

Volume 4

Winter 1977-78

Number 2

# The Journal of Christian Reconstruction



Symposium on  
the Family

A CHALCEDON PUBLICATION

# COPYRIGHT

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## The Journal of Christian Reconstruction

Volume 4 / Number 2  
Winter 1977–78  
*Symposium on the Family*  
Gary North, Editor

A CHALCEDON MINISTRY

Electronic Version 1.0 / September 7, 2005

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# THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

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This journal is dedicated to the fulfillment of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1—to subdue the earth to the glory of God. It is published by the Chalcedon Foundation, an independent Christian educational organization (see inside back cover). The perspective of the journal is that of orthodox Christianity. It affirms the verbal, plenary inspiration of the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible and the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus Christ—two natures in union (but without intermixture) in one person.

The editors are convinced that the Christian world is in need of a serious publication that bridges the gap between the newsletter-magazine and the scholarly academic journal. The editors are committed to Christian scholarship, but the journal is aimed at intelligent laymen, working pastors, and others who are interested in the reconstruction of all spheres of human existence in terms of the standards of the Old and New Testaments. It is not intended to be another outlet for professors to professors, but rather a forum for serious discussion within Christian circles.

The Marxists have been absolutely correct in their claim that theory must be united with practice, and for this reason they have been successful in their attempt to erode the foundations of the noncommunist world. The editors agree with the Marxists on this point, but instead of seeing in revolution the means of fusing theory and practice, we see the fusion in personal regeneration through God's grace in Jesus Christ and in the extension of God's kingdom. Good principles should be followed by good practice; eliminate either, and the movement falters. In the long run, it is the kingdom of God, not Marx's "kingdom of freedom," which shall reign triumphant. Christianity will emerge victorious, for only in Christ and His revelation can men find both the principles of conduct and the means of subduing the earth—the principles of Biblical law.

*The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* is published twice a year, summer and winter. Each issue costs \$4.00, and a full year costs \$7.00. *Subscription office:* P.O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251. *Editorial office:* 713 W. Cornwallis Road, Durham, NC 27707.

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# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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*Gary North*

In terms of the daily lives of the world's population, no institution is more central than the family. The civil government is normally distant. In many societies, there is no Christian church, though of course there is always some form of religious worship. There is no society without families. The society which sees the demise of the family does not survive.

Understandably, sociologists, historians, economists, and other scholars have invested considerable resources in studying family patterns in many societies. They debate endlessly about contemporary trends in family life. Some argue that family ties are growing weaker. Others argue that the family is only changing in response to altered conditions, but that it is not fundamentally less influential today than before. Some believe that the "open marriage" *avant gardists* are the cutting edge of a far different future family organization. Others are emphatic that the "open marriage" idea is a dead-end street and that it cannot spread very far. But all are agreed that the family is changing rapidly in modern, industrial societies. The debate is concerned with the existing and possible future implications that these family changes portend.

The publishing success of Jay Adams's books on family counseling indicate the concern of Christians about family problems. Churches of varying theological commitment have used Adams's techniques to deal with family crises. It is extremely significant that Adams has a PhD in speech, not psychology. His ability to propose anti-Freudian, anti-establishment therapies based on biblical revelation is in no small degree dependent upon his amateur status as a self-trained "outsider." Like the innovator in Thomas Kuhn's important book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Adams brings new insights into a guild which can no longer answer the problems of the present world, but

which is too tradition-bound to make the necessary intellectual reconstruction of a science's first principles.

The humanistic relativist who views nothing with alarm except the idea of permanent standards may not be worried about the changes in family life which the Western world is presently witnessing. He may be content to note the rising rate of divorce, the advent of abortion clinics, the single-parent family, and the coming of "open marriage." Not having any concept of the social function of traditional institutions, change is seen as a universal panacea for all the present problems of humanity. The principles of organic evolution convince him that random change is good, or at least {2} not bad, and the only thing better is elite-directed change engineered by statist social planning agencies. The family, like every other human institution, is merely another experiment in a federally financed laboratory.

What is seldom understood is that the family is the most important welfare agency, educational institution, and government disciplinarian in society. When the principles of self-government inculcated by the family are not adhered to any longer, civil governments are called in to restore order. The kind of external order enforced by civil governments is a crude, painful, and wasteful imitation of family self-government, and a far greater threat to personal liberty. The family has an incentive, biologically speaking, to rear up disciplined, responsible children, since parents may be dependent on them in the future. The pseudo-family of the civil government has every incentive to keep its "children" in a state of perpetual childhood, totally dependent upon the decisions of the legal authorities. Men are unaware of the threat to their freedom which is posed by the substitution of the pseudo-family of civil government in place of the human family. It is no accident that revolutionary regimes take immediate steps to compromise family sovereignty as soon as they capture the civil government. The family, far more than the church, has served as a primary buffer between the messianic state and the individual. Churches can be bought off, browbeaten, and controlled far less expensively than the traditional family. The "grandmother problem" of the Soviet Union—the Christian or Jewish grandmother who stays with young children while both parents are at work, telling the children the biblical stories and religious legends—has been a far sharper thorn in the side of Soviet bureaucrats and educators than the churches or



synagogues. Churches can be closed with relative impunity by the state, but families can be disrupted only at spectacularly high costs in terms of reduced productivity and social disruptions. This is why the Soviet Union had to reverse Lenin's early anti-family policies. The family is a formidable challenge to unlimited state power.

The family is not immune to external forces, the most important of which are religious and intellectual in nature. When a shift in commitment in the realm of first principles occurs, the family cannot emerge unscathed. What the West, including the USSR, is experiencing is a shift in loyalties. As secularism and relativism undermine received traditions, and as the state replaces the welfare and education functions which families once took, the family is losing its position of preeminence. Like the traditions of chivalry after gunpowder had eliminated the military function of the knight, the modern traditions of family stability and restraint are far less believable than the original traditions. Most modern commentators are aware that the family is important, that it is under fire, and that society is paying high costs for the displacement in the position of the family, yet they cannot call it back to its earlier position. The religious, political, and {3} economic environment which gave the family its foundation has slowly eroded in the West. Modern men cannot speak with authority, nor can their families. So the drift into a kind of social randomness continues. The family is not dead, by any means, but it is under siege, and modern men are unwilling to pay the religious, intellectual, and social costs of restoring the family to its old position.

Any program of Christian reconstruction which does not begin with the family is doomed. Changes in church structure may be important, as are changes in the political structure. Alterations in our economic institutions are unquestionably required. But the family is central. This is the realm of personal responsibility in which almost all of us operate. This is the institution which has the greatest impact on future generations. This is the place of our greatest responsibility precisely because it is the institution in which we exercise the greatest power. It should be clear by now that reform, if it is to be successful, must come from the ground up, or better put, from the families up. It will seldom come from the well-paid bureaucrats in any and every institution, for they have been successful in terms of the existing arrangements and are

generally unwilling to renovate that structure in which they have succeeded and from which they derive their self-esteem. When bureaucrats innovate, it is usually under pressure from the outside; in those rare cases when they do innovate (such as in the terror of the French Revolution or in the purges of the USSR in the late 1930s), it is to strengthen the hand of bureaucracy.

Our experiences of success and failure are first undergone within the family. The family is a great testing agency of character, industry, and the ability to cooperate with others. It is the mold of young personalities. If the family produces a sense of failure, it is difficult for its products to overcome that experience. Recent studies have made it clear that the family counts for far more in educational attainment than the size of school budgets or the formal qualifications of the instructors. There should be little question within Christian circles that the adherence to the principles of biblical law by heads of families will increase the probability of positive experiences among the members of those families. A psychology of confidence is engendered by successful experiences in the past. Without doubt, the family is the chief institution in any program of positive social change. In fact, any successful program will be the product of biblically oriented families. The program which does not come out of the experience of families and those working intimately with family problems will remain a blueprint in the dusty archives of some forgotten or reviled social engineer.

As a tool of evangelism, it is doubtful that any program could exceed the success of a family-centered program. The Mormons have understood this for a long time. Their recently developed program, "Family Home Evening," is an important aspect of their continuing growth. {4} Protestant and Roman Catholic churches would be well advised to examine the *Family Home Evening* manual which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published in 1976. By honoring the principle of the tithe, and by avoiding all indebtedness in the construction of church buildings, the Mormons have become the beneficiaries of remarkable, visible, external blessings. If their lead in these fields is not overtaken by other churches, then the others are unlikely to experience anything like the success which that little band of outcasts in an empty desert has achieved in less than 150 years. The "Family Home Evening" program will make them that much more difficult to match in terms of

community appeal. There is a reason why a bunch of young men on bicycles have been more successful in building churches than any other religious group in this nation, and that reason is their adherence to a few crucial principles of biblical law. One wonders if Protestant leaders might better have let the Mormons practice polygamy to their hearts' content; once they abandoned the practice, they became formidable competitors in the arena of church evangelism.

The lead article by **R. J. Rushdoony** argues that the rebellion against God in modern humanism is closely linked with humanism's war on the family. The family has been understood as an "undemocratic" institution, since it invariably stands against the tide of equalitarianism. He follows the important research of Carle Zimmerman by classifying families into three types: trustee, domestic, and atomistic. He believes that the trustee family is the biblical form, and that it is the great agent of social power and cultural transformation. He is convinced that since 1950 there have been signs of an increased interest in the trustee family pattern. He is also convinced that the atomistic family has no future. This is believable, since its adherents do not believe in the family as a trustee for the future.

**George Gilder** presents remarkable statistical evidence of the effects of the single life. Single men tend to criminality, suicide, early death, sickness, psychiatric disorders, and social pathology far more often than do married men. They earn less money, have less power, and are the archetype "losers" in American society. He points out that Negro poverty is far more closely associated with the unmarried status of black men than it is with color. Almost 40 percent of male adult blacks are single, compared to 27 percent of male whites. By permitting divorce for minor offenses within the home, the West has contributed to a new "war between the sexes," since older divorced women seldom remarry, and older divorced men marry younger women, thereby removing them from the potential supply of marriageable women for younger men. They stay single, and society suffers. The low-divorce society honors the rule of "one to a customer," thereby reducing the competition for eligible younger women. Group sex, argues Gilder, is the preference of powerful men, who benefit from it, not women. Monogamy reduces sexual competition. {6}

**J. D. Unwin** argues for monogamy along parallel lines. He concludes that monogamy increases social and economic productivity. Competitive instincts are rechanneled along socially beneficial lines. Possibly following Freud's lead in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Unwin states boldly that within three generations after the abolition of monogamy, the society in question invariably loses most of its social energy. It tends to become static and unproductive. He thinks that this is a law, and in his voluminous historical research, he found no exceptions. This essay is over fifty years old, and it never appeared in the citations of most scholars dealing with cultural matters.

If Unwin and Gilder are correct in their defense of monogamy as a positive cultural force, then **Urie Bronfenbrenner's** research offers a dismal future for the United States if basic trends are not reversed. In contrast to Rushdoony, he sees little but decline since 1950. The atomistic family is taking over. He looks at the statistical aggregates and finds little to be optimistic about. One out of six children now lives in a single-parent home, which is almost double the rate of twenty-five years ago. One-third of the mothers with tiny infants are working outside the home. In 1975, a majority of American mothers with children aged six to seventeen were working in jobs outside the home. Again, the rate has doubled since 1950. The social costs of working mothers have not been calculated, but Bronfenbrenner's conclusions make it clear that the gains in income have been at a much higher social cost than most people are willing to admit. The divorce rate is up, especially since 1960. In 1975 there were over a million divorces, double the number of 1965 and three times as many as in 1950. Almost 40 percent of all marriages now end in divorce. One out of every ten live births is a baby out of wedlock, double the 1950 rate. (This figure of 10 percent is exactly what the USSR reports for its population.) But the abortion clinics have helped to reduce this percentage. In 1965, 65,000 abortions on teenagers were performed. Preschool children spend fifty hours a week in front of the television. Fragmentation of families is the crisis of our age. His solution, like that of most secular liberal humanists, is more of the same, namely, more federal welfare money. The fact that federal welfare expenditures have increased at rates exceeding the increase in disappointing family statistics does not enter his mind. The fact that this new federal pseudo-family is a primary cause of the crisis

he describes is not even mentioned. The crisis is a religious one, and secular humanists have few relevant answers, though they can cite the statistics of failure.

**Christopher Wren** shows us that the Soviet Union is deeply enmeshed in the same process of sexual revolution and family disintegration. Even the statistics are similar to those cited by Bronfenbrenner. If Unwin and Gilder are correct, then the USSR is headed for the same sort of social {6} decline that the USA seems headed for. The phenomenon of the disintegrating family is not one of welfare vs. free enterprise, or Communism vs. capitalism. It is one of humanism vs. Christianity. The secular cultures on both sides of the iron curtain are facing similar problems in family life.

The Associated Press story on black illegitimacy points to the crisis of the ghetto that is not going to be solved by more federal dollars. It is a moral and spiritual crisis. It is interesting that Jesse Jackson, the radical black minister, is now extremely concerned about the blatantly promiscuous lyrics of the “soul music” of the 1970s and the devastation to black culture that promiscuity is creating. The same music is popular among white youths. The same secular culture undergirds—if that is the proper term for collapse—both black and white youth cultures.

**C. Schmidt** wrote this essay over seventy years ago. It shows how important the family was in the thinking of the early church fathers. Women especially were elevated out of the low position they had held in pagan classical culture in Greece and Rome. **Richard Flinn's** essay on the ideal Puritan family in the writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demonstrates that the concern of the early church fathers in strengthening the family was shared by the Puritan theologians. Puritan theologians saw the family as the means of procreating children, procreating the future members of the church, rechanneling the lusts of the flesh along productive lines, and aiding all family members in their respective callings. The family was also an important aspect of the way of worship.

In terms of ecclesiastical application, **David Chilton** believes that modern covenantal Presbyterians have misinterpreted the meaning of the covenant promise. Infant baptism is not given because all the children of the elect should be presumed to be saved, but rather because the sacrament of baptism is a symbol of man's subordination to the

covenant, with its blessings and its curses. Like circumcision, baptism is not a mark of salvation as such, but only a mark of covenantal subordination. Baptism binds both the infant and the parents to the requirements of biblical law.

My essay relies, as does Chilton's, on the work of Meredith Kline. Kline's analysis of the covenantal meaning of baptism must be extended far beyond the narrow confines of the visible church, where Kline is content to leave it. The announcement by Peter of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9) must be taken seriously. Protestants have never really considered its full implications. While they have preached the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, they have settled in their churches for the priesthood of few believers. Major reforms of the churches are mandatory if the concept of the royal priesthood is to find institutional application. The eldership must be rethought.<sup>1</sup> Children must be given communion. The position {7} of the father as priest of the family must be restored. The communion meal must replace the symbol of a communion meal. In short, Protestants have got to cease being semi-Roman Catholics.

**Greg and Cathie Bahnsen** examine the biblical doctrine of adoption and then apply it to the concrete case of family adoption. They conclude that adoption is an important area of the extension of the kingdom of God, one which has been ignored by most contemporary Christians.

**E. L. Hebden Taylor** provides an introduction to the various approaches to the family taken by modern secular scholars. The multiplicity of conceptual frameworks indicates how complex the family is, and how far-reaching its effects on society in general.

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1. As a follow-up, see my essay, "A Letter to St. Paul," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2 (Summer 1975): 160-62.

