FALL 2013

Jubilee
recovering biblical foundations for our time

CULTURAL MARXISM & THE GEO-POLITICAL ORDER
Jennifer Forbes

SUPERNATURAL NATURALISM
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ALWAYS A DYSTOPIAN NIGHTMARE:
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UTOPIA

An Official Publication of the Ezra Institute for Contemporary Christianity
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THE TERM UTOPIA ORIGINATES with Sir Thomas More’s ideal society and it literally means “no place.” This is disorienting at first, since More was a devout Catholic who has been revered by some churchmen for centuries. The reality is that he was far from biblical faith in his thinking despite being made a saint by the Church of Rome in 1935. More was basically an educational reformer and an “apostle of culture” with a humanistic bent. His famous work, Utopia, is essentially a plea for the abolition of private property and the establishment of communism. It is evident that his work is actually anti-Christian, because the normative reality for More is nature, not God and his law, and a life ordered according to nature is depicted by him as virtue. Critically, the “nature” that More has in mind is one molded, governed and controlled by institutions, by the state. Consequently, although More retained the idea of God, functionally his god was the state, as man’s re-creator, provider and preserver. Furthermore, like all Utopians, unity was the supreme virtue for More, since peace could only come through this humanly wrought oneness. As a result man is absorbed into an immanent one, the state. It should also be noted that like most humanistic intellectuals, More saw himself as one of the elite rulers of this new total order in which his fellow man must be manipulated in such a manner as to remove all social divisions. It is not surprising, then, that Lenin himself found inspiration in some of More’s ideas.\(^2\)

True Christian orthodoxy does not produce, indeed cannot produce, such Utopian illusions or plans. The reason for this is that the creator, redeemer God, in his complete word, has already declared his purposes for the future – his Kingdom and rule, established by his power and will. Since God governs history, the Christian, in faith, obedience, and confidence can move toward God’s predestined future (Eph. 1:3-14; Prov. 16:4). The triune, sovereign Lord, who by his providence and power sustains all things (Heb. 1:1-3), is the one in whom the Christian trusts. The non-believer on the other hand has no such security but posits an entirely different worldview. Utopianism, which denies God’s predestinating purpose, is therefore much more than a political idea; it is a philosophy of life, a religious theology. At its foundation is the idea that the God of the Bible is less than real, and that man has taken his place. Instead of a good, though fallen, creation being man’s environment under the purpose and providence of God, man is perceived to be in a chaotic universe perpetually threatening to crush him. The noted British Utopian dreamer, Julian Huxley, encapsulates well the modern humanistic temper:

Who or what rules the universe? So far as we can see it rules itself … even if a god does exist behind or above the universe as we experience it, we can have no knowledge of such a power: the actual gods of historical religions are only the personifications of impersonal facts of nature and of facts of our inner mental life.\(^3\)

On this view “nature” is as potentially capricious as the pagan gods of Greco-Roman mythology and of man’s own inner life of evil thoughts.

It is inescapable that our view of ultimate reality will dramatically affect our view of social order because “our vision of the universe inevitably influences our vision of society and, hence, our organization of society. If the universe is hostile to us, we conceive of society, our little universe, as also hostile.”\(^4\) Thus, in Utopian thought, having jettisoned the God of the Bible, man is necessarily confronted by a world of flux, a chance aggregate or random collocation of atoms. In such a view, there is no God to give meaning, purpose, direction or even rationality to life. This world of chance and chaos in which man’s “freedom” runs wild is thereby thought to jeopardize its own existence by its unpredictability – humanistic man lives in fear or even terror of this perceived, ever-present threat to his well-being. Man’s sin means that he sees himself in such a world as a victim of fate so that his overwhelming view of himself is characterized by self-pity, not responsibility. Therefore, without the God of the Bible and his predestination, man in the world needs a different source of certainty and more, an agency of control. The insatiable desire for control is rooted in the belief that control will save him from cha-
os, through freedom from choice (unpredictability) – into the true freedom of necessity! As J. B. S. Haldane, a Marxist Utopian put it, “There is nothing behind nature, though there is infinitely more in nature than we know at present. There is no supernatural and nothing metaphysical… freedom is the recognition of necessity. This is a paradox, but a truth.”

Clearly then, in holding the absence or irrelevance of God as basic, liberation or freedom is allegedly from the providence or sovereignty of God in the name of human autonomy. But this leaves man with a serious problem. An absolute autonomy (self-law) would logically lead to a total anarchy of thought, and what is seen as even worse, social chaos. Man must avoid this disaster at all costs. As a result the individual is inevitably plunged into a collectivity that will assume the role of God in creating, predestinating, saving, guiding and providing for the newly liberated, autonomous man. Man enlarged, the new man-god, is the collective agency for planning and organizing for man’s “liberty” and salvation.

In this edition of Jubilee, Scott Masson, Jennifer Forbes and I will examine past and present Utopian thinking in society, its origins, and its current manifestations in our culture, social order, and geo-political landscape. In contrast to anti-God humanistic utopian ideals, P. Andrew Sandlin’s article will look at the apostolic message of the Kingdom of God.

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1 More was a Renaissance Humanist who rejected the biblical idea that nature was corrupted by sin and so cannot provide “law.”
3 Julian Huxley, I Believe: The personal philosophies of twenty three eminent men and women of our time (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1944 reprint), 133-134.
5 J. B. S. Haldane, I Believe, 11-112.
AT THE OUTSET OF Jesus’ earthly ministry, the synoptic Gospel accounts relate that the Spirit which descended upon the Son of God at His baptism immediately drove Him into the wilderness (Matt. 4.1-11; Ma. 1.12-13; Lu. 4.1-13). There He was tempted by the devil for forty days. So pivotal are the two events to Mark’s Gospel that he places them at the beginning of his account, dispensing altogether with the birth narratives. The church universally recognizes the theological significance of baptism, but it consigns the event that immediately follows to comparative neglect. It begs the question. Why has God so strongly emphasized the temptation in the wilderness at the outset of Jesus’ ministry?

The great Puritan poet John Milton regarded it to be so significant that he actually made Christ’s obedience to the Father in the face of Satan’s temptation the framework for the entire narrative of his Christian epic Paradise Regained, and thus a rejoinder to Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the ninth book of his more famous Paradise Lost. For Milton, Christ’s triumphal obedience clearly anticipated the totality of His victory over Satan, sin and death.

Yet Genesis 3 is not the only Old Testament text that the Gospel accounts draw upon. This great battle and the paradise that would be regained is foreshadowed in the account of the temptation of God’s people on the verge of entering the promised land (1 John 3.8). It contains a host of details which are picked up in the Gospel narrative. Having delivered His people from the bondage of slavery, God has led them to the border of the Promised Land. A leader from each of the twelve tribes is chosen, and they are sent out into the land as spies for forty days. The twelve see that the land of Canaan is good, flowing with milk and honey. Yet it is also filled with strong and wicked men, and ten of the twelve quail at the sight, returning to the people with craven counsel. Joshua and Caleb alone urge courage, boasting of the Lord’s strength, and interestingly speak of their opponents as “bread for us.” The majority opinion among the spies prevails however. The unbelieving people are quickened by fear, and they seek to “stone (Joshua and Caleb) with stones” (Nu. 14.9-10). At that point the silent witness of the proceedings intervenes: “the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel” (Nu. 14.10). Judgment follows. God strikes the ten faithless leaders with a plague, a judgment reminiscent of the land of Egypt (Nu. 14.37); and all those over the age of twenty who had heeded their counsel are condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years and die, one year for each day their leaders had looked upon offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15).

Indeed, the Apostle John wrote that Jesus Christ came “to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3.8). The temptation scene is the second Adam’s first triumph in His personal battle with Satan, sin and death.
blessing and seen curses (Nu. 14.34). Just as Joshua and Caleb succeeded where Adam and Eve had failed, faithfully seeking to occupy the land and receive God’s promised blessing, so also the new Joshua, Jesus, trusted in God’s word as He looked to establish God’s kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven. As per type, He was assailed with temptation for forty days. Yet for the sins of God’s people with whom He has identified Himself (just as He had in baptism), He suffered His temptation in the wilderness. Jesus’ success exceeds that of Joshua in power, scope and significance.

There are echoes of both Old Testament passages in Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. Satan tempts the God-man as he once did fallen Adam in the garden. He urges Jesus to “be as a god,” by which he means to act lawlessly, as Adam once had in breaking God’s sole commandment. In original sin, Adam “Brought death into our world, and all our woe,/ With loss of Eden, Till one greater Man/ Restore us.” In Jesus’ case, it would mean defying the Father’s express will in sending His Son and abandoning His people to sin and death (Ge. 3.5). The battle between man and devil takes the form of three temptations. Jesus is enticed by Satan to produce bread miraculously to fulfill the great hunger He felt after going forty days without food, preserving His life and thus His mission. The second temptation counsels its polar opposite, to be superspiritual. It urges Him to act as if doing something clearly at odds with His bodily preservation – needlessly giving up His life – would be tantamount to fulfilling God’s will. In both of these temptations, Jesus is called to regard His life apart from any relationship to the Father or His express will; the God-man is enticed first to live selfishly, then to die selfishly. The third temptation is the deadliest of all, to achieve the Father’s will that He should reign, but to do so by circumventing the Father’s plan of the cross. He would reign on earth, but not as in Heaven.

If we were to characterize the three temptations of Satan, we would speak of them as the embrace of a Messianic kingdom of lawlessness and the rejection of providence in favor of pragmatism. We could also note that worshipping Satan, and embracing lawlessness, is the precise contradiction to exercising good stewardship over the earth as per the dominion mandate given to Adam and Eve (Ge. 1.29); in fact, it is to embrace the curse of exile in the wilderness as if it were a form of godliness, the human good.

ROMANTICISM AND THE MYTHOLOGY
OF A RETURN TO NATURE

What I will describe in the following, in broad brushstrokes, is the departure from Biblical faithfulness in Western culture since the Enlightenment. It has an analogy to these Biblical scenes not only insofar as it directly rejects the abiding relevance of the law of God and His kingdom here on earth. It also embraces the “wilderness” as the lodestar of human life and civilization. The wilderness is known by the benign word “nature.” In post-Romantic thought carnal desires (including sinful ones) are considered “natural” promptings; nature is spiritualized as an absolute; and the state of nature it held up as a democratic ideal to oppose God’s kingdom reign, in particular the moral specificity of Christian culture. According

“As in the Garden, Satan’s words have the appearance of counseling godliness (“did God say?”) while actually provoking man to set himself above God.”
criticism that it actually represents a uniquely contemporary cultural-religious perspective, and to conceal that its hostility to Christianity resides in little more than moral opposition to God and His law.

