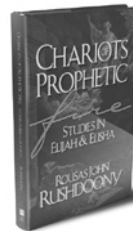
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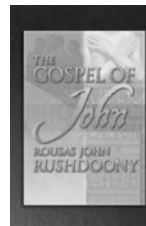
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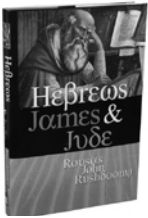
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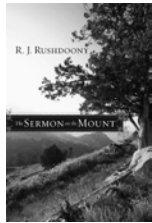
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### Sermon on the Mount

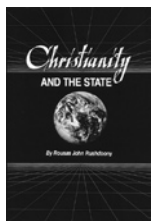
By R. J. Rushdoony. So much has been written about the Sermon on the Mount, but so little of the commentaries venture outside of the matters of the heart. The Beatitudes are reduced to the assumed meaning of their more popular portions, and much of that meaning limits our concerns to downplaying wealth, praying in secret, suppressing our worries, or simply reciting the Lord's Prayer. The Beatitudes are the Kingdom commission to the new Israel of God, and R. J. Rushdoony elucidates this powerful thesis in a readable and engaging commentary on the world's greatest sermon.

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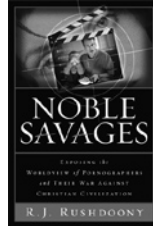
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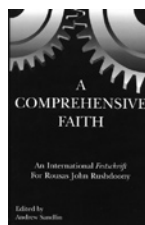
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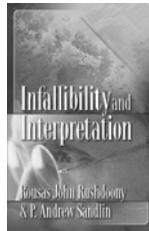




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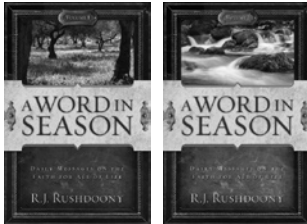
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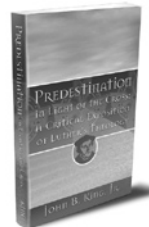
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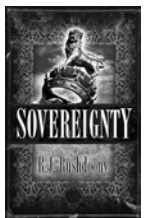
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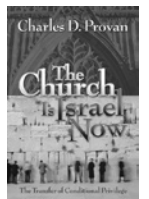
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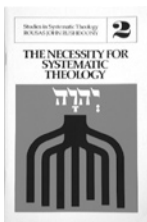
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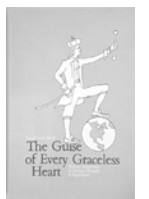
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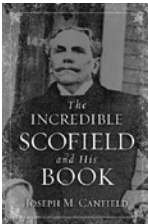
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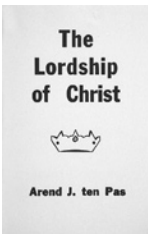
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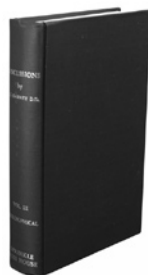


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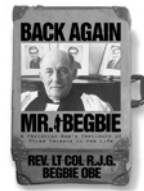
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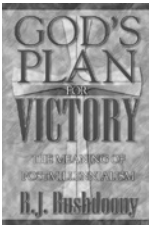
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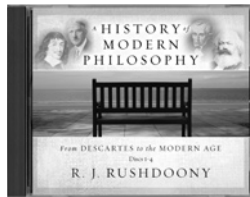
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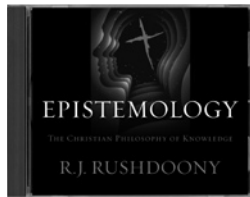
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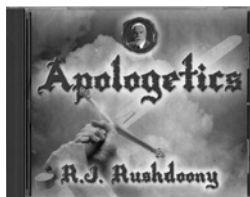
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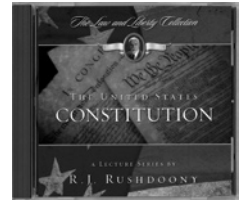
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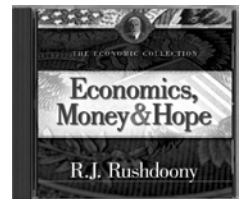
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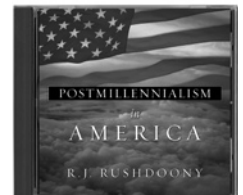
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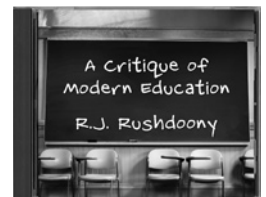
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