**1.**  
**SYMPOSIUM ON**  
**THE FAMILY**

# THE FAMILY AS TRUSTEE

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*Rousas John Rushdoony*

Two powerful impulses and drives in modern humanism are basic to any understanding of the present crisis and the goals of humanism. *First*, there is the will to kill God, to eliminate Him from history and the mind of man. The goal is religious: it is a desire to replace the religion of Scripture, orthodox Christianity, with the religion of Man, humanism. The sovereignty of man is substituted for the sovereignty of God. John Dewey made it clear that the religious goal of humanism is a democratic society and equality. He held biblical religion to be totally incompatible with this goal. Christianity, by separating “the saved and the lost,” is committed to a “spiritual aristocracy” and is thus alien to democracy and equality. Dewey declared, “I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic division to which supernatural Christianity is committed.”<sup>2</sup> This anti-Christian motive is basic to modern statist education on all levels. It is also, unhappily, basic to all too much church life, to modernism, neo-evangelicalism, and other movements.

*Second*, a basic motive of the modern era is the drive to destroy the family in its historic biblical sense. The family in terms of Scripture is an antidemocratic and aristocratic institution; its existence undercuts democracy and every move towards equality. As James Bryant Conant stated it,

Wherever the institution of the family is still a powerful force, as it is in this country, surely *inequality* of opportunity is automatically, and often unconsciously, a basic principle of the nation; the more favored parents endeavor to obtain even greater favors for their children. Therefore, when we Americans proclaim an adherence to the doctrine of equality of opportunity, we face the necessity for a perpetual com-

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2. John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1934), 84.



promise. Now it seems to me important to recognize both the inevitable conflict and the continuing nature of the compromise.<sup>3</sup>

Modern man seeks rootlessness; his love of urban life is grounded in the desire for anonymity. When he shows a taste for rural life, it is not {9} neighborliness and roots he seeks, but Nature, so that his anti-urban motives are as rootless as his urban life. The family means roots; it means relationships, responsibilities, children, parents, in-laws, relatives, and the rooted routine of a household. As a result, one of the basic drives of the modern world has been a hostility to the family, and a recurring pronouncement of its impending death. The humanistic court of Louis XV found family life, and marital love and loyalty, ridiculous and obsolete concepts. The revolutionists which followed them simply applied the already pronounced doctrines of rootlessness to all of society. All established patterns were invalid: society had to be remade in terms of rational ideas and standards, not in terms of a biblical or even a biological pattern.

This impetus received great reinforcement from the doctrine of biological evolution. The history of man was now viewed in terms of evolution, and the family, tribe, clan, and marriage were simply primitive states in the development of man and soon to be outmoded and set aside.<sup>4</sup> With the 1920s, this campaign against the family was stepped up: the “liberation” of women ostensibly spelled the end of the family. The Soviet Union tried to eliminate the family, with disastrous results. Dr. Lebedeva, Soviet head of the “Department for the Protection of Motherhood and Infancy,” admitted that the attempt to abolish the home was a failure:

Under present conditions, there is no doubt that the home offers a more stimulating environment for the development of the infant than the asylum. Not only have we decreased the death rate in this way (by placing institutional children in private homes), but we have insured normal development to a much larger proportion of babies, since in almost every case our asylum-trained babies were both mentally and physically backward.<sup>5</sup>

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3. James Bryant Conant, *Education in a Divided World: The Function of the Public Schools in Our Unique Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 8.

4. See Ch. Letourneau, *The Evolution of Marriage*, The Contemporary Science Series (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1911, rev. ed.), 356.

The qualification by Dr. Lebedeva, “under present conditions,” should be noted. The search for the conditions which will permit the abolition of the family continues. The *kibbutzim* of Israel, experiments in communal living involving by the end of the 1960s about 93,000 persons, have been widely hailed as an answer, but the years have seen a steady retreat in the radical goals of the *kibbutzim* because of failures and problems. The 1960s and 1970s have seen many proclamations of the death of the family, but the “new” experiments in living are most notable for their failures.

Enemies of the family regularly call attention to the high divorce rate. Two points can be made briefly in passing. In terms of Scripture, *first*, biblically grounded divorce is not an evil but a remedy for evil. *Second*, the high divorce rate marks not the orthodox Christian sector of the modern {10} world but rather the liberal and radical humanists. The marriages by humanists fail, not because marriage is a failure, but because these humanists are failures. The more humanism develops into its logical end, the more clearly it appears that, in every realm, humanists are “born losers,” i.e., their failure is inherent in their position.

This does not prevent humanists from sounding the ostensible death knell of the family. Edward Shorter thus tells us that the traditional family gave way in the eighteenth century to the nuclear family, and now,

In the 1960s and 1970s the entire structure of the family has begun to shift. The nuclear family is crumbling—to be replaced, I think, by the free-floating couple, a marital dyad subject to dramatic fissions and fusions, and without the orbiting satellites of pubertal children, close friends, or neighbors....<sup>6</sup>

Shorter, of course, has no place in his study for the biblical view; his vision is limited to his study, a library, and his circle of humanists. The tremendous revival of the Christian family is apparent in the Christian school movement, and we are witnessing a developing polarization

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5. Carle C. Zimmerman and Lucius F. Cervantes, *Marriage and the Family* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1956), 530.

6. Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 280.

between humanism and Christianity. It is the greatest fact of the current scene, but the academicians will not be aware of it, on the whole, until the next century, because of their total immersion in the literature and outlook of academic respectability, humanism.

It should not surprise us, therefore, that some of the most important works in this area of study (as well as other areas) go neglected. One such work is Joseph Daniel Unwin's *Sex and Culture*, published by Oxford in 1934 and incorporating a lifetime of research.<sup>7</sup> Unwin set out to show that no relationship existed between sexual regulations and cultural behavior; he found, on the contrary, that a mathematical correlation exists. Societies can be classified as zoistic, manistic, deistic, or rationalistic. Zoistic societies permit prenuptial freedom; their cultural level is exceedingly low: such societies neither erect temples nor pay any kind of post-funeral attention to their dead. They have no sense of the past, and their intellectual caliber is very meager. Manistic societies have irregular or occasional prenuptial continence, and culturally are a step up. Deistic societies are produced by prenuptial chastity, are culturally more advanced, and are monarchical. {11} Rationalistic societies have a productive minority of strict sexual regulations and an expansive and productive social energy. Unwin noted,

Any society in which complete prenuptial sexual freedom (outside the exogamic regulations and prohibited degrees) has been permitted for at least three generations will be in the zoistic cultural condition. It will also be at a dead level of conception if previously it has not been in a higher cultural condition.<sup>8</sup>

The biblical view of sex and marriage received thus a singular confirmation from the research of Unwin, in spite of himself.

The implications, too, are far-reaching. In any society, those who deny the biblical law and standards concerning sex and marriage will

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7. Early summaries of his findings include J. D. Unwin's two articles, "Monogamy as a Condition of Social Energy," *The Hibbert Journal* 25, no. 4 (July 1927); no. 100, 662–77; and "Marriage in Cultural History," in *The Hibbert Journal* 26, no. 4 (July 1928), no. 104, 695–706. A later published address, summarizing *Sex and Culture*, is Unwin's *Sexual Regulations and Cultural Behaviour* (Oxford University Press, 1935). In a later work, Unwin tried to fit his research into a planned and rational society: *Hopousia, or The Sexual and Economic Foundations of a New Society* (New York: Oxkar Piest, 1940).

8. J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 347.

thereby sentence themselves, in the persons of their children and children's children whom they rear in their alien faith, to a subordinate and inferior role in any future society. The biblical requirement is most productive of social energy and power.

Of very great importance to any understanding of the family is Carle G. Zimmerman's *Family and Civilization* (1947), a landmark study. Zimmerman broke with the reigning evolutionary faith that "evolution of the civilized family is a theory which inevitably holds that culture has no fixed base." On the contrary, Zimmerman held, we can recognize clearly that culture does have a fixed base.<sup>9</sup> He criticized also the bee-ant sociology, and the hedonistic sex-happiness school of thought. In studying the history of the family, Zimmerman found a recurring pattern of three families, and the rise and fall of civilizations in terms of their family pattern.

The three main family types are the trustee family, the domestic family, and the atomistic family. The trustee family has the most power and scope. It is called the trustee family because its living members see themselves as trustees of the family blood, rights, property, name, and position for their lifetime. They have an inheritance from the past to be preserved and developed for the future. The trustee family is the basic social power; in some forms, but not in the Bible, the trustee family can execute its members or sell them into slavery, things banned by biblical law to the trustee family but common in other cultures. The head of the family is not the head in any personal sense but as *family* head and as a trustee of powers.<sup>10</sup>

The domestic family is the most common type. It stands between the {12} trustee family and the atomistic family. The domestic family tries to get the best of both worlds—freedom for the individual and stability for the family. The family loyalties are still maintained, but the state has become the major institution in society, and men depend more on the state than the family. The husband in the domestic family has more

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9. Carle C. Zimmerman, *Family and Civilization* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), 50.

10. We cannot understand the biblical law concerning the husband's headship in a modern, personal sense: it is a trusteeship. The common interpretation today deserves the reproach of being called male chauvinism. It has no sense of responsibility, or trusteeship.

arbitrary power with both the family property and its members and acts less as a trustee of all powers.<sup>11</sup>

In the atomistic family, the individual seeks freedom from the family bonds. Father, mother, and children see the family as restraints; the basic unit for them is not the family but the individual. For the old sacredness of the trustee family, the atomistic family substitutes the sacredness of the individual. Neither the parents nor the children like the idea of sacrificing for the welfare and independence of the family; it is their purely individual welfare and independence which concerns them. The trustee family exists only in a very limited civil state: it keeps essential government in its own hands. The atomistic family sees instead the rise of the Leviathan state, of statist power and totalitarianism. There is an essential relationship between family structure and cultural and political conditions.

It should be clear, however, that, while Zimmerman has so powerfully analyzed and set forth the basic family types, differences exist within his divisions, most notably in trustee families. Antiquity gives us, as does history since then, many examples of trustee families. To cite two radically different cases, we have ancestor worship on the one hand, and the family pattern of biblical law on the other. Both are religious units, but the one is humanistic and man-centered and the other is theological and God-centered. We cannot adopt or approve the trustee family as such: our concern is with the trustee family as required by biblical law.

In Scripture, the family is man's basic church, state, school, society, welfare agency, and social power. Control of the children and their education rests with the family, but strictly in terms of God's law. Inheritance is a family power, in terms of the faith. Welfare is a family duty, not only with respect to non-related widows, orphans, and strangers (Deut. 14: 28–29), but also and especially with all relatives, for "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house [or, kindred], he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infi-

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11. When conservative Christians think of the godly family, they tend to think of the domestic rather than the trustee family; as a result, the individual man is exalted as head of the household rather than placed strictly in a trusteeship, in a position of custodial powers.

del” (1 Tim. 5:8). The authority of the husband, and of the wife, is not personal but theological and is a trusteeship for God, first of all, and then the family.

The atomistic family tends not only to be the victim of humanistic individualism but also of the humanistic doctrine of economic man. The {13} women’s liberation movement manifests simply this doctrine of economic man. A woman’s freedom and justification depend on a job independently from her husband and family. The wife’s justification is her economic ability. The wife is thus viewed as an economic unit, not as a theological fact. Such a perspective rests on a false doctrine of man. Man is not, nor is the family, an economic entity but a religious entity, according to Scripture (Eph. 5:21–33). The creation of Eve came only *after* man had been assigned a calling and had worked at it for some time. Woman was created to be a helpmeet to man in his person and calling, so that her orientation is not to a job but to her family and its life and calling. Where the doctrine of economic man rules among ostensible Christians, by the time the couple approaches its forties, the marriage disintegrates; its essential atomism rules, and the wife finds she has nothing in common with her husband and more in common sometimes with her job. The man who regards his wife as an economic unit begins and ends the marriage as an individual: he has always been married in name only. The essential oneness is never there.

I have found also, as a pastor, that this view of economic man, which governs libertarians, has usually far-reaching results. The men are henpecked, impotent, or ineffectual in many cases, and libertarian men often have drinking problems, or psychological problems. The women are aggressive and domineering, and the children are cultural drop-outs, on drugs, or, having advanced degrees, are content to be soda-jerks, bellhops, or clerks.

This does not mean that a godly wife cannot and often must work to provide for Christian schooling, to help her husband in his calling, or the like. She functions then on religious principles, in terms of Proverbs 31: 10–31, not in terms of the doctrine of economic man.

Our present cultural crisis is a family crisis, i.e., it is rooted in the decline of the biblical trustee family and the rise of the humanistic, atomistic family. Since 1950, however, in the United States there has been

a dramatic but unheralded revival of the biblical pattern. Concern about education and the rise of the Christian school movement have been basic to this return to family life. In speaking about the biblical pattern of family life, I find that older people respond with strong distaste to the “patriarchal” idea, whereas the younger are more prone to listen with intense interest. The receptivity to my *Institutes of Biblical Law*, which in part sets forth the biblical standards of family life, has been an indication of the desire for a trustee family, and, even more, a trustee culture, one having a biblical mandate and theological roots. The atomistic family has no future. The godly family commands the future. The future family is, under God, the trustee of children, property, inheritance, welfare, and education. It governs the basic areas of social power in terms of God’s law and grace.

# IN DEFENSE OF MONOGAMY

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*George Gilder*

Reprinted from *Commentary* 58, no. 5 (November 1974). Copyright American Jewish Committee, 1974. George Gilder is the author of *Sexual Suicide* and *Naked Nomads: Unmarried Men in America*, from which this article has been adapted.

No way of life has been more glowingly celebrated in recent years than that of the “liberated” single male. Yet the truth is that men without wives in America generally seem to have a far harder time of it than married men—living lives that tend to be not only shorter, but also more destructive, both to themselves and to society. Compared to others in the population the single man tends to be poor and neurotic. He is much less healthy and stable than the single woman. He is disposed to criminality, drugs, and violence. He is irresponsible about his debts, alcoholic, accident prone, and subject to venereal disease. Unless he can marry, he is often destined to a Hobbesean life—solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Of course, there are many exceptions. There is no doubt that millions of unmarried men have managed to become disciplined and valuable citizens, and millions of divorced men have survived to a happy and productive old age. Nevertheless, the bachelor pattern is overwhelmingly marked by lack of sustained commitment and lack of orientation toward the future. The single man tends to move from one sexual partner to another, from job to job, city to city, rotating his life without growth or progress. And when a man gets divorced or widowed, he tends to revert in many respects to the temperament of the never-married single man.

One striking result of the bachelor pattern is low income: singleness correlates with poverty better than race does. Indeed, one way to explain black poverty is to point out that 39 percent of black men are single, compared to 27 percent of whites. Outside the South, married black males under thirty-five earn about 40 percent more than white



singles of the same age. And while it may be hard to believe, in view of the feminist outcry, single men earn about the same as single women of the same age and qualifications. Between the ages of thirty and forty-four, according to a Labor Department study, both earn about the same hourly wages. Single college graduates over age twenty-five earn about the same amount, whether male or female. Both earned a median income of approximately \$9,500 in 1973.