The reason it is effective lies in the fact that unlike religion, nature is still popularly believed to be an absolute. If something is deemed natural, it cannot be questioned. At the same time, because what is meant by nature is so incoherent, postmodern cultural theorists like Michel Foucault have been able to overturn what was traditionally condemned as unnatural by appealing to nature! The uncritical reverence for nature has thus had enormous cultural significance. It has meant that any objections to their view of nature have been rejected as “cultural,” sectarian and arbitrary, and can be dismissed in much the same way superstitions would once have been by those who appealed to logic and evidence.

There can be little doubt how powerful the concept of nature now is. Nature is the opiate of the masses. Almost every culturally approved activity is justified by appealing to it. The most wholesome food is said to be “organic” a nebulous designation that carries overtones more salvific than scientific. Therapists encourage people to “do what is natural” to rid themselves of their inner conflict and guilt. Personal and artistic expression aims at authenticity – “being natural” – as opposed to conforming to external standards. In the “environmental movement,” whose dictates are swiftly becoming core doctrine across the political ideological spectrum, the hippy fringe dreams of a “return to nature” while the more “mainstream” technologically savvy urbane sophisticates seek to appease the pristine green goddess by reducing the human population and in general stigmatizing “carbon,” man and his artifice itself being the chief carbon stain. Finally, the contemporary promotion of homosexuality (and increasingly paedophilia) is often predicated on the fact that certain people are “born this way.” The realm of law has simply followed this utopian organic hermeneutic in turning against traditional institutions such as marriage, the family and the church, which represent and uphold a differentiated view to type, in all three manifestations we hear the call to get “back to nature.”

To see this more clearly, we must first note one of the most potent false dichotomies of modernity, the diametrical opposition of nature to culture, and vice versa. Since the Enlightenment, nature has been seen as purposive and universal; culture as arbitrary and relative. The terms of contrast are absurd. Nature is not a value-neutral or absolute term. In fact, it carries increasingly heavy cultural baggage. Far from being inclusive and universal, many have held it indirectly responsible for encouraging the aggressive tribalism of the Colonialist period that eventually engulfed the whole world in war. I regard it as central to the re-emergence of slavery in the Christian West. And like every other concept, the meaning of nature has changed in accordance with the (religious) presuppositions of the age.

Since the time of the Romantic period in the West, it has become increasingly panentheistic. It contains a religious as well as a scientific claim. This is even revealed in the misleading narrative Western academia currently likes to tell about itself, that postmodernism is defined by its hostility towards all metanarratives. While it certainly shows this towards a Christian metanarrative, it enacts a wholly uncritical replacement metanarrative of its own, that God is “in” nature. “Nature” regularly refers both to things, i.e. observable phenomena, and the causes or laws that govern and explain them. For example, we will hear that an apple is natural, and also that it falls from the tree because “that’s how nature works.” This view of nature is even said to be scientific. Yet as Hume observed, laws and causes cannot be observed empirically.

Furthermore, to say that something is “natural” is not simply a factual observation. It contains a (cultural) value judgment, usually that something is good and just and right. So when we hear that postmodernism is defined by its profound doubt, we need to take it with a grain of salt. This is its confirmation bias speaking. It appeals to nature to bolster its own cultivated sense of neutrality and innocence towards culture, to deflect
of the relation of man to nature. In swallowing up these institutions, a nature-state is being asserted. And the nation-states of the world are de-populating, moving towards a universal, utopian state of nature.

While it has taken a few centuries to gestate, the contemporary embrace of “nature” as a religious presupposition originates in the writers of the Romantic period. In contrast to the Classical or Christian art that preceded it, which invariably understood culture as a means for perfecting the created order (nature), Romantic artists almost invariably viewed culture as a denigration of nature, an “imposition” upon it. Shakespeare was held to be the great example of a more “universal” nature. He was the natural genius who ignored the rules that bound lesser artists, a law unto himself. Particularly in its more spectacular forms, what we now call nature also formed the setting of much Romantic art. But it did not function as it would have in pastoral literature. Nature was a presence with a transformative power on the invariably solitary artist in its midst. It was the Romantics who first undertook the project of idealizing and even absolutizing nature. William Wordsworth, the greatest of the English Romantic poets, led the way in attributing regenerative and even redemptive powers to it. Echoing the account of Eve’s creation in Gen. 2, he reminisces how nature’s power came to form his ideal self. He uses what we today might call psychological terms to describe putting to death the old man, and putting on the new:

…serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

Accordingly, Wordsworth and his contemporaries almost invariably exalted nature over culture, believing that “the Child is the Father of the man”17; they exalted nature over society (including attacks on marriage as its basic institution); nature over politics, including treatises on anarchy; nature (feeling) over reason; nature over civilization, particularly the city; and in all things seeing nature as a triumph over institutional decadence. It was the Romantics who first associated the presence of nature to the moral and spiritual health of a nation, and to them we owe our national parks.

There is a seeming paradox in this, though it is an illuminating one for the purposes of this essay. Their exaltation of nature simultaneously cast the poet, who represented mankind as a whole, as a tragic figure, typically in isolation. As a pastor and educator, I worry when someone isolates himself from others. But in Romantic thinking, solitude reflects a heroic rejection of inherited culture and its wisdom. The figure of the “orphan” gives poignancy to the portrait of the child by adding the overarching sense of abandonment and alienation. Roger Lundin sees it as the legacy of Cartesian philosophy, whose original hope and optimism about the “self” has given way to alienation and despair. Yet orphans remain not just the main heroes but the educational ideals of our cultural elite as they seek to bring about a nature-state in opposition to the Christian institutions of the family, the church, and the body politic.

ROMANTICISM AND THE CARTESIAN ‘NATURAL’ HUMAN SELF

One final aspect of Romanticism’s exaltation of nature needs to be identified: its attack on the cultural construct of human identity. The poet Percy Shelley was only the most consistent and thoroughgoing in his attack on Christian civilization in his work. Specifically in his two short essays “On Life” and “On Love” we see the beginning of a whole scale revision of the differentiation of personhood as the very basis for a more inclusive, holistic, natural sense of love. Shelley begins with the characteristic Romantic appeal to origins, not as a member of the human race or as a person made in the image of the triune God, but as a feeling organism, with the solitary sense that he is indistinguishable from the world around him. This sense of childhood fades as he
Hitchens, one of the better known atheists of our time, he noted his animosity was particularly pronounced in response to the substitutionary atonement of Christ and the notion that God is an ever-present Father. An astute cultural critic, Wilson observed Hitchens’ simplistic adherence to the Whig metanarrative of human emancipation from the past, an evolution away from God, human institutions, and all forms of prejudice towards ever greater freedom:

...he hates (God) for deserting us, for leaving us. At the same time, there is acknowledgment of the fact that we rejected God first. We demanded that He leave. We hate it when He leaves, and we hate it worse when He stays. This is all admittedly conflicted and contradictory, but one of the things we have to understand is that sin doesn’t make sense.

Hitchens’ hostility on these two points of Christian doctrine was striking, and it should be noted would also have astonished those who had lived before Christianity’s public acceptance in the West. What Scripture reveals about the Son’s substitutionary atonement for His enemies at the cross is precisely what put an end to the religious scapegoating of the enemies of the state in the brutality of the arena, and the revelation of God’s fatherly love for His people is clearly a source of the greatest joy and comfort. There is simply no intellectual or moral basis for a hostile response.

Nonetheless, Hitchens’ response is common, and with good warrant Wilson speculates that it is because he and the increasingly vocal “New Atheists” do not consider God in terms of the persons of the Trinity, even though it is foundational to Christian theology. He thinks of God as an impersonal “organizing principle” in the sky. That reduces Christianity to a form of Unitarianism.

Shelley’s musings on this subject were little read in his time. Yet they clearly anticipate the developments in literary theory that have utilized language to reimagine human nature since the 1960s, when the new Romantics, the cultural Marxists, took over academia.

To give us some sense of why this excursion into Romantic thinking matters, we need to take a brief detour to look to the problem caused by the current concept of nature as a functional god, a blissful state wherein we escape culture and the consequences of the fall. Douglas Wilson has observed that atheists in our time have two convictions about God. He does not exist and they hate Him. When debating the late Christopher
skeptic like Shelley might, expressing the “idea” of love. 1 John 4.16 identifies God personally with love. He is not a big idea in cosmic solitude.

Wilson articulates the Christian understanding of the intimate relation between the Trinity and love:

If it was not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2.18), it is unthinkable that God in His eternity would be alone. For orthodox Christians, the eternal reality of the Godhead has included, in its very nature, divine fellowship. The Father has always loved the Son, and the Son has loved the Father in return. Their Spirit is the eternal Spirit of that love, Himself an infinite third.

Rejecting God as Trinity invariably leads to the sense that He is an intellectual abstraction. Thereafter, if we relate to Him at all, it is as exiles or orphans, in intellectual abstraction from Him. God is someone we can never personally encounter. Wilson lays out a series of intellectual developments since the Enlightenment, rooted in precisely the assumption that has led to Hitchens’ vitriolic response to the idea of God’s love:

With Unitarianism, at least initially, God was still interested in us, but it turns out there is no real grounded reason why He should have been. So one day He took off, and there we were, the foundling race... So first there was the Father of Jesus Christ, Giver of the Holy Spirit. Then there was the Unitarian clockmaker God, who still watches His clock, and who was willing to do repairs from time to time. Then there was the God of the Deists, one who initially made the clock, wound it up, and then left, leaving no forwarding address. After He had been gone awhile, it was decided by general (very scientific) consensus that clocks can assemble themselves, and who needs a clockmaker anyway? This was the advent of modern atheism, a “scientific” and “rational” atheism. But after a few generations of that, we are now teetering on the edge of a postmodern atheism – one that denies any ultimate clockmaker the right to manufacture any metanarrative whatsoever.

The Biblical metanarrative of God’s covenant love for humanity is of course simply one of the casualties, though it is a central one.

Wilson’s explanation illustrates two things quite vividly. It attributes the hostile response of today’s atheists to a distortion of the core teachings of the Christian faith, in particular the love of God. For evangelicals, it suggests that appealing to God’s love when witnessing to Biblically illiterate unbelievers ignores the main problem. Not only do they not know who God is, by extension they no longer understand what love is. It also explains that the hostility is rooted in a fundamental misapprehension of Christian theology, specifically of the significance of the personhood of God. Finally, they have thereby detached the distinctiveness of the human person revealed in Scripture from their understanding of human love. This necessarily has consequences in how they regard the kingdom of God and how Christian believers seek to live as God’s regenerate Kingdom people. To understand how this theological error ties together with a problematic conception of nature and of love, we need to look at how they regard the kingdom of God and how Christian believers seek to live as God’s regenerate Kingdom people. To understand how this theological error ties together with a problematic conception of nature and of love, we need to make one last excursion into Christian theology, though in this case in its teaching on human nature.