Married men, however, earn nearly twice as much as singles of either {15} sex. Between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four, for example, single white men with college degrees earn an average of about \$10,500. Married men earn about \$19,000. Single college graduates earn about the same as married high-school graduates. In addition, the married high-school graduate has a nearly four times better chance than a comparable single of eventually earning over \$15,000. It would seem more important, then, for an ambitious young man to get married than to go to college. Married men are the only ones in the population who are a great success at earning money.

Although single men make no more money than women, who are said to be gravely victimized by bias, discrimination is not the bachelor's problem. His chief problem is his own psychological and physical condition. In general, men have more psychological problems than women, and single men have the most problems of all.

According to data assembled by Jessie Bernard, single men are far more prone to mental disorders than any other large group of Americans, with the possible exception of the divorced. Single men between twenty-five and sixty-five are over 30 percent more likely than married men or single women to be depressed; 30 percent more likely to show "phobic tendencies" and "passivity"; and almost twice as likely to show "severe neurotic symptoms." They are almost three times as prone to nervous breakdowns. They cannot sleep (three times more insomnia), and if they do sleep, they are three times more likely to have nightmares. But perhaps the most striking data come from a study by Leo Srole and associates, *Mental Health in the Metropolis: The Midtown Manhattan Study*. Srole's report found that married men and women do not greatly differ in their mental health: about one-fifth of both are impaired. In this survey, unlike some others, single women are slightly better off. But like all other available data, the report shows single men

to be in the worst condition and deteriorating most rapidly with age. Between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine, an astonishing total of 46.1 percent of all single men in the Manhattan survey suffer “mental health impairment.”

Needless to say, all such surveys are fallible. Studies based on vague criteria of mental health and happiness lack any final authority. But the conclusions of these studies are heavily supported by data from institutions, showing that bachelors are twenty-two times more likely than married men to be committed for mental disease (and, incidentally, ten times more likely to be put in hospitals for chronic diseases).

As far as the society is concerned, however, the main problem of single men is not mental or physical illness, or related afflictions like alcoholism and loneliness. It is not discrimination or poverty. It is not that thriving old specialty of single men and their intimates: venereal disease. Single men have another way of getting the rest of society, however reluctantly {16} and unconsciously, to take part in their problems. That way is crime.

It is by now well known that about half of all violent crime is committed by and against blacks. But the central facts about crime are not racial; they are sexual. Groups of sociologists venturing into urban streets after their seminars on violence in America do not rush to their taxis fearing attack by marauding bands of feminists, covens of single women, or angry packs of welfare mothers. Despite all the movies of the *Bonnie and Clyde* genre, and the exploits of the Symbionese Liberation Army, one need have little fear of any group that so much as contains women—or, if the truth be known, of any group that contains men who are married to women. Crime, like poverty, correlates better with sex and singleness than it does with race. Although single men number 13 percent of the population over age fourteen, they comprise 60 percent of the criminals and commit about 90 percent of major and violent crimes.

Summing it all up, then, violence and crime join with mental illness, mild neurosis, depression, addiction, venereal disease, institutionalization, poverty, unemployment, and nightmares to comprise the specialized culture of single men in America. Not surprisingly, the climax of the grim story is death. Of all groups, single males have the highest mortality rate—and suicide is increasingly the way they die. Suicide is

not restricted to young single men, however. In fact, after the perilous early twenties, the older a man gets without marrying, the more likely he is to kill himself. In addition, there are many forms of suicide that are listed under other names. Single men have almost double the mortality rate of married men and three times the mortality rate of single women from all causes: from automobile accidents and other mishaps, as well as from the whole range of conventional diseases. Most of the illnesses do not become evident until after age forty-five. Many of them, it is safe to say, represent various forms of disguised or unconscious suicide.

In analyzing the high death rates of single men, sociologists normally focus on the bachelors' lack of the kind of "personal maintenance" married men enjoy from their wives. Feminists talk of the failure of sexist society to teach male children how to cook and take care of themselves. But the maintenance explanations are inadequate to explain the all-encompassing reach of single male afflictions. Altogether the pattern of mortality among single men is so various and inexorable that it suggests an organic source: a failure of the will to live, a disconnection from the life force itself as it arises in society. Discussing the high suicide rates of single men throughout Europe in the nineteenth century, Emile Durkheim wrote: "The bond attaching the [single] man to life relaxes because that attaching him to society is itself slack."

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the literally vital importance of the marriage tie to men is the impact of its rupture by divorce or {17} widowhood. Contrary to the usual images of the helpless and abandoned wife, the statistics show far greater evidence of helpless and traumatized husbands. The woman tends to suffer most during the separation when the man diverts himself with dreams of bachelor freedom. If she is over forty, she has a much smaller chance of remarriage. But in terms of mental and physical disease and life expectancy, divorce damages the man far more than the woman.

Thus, divorced men are more likely to seek psychiatric help than divorced and separated women, and they can be found in disproportionate numbers in mental hospitals. They are also more prone to profess unhappiness than divorced women. But it is in statistics of disease and mortality that the plight of divorced men emerges most strikingly.

According to recently corrected figures from the National Bureau of Health Statistics, divorced men of every age group between thirty-five and sixty-four have a mortality rate three-and-a-third times as high as divorced women.

They die of all causes, but like single men, divorced men specialize in accidents and suicides. Divorced men are three-and-a-half times as likely as divorced women to commit suicide, and four times more likely to die in an accidental fire or explosion. Murder claims three divorced men for every divorced woman, as does cirrhosis of the liver. And, in the realm of more conventional mortality, divorced men are six times as likely as divorced women to die of heart disease.

In short, when a man, accepting an honor at the company banquet—or prefacing a book—gives much of the credit to his wife, he is not merely following a ritual. He is stating a practical fact. In overwhelming likelihood, he would not have succeeded—and possibly not even survived—if he had been single or divorced.

But statistics are treacherous. Perhaps all these weaknesses of the single and divorced are the cause rather than the consequence of their marital failures. The man with a criminal bent or a proneness to mental illness is admittedly a poor prospect for marriage and a good one for divorce. Perhaps the man who falls off cliffs, or crashes his automobile, or drinks to excess, or takes addictive drugs, or fools around with guns, or inclines to suicide, or becomes depressed and unhappy and neurotic—even late in life—perhaps these men also, in one way or another, selected themselves out for successful marriage.

It is possible to explain by the process of marital selection all associations of divorced and single men with mortality, insanity, and criminality—and the associations of married men with longevity, success, and equanimity. It is possible to contend that these statistical relationships have little to do with the comparative healthiness of single and married life or the deep psychological need of men for women. But these explanations create more problems than they solve. The idea that most singles are inherently {18} unmarriageable and the divorced unstable fails to explain the same pattern of afflictions among widowers. It fails to explain the absence of comparable patterns among single and divorced women. And the marital selection theory fails to explain the mechanism whereby many of the symptoms that supposedly prevent mar-

riage do not appear until after many years of singleness. In addition, the impact of marriage on character is not merely a statistical conclusion. One does not have to look far to find examples of buccaneer singles transformed by marriage or to find examples of once stable men plunged into depression and drink by widowhood or divorce.

Other skeptics ascribe all the problems of divorced men to the removal of “personal maintenance.” But this theory fails to explain why the pattern affects the rich, who can have servants, as well as the poor, who cannot, and affects the young and the old, from all parts of the country and from all industrial societies where statistics are available.

In the elaborate studies by John Bowlby on attachment and loss in small children in all human societies, in recent evidence that lack of “social involvement” is a key to mental illness, and in the endless annals of the literature of isolation, everywhere we discover that the finding and losing of love are central to human experience. It should not be surprising that divorce is a deadly event for men. Men are usually the most active partners in the finding of love, and they are most likely to lose everything, even the children, when love is lost.

But what about the “sexual revolution”? Has it not made life easier or more pleasant or more exciting for unmarried men? There too the answer would seem to be no.

One source of information on these matters is a volume entitled *Sexual Behavior in the 1970s*, written by Morton Hunt, which presents the results of an ambitious national survey conducted by *Playboy* in 1972 with the assistance of the (Kinsey) Institute of Sex Research. Author of several previous books on sexual behavior, Hunt analyzes the new findings and compares them with the results of the two Kinsey Reports (1949 and 1954) and with other surveys of sexual conduct. What Hunt finds is that even in the realm of sex, single men do less well than married men. Though single men are more promiscuous, they also have less total sexual experience than monogamous men (or women). In the younger groups single men have only about one-fifth as much sexual activity as married men of the same age, and less than half as much sexual activity as single females. Single men are also less successful on the “inner scoreboard”—women’s orgasms (the rate of failure here being five times higher than in marital sex). But single men do rate

higher on one sexual scale: being more promiscuous, they are more prone to venereal disease than married men or single women.

As to the image of the single male as playboy and swinger, it has at {19} best a coincidental relation to reality. There are such creatures, but they are generally powerful and rich and successful beyond the dreams of the vast majority of single men. Nor do the playboys represent the only ascendant style of American manhood in a time of “sexual revolution.” Recent research offers startling evidence of a sexual crisis among young men, marked by sexual fragility and retreat. A *Playboy* survey of college students in 1971 indicated that while virginity among girls was rapidly diminishing, virginity among boys was actually increasing, and at an equal rate. Greater female availability and aggressiveness often seem to decrease male confidence and initiative. Further evidence of such retreat comes in the form of impotence, now the leading complaint at virtually every college psychiatric clinic. One psychiatrist, citing evidence from “my patients, both male and female, articles in medical journals, and conversations with my colleagues,” calls it “the least publicized epidemic of the last decade.”

As an additional grim entry on the sexual scene—to go with the playboys and the impotents—we have an expanding number of rapists. Although dignified married men with high status in their communities receive the most publicity, rape is another specialty of single men with confused sexual identities. Proportionately, a single man is about five times as likely as a married man to be convicted of rape. The reported incidence of this crime increased almost 80 percent between 1968 and 1974, and the real incidence probably increased also.

We have, then, the playboy, the impotent, and the rapist as an unholy trinity of single manhood. To be sure, they comprise, when taken all together, only a minority of all single men; they are the most conspicuous winners and most abject losers of the “sexual revolution.” But they play a much larger role in the consciousness of our time than their numbers warrant. They offer the appeal of demonic darkness, as strong as Gatsby’s orgiastic light itself, to those who gather on mountaintops and dream of the end of sexual rules and limitations: the end to monogamy.

The dream of liberation from monogamy emerges in a chorus of influential voices. They speak in terms of “freedom” and “fulfillment.”

Books like *Beyond Monogamy*, magazines like *Playboy*, organizations like the Humanists and the Sexual Freedom League, all present themselves as embattled “liberals” confronting a powerful and reactionary establishment. The sexual liberals purport to be the “open,” the “creative,” the “genitally liberated” facing the “repressives,” the “paranoids,” the “anal compulsives.” The liberals are against power games and for the sharing of love. They are for “universal kinship,” in Alex Comfort’s phrase, and equality.

Why then is there such a disparity between this hopeful vision and the reality of the single “liberated” life? The reason is that the removal of {20} restrictions on sexual activity does not bring equality and community. It brings ever more vicious sexual competition. The women become “easier” for the powerful to get—but harder for others to keep. Divorces become “easier”—but remarriage is extremely difficult for abandoned older women. Marriages become more “open”—open not only for the partners to get out but also for the powerful to get in.

Monogamy is central to any democratic social contract, designed to prevent a breakdown of society into “war of every man against every other man.” In order to preserve order, a man may relinquish liberty, prosperity, and power to the state. But if he has to give up his wife to his boss, he is no longer a man. A society of open sexual competition, in which the rich and powerful—or even the sexually attractive—can command large numbers of women is a society with the most intolerable hierarchy of all. In any polygamous society some men have no wives at all; denied women and children, they are in effect deprived of the very substance of life.

Monogamy is egalitarianism in the realm of love. It is a mode of rationing. It means—to put it crudely—one to a customer. Competition is intense enough even so, because of the sexual inequality of human beings. But under a regime of monogamy there are limits. One may covet one’s neighbor’s wife, one may harbor fantasies of teeny boppers, but one generally leaves it at that. One does not leave one’s own wife when she grows older, to take a woman who would otherwise go to a younger man. Thus a balance is maintained and each generation gets its only true sexual rights: the right of a wife or husband and the right to participate in the future of the race through children.

It is not a ruthlessly strict system. Many divorces occurring among the young are relatively harmless. There is a place in the system for some philandering. But the essential rules are necessary to a just and democratic society. A breakdown in the sexual order will bring social ills and injustices far more grievous than the usual inequalities of money and power.

Such a breakdown is already occurring in American society. The most obvious evidence is the ever-growing number of older divorcees. Between the ages of forty and sixty-five, there were 1,600,000 divorced women in 1973, up 231,000 since 1970, while there were only 935,000 divorced men. The divorced men, moreover, were remarrying over three times as fast as the divorcees. This disparity is caused by a fundamental inequality between the sexes.

Unlike divorced men, most of whom find wives within a few years, women over forty only rarely remarry. The median age for these divorced women was approximately forty, while the median age for the women whom the men took as their second wives was about thirty. A woman divorced after forty—after her childbearing years—is most likely to spend the rest of her life unmarried. Although women in general can bear singleness far [{21}](#) better than can men, this huge number of divorcees is a national tragedy.

A society is an organism. We cannot simply exclude a few million women from the fabric of families, remarry their husbands to younger women, and quietly return to our business as if nothing has happened. What has happened is a major rupture in the social system, felt everywhere.

Older divorced women are not the only victims of this rupture. The other victims are young single men. When the divorced men marry young women, the older men, in effect, become polygamists. Each man monopolizes the fertile, eligible years of two or more women. The inevitable result is that millions of young single men cannot get married or have children.

Between twenty and forty, there are 1,250,000 more single, separated, or divorced men than single, separated, and divorced women. When the million or so divorced and separating men between forty and fifty-five enter the fray—to remarry women with a median age in their low thirties—the strains are intense. Eighty-five percent of the



women between twenty-five and forty are already married. The ones who are single in many cases are not eager to get married or are unlikely prospects for some other reason. Many single women over thirty have prestigious jobs and are unwilling to marry less successful men. Thus the field for the single men is diminished still further.

The overall result is sexual pressure on most men and most marriages. It is sexual turbulence and struggle extended throughout the society. It is fatherless children and childless fathers. It is a rising incidence of homosexuality, a frequent recourse of marginal males in polygamous societies everywhere. Above all, the result is an abundance of losers, men and women lost in the sexual shuffle and relegated to the singles game, in which almost no one wins.

So few win because the losers in the “sexual revolution”—post-forty women and young men—cannot marry each other. The divorced women are too old and the single men too young. Although women’s magazines have recently begun entertaining their readers with happy stories of sex between these two available generations, the cases of marriage are extremely rare, except possibly in show business, where it was ever thus. The few marriages that do occur between young men and older divorced women, moreover, do not often bring children or real family responsibilities. The young man is only technically married.

The fact remains that young men almost always marry women of childbearing age. By and large, single men of all ages fall in love with young women. When they fail to find young single women, they prospect among the married ones. If they fail here, they do not get married at all. It is the same with older divorced men. They will often marry a much younger woman before a woman their own age or older. {22} Throughout human evolution the competition among men has focused on fertile women. That is the very essence of the male sex drive. Outside of literature, men are not usually attracted sexually to women whose age reminds them of their mothers. Even when children are not consciously sought, men are most attracted to women who can bear them; and children are still a vital, if often unconscious, motive of marriage.

The chief beneficiaries of the “sexual revolution,” therefore, are older, married men with exceptional appeals and powers. They can leave their older wives and marry younger ones. In addition, powerful men

can have young mistresses, thus monopolizing two young women. These forms of polygamy create a large number of peripheral males who cannot win a durable relationship with a woman and whose existing ties are always in jeopardy. As in a baboon troop, the powerful get the women most of the time; and the powerful father most of the children.

It is then that the peripheral men feel sexually expendable. But unlike the peripheral baboons, who are physically controlled by the dominant ones, the peripheral men are not powerless. They can buy knives and guns, drugs and alcohol, and thus achieve a brief and predatory dominance or an illusory potency. The rapist, the addict impotent, and the playboy, in a way, become equals.

It should be remembered that the real arenas of “sexual revolution” in America are not the universities, but the black ghettos. Although statistics are not available for the ghetto itself, the overall black totals are heavily influenced by ghetto conditions. Thirty-nine percent of all black men are single, compared to 27 percent of white men. Only 52 percent of black children under eighteen are living with both parents, down 7 percent in three years, to a level 35.8 points below the white percentage. Black women, through jobs and welfare, tend to be financially independent of the men. In the ghetto, divorce and desertion are more common than anywhere else in the society, and sexual competition and bravado are inevitably pervasive.

But the ghetto does not provide a secure place for the losers, a secure haven of love and self-esteem. Because the ghetto often cannot enforce monogamy or perpetuate marriage, most older ghetto women lack husbands. So half the violent crimes in America are committed by and against ghetto residents. So rape and impotence, addiction and robbery all too often cast a pall over the streets and homes. Even though there are many reasons for the ghetto tragedy—both in our history and in our current policy—there is no doubt that this tragedy has now assumed the bitter pattern of sexual emancipation. It is the losers’ side of the “sexual revolution.” People who would like to extend the pattern to the rest of the society should study it well. (They also might study the Moslem world and other polygamous societies, whose characteristic features are the suppression {23} of women and the emergence of large numbers of homosexuals.)

The sexual revolutionary, with his talk of love and sharing and universal kinship, sounds like a rather conventional utopian: sentimental but harmless, and with his heart in the right place. In fact, however, the sexual revolutionary is more dangerous than most, because his program is at once less realistic and more feasible. Unlike the economic or political utopia, the sexual one can be practiced in one's own home. But also unlike the economic or political utopian, who at least gestures at realities of scarcity and interdependence, the sexual revolutionary rarely transcends the closed world of his own imagination. In theory, his program is utterly misconceived, and in practice it is evil.

Any Communist, for example, knows that equality takes work, power, even dictatorship. He has no illusion that freedom alone will achieve it. But to the sexual revolutionary it goes without saying that people become equal merely by taking off their clothes. It is a surprising variation on the theory, never really believed even by its proponents, that "they're all alike in the dark."

Yet the descriptions of swinging in a book like *Beyond Monogamy* offer abundant sociological data, for those who reject the evidence of their own lives and senses, that sexual appeal is no more equally distributed than anything else. One might go further. Sexual appeal is distributed with an unevenness more inexorable and irreversible than almost any other human advantage—perhaps even more than intelligence and virtue, certainly more than money and power. On the most obvious level, older men are much more powerful sexually than older women, and younger, fertile women are much more powerful sexually than younger men. But inequalities in sexual appeal are great among men and women of all ages.

Monogamy is designed to minimize the effect of such inequalities—to prevent the powerful of either sex from disrupting the familial order. In practice, however, the chief offenders are older men. Young women, however powerful sexually, do not normally want to exercise their powers to gain large numbers of partners. And in fact, female resistance to the more flamboyant manifestations of sexual revolution has been repeatedly demonstrated. Attempts to promote communal sex usually leave women cold. H. Wayne Gourley, for example, established "Walden Two" as a utopian community in Pennsylvania partly to experiment with group marriage. But in the end he had to leave the

group, selling them his house. The experiment failed, according to Kathleen Greibe's report, because "there has never been a female at Walden House who had any interest at all in group marriage." This is not surprising. The anthropologists tell us that there has never been any group of women who have long permitted a regimen of group sex. Group sex has occurred chiefly when powerful men have enforced it. {24}

Any sexual revolution, therefore, will tend to liberate more men than women. Larger numbers of men than women will command two or more exclusive partners. Thus a sexual revolution will exclude many more young men than young women. In addition, any older woman with a sexually attractive husband is likely to be deserted. When the society stops enforcing monogamy, a social order based on monogamous families will break down into a system based on the bitter hierarchies of sexual power.

Such disasters of sexual inequality explain why real egalitarians, even revolutionary ones like Fidel Castro and Mao Tse-tung, are normally conservative about sex. They do not want to liberate its disruptive and hierarchical potentials. That is why libertarians, who even want to turn the police force over to private enterprise, hesitate to extend *laissez faire* to sex. That is why the program of the sexual revolution—with its promised link of freedom and equality—is even more fatuous, more quixotic, than any of the long procession of egalitarian dreams that have bemused this century's politics. Sexual liberals and revolutionaries are anything but egalitarians. They are just men with sexual ambition or dreams of orgiastic glory.

What happens when sex is liberated is not equality but a vast intensification of sexual competition, from which there is no sure haven except impotence and defeat; competition in which marriage is just another arena, or the home base from which the strong deploy; competition in which the only sure result is an ever larger band of vindictive losers.

In some societies, losers do not matter very much. They can be sent to rest homes and asylums, dispatched to distant wars, or thrown in jail. But the success or failure of a peaceful democratic society is dependent on what happens to the people who lose. That most people can live with sexual "liberation" may in some sense be true. But what is also

true, and more to the point, is that such “liberation” makes criminals out of many men and deprives even larger numbers of men and women alike of the essentials of human dignity and love.

# MONOGAMY AS A CONDITION OF SOCIAL ENERGY

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*J. D. Unwin*

Reprinted from *The Hibbert Journal* 25 (July 1927): 663–77.

The records of history show a series of different societies, in different places, each rising to civilization as they become absolutely monogamous,<sup>12</sup> achieving high culture while that absolute state is preserved, and falling into decline as it is modified or discarded. Just as societies have advanced from savagery to civilization, and then faded away into a state of general decrepitude, so in each of them has marriage first previously changed from a temporary affair based on mutual consent to a lifelong association of one man with one woman, and then turned back to a loose union or to polygamy. The whole of human history does not contain a single instance of a group becoming civilized unless it has been absolutely monogamous, nor is there any example of a group retaining its culture after it has adopted less rigorous customs. Marriage as a lifelong association has been an attendant circumstance of all human achievement, and its adoption has preceded all manifestations of social energy, whether that energy be reflected in conquest, in art and science, in the extension of the social vision, or in the substitution of monotheism for polytheism, and the exaltation of the conception of the one God.

It is my purpose not only to present these historical data, but also to show that, besides being contemporaneous, these coincident facts are intimately connected, and that indissoluble monogamy must be

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12. I use the following terms in these senses: absolute monogamy—the state of having only one husband or wife at one time, but presupposing conditions whereby the wife is under the dominion of the husband; modified monogamy—the state of having one spouse at one time, the association being terminable by either party upon terms laid down by the law; indissoluble monogamy—a lifelong association of one man with one woman, neither party being allowed to break the bond on any pretext.

regarded as the mainspring of all social activity, a necessary condition of human development.

We will consider the facts first.

Among the Amoritic Semites, in the fourth phase of Babylonian history (c. 2300–1950 BC), marriage was originally by purchase. Bride price was paid to the father; wives and children were property, and could be sold, mortgaged, and repudiated at will. A wife caught in adultery was drowned. For her to refuse conjugal rights was an offense against society, {26} punishable by death. By the end of Hammurabi's reign customs had completely changed. Jastrow says:

The social advance over earlier conditions is considerable. The husband can no longer put away his wife at will. If no blame attaches to her, a fair compensation must be given, not merely half a mina; but in case there are children, also the dowry; or if there are children, then in lieu of the dowry sufficient alimony to bring up her children, and a share in the husband's estate, after the children shall have reached their majority.

The marital power thus appears greatly curbed, corresponding to the restrictions put upon the exercise of parental authority.

The old Sumerian family laws give the power of absolute divorce to the husband, without distinction whether there are children or not, whether the woman has done wrong or is entirely innocent. The Hammurabi Code not only makes a distinction between the childless wife and the one who has borne children, but permits absolute divorce without compensation only in the case of guilt on the part of the wife<sup>13</sup>

And the wife was granted power to break a bond which had become repugnant to her. She could refuse conjugal rights, and justify her aversion in the courts. Her own conduct being adjudged innocent, she was allowed to return to her people—a separation for incompatibility.

Finally, the position of woman in the community improved so much that she could hold property, trade and contract in her own name, and bear witness in the courts. She was jointly responsible for debts incurred by her husband, and was on a footing of legal equality.

During the great Sumerian revival in the days of the Kings of Ur (c. 2600–2300 BC) the same process had already gone on. The original

13. *Journal of American Oriental Society* 36: 7.

Sumerian family laws were severe, but a part of a Sumerian Code contains some sections which are the same as some of those in the later code, introducing the modifications mentioned above. Especially is there one which deals with adultery. The penalty is no longer drowning, but merely permission to the man to take another wife. As Professor Langdon says,<sup>14</sup> this involves a less serious estimate of the crime. In the time of Gudea wives are being mentioned in the contracts as being equally responsible for the carrying out of the provisions—this showing considerable economic advancement over previous conditions. We know that Dungi appointed his daughters rulers of provinces.

The habits of the people whom the Amorites supplanted as the ruling race, therefore, were afterwards adopted by their successors; that is, the Sumerians had much modified their monogamy when they fell into decline, and these same or similar modifications being adopted by the Amorites, they {27} too fell away before the rude and uncultivated Kassites.

Nor is this all. In the twenty-eighth century, before the time of Akkadian domination, Lagash had enjoyed two centuries of Sumerian hegemony. Great conquerors were her rulers. But Urukagina usurped the throne at a time of general decadence, when the city was throttled by a huge hierarchy. Open adultery had become rampant. His first reform was to reinforce the old rules of continence and to reintroduce the old severe punishments. His efforts did not prevent the fall of the city, but it is interesting to note that after the Akkadian power had passed away it is the rulers of Lagash who inaugurate “a new epoch in literature and art, and the new sentiment is profound.”<sup>15</sup>

The Assyrians, though subject to Hammurabi, had lagged behind in the matter of social development. After the fall of the Babylonian Empire they were still absolutely monogamous. A childless widow was married to a brother of the husband. A woman had no control over property, and if she pledged or sold her husband's goods she was guilty of theft. It was a punishable offense to contract with her. By the fifteenth century the Assyrians were being treated by Egypt as the equals of their former masters. But by the seventh century, just before the final

14. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1920.

15. Langdon, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 1, 433.



*debacle*, polygamy, aggravated by the influx of war captives, had become common. A record of a district around Harran shows that out of sixty-four men, nine are wifeless, while sixteen have two wives, six have three, and four and five are possessed by two. At the same time also Assyrian women had secured their freedom and were able to trade and contract in their own name; they also succeeded to high office in civil administration.

Of the marriage customs of the Cretans we have no knowledge. The sixteenth and fifteenth centuries were for them what the sixth and fifth were for Athens. All we know is that during that time there were female pugilists, female toreadors, and that women are depicted as driving chariots and hunting. They openly attended public functions, and seem also to have taken a leading part in religious ceremony. In no society which has attained civilization is there any record of women achieving such high position unless their rise has been accompanied by the adoption of a less rigorous form of marriage. But the evidence stops there.

Of the Achaeans, Homer affords details of the original absolute monogamy and its gradual qualification. They are “out and out monogamists.” Wives are bought; daughters are “cattle bringing.” Parental and marital authority is complete. Then “*edna*” comes to be equal to “*pherne*,” service in war is accepted in lieu of bride price, and personal qualities even come to be preferred to price. And while tacitly admitting that Alcinous will have the final word, Nausicaa implies that her own wishes will be consulted {28} in the choice of a husband. The rise in the position of women is too well known to need remark.

But concubinage comes to be practiced. The children of such unions were bastards, but there are traces that the mark of bastardy was losing its sting and that the tendency was to regard the bastard on the same terms as a legitimate son. It is this tendency to polygamy which is the chief complaint of Thersites— “Soft fools,” he calls the Atridae, “base things of shame, ye women of Achaea, and men no more.” Two generations after Agamemnon the great Achaean passes into oblivion. “The general tone of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is not a nascent, but a decaying order of things.<sup>16</sup>

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16. J. P. Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece*, 18.

(No Egyptian code of laws has been recovered, and we have no continuous record of their social customs over the 3,000 years of history—a period equal in length to that which separates the present day from the fall of Troy. The fact that there are many hieroglyphic combinations which are translated by the same English word,<sup>17</sup> the subtlety of the difference between which cannot be read, seems to indicate that there was some change in the relations between the Pharaoh and the women of his household. It is sufficient, perhaps, that the people themselves seem to have been monogamous, and that it is not until the last days of the Empire that we have information that marriage had become for them a temporary affair, easily terminated.)

When culture comes again, in Attica, an area untouched by the Achaeans and unaffected by the Dorians, it is with a people who still regard marriage as a lifelong association. The Greeks of Attica were absolutely monogamous. Wives were originally bought, and the marital power was supreme. Time brings the same changes as before, and the date of their full institution is the fifth century. By the end of that century, three generations before the Greeks became a subject race, the old customs had completely changed. Isocrates complains (in a way which sounds familiar), referring to Marathon and Salamis, “Then our young men did not waste their days in gambling houses and with music girls.”

The denial of legality to a marriage with an “Outlander” woman, and the popularity to which these ladies attained, endangered the monogamic tie. The effect was at first refining, a little later enervating. For, like the word “mistress” in English, “companion” came to mean not much more than a concubine. A generation after Pericles, Demosthenes could say, “We have companions for the sake of pleasure, and wives to bear us legal offspring.” And divorce, at first in the hands of the man alone, became {29} possible for the wife. She had but to apply to the archon.

Paederasty became a common indulgence—a thing unknown in Homer. Women could not endure the continual seclusion to which

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17. Budge’s Dictionary gives seven different combinations which are all translated “concubine”; five which are rendered “harem”; and three for “handmaid”; cf. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 74n. For relations of the sexes during Old Kingdom, Breasted, *History*, 86; Petrie, *History*, vol. 1, 31; Budge, *History*, vol. 2, 20; in New Empire, Petrie, vol. 2, 146, 181; Budge, vol. 4, 95; etc.

they were subjected, and clandestine love affairs were common amongst them, as was drunkenness. In spite of a movement for their emancipation, their economic status was not much improved. Professor Westermarck thus sums it up:

Among the Greeks of early days marriage was a union of great stability, although in later times it became extremely easy and frequent.<sup>18</sup>

In Dorian Sparta there was no such thing as a virtue of lifelong faithfulness. It was the object of the law to organize society in such a way that the finest women were mated with the finest men. This desirable end was not to be interfered with by any ideas of fidelity or monandry. But Sparta does not enter into the history of culture; she bred no historian to write her history, nor did she make the slightest contribution to the knowledge or achievement of the human race.