As we just saw, the doctrine of the Trinity is essential to understanding God’s personal nature. Ditto love. When we speak of the love of God, it is not in the first order to reflect on how He relates to humanity, it is to declare who He is in His being. The declaration that God is one yet also three persons is embedded in Scripture, and for good reason was among the two primary grounds of theological debate in the early church. The doctrine of the Trinity explains how Jesus’ mission of salvation is not just an arbitrary fact. It is an expression of who God is in His true nature. God’s love is eternal (Ps. 136) precisely because “God does not change” (Mal. 3.6; Heb. 13.8). God’s revelation to man allows him to exercise dominion in the realm of knowledge. Scientific advance is rooted in the Trinitarian belief that the universe can be comprehended, as it solves the ancient philosophical problem of the one and the many. There is unity in diversity. Neither unity
or diversity is ultimate. For God is one, but also three. 34

The Trinity is also essential to understanding man’s personal nature in contradistinction to the rest of the created order. Let us take a moment to look at that in more detail. In Genesis 1.26-27, the creation of Adam and Eve is described in terms of God’s personal image:

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

We must be careful not to let the event’s unique significance be disguised by the established pattern of repetition. The chronological pattern is less important than the significance of the event. 35 The fact that the creation of man falls on the sixth day, the day on which the animals were also created, has led many to assume that in the creation of man there is a climax in the order of the animals analogous to that in the order of the days. Accordingly, man is not so much a) the crown of the six-day creation, as b) the crown of the sixth day of creation, i.e. the top dog in the animal kingdom. These are very different assertions, and must not be conflated. That the text declares man to be the crown of God’s creation seems indisputable, but his inclusion as an animal is doubtful. 36 After all, as is rendered even more obvious in the elaboration of Gen. 2.7, the specific means of man’s creation from the dust is unique. 37 Furthermore, the language of “kinds” used to distinguish the animals from one another is not extended to include man (Gen. 1.24-25). All of this is not to deny a connection between the animals and man, but it is to say that Adam and Eve do not bear the imago Dei on account of the fact that they are a special kind of animal. 38

In what sense and on what account do they bear God’s personal image then? It seems related to the fact that God addresses Adam and Eve personally. In both respects, in the fact that they are addressed, and in fact that it happens personally, man is distinguished from the animals. God loves the animals, but He does not speak to them. The divine Word therefore not only creates but also constitutes the imago Dei in man, which becomes clearer yet when God commands them to exercise dominion care over the rest of creation, which Adam then does when he names the beasts. Man is not first among equals in nature because the imago Dei is not a natural attribute. One further thing can be said on the topic of God’s address which pertains to God’s image. It is in relation to what man is to do and not to do. This is not just the “is” language of creation but the “ought” language of law. The act of command and prohibition reflects a moral nature essential both to God and man. So while it is God’s address that renders man distinctively human, the commands and the prohibition he is given entails a moral imperative to obey to stay in personal communion with God. Obedience is an essential aspect of love. While God’s address renders man human, it is man’s obedience that keeps him upright. 39 Disobeying God’s commands (as we witness in Gen. 3) does not render us non-human or non-persons, but it does make us something the animals can never be, namely sinners.

Furthermore, man’s categorical distinction from the animals is also accompanied by marks of personal differentiation within humanity itself. The personal pronouns our image and our likeness in Gen. 1.26 are plural, reflecting the plurality of persons in the Godhead. Adam and Eve together are spoken of as man, a collective singular, and yet the male-female distinction between the two is also essential to their identity. This apparent logical contradiction is resolved by reminding ourselves of God’s own nature. As in the Trinity, the formulation of man’s identity reflects a unity in diversity. The distinction from the animals on this note is unambiguous in the account in Gen. 2, where we learn that Eve is taken from Adam’s own side (differentiation) and, again in the language of poetry, we hear that Eve completes Adam in a way the other animals could not (unity). The statement of that unity is the dec-
The Euphoria of "Equality" and The Assault on Differentiated Personhood and Love

This is precisely why contemporary redefinitions of human sexual and gender identity and homosexual marriage are so troubling. It is not just that redefining sex or marriage ipso facto departs from God’s defined moral character. It is not just that in same-sex marriage, the union of marriage has been redefined in such a way that it rejects the significance of diversity in unity. It is also that the distinctiveness of person has been lost. By ignoring the fundamental polarity of being revealed in male-female sexual differentiation, our society has sanctioned something like a personal Unitarianism as the basis for all social and political relations. It is true that enforcing radical desexualized individualism has long been a tendency in Western culture and law. But attaching it directly to marriage is far more significant, because marriage is interwoven into the social, legal and political fabric. Redefining it must in turn affect all subsequent understanding of human rights. It marks the absolute embrace of the curse of alienation and exile from God’s image as the utopian solution to human ills. It is as if “all we need is love.” And love no longer entails a person (let alone the Person), it refers to an abstraction of person, whose only legal stipulation lies in “consent.”

In seeking to avoid the gendered implications of human individuals, we also eliminate individual personhood. It is the personal differentiation of being male or female that designates an encounter with another person. Personhood, and everything that is implicated with it in Western law and culture, from equality before the law, the requirement of separate witnesses in a criminal trial, to personal freedoms, cannot survive the assault on sexual differentiation because the two are inextricably linked. The ultimate minority, the individual person, has been crushed in the name of “minority group rights.” Abolishing sexual differentiation as an aspect of personhood has the inevitable consequence that man becomes a species no different than an animal, with the capacity for moral guilt but without a refuge of moral purity, to the frustration and impoverishment of humanity, and the depersonalization of all human interactions. Human rights legislation has only further tracked Shelley’s thought and the tendency of Cartesian self-fathering by attributing “minority” status to those who self-identify as minorities even without a mark of personal sexual differentiation, the transgendered community.

Conclusion

This essay began with a look at the temptation in the wilderness, and the onset of the kingdom of God in Christ’s obedience to the Father’s holy word. It then described how Western civilization has rebelliously embraced the wilderness – nature in the form of lawlessness – as if it were a more universal kingdom. Having ignored the personhood of God and rebelled against Christian teaching, it has now gone on to attack human personhood in the most radical fashion.

How Shall We Respond?

In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus teaches Christians to pray in the name of our Heavenly Father for the coming of His kingdom on earth. Jesus’ three temptations are a pattern for us. Our first danger is in taking a pragmatic stance. We cannot act as if there were a different standard for Christians than for other people. Every human being is a person, made in the image of God. It is in Christ’s image that every person finds his or her true humanity. Their sexual differentiation is a necessary sign of that personhood, and marriage of male and female is a picture of God’s plan for the flourishing of human life. It is also His analogy for the relationship of Christ to His church. To sanction changes in marriage or gender is to deny them their humanity, to show them a lack of love. Marriage as God defines it is a human good, and refusing to uphold it is to commit a human rights violation against others.

Finally, we can adopt a different kingdom ethics under Christ’s banner. We might euphemistically call it social justice, but it is at odds with God’s view of
society which from the beginning entails diversity in unity: in marriage and the family. Praying for God’s kingdom to come happens as we also hallow the Father’s name on earth as it is in Heaven. Hallowing entails calling holy what God calls holy. In other words, praying the Lord’s prayer with integrity necessitates “seek(ing) first His Kingdom and His righteousness” (Matt. 6.33). It is not simply sanctifying our blessed thoughts. It means obeying the Great Commission, going out into the world and disciplining the nations, teaching them all that the Lord has commanded.

Jesus Christ, speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit, promised His people, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14.18) Let us trust God at His word rather than be deceived by false ideals.

1 The word “synoptic” refers to the common vantage point and narrative order taken in the first three Gospels.
2 Milton personified the three figures in Paradise Lost, probably picking up the idea of James 1.15.
3 He had promised the land to Abraham 400 years previously. Cf. Ge. 15.18-21.
4 Nu. 14.34. The reference to blessing and curses is in Deut. 28.
5 One of the more useful illustrations of how New Testament texts relate to the Old is in terms of types and shadows, the language used in the Letter to the Hebrews. The original (OT text) is like a pencil sketch; the NT revision is like a colorful oil painting that follows and enriches its outlines.
6 Paradise Lost, I, 3-5.
7 Man’s original temptation was “to be as gods.” Whereas Jesus, Paul explains, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing” (Phil. 2.6-7).
8 This is how Milton portrays Satan in Paradise Lost ix, 666.
9 The Apostle John states in definitive fashion that “sin is lawlessness” (1 Jo. 3.4).
10 C.S. Lewis, in his magisterial Studies in Words, uses sixty-odd pages to trace the development and transformation of the word “nature.” He concludes with the Romantic conception of the early nineteenth century. There the concept is panentheist in character, Thomas McFarland’s argument in Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition (Clarendon 1969). If anything, Lewis’s account is too brief. Rousseau used the concept of nature to attack all institutions from the family to the church, and appealed to the State to swallow them up. Rousseau is the intellectual founder of today’s nature-state.
11 The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy explains that “Panentheism” is a constructed word composed of the English equivalents of the Greek terms “pan”, meaning all, “en”, meaning in, and “theism”, meaning God. Panentheism considers God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. It offers an increasingly popular alternative to both traditional theism and pantheism. Panentheism seeks to avoid either isolating God from the world as traditional theism often does or identifying God with the world as pantheism does. Traditional theistic systems emphasize the difference between God and the world while panentheism stresses God’s active presence in the world. ‘http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism/
13 Cf. Thomas Nagel, Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Concept of Nature is Almost Certainly False (2013)
14 A “confirmation bias” describes the tendency people have to favour information that supports their core beliefs or convictions.
15 The origins of this movement, concerned for the consequence of humanity’s “carbon footprint” can be traced back to Thomas Malthus.
16 Eight major studies of identical twins in Australia, the U.S., and Scandinavia during the last two decades have all arrived at the same conclusion: gays were not born that way. http://www.hollanddavis.com/?p=3647
17 Sociologist Mary Eberstadt suggests in How the West Really Lost God: A New Theory of Secularization (2013) that family decline and religious decline go hand in hand. The two are “the double helix of society, each dependent on the strength of the other for successful reproduction.”
Thomas Molnar, in *Utopia: The Perennial Heresy* (1990), describes utopian thought as a belief in an unspoiled beginning and attainable perfection. Very often the pessimistic conception of the universe, as found in thoroughgoing materialism and its belief that chance so created everything that even man himself is a fortuitous aggregate of atoms, leads to an irrational optimism regarding the possibility of establishing a happy community. pp.6-7.

The extent to which they did so led Thomas Carlyle to describe Romanticism as “natural supernaturalism.”


“My Heart leaps up” http://www.bartleby.com/145/ww194.html

Cf. William Godwin’s *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) “[the institution of marriage is a system of fraud,” “the worst of all laws”] or the final sentence of his wife Mary Wollstonecraft’s novel Mary (1788) “[She thought she was hastening towards the world where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.”]

Percy Bysshe Shelley, who married Wollstonecraft’s daughter Mary, wrote “Queen Mab” and “The Mask of Anarchy,” key texts for anarchists throughout the nineteenth century.

William Wordsworth,

“One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.”