The patricians were the original *populus Romanus*. They were married by *confarreatio*, while the unions of the *plebs*, admitted to citizenship under the Tullian constitution, were *coemptio* and *usus*. These unions, not being in accordance with the old Sabine religion of Numa, were regarded by the patricians as irregular. After a long struggle marriage between the orders was legalized in 445 BC. And in the meantime and immediately after, the patricians began to depart from their indissoluble institution; the tendency is seen in the story of Claudius and Verginia, and Antonius was excluded from the Senate for putting away his wife without consultation with the family. The *plebs*, married by *coemptio* (for *usus* is rare), are rising; the patricians are losing their domination. A little later there is the poisoning episode of the Matrons; the Licinian law passes, and all the offices of state are in turn opened to the *plebs*. (The Ogulnian law throwing open the office of *pontifex maximus* shows that they have adopted *confarreatio*.<sup>19</sup>) During the Third Samnite War the wife of Volumnius sets up in her house the worship of Plebeian Pudicitia, "to be honoured with a holier observance and by

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18. *History of Human Marriage*, vol. 3, 318. The law of inheritance, by which the "epicleros" was a mere appendage of the estate, and inseparable from it, undoubtedly caused many divorces.

19. This is also clear from Tacitus, *Annals*, bk. 4, sec. 16.

purser worshippers than that of the patricians.”<sup>20</sup> Matrons are put on public trial for adultery.

Two centuries after the expulsion of the kings, therefore, the patricians are giving up their old rigorous customs, and are falling in influence and power. The plebeians are adopting them, and they attain the power. Rome still expands. And her population becomes homogeneous. {30}

By the middle of the third century Rome is mistress of Italy. The Punic Wars put the Mediterranean under her rule. But this century also sees the changes in customs. Marriage *sine in manum conventione* came in with the *ius gentium*. These were not *iustae nuptiae*, nor did they involve *potestas*. Marriages of this kind became frequent. Women acquired economic independence. The Maenian Law transferred the judgment of divorce from the family council to a *iudicium de moribus*. The procedure for dissolution of marriage was thus facilitated. At the beginning of the third century Pyrrhus received a glowing account of the dignity of the Roman Senate. The power and influence of Rome were paramount. After the Punic Wars divorces increased, marriage became an affair of temporary attachment, and the upper classes declined to an alarming extent. *Confarreatio* disappeared and civil war arose. The plebs followed the patricians, and the modification of their monogamy followed the same line as before.

It took over thirty years to pass the Lex Julia and Papia Poppaea,<sup>21</sup> such was the opposition to the tightening of the marriage tie. The later operation of the law was assisted by the introduction of Christian marriage amongst the proletariat. There followed two centuries of peace such as have seldom been enjoyed in history. But what effect there was could not be permanent, and in the time of Diocletian marriage was a very loose union indeed. Husband and wife had separate estates, the lady kept her own name, and the bond between them could be easily dissolved, no reason being assignable. In the next century the Germans came down.

Tacitus describes their marriage customs:

20. Livy, bk. 10, 23. Trans. Everyman Library.

21. For the effect of this law, see Muirhead, *Roman Law*, 275.

Their marriage code is strict. They are content with one wife, except a very few of them, and these not from sensuality but because their noble birth procures for them many offers of alliance.<sup>22</sup> The wife does not bring a dowry to the husband but the husband to the wife.... They live uncorrupted. Clandestine correspondence is equally unknown to men and women. Very rare is adultery, the punishment for which is prompt, and in the husband's power. The loss of chastity meets with no indulgence; neither beauty, youth, nor wealth will procure for the culprit a husband. No one in Germany laughs at vice, nor do they call it the fashion to corrupt and to be corrupted. Only maidens are given in marriage; they receive one husband, as having one body and one life, that they may have no thoughts beyond, no further reaching desires, that they love not so much the husband as the married state.<sup>23</sup>

These absolutely monogamous Germans swept over the Western Empire, and upon them the white civilization was founded. It is only possible here to follow the course of history in its hitherto leading nation, the English. {31}

Various conquests had mixed the races resident in England. Marriage was a

private transaction taking the form of a sale of the bride by the father or guardian.... Later on the consent of the bride seems to have been needed, and Canute made some advances in this direction.... Still later the bride gained the right of self-betrothal and the parties could conduct their own ceremony.<sup>24</sup>

Customs thus started to move in the same direction as in other societies, the parental power being gradually lessened and the contracting parties obtaining the right to act on their own responsibility. It was at this stage that the Church gained control of the institution, and by the tenth century it was the custom for the newly wedded pair to attend a regular bride mass. Soon after the clergy inherited the functions of the ancient orator, and came to direct the whole celebration, the nuptial ceremony taking place at the church door, followed by mass in the church itself. The next stage was that marriage was not valid unless conducted by a priest.<sup>25</sup> And it was this control by the Church which

22. For this plurality, see later, 672.

23. Tacitus, *Germania*, vols. 18–19. Trans. Church and Brodribb.

24. Howard, *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, vol. 1, 258, 278, 281.

25. *Ibid.*, 308.

arrested temporarily the changes observed above. It preserved absolute monogamy, and put all its weight against divorce and temporary unions.

At the same time, however, it proclaimed that marriage was a remedy for fornication, that celibacy was the most desirable of virtues and that virgins peopled Heaven. (The conquering Normans took to monasticism, and they gradually lost their dominant position to the conquered, who were not allowed by them to enter the religious houses.)

The Reformers, however, did not regard marriage from the magical point of view, nor as a concession to the flesh. It was for them the most desirable state in which a man could live. The growth of their influence and power, therefore, reintroduced absolute monogamy after its practice had been much affected by organized and consistent exhortation to monasticism. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the complete adoption of their attitude, and England rose to her heights.

Marriage as a lifelong association continued until the nineteenth century, when the first modifications were introduced. Further changes were made in the twentieth century, the two sexes being placed upon almost equal terms. Meanwhile the usual and inevitable female emancipation had taken place, and women became economically independent.

Time produces, therefore, the same changes in English marriage customs which have been observed elsewhere, changes which the impositions of external authority are powerless to affect. (The course of the changes in the customs of other sections of the white civilization differs only in time; {32} those nations in the twentieth century who have not yet modified their monogamy succeed to more and more influence.) And the rise and expansion of England's power and influence is contemporaneous with the preservation of marriage as a lifelong institution. As her decline is not yet an historical fact, the evidence stops there; but it is interesting to observe that, as her methods of legal administration demanded on the part of the plaintiff possession of some wealth, and therefore those with wealth were the first to be able to take advantage of the changes in the law, the result was that her old landed aristocracy were the first to practice a modified monogamy, and they soon lost that superior position in the State which had been theirs.

Such are the parallel events in the history of those civilized societies which have modified their absolute monogamy. Before considering those groups which have discarded monogamy for polygamy, it is convenient first to notice the path by which a state of absolute monogamy is arrived at.

There are in history many survivals (such as the avunculate, female eponyms, the permission of marriage between brother and sister german, but not uterine, etymological and philological phenomena, etc.) which can only be satisfactorily explained by concluding that at a time in the remote past, in the society amongst whom the survivals are found, mother-right prevailed; that is, when descent, kinship, etc., was reckoned solely through the mother. The evidence is supplemented by the quaint custom of the *couvade* which is found all over the world today.

Traces of matrilineal kinship and/or other customs pointing to mother-right are found among the Teutons, Greeks, Latins, Etruscans, Picts, Celts, Semites, Sumerians, and Aztecs; that is, among all the great civilized families of which we have continuous record.

Mother-right grew up as the result of the recognition of kinship. As McLennan was the first to point out, ideas of kinship, like many other things cognizable to the senses, grew, and there was a time when there was no recognition of it. And when kinship began to be appreciated it was uterine filiation which was first noted. Ideas of kinship through males came later. The priority of the recognition of kinship through females is accepted by all students as the more archaic.<sup>26</sup>

When matrilineal kinship is the rule, the social unit is at first the clan; marriage is matrilocal; and children belong to the kin of the mother. Marriage is a temporary arrangement based on mutual consent; the woman remains with her own people and receives only occasional visits from her {33} husband (or husbands). Mother-right in its

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26. Rivers, "Mother-right," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*; Lang, *Social Origins*, 21; Crawley, *Mystic Rose*, 460; Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, i, 256; Hartland, *Mem. American Anthropological Association*, iv; Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, 69, 159; Letourneau, *Evolution of Marriage*, 302; Spencer, *Sociology*, vol. 1, 754; Giddings, *Principles of Sociology*, 158; Howard, *ibid.*, vol. 1, 222; etc. For people amongst whom the change is now taking place, Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, vol. 1, 71; vol. 2, 196, 325, 589; vol. 4, 131, 240.

purest and first phases, then, may mean polyandry, or a mixture between polyandry and polygamy, or a very loose monandry. The growth of knowledge of kinship through males would cause alteration of these customs. Possession of the offspring being of advantage to the clan, that of the husband would demand that their claim be considered. The methods adopted to secure the children would naturally vary with the conditions obtaining in the locality. If there were a state of peace, through an intermediate step by which a husband had left his kin and taken up residence with the wife's people whose sole mate he was, purchase would be the method to which they would have to resort. For the producer of valuable children would herself be of great value. Whether such purchased women were monandric or no would depend, perhaps, on the numerical proportion of the sexes, or on the customs which had preceded the change of residence on the part of the woman. Or it might be that there was a continual state of war between localities, and the women would become the prizes of the conquerors. It may be that in so far as it is probable that in his most savage state man was always in a state of enmity with his neighbors, the recognition of kinship through males came as the result of a man having possession of a captive woman. Or, again, it may have been that purchase succeeded capture as the accepted means of securing a wife. At any rate, in all cases a woman would become a piece of property, bought and secured for the purpose of providing descendants of the blood of the male.

From the stage when a woman received her husband (or husbands) as an occasional visitor to the time when she was the prize of one man who possessed her amongst his own people is a long step; and accompanying these changes there is to be observed a growth in the unit of social organization from the clan to the tribe, substitution of religion for magic, and an increase of knowledge of the physical universe. And whether or no the group ever practiced polyandry preliminary to monandry, and with or without the intermediate step of capture as the usual method of obtaining a wife, marriage, from a loose union subject only to mutual consent, becomes an association of a lifetime.

It is just after this stage has been reached that societies enter history. The customs which we saw in operation at the beginning of each group's historical career are now easily understood, as is the way in which polygamy came to be practiced. In a state of war the prizes go to



the chief first, and woman is man's most valuable possession. In a state of peace the chief has the wealth to purchase more women—these to ensure heirs of his blood. Further, intermarriage cements an alliance. In all societies of which we have continuous record, it is the chief who is the first to have more than one wife.<sup>27</sup> His senior men naturally follow him, and {34} more than one wife becomes the custom of all who can afford the larger household.

Before the fall of the Assyrian Empire the Iranians were absolutely monogamous. How they came to be so we do not know: whether or no we are justified in ascribing to them the institution of the maternal clan on the ground that all those Aryan societies of which we have continuous knowledge undoubtedly show traces of mother-right, this is no occasion to inquire. Anyway, marriage in the Avesta shows a monogamous condition combined with a high position for women. The Pishadian period was a time when “men hunted and tilled, women minded the house, and children were enjoined to be reverent to elders, dutiful to parents, and diligent workers for the household.” “Sexual infidelity was a grave moral offence, and violation of the sanctity of marriage grieves Astrivanghuhi”<sup>28</sup> (female genius of chastity).

But just before Zoroaster polygamy was starting to occur amongst the higher classes. To be childless was the greatest possible calamity which could befall a household. It was doubtless this childlessness, or the fear of it, which was the cause of the change.<sup>29</sup>

The virile Medes, after living a frugal life in the mountains, fell down upon Assyria. Indulgence sapped their energy, and in four or five generations they gave way to the Persians, who conquered all the peoples which had been subject to the Assyrians, and founded their great empire. But they had no culture of their own; by the time they enter history they are polygamous; and they were defeated as soon as they came up against an absolutely monogamous people. Alexander had not to fight very much to gain possession of all their country.

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27. Compare German customs quoted above.

28. Manickji Nussuvangi Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilisation*, 69–70, 111.

29. Cf. de Harlez, quoted in Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, vol. 3, 44; vol. 25, no. 4.

After 500 years of stagnation and suffering of alien rule, a fresh group arose, the Sassanids, and again the rise is attended by absolute monogamy. They arose just as Rome was starting to weaken, had five different modes of marriage, all monogamous, and retained their power until the Arabs burst over the land. Meantime they conquered Egypt from Rome. But their kings went the same way as before, maintained vast seraglios, and as soon as a people sufficiently virile arose they disappeared.

The demonstration of the steps by which the Arabs went through the stage of absolute monogamy and then quickly adopted polygamy is made easy if we may follow Robertson Smith. He traces the path from the time when marriage was matrilineal, and the woman received periodical visits from her husband (or husbands), to a state when a number of men secured a wife for themselves. Then, as private rights came to be recognized in place of stock rights, and the idea of the family grew up in place of the {35} idea of the clan, one man became “ba’al” of one woman. And this last condition of things was the state just before the time of Mohammed.

Mohammed was born to a society in which “ba’al” marriage was the rule; the woman was under dominion of the husband, who was her lord and master. The temporary arrangements based on mutual consent were still the practice in some cases, but such loose unions were no longer looked upon as respectable. “Ba’al” marriages were constituted both by capture and contract, the subjection of the wife being complete in each case. Mohammed went out of his way to condemn the looser unions as “sisters of harlotry,” and laid great stress on conjugal fidelity. But polygamy was fast coming in.

It was Arabs with such customs, but with no monogamic obligations, who burst over Egypt. But their conquering career was held up for three generations by the monogamous Berbers, whom no one had subjugated since the attempt of Rome. The Berbers were at length persuaded to accept the new religion, and then the Arab advance continued. It was these converted Berbers who conquered Spain (under Berber leaders), and who were the mainstay of the Moorish power in the country. It was men born of Berber, Jewish and Gothic women who founded the great civilization which arose in Spain. The Arab masters were soon enervated by their polygamous habits, twice

more during their rule was the country swept by the monogamous Berbers from Africa, and finally, in the end of the tenth century, the whole country was a mass of anarchy and ruin. The Arab civilization in the east did not last so long as that of the west, and nowhere reached the height attained by the latter. It was soon reduced to lethargy.

The reintroduction of monogamy amongst the people who had been born to polygamy was accompanied by the rise of Spain, her succession to great power and influence, her occupation of overseas lands. Then monasticism was introduced. Soon after, Spain received final defeat at the hands of England, who had just cast off monasticism and returned to absolute monogamy.

Such, in outline, are the salient facts concerning the changes in marriage customs adopted by each society, and the dates of those changes. In every case, where we have a continuous record, the curve of development (savagery—civilization—decrepitude) has followed parallel to the curve of marriage changes (loose unions—absolute monogamy—modified monogamy, or polygamy).<sup>30</sup> The question which arises is whether the parallel facts have any relation to one another and affect one another.

There is a simple truth in life which reveals the answer to this question. {36} It is this—that all human achievement is the result of the sublimation of the force of life; that is, it is the product of the diversion of innate power into other forms of expression. For this to be granted it does not matter whether a man subscribes to an analytical, synthetical or academical form of psychology, or whether he heeds psychological speculation at all. It does not matter whether he is a mechanical determinist or a creative indeterminist. The one great argument in favor of “sublimation” is the personal experience of the individual.

Life is a very mysterious force, and that which is within a man cannot, perhaps, be described as merely sexual without extending the term beyond the limit of its sense. But in its lowest forms the manifestation of the force of life is admittedly mainly sexual. My submission is that

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30. In the exposition of adopted customs I have not seen fit to pay attention to the question whether the changes were due to a natural evolution or to a possible blending of cultures resulting from an admixture of peoples. I have been concerned only with the facts of the changes, not with the reasons for their occurrence.

man, developing from *homo sapiens*, comes to regulate the relations between the sexes in such a way as to place limitations upon the expenditure of the force of life in a purely animal and sexual way, and these limitations compel him to expend it in different ways and put it into other channels. Once he has gained such power over his natural surroundings and over animals as to be able to have leisure from the incessant hunt for food and the common needs of life, if the customs which he has adopted prevent him from indulging his sexual appetite as and when he is so moved, he is compelled to turn elsewhere for an outlet for his energy. If there is no one at hand to fight (and fighting is the humblest form of sublimated activity), the enforced control of his energy drives him to reflection and contemplation. His attention is diverted to attempting things, investigating things, perhaps even to making things which previous observation has revealed as advantageous. Sticks and stones, mysterious in the stage of fetishism, are found to be under his control and become his instruments; contemplation and inquiry lead to a reformed vision of the universe; speculation concerning his relation to his fellows brings a new social outlook, a changed attitude to the generations in his clan; and so the process goes on. The tighter grow his marriage customs, the stronger the discipline he has to exercise upon himself, the less can the natural powers be indulged in satisfaction of animal appetite, and the more is he compelled to reflect upon himself, his fellows and his environment. Magic is left behind; for the mind growing, under compulsory continence, more and more acute, it becomes apparent that he can in no way directly control the processes of Nature, which are then conceived as powers in themselves, personal beings, whose goodwill he seeks. The flowing of a stream, like the storm and the wind, comes to be regarded as a divine power. And as there is born the religious outlook, so also does the social vision broaden; clan becomes tribe, the bond of blood is supplemented by the bond of proximity of residence. (The extension of the social unit is essentially an intellectual process.) And the longer time goes on, less and less can man live as an animal; and while his marriage {37} law retains its rigor the higher does he advance in his culture.

Thus it is not long before observation and experiment shows that even the divine can be controlled and the digging of a trench will turn

the flow of a stream to a part hitherto dry, with resulting fertility—a fertility which has previously been regarded as the boon of a special goddess. Such a discovery will necessitate a change in the conception of the gods, and a revolution in the economic organization of life. Time goes on, and each generation is born to a greater discipline and an increased tradition,<sup>31</sup> traveling further and further away from the animal condition of unfettered impulse, knowing nothing of that time in which the force of life was not rigidly controlled, and spending its years of impressionable childhood amongst new perceptions, extended aims, and heightened culture.

It is this control of energy, an experience unknown to any animal, which is the first stage in man's advancement from savagery, and which is the first cause of reflection and thought. It is the force of life, shut out from its primitive escape, and demanding outlet, which is the fundamental cause of the advancement and achievement of societies; and that which diverts it into fresh channels is none other than the dictate of social custom, the law which governs marriage.

As Sir James Frazer has said:

Intellectual progress, which reveals itself in the growth of art and science, cannot be dissociated from industrial and economic progress, and that in its turn receives an immense impulse from conquest and empire. It is no mere accident that the most vehement outbursts of activity of the human mind have followed close upon the heels of victory.<sup>32</sup>

All these things—conquest, empire, art, science—are diverse manifestations of the force of life, which, controlled by an inherited tradition, demands outlet from its pent-up state; and it is this control which is the cause of those overwhelming outbursts of activity"; which compels the Arab to burst over Egypt; causes the Amorites to found their tremendous commerce and raise Babylon from an insignificant city to the capital of a large empire; urges forward the Persians, and drives the Teutons over the Roman Empire; makes the Spaniard sail the seas, the Athenian philosophize, the English colonize. It is this control which gave Rome her *gravitas*, which made the eighteenth century the heyday

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31. In this connection compare Fr. Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, 202–3.

32. *Early Kingship*, 86.

of modern Europe, and which causes the scientist to drag the secrets from the universe. And as long as the force of life is driven into seeking sublimated forms of manifestation, so long does achievement continue.

But it seems to tend to flow back to its original source. Unless rigidly compelled to turn into other channels, it inclines to the more facile paths of {38} expression. The loosening of the marriage bond—that is, the gradual return to a temporary union made and broken by consent—releases the compulsion. The outlook reverts to what it was at first. The social vision, imposed upon society by the rigor of its own customs, returns to regard for the present only. Pride in the past, responsibility for the future, both disappear. And when a generation arrives which has known no sterner discipline, but which spends its early years in an atmosphere of submission to impulse, it does not add one whit to what has gone before, but, sinking into unrelieved lethargy, ekes out its meager existence in the grip of forces which it is no longer able to control. Its energy sapped by its own indulgence, its vision reduced to a single dimension, it finds that it can no longer cope with the ultimate causes of things, and there comes a loss of affirmation, a failure of nerve, a denial of the gods, and a despondent fear of the future.

Civilization is but a period of compulsory sublimation during which the society expands in all its intricate activities, increasing its knowledge of the physical universe, exalting its ideas of the gods, enlarging its social outlook, and manifesting itself in art and culture. Such compulsion is a law of social development, and just as I must pay the penalty should I at any time by falling from the roof transgress the law of gravitation, so must any transgression of this law (that is, any modification of indissoluble monogamy) result in certain decline.

# THE DISTURBING CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN FAMILY

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*Urie Bronfenbrenner*

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Americans like to talk a lot about “progress,” “improving the quality of life,” and “meeting the challenges of tomorrow.” All these depend on our ability to raise today’s children well. The future belongs to those countries that make their primary commitment to the cultivation of the minds, character, and creative vigor of the young. Therefore, the United States should take the upbringing of its children at least as seriously as it does landing on the moon or Mars.

In the upbringing of today’s children numerous factors play a role: their neighborhood or town, schools, friends, religious institutions, games, work, the television and films they watch, the papers, advertising, magazines, and books they read, role models, and their family. But in the recent years nearly every line of social and psychological research points to the family as the foremost influence in what the Germans call *Erziehung*, the Russians *vospitanie*, the French *elevation*, the Greeks *paideia*, and we might call “character formation,” “cultural education,” or “upbringing.”

That the family is the central institution comes as no surprise to most anthropologists, ethnic patriachs, or social historians because the family is the only social institution that is present in every single village, tribe, people, or nation-state we know throughout history. But that the family is the core institution in every society may startle and annoy many contemporary Americans. For most of us it is *the individual* that is the chief social unit. We speak of the individual vs. the state, individual achievement, support for disadvantaged individuals, the rights of individuals, finding ourselves as individuals. It’s always the individual, with “the government” a weak second. The family is not currently a social unit we value or support.

This fact is reflected in the scholarly research of the United States. Until recently there has been only sporadic research on the history, significance, or changes in the family. And it is reflected in our national, local, and business policies, where a father, mother, son, and daughter are usually treated as four individuals rather than as a family.

Thus, we have the following situation. At a time when our nation more than ever needs a public-spirited and enlightened young, and when the best new research is pointing to the critical role of the family, our nation {40} pays little attention to the family as a key social unit, and there are mounting indications that the American family as we know it is falling apart.

I realize that at several times in the past century observers have wailed about the decline of the family. Historian Charles Thwing, for example, wrote in his 1913 book on the family: "The individual has come to be regarded as the crown and centre of social and legal order. The family, as an institution of prime importance, has passed away." But what has happened in the United States since the 1950s really adds up to a rapid and radical change in American family life. And the consequences for the young, and for society as a whole, are approaching the calamitous. Let me explain what I mean.

There was a kind of family stability in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The extended family still existed in places; one out of 10 families had another adult relative living under its roof. After the shakeout year of 1946, the divorce rate was quite low, especially among families with young children. Only one mother in four was working outside the home. And fewer than four percent of all children born were illegitimate. Parents fought for a better education for their children, kicking off a school and college-building boom. Television, which became commercially available to households in 1948, was almost unknown. Mass magazines wrote of "togetherness" and radio soap operas featured families.

In the past 25 years, however, the change has been dramatic. The dimensions of this change can be illustrated by some data that I and others have gathered about two categories: the number of parents and other adult relatives in the home, and the amount of attention that parents devote to genuine relationships with their children.



As for adults in the home, there has been a further decline in the number of grandmothers, uncles, or unmarried sisters in the home. From roughly 10 percent of all homes having a third or fourth adult in 1950, the percentage has dropped to half that. Compared to fifty years ago, the change is even more considerable. For example, in the 1920s half the households in Massachusetts included at least one adult besides the parents; today the figure is four percent.

That leaves Mom and Dad. But Mom is increasingly not found at home either because she's out working, as well as attending meetings or shopping several nights a week. In 1975 for the first time in American history a majority of the nation's mothers with school-age children—ages 6 to 17—held jobs outside the home. In fact, women with school-age children show the highest labor force participation rate, 54 percent, compared with 28 percent in 1950.

For preschool children the change is more startling. In 1975, 39 percent of mothers of children under six were working, more than three times {41} as many as in 1948. As for mothers with tiny infants, children under three, nearly one in three is working—an amazing jump from 1950.

Of course, the increase of women in the work force is one of the most significant social and economic facts of our time. While the number of working husbands has risen from 29.8 million to 37.8 million between 1947 and 1975, or 27 percent, the number of working wives has shot from 6.5 million to 19.8 million, or 205 percent—nearly 10 times as much. It began before the so-called women's liberation movement, and has unquestionably brought many new opportunities and greater satisfaction to numerous wives and mothers. But it has also had a major impact on American child-rearing.

The parents have not only been leaving the home to work; they have increasingly been disappearing. The number of children under 18 living with only one of their parents—*now one out of six*—has almost doubled in the past 25 years. And the change has been most rapid for children under six years old. In 1974, 13 percent of all infants under three—nearly one million babies—lived with only one parent.

Three of the main contributors to the rise of one-parent homes have been divorces, illegitimate births, and desertions.

The divorce rate has risen appreciably in the past 25 years, but especially since the early 1960s. Last year for the first time in U.S. history the number of divorces exceeded one million—twice the number of a decade earlier, and almost three times that of 1950. Nearly 40 percent of all marriages now end in divorce; three out of ten women separate from their husbands before the age of 30. The number of children from divorced families is twice that of a decade ago.

True, the remarriage rate has been going up too, but it lags far behind the divorce rate. Also, more divorces can mean that there is more affection between married couples now than in 1950, when unhappy couples tended to stay together regardless. But a growing number of divorces are now accompanied by a new phenomenon: the unwillingness of *either* parent to take custody of the children.

Next to divorce, illegitimate births are the fastest growing contributor to one-parent homes. In the past 25 years the rate of illegitimacy has more than doubled, from 4 per 100 live births to 10 per 100 live births. And in addition to the more than 350,000 babies born out of wedlock last year, another 65,000 pregnancies were halted by abortions to teenagers alone. Thus, a growing number of children are being born to unmarried women, 80 percent of them under 25 years old.

As for desertions, the male has long been a frequent deserter of his wife and children—male desertion accounted for 49 percent of divorces in the USA in 1900—and males continue to flee. But wives have begun deserting in far greater numbers too. Police department reports are suddenly full {42} of notices of missing mothers, and detective bureaus indicate a quantum leap in the number of runaway wives.

Single-parenthood is especially common among the poor, although it's becoming more frequent among the lower and upper middle classes. And it is particularly prevalent among black Americans, many of whom are poor. In 1974 only 56 percent of all black children under 18 lived with both parents, down from 71 percent in 1965. (Recent research by Herbert Gutmann and others has found that black families have been more stable until recently than many believed.) Specifically, between 1960 and 1970 the percentage of single-parent families among blacks increased at a rate five times that for whites—a baffling fact since it was a period of considerable economic and education gains for

blacks. Today, the proportion of single-parent families among blacks is three times that of whites.

Two things are noteworthy, however. White families are being fragmented progressively as well as black families. And middle-class families are now approaching the social disintegration of lower-class families a decade ago.

The other broad category of change is the amount of attention that one or both parents give to affectionate child-raising when the children and adults are not separated by school or work. Here too there has been a sharp decline.

With demands of a job that sometimes claim the evening hours and weekends, with increasing time spent commuting and caring for automobiles, with entertaining and social visits as well as meetings and community obligations, parents spend less and less time working, playing, reading, and talking with their children. More and more children come home to an empty house or apartment.

In some homes a child spends more evenings with a passive, uninterested babysitter than a participating parent. Our study of middle-class fathers of one-year-old infants found that they spent an average of only 20 minutes a day with their babies. When a recording microphone was attached to each infant's shirt, the data indicated that in terms of true, intimate interaction between father and child the average daily time together was 38 *seconds*. One survey I did of child rearing practices in the United States over the past 25 years reveals a decrease in all spheres of interaction between parents and their children. (The same trend is appearing in Europe, according to cross-cultural studies.)

An increasing number of parents enroll their children in day-care centers—enrollment doubled between 1965 and 1975 alone—and then preschools. And they sit them in front of television. It is estimated by experts that preschool children—under six—spend an average of 50 hours a week watching TV. By the time the average American youngster graduates from high school he has spent more hours watching the television {43} screen than he has spent in school, or in any other activity except sleeping. Gone increasingly are family picnics, long Sunday dinners, children and parents working together fixing the house, preparing meals, hiking in the woods, singing and dancing with other families or friends. And we are paying a price for this growing inatten-

tion, even hostility, to our children. It is not only the parents of children who are neglecting them. Society does so too. As the 1970 White House Conference on Children reported:

A host of factors conspire to isolate children from the rest of society. The fragmentation of the extended family, the separation of residential and business areas, the disappearance of neighborhoods, zoning ordinances, occupational mobility, child labor laws, the abolishment of the apprentice system, consolidated schools, television, separate patterns of social life for different age groups, the working mother, the delegation of child care to specialists—all these manifestations of progress operate to decrease opportunity and incentive for meaningful contact between children and persons older or younger than themselves.

James Coleman's fine 1974 study, *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, documented the same new conditions.

Nor should all the blame fall on the heads of the parents themselves. In many ways, the crux of the problem is not the battered child but the battered parent. To quote from the same 1970 Report to the President:

In today's world parents find themselves at the mercy of a society which imposes pressures and priorities that allow neither time nor place for meaningful activities and relations between children and adults, which downgrade the role of parents and the functions of parenthood, and which prevent the parent from doing things he wants to do as a guide, friend, and companion to his children.... The frustrations are greatest for the family of poverty where the capacity for human response is crippled by hunger, cold, filth, sickness, and despair.

What has replaced the parents, relatives, neighbors, and other caring adults? Three things primarily: television, peer groups (same-age cliques or gangs), and loneliness. A recent study found that at every age level, children today show a greater dependency on their age-mates than they did ten years ago. And, increasing numbers of lonely "latch-key children" are growing up with almost no care at all, often running away—at the rate of more than one million a year now—to join colonies of other solitary juveniles to experiment with drugs, crime, sex, religious cults, and the sheer restless busyness of Kerouac-like movement over the American landscape. These so-called "latch-key children" contribute far out of proportion to the ranks of young persons

who have reading problems, who are dropouts, drug users, and juvenile delinquents.