(The Tables Turned, 21-24) http://www.bartleby.com/145/ww134.html


http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~djb/shelley/1880onlife.html

Douglas Wilson, *Father Hunger*, p.47.

Douglas Wilson, *Father Hunger*, p.50.

This is one of Peter Leithart’s contentions in his important work on the relation of church and state *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (2010)

Douglas Wilson, *Father Hunger*, pp.48-49.

Theologians will distinguish between the ontological Trinity and the “economic” Trinity to distinguish between how God acts within Himself and how He relates to the “house” (oikos) of God.

The other was the two natures of Christ.


The departure from Gen. 1 chronology in Gen. 2 makes the point about what really matters unambiguous.

It is regularly said of Creationists that they misread the Creation narrative as a scientific text. Yet what escapes their attention is that reading an animal taxonomy into the 6th day of creation, the common practice of Christian Darwinists, is itself imposing a scientific presupposition on the text—one that the narrative does not bear out.

Some have suggested that it is the nephesh used in Gen. 2.7 (trans. ‘living soul’) that distinguishes man from the animals. The problem with that view is that there are four uses of the word (trans. ‘life’) preceding this, which make it clear that the animals also have it (Gen. 1.20, 21, 24, 30). This does not mean that man is not categorically distinct. It means that the *imago Dei* is not to be understood naturalistically, as a function of creaturely existence.

The root of the error seems to be in the inherited presupposition of commentators, particularly in the Thomistic tradition, that “nature” or “being” is the overarching concept. That is actually a Stoic postulate. It creates a hermeneutic framework at odds with the Biblical narrative. Indeed, our concept of nature does not even exist in Biblical Hebrew.

This reveals the absurdity of the logic of influential contemporary ethicists like Peter Singer, who, countering the *Christian Darwinist view* of man as king of the animals, counsels eradicating all moral distinctions between man and animals in the realm of law on the grounds that we are all just animals.

It also announces something very important about the humanities and Christian education in general, namely that the revelation of God as a Word which determines and explains the distinctively human (the *imago*) is indispensable.

“We might euphemistically call it social justice, but it is at odds with God’s view of society which from the beginning entails diversity in unity.”
UTOPIA: ALWAYS A DYSTOPIAN NIGHTMARE

UTOPIANISM IS A RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW - it has religious views of God, nature, man and community. In biblical terms, by building his tower of Babel, and attempting to arrest history, as a monument to his own collective divinity (the city of man), man seeks vengeance against the God of the garden who drove him from paradise. In this sense, the Utopian lie is the original temptation that can only produce dystopia.

This collective divinity concept is a Nebuchadnezzar-sized idol that then steadily lays claim to all the attributes of the God it has ‘replaced.’ That is not to say that the Utopian devotee can be immediately recognized as a religious creature. This is because typically, the Utopian believer does not mention God, judgment, salvation, heaven and hell explicitly, but prefers to secularize or spiritualize with mystical abstraction, the theological terminology of Christianity and formulate new doctrine, ceremonies and sacrifices. Julian Huxley is remarkably open and explicit on this point:

"If we translate salvation into terms of this world, we find that it means achieving harmony between different parts of our nature, including its subconscious depths and its rarely touched heights, and also achieving some satisfactory relation of adjustment between ourselves and the outer world, including not only the world of nature, but the social world of man. I believe it to be possible to "achieve salvation" in this sense, and right to aim at doing so, just as I believe it possible and valuable to achieve a sense of union with something bigger than our ordinary selves, even if that something be not a god but an extension of our narrow core to include in a single grasp ranges of outer experience and inner nature on which we do not ordinarily draw."¹

Here we have a “blending” of secular terminology and the language of pagan spirituality. The union with something bigger than the self is the whole, the one, the ideal of man divinized in and by his unification with himself (nature). Huxley goes on to argue that, having repudiated God, the answer for developing meaning and purpose lies in “science,” by which he means the endless possibilities of the evolution of man by socialization, organization and technology. Through this activity, it is thought that man gains power over nature (himself) to deliver and save him from suffering or pain which are intolerable to all Utopians, as it is to all forms of Eastern and pagan spirituality. The possible implications of such a Utopian vision were foreseen by George Orwell in his dystopian novel 1984, where he envisions the problem confronting all Utopian dreams – fallen man's exercise of power is demonic – only power for the sake of power is expressed when man usurps the prerogatives of God. Orwell has O'Brien declare in a noted passage:

"Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing. Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less, but more merciless as it refines itself. Progress in our world will be progress toward more pain … already we are breaking down the habits of thought which have survived from before the revolution. We have cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman. No one dares trust a wife or a child, or a friend any longer. But in the future there will be no wives and no friends."
Children will be taken from their mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen. The sex instinct will be eradicated. Procreation will be an annual formality like the renewal of a ration card … there will be no loyalty except loyalty toward the party. There will be no love except the love of Big Brother … there will be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent we shall have no more need of science. There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no employment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always – do not forget this Winston – always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on the enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – forever.²

So, man has replaced God and his word. As a result he needs a new doctrine of God and a new word. In this reimagining process, he transfers the key attributes of God to man and his agencies. Because man is a sinner, these Utopian schemes must always be dystopian in their outcomes. Let us examine why.

THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD

Utopian literature was one of the key markers of the beginning of the modern age, though Plato’s Republic is basic to all such modern Utopias. From More to Bacon, Campanella and Harrington, man dreamt of restoring paradise to the earth. The essential ingredient in making this a reality is that the state (personified by elite philosopher-kings) must be allowed to “organize” society through technology (power) and scientific socialism, in terms of man’s new conception of justice which now means liberation from God. Justice is no longer located in God and his law, but in radical egalitarian, equilitarian equalization as the route to reunification. Where differences exist to any degree, this unity cannot be achieved. But why are inequality, moral differentiation, diversity and variety such a horror to man’s Utopian aspirations?

First, we must remember that the doctrine of God is inescapable. If man pretends God is dead, his need for the doctrine of God does not disappear; it is transferred from the transcendent to the immanent realm. Now central to the doctrine of God is the unity of the godhead. God cannot be divided against himself! In the Christian faith we have one God in three persons in perfect relational unity, fully representative of each other, and equally ultimate. Satanically inspired thought always counterfeits these doctrines...
because they are inescapable categories. So both the doctrine of God and the kingdom of God are counterfeited in Utopianism.

Second, the idea of alienation is critical to the Utopian worldview because it suggests man is alienated from his true being. This idea is as old as ancient Greek philosophy. In Plato we are offered the form-matter scheme. Form or idea produces the copies in the tangible world which are more and more imperfect in proportion to their distance from the original. Man is therefore alienated from the idea of man and as such cannot find unity within himself or with himself. Hegel’s philosophy is critically important here in understanding the development of this concept in the West:

Hegel’s system regards man as condemned to externalize himself, to cease being pure consciousness. Every interpersonal relationship, every relationship with the state, every economic relationship and every relationship with God and religion is reification (objectivization) of man’s subjective essence.4

Here, man is steadily alienated from his true godhood simply by consciousness of anything outside himself—the essence of self being pure spirit or pure consciousness. This same idea is central to Buddhism and Hinduism, where the goal of existence is reabsorption into the one, Brahmin or Nirvana. The goal of pantheistic meditation (yoga) is recognizing the ultimate oneness and unity of all things; that there are no real distinctions, only illusory ones. In Buddhism the ultimate goal is pure consciousness which is unconsciousness—the annihilation of the idea of self altogether. Thus in Hegel, West meets East intellectually, although the implications are developed in different ways. Although not easy to conceptualize, essentially for Hegel, the differentiation manifest in history and the created order scatter bits of “god” (human consciousness, pure spirit) everywhere. Therefore, man can only realize himself (discover his godhood) by reunification with the fragmented self. The quintessential Utopian Karl Marx claimed to have solved this problem of fragmentation within the communist society.

Marx held that man was alienated from nature (himself), with which he ought to be one. Work was an action of nature manifesting itself through man. Nature and man correlate to object and subject, so a history created and totally controlled by industry was thought to reconcile subject and object (oneness). That is to say, nature (god) recreates itself by man’s work or technical industry, and this expresses man’s one essence with nature, so long as man works for his own betterment. Nature then, realized in man, is in fact god, yet doesn’t realize it because it has been alienated from itself by Christian theistic doctrines of God, man and the world. Man (one essence with nature) must become self-conscious, aware of being his own creator through work—the remaking of nature by scientific socialism.

To resist this process is to be identified as an oppressor and to be on the side of evil. Today, the sine qua non of all victimhood is the planet or nature itself, standing proxy for all “oppressed” groups everywhere. It is no longer as simple as the bourgeois oppressing the proletariat. The planet or nature itself must be liberated for man to be liberated and recreate himself; this requires radical equalization to stop the white, Christian, capitalist plunderers. This involves the development of a panoply of human rights for “groups” that demand not just equal opportunity but equal outcomes for all. This alone is cast as social justice. All those who oppose this program are the oppressors, opposed to human liberation.

Social justice here is not to be equated with love and justice in the biblical sense which entails the love of God and neighbor as the fulfillment of God’s law (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:38-39; Rom. 13:10). Rather, since love of the living God is rejected, man must love the new god - collectivist man - with absolute and unswerving devotion. The God of Scripture is thus substituted for “divine” interpersonal relationships. For there to be unity in the new godhead, there must be total equality and equal ultimacy among all people, which means loving all things. This means that there can be no discrimination in regard to anything. To begin with, to insist that there is a moral difference between people and their actions in terms of right
and wrong, truth and falsehood or good and evil, as an objective standard, constitutes discrimination. In this worldview to discriminate against anything (except Christianity) is a contradiction of the Utopians’ most basic premise – oneness or total unity. Indeed, how could anything be right or wrong, true or false in terms of truth status in an absolute sense, since for all evolutionary pantheism these terms indicating differentiation (right/wrong, good/evil, male/female, etc.) are simply labels for different items throughout the advance (process) of psychological, biological and social evolution? All absolute distinctions are either illusory or mere social conventions. Naturally then, all religions, cultures, sexual practices, gender expressions or lifestyle choices are equal. Without this equality the Utopian holds, there can be no unity. Given the idea that all people are “fragments of god,” no fragment can be more ultimate than another; all things must be leveled for there must be unity in the godhead.

Moreover, since all values are really just social constructs (objectivization in Hegel’s terminology) in a historical process where all things are becoming one (unity), all basic distinctions in created reality must necessarily be broken down. To bring this belief from the abstract and land it in the concrete realm of present social engineering and political Utopianism in North America, we need only point to the ‘queering’ of all things as the new social reality. Today, all over the United States and Canada (and most of Western Europe) our politicians, having bought into international Utopianism, are co-operating for the redefinition of marriage, sexuality, family, and even gender. It is not only that the sexual, social, cultural, historical and innate norms of heterosexual masculinity and femininity are being condemned as heterosexism, transphobia and homophobia, it is that the very idea that there are two genders is being denied. The obvious biological and corresponding social realities entailed in the terms male and female are increasingly no longer being viewed as normative in education, law, politics, or even medicine. Politically, this “unification” in the name of “love” and care, is extending right into the dressing room and washroom where your children prepare for sports. Increasingly, one can express whatever gender one feels like, irrespective of biology, and these distortions are being protected by force of law. We are told that there are now many gender identities and sexual orientations.

To recognize, accept, and celebrate these ideas as the highest social values is described as “love.” Moreover, to insist that all others recognize and celebrate these values, and to require them as a matter of legislation and coercion is considered “justice.” Therefore, by eliminating differences in economic prosperity, knowledge, health, gender, moral values and more, all mankind will be humanized and socialized, united as one universal mind and entity, and the unity of the godhead will be achieved. At this dreamed-of historical moment, socialized humanity will finally be classless, stateless, family-less, gender-less, lawless, religion-less, and an essentially structure-less collectivity of beings in harmony with themselves and the other (nature). Equality is here both ontological (in terms of our being) and political. This love and unity, the accomplishment of total social justice, is the one great imperative of the Utopian. We see this particularly today in the “repressive tolerance” agenda of Herbert Marcuse that has become the new orthodoxy throughout much of Western higher education. Those who oppose this vision are to be condemned as heretics, disturbers of the peace, and purveyors of the new atheism – belief in the God of the Bible. Such a view of reality based on a personal God who transcends time and his creation, differentiates, judges, commands, and calls to repentance, cannot be tolerated, for it destroys the unity of the new godhead. The heretics must be sanctioned, silenced or cast out. This absolute requirement for the unity (oneness) of humanity as the essence of justice or equity is the fundamental principle of the dystopian nightmare.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE GODHEAD

A second necessary aspect to any doctrine of God is omnipotence. Clearly, if God is not sovereign and all-powerful he cannot be God. Consequently, if sinful man’s humanistic project is “to be as
God,” then as the new source of power, certainty and meaning, he must be omnipotent. What is then required is that man as the new god must ape and acquire the characteristics of the living God in order to realize his divinity. In order to be all-powerful, the new god, of necessity, must eliminate chance, impotence (powerlessness) and uncertainty from human affairs and this requires total control and omni-competence. We have already seen that Utopians believe this will require a world-state with universal jurisdiction. It is only in terms of this theology of state that we can understand the aspirations of the United Nations with its goal of a one-world order, manifest in the proliferation of a litany of international bodies, treaties, and institutions, from banks, to courts, to armies, lawmakers, and cultural organizations for “planning” humanity’s “free” future. The irony of this coercive pursuit of freedom through unity should not go unnoticed. Utopian power and control require the political use of coercion, the state functioning as “man enlarged,” as the sole source of law and sovereign authority. It further requires the manipulation of nature in terms of organizational “science” to eliminate uncertainty and demonstrate this omni-competence.

Such a vision is obviously dystopian since it requires totalitarianism. This is not simply a technique for domination, it is a religious principle. Molnar observes:

> It is a doctrinal necessity inscribed in Marxist theory. Totalitarianism prescribes total domination over man – over all his mental, spiritual, creative and technical endeavors, and its organization of these activities is the sine qua non of restoring man to a direct relationship with nature.⁶

Total power is then an essential requirement to bring about the new Utopia which mankind is said to both need and be destined for. Even if most people don’t understand this destiny, the new philosopher-kings, the elite social planners believe they understand, and more importantly, know what is best for the rest of us.

Whether the Utopian delusion is expressed as a form of Marxism or National Socialism (fascism) or some other political permutation, power is the central theme. Both Marxism and National Socialism are totalitarian ideologies: one centered in class or “victim” warfare in which people are divided up into oppressor and oppressed groups; the other in elitism in which the superior must crush the inferior and weak. One calls for the dictatorship of the proletariat or the common people, the other for the dictatorship of the supermen. Both are instruments of naked power for the creation of a Utopian society where, one way or another, man is becoming a god. In the twentieth century both ideologies resulted in the expression of naked power involving brutal and horrific slaughter on an unprecedented scale. Both engaged in repression, torture, mass murder and experimentation on human individuals, families, communities and whole nations. Whether through the SS and Gestapo, or by the officials of “the party,” both sought total control of all aspects of the social order that they might create their brave new worlds. In both contexts, dissent could not be tolerated. Likewise both regimes claimed to act on behalf of nature (materialistic evolution), advancing mankind toward its destiny in godhood.

It remains the case that the true and living God is the main obstacle to man’s lust for total power and the creation of his dystopian nightmare. Once the idea of the God of the Bible is eliminated, the stage of freedom from God or the stage of “necessity” has been reached. In this stage, nature and history dictate all human decisions and actions with a total authority, surpassing that of God himself. These dictates of nature cannot be refused. Molnar explains why: “First, because these dictates are proclaimed in the name of nature; secondly, because man is himself part of nature and of history, nothing remains in reference to which he might say ‘no.’”⁷ If nature and impersonal processes of history dictate all human actions, then there is no transcendent appeal possible for man, no higher authority to which he may appeal against tyranny and slavery. The new order of unity and salvation is then the scientific, socialist state. The “One” (nature/god)
Utopia

is totally immanent and so there is no escape from the incarnate truth. It becomes logical to then maintain that it is evil to resist this truth. Man is thus absorbed into a process that is both necessary and irresistible. Accordingly, total predestinating power is demanded and sought by the state in the name of man's freedom – freedom to be part of nature and its determinative historical progress. In a profound irony, true freedom is then the renunciation of freedom.

One further logical development of man's dystopian will to power is the arrogation to himself of the power to judge and pour out wrath as the new god. In a world that rejects the living God, the need for judgment has not vanished. If God's covenantal judgments in history are denied, man's word of blessing and cursing must replace them. If God's transcendent court and judgment are abolished in man's thinking, then man needs to create for himself a purely world-bound and temporal court for absolute judgment, and consign men to an immanent hell for disobedience. If history is all there is, judgment cannot be delayed. To delay judgment is to hinder progress toward Oneness and unity. As Albert Camus put it, "the judgment pronounced by history must be pronounced immediately, for culpability coincides with the check to progress and with punishment." The Christian view of reality can give men maximum freedom under the law and need not insist on absolute and immediate judgment in history over all sin, because ultimate judgment and the judgment of men's hearts and motives belongs to God alone. Without the living God, however, the Utopian state fills the vacuum in man's craving for judgment. The terror involved in such a view is that this de-facto god, the power state, has no transcendent critique since there is no God in judgment over it.

The Utopian naturally recognizes that not all the population will agree with his vision of a total order that doles out summary judgment against the structural oppressors and resisters, so in political discourse the "people" or the real population (outside of a demonized religious right) are the abstract group upon which the new unanimity is established. This public is then indoctrinated and required to internalize the correct (politically correct) way of thinking, and the non-conformers are then to be punished for their bigotry, intolerance, rejection of the democratic will, sexism, classism, nationalism, heterosexism and a variety of psychological phobias that multiply by the week. To the scientific planners the Utopian worldview is allegedly so self-evident that only the perverted would resist it, and these must be put on trial, by media, politics or tribunal, for their violation of the new positive human rights – this is the presently tame expression of temporal judgment in the West. The brutal interference of the state in the "commune" system of the Chinese communists is very well documented (including the regulation of the sex lives of married couples), and yet these horrors give Western intellectuals little pause.

So judgment, as an expression of total power, comes from the new god, personified in the scientific, socialist pagan state. Every worldview has its vision of judgment - heaven and hell. In much Eastern thought, hell is temporal existence and heaven is impersonal being or non-being. For the Utopian, hell is the world of God's law and absolute values, and heaven is the coming collective consciousness where man transcends his humanity.

Whenever man usurps the attributes of divinity and seeks omnipotence, he creates a hell on earth and those he claims to be liberating become victims of the vindictive wrath of a counterfeit god.

THE OMNISCIENCE OF THE GODHEAD

The biblical doctrine of the holy Trinity includes the affirmation that the living God is all-knowing, and that this is basic to the being of God. A true God cannot be without total knowledge since this is logically required by creation, total government, predestination and total power. As Christians we believe that God knows us totally, from the hairs on our head to the content of our minds, and that he governs the life of man comprehensively in his providence. It is then immediately noteworthy that in the dystopian projects of the modern age, the man-god, the religious object of the Utopian, through the organized apparatus of the state,
pursues a total knowledge of man by regulation and, most importantly, education. This is because the new god must, like the living God he is seeking to usurp, be all-knowing. Omniscience must be co-opted into man’s vision of himself if he would be as god. This god cannot settle for approximations, or tolerate provisional, uncertain conclusions about a nature whose re-creator and predestinator he believes himself to be.

Education is governed in the modern Utopian age by doctrines of behaviorism. The Utopian believes in the perfectibility of humanity, born without a sinful nature or pre-established essence. As simply a material creature, an aspect of the cosmos, a person’s life is ruled by external impressions and environmental factors. Accordingly, by applying scientific, social controls, the individual is made ready for society to use in the building of the city of man. History itself can be wiped out (as mere social construct and power relations in disguise) by the educational revolution, resulting in revolution in all spheres (political, legal, economic, scientific), resulting in social consciousness now thrown open to recreation. Just as we noticed regarding Hegelian thought and Eastern pantheism, in the psychology of behaviorism, individual consciousness is the problem, because it leads to alienation, fragmentation or disintegration. To have a fully empirical man, that is, one totally controllable and governed by conditions and environment, the idea of an independent, personal consciousness needs to be rejected because it not only leads away from oneness (unity) and universal consciousness, it also leads to the idea of an individual soul and ultimately to the living God outside and beyond nature. Why is this radical rejection of true personal consciousness necessary? Because in a world of personal consciousness and individual souls, the new man-god is denied omniscience because man’s inner consciousness and the idea of the soul, let alone the being of God, are beyond his capacity to know and control in totality. In such a reality he would not be god, so individual, personal consciousness must be rejected.

The aim of all this then is omniscience for the man-god. The outcome of omniscience is the ability to predict and control totally. A given stimuli will produce a given response. Such control, it is held, is possible with adults but much more difficult to achieve. The key is to get the children as early as possible and remake them by educational conditioning.

Once again we have divine attributes, which in Christianity are basic to the being of God, and with some predicates to individuals made in the image of God (i.e. personhood, mind, planning), transferred to the new unified godhead. In the world of dystopian education, social engineering first reduces the human to the animal (material/nature), and then denies independent consciousness to the individual, whilst attributing thought, planning, power, predestination and omniscience to the collective – the immanent one. Man is not omniscient, nor is he at the wheel of history; he is a creature, and through his attempts to be other than he is by manipulation, experimentation, drugs and social engineering, he only reveals his enslavement to the machinations of dark spiritual powers likewise beyond his control.