What is not often recognized is that the social fabric which so many feel is tearing around them is to a large extent a result of the deteriorating family life and the conditions that undermine declining care for our children. {44} Look at what has been happening to America's youth.

Crime in America is increasingly a youth problem. Crimes by children—those under 18—have been growing at a higher rate than the juvenile population. According to FBI data, arrests of children for serious crimes—murder, assault, robbery, and rape—have jumped about 200 percent in the past 15 years, and arrests for lesser crimes—larceny, burglary, auto theft, forgery—have doubled. Arrests for juvenile prostitution have increased 286 percent, those for trafficking and use of drugs 4600 percent.

This increase of crime by children is three times that of adults over the same period. In 1973 1.7 million children were arrested for criminal actions—one fourth of the total arrests in that year. At the present rate, one out of every nine teenagers can be expected to appear in court before the age of 18. And since many criminal offenders tend to be repeaters, the depressing prospect is for an expanded adult criminal population in the years ahead. And crime is already costing Americans an estimated \$80 billion a year.

School vandalism has become in some areas as American as apple pie, soft drinks, and aspirin. A good deal of the blame put on teachers for failing to instruct our youth adequately belongs with parents and their increasingly resentful and violent children, and on the rest of us for failing to give both our teachers and our families adequate support, especially of the nonmonetary kind.

The suicide rate for young people aged 15 to 19 has more than tripled in less than 20 years, leaping from 2.3 per 100,000 in 1956 to 7.1 in 1974; and in recent years there has been an increase in suicides among younger children, some as young as 10. Suicide is now the third leading cause of death among young American whites; the rate for young blacks is lower but increasing faster. For young American black males, homicide is now the leading cause of death. Death from violence in some form—suicide, homicide, auto and other accidents—now

accounts for two out of three deaths of those between 5 and 18. The self-destructiveness of our children has become a truly serious problem.

Well-known by now is the decline in academic capability among the nation's young during the past 15 years or so. According to the College Entrance Examination Board, average scores on the scholastic aptitude tests have dropped in the past 12 years 44 points (from 478 to 434) in the verbal skills and 30 points (from 502 to 472) in math, on a scale of 200 to 800. Teachers and professors have in recent years become alarmed at what they experience as their students' growing inability to write decently, refusal to be rigorous in their work, and inability to use common sense reasoning about everyday adult affairs of life.

In a 1976 Gallup Poll conducted for the *Phi Delta Kappan*, a professional education journal, two-thirds of the Americans sampled blamed {45} parents for these test score declines because they did not provide enough attention, help, and supervision for their children. And an impressive series of investigations, most notably by James Coleman and Christopher Jencks, have demonstrated that it is not so much the schools that determine academic achievement or character as a student's family life and the conditions undergirding a strong life within the family: employment, health services, work schedules, child care, neighbors who care, and the like.

In addition, the alienation, anti-social behavior, and disorientation of the young have made an ever larger minority of them unemployable without training or self-discipline. Half the unemployment in our country today is among young persons under 25 years old.

What are we as a nation to do?

I conducted a study recently for the National Academy of Sciences that tried to determine how successful all of America's early intervention programs such as Head Start really were. The results, sad to admit, were disappointing—except in places that involved the *parents* in the effort.

It's transparent now that the family is a critically important institution in shaping our children's minds, values, and behavior. But it's equally clear that the American family is disintegrating. That's what I'd call a collision course for our society. It must be reversed. But how?

There's no space here for concrete suggestions, but I would like to offer a few thoughts. I think the main causes of the change in family life are three in number. So perhaps our remedies need to take three paths.

*One cause is our attitudes.* America has temporarily lost its balance. Today what matters most for many people is their own growth and happiness, their own self-fulfillment, doing their own thing, finding ourselves. We seem to be sunk in individualism. We so much want to "make it" for ourselves that we have almost stopped being a caring society that cares for others. We seem to be hesitant about making a commitment to anyone or anything, including our own flesh and blood.

To be sure, individualism has helped bring about extraordinary solo efforts by many Americans—in art, science, business, and other areas. But we have entered a period of history when we need to put other, neglected values on the scale too. We have many other traditions in the American past: our social welfare schemes, our great public education system, our way of helping our neighbors—or foreign peoples—in times of catastrophe, our volunteer organizations that Tocqueville found so outstanding, our scholarships and other help for the poor but able, our quickness in extending friendship and care to strangers. Like individualism, they too are American traits; and we should draw upon them also. It's a matter of more balanced attitudes.

The healthy growth of each child requires a commitment of love, care, and attention from someone. Neighbors, day care leaders, and school {46} teachers can help, but most of the enduring irrational involvement and intimate activities must come from parents. No one else can ever care so much or so continually. We need to get out of ourselves and into the lives of our children more than we do.

*A second cause is our socio-technical structure*—the network of work schemes, social dances, travel patterns, telephones, and other social patterns and apparatus that conduce us to separate and fragment rather than come together. We need to reshape parts of this socio-technical structure to meet the new needs of today's parents and children.

As a nation we are superb at scientific technology. In this area we are pragmatic. We try new things to see if they work. But when it comes to social technology, we are stuffy, rigid, pessimistic. We often refuse to try little experiments in human affairs to see if our society can be more

harmonious, and our children happier. Little things, like more part-time work schemes to allow mothers, students, and fathers to have more flexible schedules for greater human contact, seem so difficult.

Our welfare system is a disaster, actively abetting the dissolution of our families. It's chaotic and was designed by no one. Do we redesign it? No, we prefer to continue to muddle through, even though the cost in human lives is staggering.

I would suggest that the United States can no longer afford to be so methodical, precise, pragmatic, and research-oriented solely in its technological advances, and continue to be so sloppy, neglectful, cautious, and fatalistic in its social programs.

*Last, our national rules and policy* are a cause of family trouble. The United States is now the only industrialized nation that does not insure health care or a minimum income for every family with young children, and the only one that has not yet established a program of child care services for working mothers. In the controversial gun control legislation we support the rights of each individual to bear arms but not the rights of our people—or our police—against being shot to death more easily each year. We care more fervently about keeping our wilderness wild, our favorite fishing holes intact, and football than we do about the condition of our families or the gradually spreading cancer among our children.

In our taxes, our plane fares, or our government welfare policies we pay close attention to each individual's privileges and pay little attention to family rates or policies that would help build more cohesive families. We are not only "far out" in some of our individual behavior; among the advanced nations of the world the United States is "far out" in its national permissiveness toward individuals and its national neglect of the upbringing of its children.

Obviously, we cannot go back to the family life of an earlier age—nor should we wish to do so, given some of the old-time family's inequalities {47} and authoritarian practices. But we can design and put into practice new attitudes and structures appropriate for our time. Among all the talk about returning to decency and fundamental values after Vietnam and Watergate, none ought to be more dear than that of a renewed concentration on the proper care, instruction, guidance, and



values of America's young people and the families in which they are raised.

The bodies, minds, and emotional health of our children demand it. And the ability of our country to cope with its awesome future demands it.

# THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION IN THE USSR

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*Christopher S. Wren*

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MOSCOW, Sept. 24—The leading Soviet literary weekly suggested last spring that an increase in the number of children born out of wedlock not only might improve the country's sagging birthrate but also might allow women who do not marry to have families.

"Morality should not stand in the way of human happiness," wrote Leonid Zhukhovitsky in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. "After all, its inherent obligation is to protect the human being and not itself."

Such frankness in the pages of the publication of the Writers Union can be attributed in part to the Kremlin's concern over a birthrate that has hovered near 18 per 1,000 of population for a decade. It also highlights changing attitudes toward the long-taboo subject of sex.

## *A Puritanical Facade Maintained*

Since the Bolshevik Revolution, which was followed by a hedonistic period until Lenin attempted to squelch it, the Soviet Union has maintained a puritanical facade. Its citizens have been insulated from the pornography that assaults the West, and Soviet films and magazines are generally demure.

That facade does not reflect the realities in a country where one new mother in ten is unmarried, where almost a third of marriages break up and where sexual encounters have become commonplace. The leadership has seemed ambivalent about how to respond.

The shift in moral values evokes the sexual revolution that hit the West some years ago, but a Russian contends that it results from a dissipation of faith. "We don't have anything to believe in," he said. "Either you believe in God or in the man who is leading you. Without either, it is hard to have morality."

A tolerance for sexual relations outside marriage has become most noticeable in the major cities. Viktor I. Perevedentsev, a leading social demographer, reported two years ago that nearly half of a sample of happily married women in Leningrad believed that they were entitled to extramarital affairs. Another researcher in Moscow privately recounted details of an unpublished survey of young unmarried women in which {49} two-thirds condoned premarital sex and the rest were mostly indifferent.

A study of Leningrad students several years ago disclosed that 85 percent of the men and 64 percent of the women had had sexual relations before they were 21 years old. A few confessions have even emerged in the controlled press. "For goodness sake, don't think that some immoral woman is writing you," a 34-year-old Kiev housewife recently told the weekly supplement *Nedelya* in revealing details of an affair she had carried on for five years.

According to published statistics, over 400,000 babies a year are born out of wedlock despite the availability of birth-control devices and a national network of abortion clinics that charge less than \$7 for a visit. A Leningrad study disclosed that one of fourteen young brides questioned cited pregnancy as the motive for getting married.

The premarital pregnancy rate seems to be due not only to nonchalance among young men but also to sporadic shortages of the birth-control devices. Speaking of condoms, a young father said, "You don't always find them available." While Soviet brands sell in packets of five for 35 cents, foreign-made ones bring a ruble apiece, or \$1.40, on the black market.

### *Pills, Loops, Vasectomies*

The birth-control pill is less popular than in the United States or Europe because of side effects like weight gain. Soviet-made diaphragms are considered unreliable, with loops or cervical caps more widely preferred. A Moscow physician said that vasectomies had caught on only among Government or party officials who wanted to eliminate risk of blackmail if they engaged in extramarital affairs.

Though "gigantic shifts in society's approach to extramarital and premarital sex" were noted by Dr. Perevedentsev, the social demographer, more than two years ago, the authorities long refused to acknowl-

edge that a problem existed. A researcher told of a censor who refused to approve a study of frigidity among women until the figures were lowered; a 1974 manual announced that 100 percent of Soviet men in a study reported achieving orgasm, though articles have since hinted otherwise.

One consequence is that schools have virtually ignored sex education, except for the Baltic republic of Latvia, which allots 12 hours a year. “We had no classes in it so we learned about sex ourselves,” a Moscow member of Komsomol, the Communist youth organization, recalled. “In our school everybody slept around by the time we had finished eighth grade. By the tenth grade one girl was already pregnant. But when I look at the kids today, I think we were quite moral.”

Articles have dramatically limned the horrors of premarital sex. *Zdorovye*, a widely read health magazine, warned young men a couple of years {50} ago that intimacy before marriage “can cause fluctuations of potency that become the source of doubt, lack of confidence, and sometimes even neurotic reactions.” Young women, it said, usually encounter disillusionment and a conviction of frigidity.

### *The Advice Is Sometimes Dated*

*Zdorovye* has taken the lead in telling Russians what they want to learn about sex, including how long intercourse should last—two minutes, it advised. It sometimes sounds dated for it says, among other things, that women have less interest in sex than men. “The most common male mistake is the tendency to overestimate the sexual aspirations of women,” explained A. I. Belkin, a physician, in a 1975 article. “The coldness of a young wife becomes an unexpected and unpleasant discovery for the husband. Yet it is quite natural.”

The cautious trend toward more candor has prompted a number of readers to share their experiences. “He swooped down like a kite and afterwards he fell fast asleep,” a young bride complained, describing her wedding night. “In the morning when he woke up he was surprised to see my tear-swollen eyes.” *Zdorovye* urged more tenderness from the bridegroom because “nature isn’t on her side at this difficult moment.”

Despite widespread interest, specialists still complain about a lack of literature on sexual subjects. A book on venereal disease for adoles-

cents, *I Will Speak Frankly*, was praised by critics but printed in only 30,000 copies.

Perhaps the biggest stride has been in the creation of marriage clinics, first in Riga and then in Leningrad and Moscow. Cheslovas S. Grizitskas, a neuropathologist who runs the program in Riga, told a Soviet interviewer last year: "We simply prepare our young people very badly for marriage, and they enter adulthood considering that love is only enjoyment. But love is also responsibility."

### *Fifty Percent Divorce Rate in Moscow*

Disenchantment is reflected in the divorce statistics, which last showed 27 divorces for 100 marriages. Dr. Perevedentsev, calling this figure low because it included only officially registered divorces, estimated that up to a third of the marriages might have ended. In cities like Moscow and Kiev the divorce rate is approaching 50 percent of marriages.

A Leningrad survey of 1,000 divorced people reported that 244 cited infidelity among the reasons why their marriages broke up while 215 mentioned drunkenness; these could be symptoms rather than causes, of course. The continuing housing shortage, which forces many newlyweds to squeeze in with relatives, has also contributed to the toll; another Leningrad study found that 79 percent of divorced couples polled did not have their own accommodations when they married. {51} The lack of apartments has apparently discouraged some couples from matrimony though not from love affairs. A popular trysting place for unmarried students in Moscow has been the cramped compartments of the overnight train to Leningrad.

### *System "Encourages" Affairs*

A divorced Muscovite contended that the rising statistics did not reflect the extent of failed marriages. "If you join the Communist Party or become an official, a divorce would look bad on your record," he said. "But the higher you go, the easier it becomes to acquire a mistress. The system encourages extramarital affairs." He reported that some young women at his office got promoted by sleeping with the manager.

The most recent census has shown 1.5 million more married women than men. Sociologists attribute the discrepancy in part to unwed mothers who list themselves as married. One in Sverdlovsk who is 46 wrote *Literaturnaya Gazeta* to plead for more understanding. “I am not a single mother at all,” she said. “I don’t feel alone because I have a son.”

In the controversial article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* suggesting more children out of wedlock, Mr. Zhukhovitsky argued that an increase in extramarital affairs and illegitimate births should not be ascribed simply to promiscuity. “If many, many unmarried women did not become mothers, society today would be short many, many children. And children are the country’s future.” He concluded: “After all, what is really bitter is not life without a husband but life without love.”

## STUDY SHOWS HIGH BLACK ILLEGITIMACY

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*Los Angeles Times* (August 18, 1976).

WASHINGTON (AP)—The first official Census Bureau survey of premarital childbirth shows that more than half the first children born to black mothers in 1969 were illegitimate.

The study said that 10.1 percent of the first babies born to white mothers were born out of wedlock that year. For blacks, the figure was 52.6 percent.

Demographers, sociologists, and social psychiatrists say that differences in the economic, social, educational, and cultural background of blacks and whites explain differences in their premarital sexual activity.

One population expert said that more recent figures suggest a decline in black illegitimacy and higher white illegitimacy in the 1970s.

The report, released Tuesday, was based on statistics gathered in the 1970 census. The study was begun a year and a half ago.

Among other findings in the Census Bureau report:

—In 1970, there were 1 million mothers who had never been married, including 561,141 blacks and 414,704 whites.

—Women who bore their first child out of wedlock, regardless of race, later experienced higher divorce rates, separation and widowhood compared with women who married before their first child was born.

—Pregnant brides had marriages that were almost as successful as women who did not conceive a child before marriage. The figures showed that 81.6 percent of pregnant women married in the last half of the 1960s were still with their husbands in 1970, compared to 85.5 percent of women who were not pregnant when they married.