**BABEL IS BROKEN**

Men’s Utopias, the man-created and man-planned societies of the future, are always a dystopian nightmare because man is a fallen sinner in rebellion against God (Rom. 5:10-21). Fallen man is in constant denial of this reality, and hates to accept that he is a creature, and a broken one at that. As such he is dead in trespasses and sins and utterly incapable of saving himself from himself (Eph. 2:1-3). His demonic urge and evil desire is transparently the one seen in Genesis 3:5, “to be as God,” and as such has as his motivating force the usurpation of the divine attributes, which, being falsified in the hands of sinful man, produces, not a paradise, but a hell on earth. However, if man is not a sinner as Utopian dreamers claim, he does not need a savior, but an expert – essentially an elite class to reorganize all things and plan man’s liberation from what are in fact the results of his own sins. Human power, it is thought, through a central organization of society, can restore paradise...
and overcome the problem of sin (not moral evil, but man’s disjoint from nature, his alienation) without the redemption of Jesus Christ. And, the more deeply people are committed to the Utopian illusion the less they are able to recognize their own depravity and sin. In the final analysis, dystopia is produced because of man’s prideful defiance of God and lawless desire to manipulate his future by enlarging himself to cosmic proportions. Molnar is to the point: “His real vice is, first, the desire to dismantle human individuality through the dissolution of individual conscience and consciousness, and then to replace these with the collectivity and coalesced consciousness.” His arrogance puts him on God’s throne, possessing total power and potency, knowledge and control, believing that only paradise is fit for the man-god.

The gospel awakens men from their sinful dream and quickens them to recognize that they are not God – they can never be omnipotent, omniscient, transcendent or sovereign. Rather men are made noble in the image of God, created as his vice-regents to serve, obey and glorify God, and in this to discover their true joy and original humanity, unity in diversity, both one and many. In Jesus Christ the fragmentation produced by sin is undone, and man is made a new creation, restoring his fellowship, not with nature, but with the living God and his fellow men, illustrated for us in the communion feast and the life of the church. Then, as the new humanity in Jesus Christ, people are called once again to exercise, not domination, but dominion under God, making creation a culture, to turn the world back into God’s garden by the ministry of the gospel and obedience to God’s every word. God alone makes all things new by regeneration and sanctification and he alone brings history to a conclusion at his ordained time; only then will there be a new heaven and a new earth in which complete righteousness dwells. This alone is the answer to man’s religious hunger – God’s new humanity in Jesus Christ, where we are made one in the Lord. God is in total control. His purposes will prevail and our joy and peace, salvation and rest are in the worship of God and enjoyment of him, in fellowship with his people forever.

Pagan man dreams of pure consciousness which is in fact unconsciousness, but St Paul summons all to awake from dreams that lead to death and declares, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 5:14).

1 Huxley, I Believe, 134.
4 Molnar, Utopia, 34-35.
5 For a meticulously researched study of these dramatic changes see, Michael L. Brown, A Queer Thing Happened to America: And what a long, strange trip it’s been (Concord, North Carolina: EqualTime Books, 2011)
6 Molnar, Utopia, 99.
7 Molnar, Utopia, 113. Note that in both Marxism and Hitler’s National Socialism, the doctrine of evolution in nature played a key role. For Marx, Darwinism justified the class struggle and verified his materialism. For Hitler, evolution justified the elimination of the weak in the creation of man-gods.
9 For the highly influential Michel Foucault (perhaps the most cited scholar in the humanities today), the Christian past involves the unjust preservation of an arbitrary worldview that pretends to be true or foundational. In fact, Foucault held, truth or reality is merely a social construct, and past constructs should not bind us in the present. Thus, social reality in our time entangles people in a “web of oppression.” The oppressor class, are the white, male, heterosexual, wealthy, English speaking, able-bodied Christians – outside this group all others are victims of structural oppression to varying degrees. On this view, the personal conduct of an individual is irrelevant to their participation in injustice and oppression. If you share wholly or in part, by birth or by hard work, a good number of the characteristics listed above, you are inescapably a structural oppressor to be judged and cast down to bring about social justice.
10 Rushdoony, Messianic Character, 169.
11 Molnar, Utopia, 227.
CULTURAL MARXISM & The Geo-Political Order

WHEN PEOPLE HEAR THE term “Marxism,” they are usually inclined to think of the economic and political implications of Marxist ideology historically. Marxism is the underlying system of thought that gave rise to communism, the political system brought about by revolution and implemented in countries like the USSR, China, East Germany and North Korea. The dominant assumption for many in the general public today is that Marxism is a dying element of the past. It is assumed that Marxism is no longer relevant, that its ideology proved itself a failure with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is also widely believed that Marxism does not exist in a democracy. The truth is altogether surprising to some: utopian Marxist ideology has infiltrated our contemporary culture, is mainstream in academia, and is shaping the geo-political landscape of not just a particular country, but the world. This article will seek to examine and illustrate this.

In the classical understanding of Marxism, Karl Marx dealt with economics and political power, and focused on the exploitation of the working class (the proletariat) by the owners of the means of production, the bourgeoisie. He saw this exploitation as an inherent feature and key element of capitalism and free markets. The bourgeoisie, or capitalists, oppress those who are employed for their labour. He advocated for the proletariat to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and implement a “classless” society. This was the aim of communism in the Soviet Union, China and other communist countries, except that rather than his “classless” society in which all are supposed to be equal, a ruthlessly oppressive society resulted and freedom was destroyed. It is this political application of Marxist thought which leads to the assumption that there is no Marxism here in the democratic country of Canada.

CULTURE CHANGE FUNDAMENTAL TO POLITICAL CHANGE

As with any philosophy, however, there are those who create the ideas, and then those who develop and modify them. There have been different schools of thought within Marxism, but we will examine the ideas developed by Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt school, because of their widespread influence in our culture and the geopolitical landscape. While Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin posited that political power was central to bringing about their economic objective, Gramsci argued that cultural change and the establishment of cultural hegemony were fundamental to the attainment of power and therefore must be achieved first. Gramsci was a theorist, activist and founder of the Italian Communist party who developed the idea of “Cultural Hegemony” in which political and economic power will only be achieved and maintained if you have a culture which believes that what you are doing is good, beautiful, just and possible. In Gramsci’s view, a class cannot gain power by merely advancing its own narrow economic interests. Neither can it dominate by force and coercion alone. Rather, it must exert intellectual and moral leadership, and make alliances and compromises with a variety of forces and create a new consciousness. These alliances form the basis for consent to a certain social order and then reinforce the power of the dominant class through various institutions and social relations and ideas. He and the Frankfurt school recognized that culture must be changed first, and then law can be used as a political tool for the reconstruction of society and the economic order.

The Frankfurt school, and later Marxists, took the framework of the class struggle developed by Marx, which divided classes into either oppressors or victims, and applied it to other arbi-
In rebellion against God, fallen humans want to eliminate the distinctions in God’s creation so that they can live as though there is no God, holding instead that we are our own god and can control our destiny.

The brilliance of Marxists like Gramsci and the Frankfurt school is that they understood the necessity to change culture, not just politics, to achieve their desired end. In the West, through their historical influence, this is being accomplished through education, media and entertainment. We see the rhetoric of “equality” in literary theory, social sciences, the humanities, revisionist history, political philosophy, the entertainment industry, media spin and in our everyday humour and language.

As Marxist thinking becomes entrenched in the culture, people want to see it enforced by law, because their faith, not grounded in the triune God of Scripture, is placed in legislation and political power to save man. The idea is to liberate various “groups” from arbitrarily defined oppression. It starts culturally by social enforcement through political correctness and a self-policing of people through tactics of peer pressure and shaming. Then people want these values enshrined in law and under this progressive ideology, “equity” and “social justice” mean strengthening the position of “victim” groups and weakening the position of “oppressors.” This so-called “liberation” is often actually the removal of other people’s liberties and a falsely justified preference for certain groups over others.

In the first place, Marxism divides people into groups usually based on factors they cannot control (like race and sex), and then pits the different groups against each other, creating division and hatred. Hatred of the current social order is a necessary ingredient to ignite revolution in order to bring about a new social order. The emphasis on group consciousness entails a de-emphasis on the individual’s capacity for choice and the ability to transcend these ascriptive categories. Cultural Marxism aims to make all distinctions appear detrimental in order to advocate for an “equalizing” of all things. Behind this ideology which seeks to eliminate all differences and make all things the same, is a deeply anti-Christian spirit because the ultimate goal is to eliminate the greatest distinction in the universe: that of Creator and creature.

At first glance, “equality for all” may have the appearance of justice; however, a closer look at
Cultural Marxism attempting to extend the power of government over the citizenry.

First-generation rights are those generally considered to be “negative” rights in the sense that governments are prohibited from doing things that impinge on an individual’s life or property (i.e., the right to free speech prohibits interference with one’s speech). Second- and third-generation rights are considered to be “positive” rights in the sense that they obligate the government to provide a service.

All of creation and every individual is the property of God and therefore no one has the authority to abuse another individual. It is each person’s status as a creature made by God that is the foundation of rights, and that gives people an appeal to transcendent authority beyond the state.

If government is constituted for the main purpose of preserving people’s rights, then that has significant implications for what the government can legitimately do. It cannot take away the life, liberty or property of any citizen without just cause. “The government cannot “destroy” a citizen, that is, take away his life; it cannot “enslave” a citizen, that is, take away his liberty; and it cannot “impoverish” a citizen, that is, take away his property”.

With the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, we shifted from individual rights before the law to group rights and entitlements which stem from Marxist philosophy. The Charter promotes “egalitarianism,” i.e., the modern notion of social equality which extends the government’s power over the people. Equality under the law is steadily replaced by legal preferences for any groups deemed “victimized.”

With the charter, the institutional change involved the Supreme Court acquiring power previously reserved for Parliament and the legislatures. Professor Robert Martin, of the University of Western Ontario, aptly critiques the ideological change associated with the Charter, saying it has made Canada less democratic by...
Cultural Marxism

justices but also desirable forms of interaction to get people to conform their behavior to the expectations of the movement. Again, this is an expansion of government coercion - a switch from negative to positive rights.

At issue here is the conception of human nature underlying the modern human-rights project. People are considered to be inherently good and are a product of the “system”. Therefore, if they don’t behave properly, it is believed their society has made them behave this way. In this thinking, people are seen as blank slates; their societal environment makes them what they are. This logically leads to the belief that a “properly” constructed society should make people behave “acceptably.” This view is known as “constructivism”. Constructivists are confident that such coercive state projects can succeed because they attribute man’s disagreeable characteristics to the effects of a system that is within man’s power to alter and control. Control is here the key word. Christians also can work to change unrighteous systems, but not by manipulation and control of the environment. Rather through the regenerating work of the Spirit people are remade to live righteously, and the prophetic witness of the church in holding forth His word, which cannot return empty, leads to the transformation of unjust structures.

Though proponents of Marxism begin with cultural transformation so people will self-police their thinking and activities in terms of the Marxist framework, they also look to governments to enforce these values, as we’ve seen in Canada. If human beings really are the product of their social environment, and if it is possible to successfully remake them by reconstructing their environment, then suppressing freedom can be seen as a temporary expedient in the historical march to a greater and more comprehensive freedom. However, Scripture teaches clearly that human beings are inherently sinful, so there is no reason to believe that such “temporary” measures will ever be repealed once instituted (as witness income- and property tax measures). As national governments are limited in the reach of their power, it is to international institutions that they turn. As one human rights

Why is this change important? Because contemporary Marxists see two primary tools for social change: education and legislation. Education is for the purpose of re-socializing the culture to change people’s thinking, worldview and values, preparing the way for legislation to enforce those values. And this is no secret. My professors in university repeatedly stated these objectives, and I recall writing final papers on why education and legislation are the primary means to change the socio-political order. Marxist rhetoric in education is well underway in our universities and public schools. With the advent of the Charter, ideologically driven elites in our court systems have been empowered to bring about these changes in the law-order.

In Canada, we also established Human Rights Commissions. These are more than just alternative dispute-resolution agencies. They are supposed to actively advance the cause of the human-rights movement and help to change people’s behavior by highlighting not only in-

“Rather through the regenerating work of the Spirit people are remade to live righteously, and the prophetic witness of the church in holding forth His word, which cannot return empty, leads to the transformation of unjust structures.”
“Whereas cultural Marxists look at the world as divided into victim and oppressor classes, Christians must look at the world as divided between covenant keepers and covenant violators as we each stand in relationship to God.”

scholar posited “the democratization of the international system, which is the only way to achieve the ideal of ‘perpetual peace’ in the sense that Kant attributed to the expression, cannot move ahead without the gradual extension of this recognition and protection of human rights at a supranational level.” University professors throughout Western universities invoke concepts of inclusion, human rights and social justice to advocate for a form of global citizenship guaranteed by international human rights agreements and transnational arrangements.

INFLUENCE ON THE GLOBAL LEVEL

Ideas have consequences. Marxist egalitarian ideas are not just topics to discuss in a university classroom, they are playing out on a large scale in global politics, economics, social innovation and the practical realities of our daily lives. Because their proponents are championing a unified world order in which “equality” is doled out for everyone from the top down, driven by a utopian ideal, they have found it necessary to create and utilize international institutions that can impact the structures of sovereign nations and societies. The most influential body for that currently is the United Nations. In 1995, the Commission on Global Governance issued a report titled Our Global Neighbourhood. This document called for a strengthening of the United Nations and the power of its institutions. The following is a list of some of the aims in the report and more that have developed. The aim is to extend global power and unified governance through:

1. Global reach. Exercise influence and power across the globe through UNESCO, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, NGOs, civil society organizations and 110,000 military personnel across the world (called ‘peacekeepers’).
2. Global Court. The International Criminal Court, established in 2002, allows for the prosecution of people at a supranational level, often violating due process and procedural rights which Canadian citizens are privileged to hold.
3. Worldwide economic control. The UN wants to turn the International Monetary Fund into a global federal reserve with a global currency to displace the dollar and all other currencies. Whoever controls the global currency controls the global economy.
4. Global taxation. This intention is for the purposes of redistribution of wealth. Despite being heralded as aid for the poor, wealth from nations like Canada actually ends up in the hands of dictators and oppressive regimes, not the poor, in the developing world.
5. Global Sustainable Development. This is the noble-sounding code phrase for the takeover of private property, control of the water supply, and control of population (through abortion, birth control, euthanasia, and disincentives for families).
6. Global regulation of arms. They seek not to eliminate arms, but to own them all, to concentrate power and world control.
7. Internet control. Recently proposed in December 2012 for purposes of taxation and censorship.

The UN is not for human rights but for world control, and behind this desire to control is a demonic inspiration (Eph. 2:1-3, 1 Tim. 4:1-3). The Christian worldview is unacceptable to modern standards of secular thought. Despite this, it readily co-opts the terminology of human dignity and individual rights that arose from the Christian worldview, while at the same time undermining those concepts with state intrusion. This involves embracing a philosophical contradiction. And really, most people in our society subscribe to contradictory ideas.

Truth is mixed with error and it is our task to separate it and clarify the truth. Ephesians 5:11 states, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” Verses 15-16 remind us, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” This is the purpose behind this publication: learning to understand what the will of the Lord is for the covenant
The individual must first be redeemed from their sin by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The gospel is not only that God saves us from our sins, but also that He saves us for His kingdom.

Let us not go the way of Babel, seeking to build a world under human control, but submit ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). We must choose obedience to God’s law in our own lives, families, churches and communities, and call others to obedience. In our engagement with the culture for godly transformation, we must keep ourselves from being polluted by it.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, the Lord declares: “If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” This repentance is not just on an individual basis, but corporately as the body of Christ. We must repent and turn from our sins, which include our own lawless living and the neglect of our Kingdom responsibilities. For “whoever is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys” (Prov. 18:9).

Scripture makes clear that God’s law-order for creation and society leads to human flourishing. Rebellion against God leads to defilement, destruction and great evil. But a righteous social order begins with the self-government of individual believers by the power of the Holy Spirit, choosing to live in accordance to God’s law, to be obedient to Him. When we violate the law, negative consequences abound.

2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
9 Raehn, R.V. (1997). The Historical Roots of ‘Political Correctness’. Free Congress Foundation,
No.44.


12 Ibid.


15 Ibid.


17 Ibid.

18 Romans 8.


20 Fonte, J. (2002). *The Fracturing of the West*. Policy vol. 18, no.3.


24 Ibid, (ch.7, p.7)

25 Ibid, (ch.3, p.5)

26 Ibid, (ch.3, pp.6, 31)

I INVITE YOU TO step back and examine the overarching picture of the Christian faith. We often get so tangled in the details of the faith that we miss the great, sweeping issues that should be occupying our attention. In fact, I am convinced that the leading defects of the contemporary church are not in the details but in the essentials. In other words, we are failing not so much in the secondary issues that we just cannot seem to get right; rather, we have missed the huge issues. This is a serious indictment, and if it is correct, it demands a drastic course correction.

There is no better place to begin to tackle these big problems than at the center of the faith, the apostolic message of the Kingdom of God.

WHAT IS THE KERYGMA?

Kerygma – meaning proclamation or preaching – is an important word in Christianity. It is a Greek word that has been enlisted for its theological significance. It describes the earliest message of the primitive Christian faith. The kerygma is the initial apostolic preaching about Jesus Christ. This is the first message that the apostles announced after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven.1

The kerygma is so significant because it communicates what the earliest followers of Jesus thought about Him and His ministry. It is the news that they disseminated in the ancient Near East relating to the Person of Jesus Christ. What was this news? It is a cluster of momentous, historical events that if one believes, his life will change forever — notably that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, that He died for the human race on the cross, that He rose the third day from the dead in great victory, that He is returning from Heaven in resplendent glory, and that whoever trusts in Him with a repentant, obedient faith will be granted eternal life by the grace of God.

This announcement centers on two main past events — the death3 and resurrection4 of Jesus Christ. These events, according to the apostles, were necessary because of the massive plight of humanity that they are calculated to reverse — man’s sin. Jesus died on the cross as our sacrifice, paying the penalty for man’s sin (1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:2; 1 Pet. 3:18), and He rose from the dead to liberate us from the power of that sin (Rom. 6:1-13; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The heart of the kerygma is the death and resurrection of Jesus, the cross and the empty tomb. This is the primitive apostolic message that we are called to perpetuate and preach today.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

This kerygma must be set in the larger context of the Kingdom of God, the basilea, which literally denotes “rule” or “reign.” It is not so much a realm over which a king reigns, as it is the reign itself.2 We might say that the kingdom is wherever the king is.

Jesus centered His earthly ministry on the Kingdom of God. He states this fact quite explicitly from the very beginning (Matt. 4:17-23). This kingdom is the fulfillment of the Old Testament (Matt. 3:1-3). Jehovah had reigned over the earth since its creation, of course (Ps. 93, e.g.), and He was in a special sense the King of Israel (1 Sam. 8:1-9); but when Jesus arrived, He claimed to fulfill the prophecies of Messiah, Jehovah’s unique representative in the earth and King of the Jews. He embodied Jehovah’s mediatory reign in the world. This is why Jesus
First, soteriology is not the central theme of the Christian message. Soteriology is that branch of theology that addresses salvation, especially the salvation of the individual. It is a crucial branch of theology, because the message of the Gospel is addressed first to individuals, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is man's only hope of salvation. There will be no salvation apart from that Gospel. Soteriology summarizes the Biblical teaching regarding this individual salvation. As heirs of the Protestant Reformation, we hold to a distinctive soteriology — solus Christus (or solo Christo), sola gratia, and sola fide — we affirm that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ, not in the church; that this salvation is solely by the grace of God, not by man's meriting salvation in cooperation with God; and that justification is by faith alone, not by both faith and works (human merit or achievement before God).6

It was critical for the Reformers to stress these Biblical truths to counter certain errors that had crept into the Western church.

We heirs of this tradition must be careful, however, not to allow the leading concerns of the Reformation to shape the way we read the Bible.7 The Bible, not our distinctives and confessions of faith, is preeminent (here we meet another Reformation "sola" — sola Scriptura, the Bible alone). And the Bible does not teach that individual soteriology is the overarching theme of the faith or of the Bible. The great theme of the Bible is the glory of God manifested in Heaven and earth by means of God's Kingdom. Soteriology is an indispensable segment of that Kingdom, but it does not exhaust that Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is much bigger than your salvation or mine, and God's plans for the world are larger than individual soteriology.

Within the last 150 years or so in the West, both the kerygma and the Kingdom have been essentially reduced to “how to get to heaven when you die.” This is not the message of Jesus or the early apostles.8 Their message was the extension of God's earthly reign (“the Kingdom”), to which the Gospel of Jesus makes an indispensable contribution. But if you heard many Western
Christians only in the last few generations, you might get the idea that the Bible is chiefly about saving a few souls from the earth and getting them to Heaven when they die. If this is the main message of the Bible, God wasted a lot of ink, because the Bible addresses many more topics than soteriology, and it depicts some of those topics as no less significant than getting sinners to trust Jesus so they can get to Heaven. But since our era is increasingly man-centered, men want a God whose principal concern is their own salvation and not His own glory. He will not oblige them. The underlying theme of all that we read in the Bible is the glory of God as it comes to the fore in His Kingdom in human history. Doxology, not soteriology, comes first.

Second, sinners cannot be saved unless they surrender to the Lordship (Kingship) of Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace, but we are not saved without submission. This fact is clear from Jesus’ statement that all those who do not take up their cross and follow Him will lose their soul (that is, their life, Matt. 16:24-28). It is also evident from Jesus’ promise to Zacchaeus, that God saved him when this tax collector pledged to restore all stolen property (Luke 19:7-10). Moreover, Jesus told the wealthy young ruler that if he were not willing to surrender all that he has to follow Him, the man could not inherit eternal life (Luke 18:18-23). If we do not bow the knee to King Jesus, we cannot be saved.

As a result, there can be no salvation without repentance. God does not merely save us in our sins; he saves us from our sins (Rom. 6-8).

Years ago in Mississippi I knew a preacher. He understood repentance. One day he was telling the Gospel to a young lady. She was a sinner who needed to get saved. For one thing, she was living with a young man and committing fornication. My friend told her that God would save her if she would repent and trust in Jesus. She said, “I can trust in Jesus, but I just can’t give up sleeping with my boyfriend.”

He replied to her, “Then you cannot get saved. God only saves people who repent of their sins.”

God will save all who come to him in faith, but we must come to Him on His terms, not our terms. Too many people act as though God is the great cosmic genie — existent to give them what they want, to make life better for them, to assist them in their self-improvement. They are in a tight jam with money or their job or their parents or children or the police or in their “relationships,” and they need God to give them a quick fix, so they fly to Jesus with their problems. But Jesus saves repentant sinners, not sinners who want an existential quick fix.

To say we are saved totally by grace is not to say God requires nothing of us in salvation. You must lose your life in Jesus if you are to be saved — that is, you must die to yourself. Jesus says this plainly, so there’s no use denying it. If you are not ready to give up your life, you are not ready to get saved.

Recently I was re-reading in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s classic The Cost of Discipleship. Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor in the ’30s. He was a brilliant young theologian. Karl Barth called his first doctoral dissertation (which he completed when he was 24 years old) a “theological miracle.” Bonhoeffer was implicated in several attempts to assassinate Hitler (Bonhoeffer, you see, was not one of those preachers who believed that faith only applied in the church; he knew that if Jesus is Lord, He is Lord of all the earth.) He was executed in April 1945 for his complicity against Hitler, just three weeks before the city was liberated by the Allies.

In his book he talks about “cheap grace.” He means by this expression that grace was costly to Jesus, but that too many Christians think they can act any way they want, since salvation is by God’s grace. Grace is cheap — “free for all.” We do not value it since it did not cost us anything. We tend to value something that costs us a lot, but we tend not to value something that does not cost us dearly. Jesus’ death did not cost us anything, so we can easily cheapen that grace by which we receive the benefits of that death.

But this idea is a destructive evil. Bonhoeffer wrote, “The word of cheap grace has been the...
ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works.”9 And he is right.

I heard Professor John Franke of Biblical Seminary relate once something that a new Christian friend had told him: “Being a Christian costs you nothing since Jesus did all the work of salvation for you. But being a Christian costs you everything, since when you come to Jesus, you lose your life for Him.” This is just what Jesus said in John 12:25-26. If you refuse to lose your life for Jesus — if you insist on doing things your way and not God’s way — you cannot be saved. Grace is free, but it is not cheap.

Jesus died, and we follow Him in death — not a martyr’s death (though we may have to do that, too), but death to ourselves. That’s what it means to be saved, to be a follower of Jesus.

There is no salvation without surrender to the Kingship of Jesus Christ.

Third, the church is not God’s chief concern in the earth. The fact that this assertion would be controversial shows how far the church has drifted from the Bible.10 Jesus spoke again and again about the Kingdom, but only twice about the church (by which he could simply have meant His followers in a generic sense, and not an institution11). By the church, the Bible denotes the ekklesia, the people of God in a particular locale under the oversight of leaders (1 Pet. 5:1-5).12 The Bible teaches that Jesus shed His blood for this church (Acts 20:28) and that He rules in this church (Eph. 1:18-23). It is tempting to presume that the church is a sort of idealized body known only to God, but this is not how the Bible uses the term. When we say the church, we denote God’s people in a specific location, not an “invisible” church; not a human institution as such; and not (worse yet) a denomination, of which the Bible knows nothing. Rather, the denotation of ekklesia in the Bible is: God’s collective, localized body covenanted together and with Jesus under His authority.

Tragically, in Christian history the church has often been used as a synonym for the Kingdom of God. This is the position of the Roman Catholic Church.13 It is also the view of the Westminster Confession of Faith (ch. 25, no. 2). But it is not the view of the Bible. It is almost self-evident from the pages of the New Testament that the Kingdom is the reign of God and the church is an aspect of that reign (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:24, 50).

This means that Christian schools and businesses and politics and music and pro-life and family and campus and cultural and mercy ministries and so on are (or should be) within the Kingdom of God, even though they are not specifically the church — that is, they are not the specific community assembling under Jesus’ Lordship (though the individuals engaging in these activities are often part of the church). The church is the assembly of the faithful, and they act as the church when they act faithfully wherever they are; but the Kingdom is the sphere of Jesus Christ’s rule, and the church is only one crucial aspect of it.14

The Kingdom, not the church, is the big issue. “The mission of the church is to herald the coming kingdom of God, but the church must never mistake itself for the kingdom . . . .”15

Fourth, no man or human institution may arrogate to itself the claims of Jesus as rightful King. Man likes to play God. This was the Original Sin of Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6). In Babel man tried to erect a tower up to God (Gen. 11:1-9). Because man is a sinner, he cannot accept that God is God and that he is not God. God rules man by His love and justice, but man wishes to control and tyrannize his fellow man.

This happens in the family. Eastern cultures tend to worship ancestors; this is pagan practice. In contemporary Christian circles, we have the “patriarchy” movement, which rightly stresses the father’s leadership in the family, but too often it makes the Christian father the final earthly arbiter of family life. It is legalistic. Its proponents sometimes claim that birth control is sin, that Sunday school is sin, that sending daughters off to college is sin, and that the husband is “responsible” for his wife’s sins (this is the “Federal Headship” theory). In some quarters, women are to be seen and not heard. The husband becomes
dualism has surrendered vast cultural territories to unbelievers and to secularists. Ironically, many Christians complain about the condition of the culture, yet it has been their own dualistic dereliction that has permitted this de-Christianization (secularization) of society.

GOD IS INTERESTED NOT JUST IN THE FAMILY AND CHURCH, BUT THE ENTIRE WORLD.

As heirs of the King (Rom. 8:17), we are commanded to call the entire world to be reconciled to God in the Person and work of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:19). The Great Commission requires that we preach the Gospel, baptize and disciple all the nations for Jesus, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given (Matt. 28:18-20). “When we preach Christ,” writes Pinnock, “we are not just offering a happiness pill and hell-fire insurance, we are asking people to join in the dominion mandate and come aboard the kingdom train.”

This means that, among other things, we should encourage our young people to enter not just the full-time Christian ministry (pastors and missionaries and teachers, which are sorely needed), but also fields such as sales and medicine and technology and music and politics and business professions. There are no “secular” occupations as long as they are surrendered to Jesus Christ.

If God’s objective is to bring all the world under the authority of King Jesus, then our commission must be to extend that Kingdom far beyond the four walls of the church. The kerygma is the Gospel message at the center of the Kingdom, defined as the reign of God in the earth; but the Kingdom of God is God’s great work in the earth.
The Kerygma of the Kingdom

beyond the scope of this chapter.


5 George E. Ladd, Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 77-81.

6 Donald G. Bloesch, Jesus Christ (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1997), 175-180.


15 Donald G. Bloesch, Jesus Christ, 243.


18 Clark H. Pinnock, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1985), 78.
Resource Corner

How Then Shall We Answer - Hardcover

This book represents Joe Boot’s summa apologetica. Bold, imaginative and instructive, it is written for a general audience rather than for a specialized one. The prose is remarkable not only for evident wisdom in the field of apologetics but also for the distinctive way the author does it. With various imageries and anecdotes, Joe provides a clear, engaging articulation of a fresh set of perspectives on several topics. Full of biblical and theological insights, and written with an evangelistic heart, this book serves to nourish the faithful, stimulate good arguments for the seeker and build a strong rational basis for the causative relation between faith and reason, the former being the presupposition of the latter. With rigor and relevance, Joe constitutes a seminal apologetic that enables readers to grasp the signs of divine transcendence, and to apprehend, or rather to be apprehended by the beauty of Christ. (Dennis Ngien PhD, from the foreword)

Why I Still Believe - Softcover

In Why I Still Believe, apologist Joe Boot provides a readable introduction to presuppositional apologetics for the average layperson. This approach assumes that the Christian and non-Christian come to the discussion of faith with worldviews—sets of presuppositions—that are miles apart, so that there is little common ground on which to build an objective argument of rational proof. In this conversational survey of his own intellectual and spiritual journey, Boot invites the non-believer to step inside the Christian worldview to see whether or not it makes sense. Along the way he builds a coherent argument for the truth of Christianity. He also examines the non-Christian worldview, showing how it ultimately fails to make sense of the world.

Searching For Truth - Softcover (also available in Urdu)

This book provides reasonable answers to questions asked by people who have vague but deep longings to know God. Starting with basic human convictions about the world and moving ultimately to the need for salvation through Jesus Christ, Boot also addresses questions about suffering, truth, morality, and guilt. He offers answers to those asking for a credible and logical explanation of the Christian faith.

How Then Shall We Answer Conference Series 2011 - CD

Complete audio content from the second conference in the ‘How Then Shall We Answer’ Series. In this six disc audio CD package, Dennis Ignatius, Jeffery Ventrella, and Joe Boot tackle the question of Christianity and culture. Track titles are: The Meaning of Culture; Living in Sin...Well; Christ and Culture; The Greatness of the Great Commission; and the Closing Charge. Also included is an impromptu Q&A session with Jeffery Ventrella and Joe Boot.
The Great Debate - DVD


How Then Shall We Answer Conference Series 2010 - CD

The audio for the first conference in the ‘How Then Shall We Answer’ Conference Series. Topics covered in this six-disc set include: an understanding of the family in the context of God’s sovereignty and social design; the family’s calling under the Great Commission; the family’s history in Canada; bio-ethical issues, such as genetic engineering; the relationship between the Law of God and civil law; and the role of the State according to the Bible.

The Cathedral Builder - Softcover

"The rule of law is a cathedral we have to build brick by brick." So spoke Chief Justice John G. Roberts in his first major public address. But how are those bricks to be laid, and upon what foundation? Ezra Institute Fellow and esteemed legal scholar Jeffery Ventrella explains how the rule of law is a key to discovering and implementing true and lasting cultural beauty, and explores how that rule of law is established in culture. Softcover.

The Trouble with Canada...Still!
A Citizen Speaks Out - Softcover

Canada suffered a regime-change in the last quarter of the twentieth-century, and is now caught between two irreconcilable styles of government: A top-down collectivism and a bottom-up individualism. In this completely revised update of his best-selling classic, William Gairdner shows how Canada has been damaged through a dangerous love affair with the former. Familiar topics are put under a searing new light, and recent issues such as immigration, diversity, and corruption of the law are confronted head on as Gairdner comes to many startling—and sure to be controversial—conclusions. This book is a bold clarion call to arms for Canada to examine and renew itself…before it is too late.

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