—Among white women who became pregnant while single and married in the last half of the 1960s, 63 percent were married before the child was born. Among blacks, 31.6 percent were married before having the baby.

—In general, unwed black mothers were more likely than white mothers to keep their illegitimate children.

The survey also showed that the percentage of illegitimate first babies had increased among blacks in recent years but remained nearly stable among whites.

It showed that 71 percent of black mothers 15 to 20 years old in 1969 bore their first child out of wedlock while 22 percent of white mothers in the same age group gave birth to illegitimate children. {53}

Of black women age 45 to 50 in 1969, nearly one in five—18.1 percent—reported having their first child out of wedlock. Of black women age 25 to 30, about 38.2 percent reported illegitimate first births, according to the report.

Among white women in the 45-to-50 age group, 5.7 percent reported having their first child while single. For white women 25 to 30 years old, the figure was 6.4 percent.

The Census Bureau findings are consistent with data published by demographers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore that showed black women age 15 to 19 were more sexually active than white women of the same age. This material showed that at age 19, about 80 percent of black women surveyed had had intercourse, compared to 40 percent of white women of the same age.

Another aspect of the Johns Hopkins report showed that 54.5 percent of the white women knew at what point in their menstrual cycle they were most likely to get pregnant, compared to 18.8 percent of the black females.

Mrs. Joyce Dryfoos at Planned Parenthood's research arm, the Alan Guttmacher Institute in New York, said that differences in black and white illegitimacy rates can be traced to educational as well as cultural differences.

"The conventional wisdom is that black culture is more accepting of illegitimacy than the white culture," she said. "I would expect a decline in black illegitimacy in the next report because our statistics show that blacks are using abortion services more than we expected."

Mrs. Dryfoos, the institute's director of planning, said more recent data compiled by her organization shows that in the mid-1970s, illegitimacy rates for blacks had gone down slightly and had increased slightly for whites. "This suggests increased sexual activity among younger white women," she said. "The social changes are reaching down into younger and younger age groups."



# THE FAMILY IN THE WRITINGS OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

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Reprinted from C. Schmidt, *The Social Results of Early Christianity*  
(London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1907), 188–208.  
Footnotes omitted.

The restoration of woman, which was taught by the apostles, was achieved by the Church. In the pagan world woman was degraded by the laws and debased by her own habits. Christianity held out to her a lifting hand. The Fathers remembered that degradation only to resist it with all their energy. It is true that instead of finding the cause of her inferiority in the State's materialistic egoism and man's pride in his strength, it was sometimes regarded as a consequence of the curse on women after the fall, as a punishment whose penalties Christ came to destroy. When Chrysostom and Augustine express this opinion, they do not explain why woman only is punished, and then placed to atone for her fault, in dependence on him who sinned as she did. This explanation satisfies neither intellect nor faith. Many of the Fathers enlarged their ideas in this respect. Ambrose said expressly that it is wrong to accuse woman alone of causing the fall. If she fell, ought not the stronger man to have been able to resist and to guard his weaker companion? The fall of man, so to speak, absolves that of woman. Also God has willed that through her salvation came into the world.

This is the necessary point of view really to raise woman from her ancient inferiority, which Chrysostom and Augustine had otherwise no intention of maintaining. Jesus Christ freed the whole of humanity; in the kingdom of God there is no chosen sex. All the Fathers are unanimous on this point. They teach the perfect equality of man and woman; that both are alike formed of dust, after the image of God; that they must cultivate the same virtues, obedience, chastity, charity; that they have the same struggles against the same temptations; that they will both rise again to appear before the tribunal of the same judge,

who will judge them without respect of persons. Their natures are therefore equally honorable. "The Saviour," says Augustine, "gives abundant proof of this in being born of a woman."

What then could be more iniquitous than the pagan laws intended to keep women in an inferior position, and depriving them of the most natural rights? Hereafter woman herself must no longer plead weakness when {55} difficult virtues are required of her! This weakness is only in her flesh; in her soul is a force as strong as that of man. If God has given her a gentleness which is impressed more easily than the manly will, He has done it the better to dispose her to compassion and sympathy. Besides, in circumstances which require courage, she often shows more than men. Gregory of Nyssa, in his beautiful picture of the virtues of a Christian woman, says, "Where is he who can compare with her in trial, who equals her in piety, constancy, and devotion?"

These teachings necessarily had an immense influence on women. All the feelings which the ancient social order had repressed or degraded were freely drawn out by Christianity. Christian women showed from the first a charity, sweetness, and modesty that paganism had never known. It has been said that, feeling more vividly than men the benefit of spiritual freedom through Christ, they wished to show their gratitude to their Saviour by more absolute devotion. The Church, deeply feeling the reserve becoming to women, maintained the apostolic precept that they must not speak in the public assemblies of believers; but this exclusion from preaching did not hinder them from fulfilling a mission in society suited to their character. We shall find later that the ancient Church gave them humble, gentle duties in harmony with their natural virtues. Let us remember here, that in times of persecution they were models of charity and courage. They consoled the prisoners, dressed the wounds of the tortured, prayed with the martyrs, and according to the expression of Chrysostom, "showed themselves more courageous than lions." They bore in their own persons cruel tortures with a quiet heroism which, more than all the rest, proves the superiority of Christian to pagan woman.

In later times, when persecution had ceased, woman continued to be distinguished by a more active piety. Whilst men were occupied in the forum or amused with the games of the amphitheatre, they went to the churches or led in their own homes a life of consecration to Christ.

Chrysostom delighted to hold them up as an example to men. "They surpass us," he says, "in love to the Saviour, in chastity, in compassion for the miserable." History has preserved the names of several of these holy women. We will mention only some belonging to the latter days of the empire, to show the contrast between Christians in high rank and pagans belonging to the same classes. Melania the younger, who had large estates in all parts of the empire, gave them all to the Church for the poor. She dedicated herself to the service of the unhappy. She went through the country seeking everywhere to relieve distress, to help the sick and comfort the afflicted. Paulla, of the family of Scipio, and Paulus Emilius, widow of Toxotius, a descendant of the Julian line, and Fabiola, of the family of Fabius, followed this example. They added a new and sweeter fame to the line of warriors from whom they were descended. At the same time the Princess Priscilla visited {56} the hospitals, where with her own hands she rendered the humblest services to the sick poor. The Empresses Pulcheria and Eudoxia were not less distinguished for high mental power than for the gentleness and purity of their manners.

Ideas about marriage were altogether altered by the elevation of woman and the subordination of the earthly interests of the State to the spiritual interests of the reign of God. In the State men are united for temporary needs; in the kingdom of God they are united by love for eternity. The Saviour had already given its true character when He represented it as a Divine institution, and a union of soul. These great principles were developed by the Church, and increased the contrast between Christian and pagan civilization. According to the Fathers, marriage with one wife was instituted by God Himself when He created the first couple. It is not a passing union for the temporary satisfaction of carnal desires or the needs of the State. It is rather an association of souls than bodies, intended to glorify God and to last beyond this life. It is a mystery, for it is a type of the union of Christ and His Church. Thus sanctified, it becomes a school of virtue, and of mutual duties between husband and wife, for their education, with their family, to eternal life. Each household, each family, ought to be an image of the Church; for where two or three are united in the name of Christ, He is there in the midst of them. Because of the deep meaning given by Christianity to marriage, it received for the first time the sanction of

the Church. Blest by the priest in the presence of the congregation, it became one of the most solemn religious acts. Clandestine marriages, unconsecrated by the Church, were looked upon almost as illegal unions.

Another consequence of the religious feeling in reference to Christian marriage was to make it a matter of choice. Paganism could not understand this freedom; it inflicted penalties on him who refrained from the duty of furnishing the State with citizens. Christianity founded marriage, not on passion or interest, but on true love. This is a spontaneous sentiment; therefore he who does not feel it must be allowed to remain unmarried. When individual rights are recognized, the wish to remain unmarried must be respected; it can no longer be punished as contrary to the interests of the Republic. We find, in very early times, Christians who chose to remain unmarried; they are even held up for special esteem, as knowing how to resist the desires of the flesh. This esteem, in its principle, was homage given to Christian liberty.

In later times some Fathers, such as Ambrose and Augustine, thought the cares of married life a hindrance to holiness, and gave to celibacy the exaggerated importance of a more perfect virtue. They were willing to say that marriage might be good and honorable, but they only advised it for those who could not otherwise live in chastity. Methodius, an enthusiastic admirer of virginity, admits however that marriage ought not to be abolished; {57} for although the moon, to which he compares the celibate, is greater than the stars, they nevertheless shed a little light in the sky. By the side of this ascetic tendency, the truer and more Christian idea was also upheld—that marriage is not a hindrance to piety, and that consequently it is no less holy than virginity and celibacy. This was the opinion of Chrysostom. This great-minded man often tries to prove that the sacred union of marriage, instead of being a hindrance, is for Christians a means of mutual help in spiritual life. Domestic cares, household rule, the education of children are noble duties; as such, if well fulfilled, they cannot hinder progress towards perfection. Such a Christian husband and wife show a holier life than the inhabitants of many a monastery. It often happened that one wished to leave the other, from devotion to the ascetic life. Chrysostom represented to these thoughtless pious people that fasts

and abstinences are worthless if the tie of love is broken. Besides, it is to expose the one who has no vocation for asceticism to temptation. The union between husband and wife is so holy that it creates a solidarity, a mutual responsibility, which compels them to guard it with the most inviolable fidelity.

In the natural and close union of Christian marriage, woman seems at a first glance to occupy a subordinate position, analogous to that assigned to her by pagan society. It is true that the Fathers repeat from the Old and New Testaments, that woman submits to man on account of her weakness; but it is a free submission, for the wife is equal to the husband by nature and by her rank in the conjugal union. If she must serve, it is in the Christian sense, through love. She must be as a sister, placed in his sight as the Church is in sight of her Head. She and her husband do not form two separate beings; they only make together one person, of whom the husband is the head. It is no longer the olden slavery of woman; she is raised, and equals the husband in dignity, whilst seeing in him the head of the family. Christianity could never have proclaimed an emancipation of woman as it was carried out by the Roman ladies of the decadence, or as it is taught by modern socialism. With marvellous intelligence of the needs of nature and life, two domains are divided between husband and wife, so as to claim the whole activity of each. Human life has two sides, public and private; God has given to each sex the limits which none pass without penalty. Neither men nor women ever leave their own sphere without wounding the universal conscience of the human race. According to the Fathers, outside business is given to man, the forum, the senate, the camps; whilst to woman are given internal household duties. Chrysostom says, "She can neither carry arms, nor vote in the assemblies, nor manage the commune, but she can weave thread, give better advice than her husband about domestic matters, rule and keep order in her household, superintend the servants and bring up the children. Each sex has its special vocation; God has not given all to one, He has wisely divided it." Thus {58} the wife, instead of being the servant of the husband, is his companion and helper; she is, according to the beautiful ideas of the Fathers, his indispensable complement. It is only through her that he becomes all that he ought to be in accordance with the intentions of God. It is woman who comforts man and gives him calm and courage. To quote

again from Chrysostom: “Nothing,” he says, “can better mould man than a pious and wise woman. It is proved because many violent, harsh, passionate men have been led to gentler feelings through the influence of their wives.”

The Fathers, knowing how woman pities and compassionates more easily than man, give to her, besides household duties, a mission away from home. They do not refuse to widen the sphere of her activities, but they do not call her to mix in the struggles of men, or to take any occupation contrary to the genius of her sex. Her appointed task is one of consolation and charity, caring for the poor, visiting the sick, consoling the afflicted. The Christian wife, as drawn by the Fathers, is modest, pious, fearing the voluptuous or barbarous spectacles of paganism, seldom leaving her house, where, instead of receiving lovers or actors, she hospitably entertains those who are unhappy, and poor foreigners. When she goes out, it is not to the circus or bath, pompously with a troop of slaves; but, covered with a veil, she goes quietly to church, or the dwelling of a poor person. It was rightly said that she forms the most beautiful ornament of her husband, and the joy of her family. Briefly, she is admirable. We may be permitted to add the portrait drawn towards the end of the fourth century by Bishop Asterius, of Amasia: “She is thy member, thy helper, thy aid in the trials of life. She attends thee in sickness, comforts thee in affliction; she is the guardian angel of thy home, the keeper of thy wealth. She suffers the same evils as thou and enjoys the same pleasures. If thou hast riches she takes care of them, if thou art poor she will make the most of thy small means. She resists misfortune with strength and courage. Thanks to the tie which unites her to thee, she bears the painful burden of educating her children. If thou shouldst lose thy fortune, thou will hide thyself in discouragement. Thy false friends, whose affections vary with the vicissitudes of thy lot, disappear; thy slaves leave thee. The wife alone remains, as the member of an afflicted body, as a servant of the ills of man, to give the care he needs. It is she who wipes away his tears, and who dresses his wounds when he has been tortured. It is she, finally, who goes with him when he is led into captivity.”

To attain the happiness of possessing such a wife, the Fathers exhort Christians not to think lightly of marriage, this most important event of life, on which all worldly happiness or discomfort depends. They

desire that the choice shall not be made without serious consideration. As Christian marriage is the union of souls, typically illustrated by the union of Christ with the Church, it is necessary, above all, that there shall be a {59} common feeling about what is most essential—about faith. They decided, therefore, to prohibit mixed marriages of Christians and pagans, and began by pointing out the inconveniences which would necessarily result from unions of this kind, where the pagan husband would hinder his Christian wife from giving herself to prayer and the inspirations of charity. Before long they were absolutely forbidden. Tertullian had already reproved them as improper. A little later the Fathers unanimously condemned them, and the councils excommunicated those parents who consented to them. If a husband or wife became Christian after marriage, that was no reason for breaking the bond. On the contrary, it ought to be sanctified by the efforts of the Christian to lead the one still in idolatry to the Saviour. The converted woman was advised to be still more gentle, humble, and peace-loving, because she had more to fear from the hastiness of her pagan husband.

After requiring joint faith as the first condition of a happy marriage, other counsels, full of wisdom and charity, were added. We just mention these to mark still more clearly the difference between the Christian spirit and that of pagan civilization. The wife must not be chosen for beauty or riches, but only for her virtues and the graces of a good disposition. Therefore it is wise to find out what her previous conduct has been, and above all, if she has faithfully fulfilled her duties to her parents. “A wise and pious young girl,” says Chrysostom, “is more precious than all the gold in the world.”

The young girl was advised to take for husband the one chosen for her by her father. This was a remnant of the ancient paternal right, but it was mitigated by the acknowledgment that for a happy union the girl must love him who seeks her, and not be forced to marry against her wishes. Augustine even desired that when she had arrived at years of discretion, she should be allowed to choose her husband herself. This was an immense progress from the customs of antiquity.

Lastly, to preserve the ties of family love still more completely, the Fathers asked that marriage between relations should be prohibited, or at least that the relationships fixed by Roman law as hindrances should be increased. This was not a barrier imposed contrary to the respect of

Christianity for the rights of individuality; it was a natural consequence of the principle of love. It was desired that the family, which partly represented the Church of God, and which had lost its power in pagan society through the loosening of the most sacred bonds, should be united more closely by a charity free from all personal desires. Ambrose wished to attach these prohibitions to a special Divine law, but although that utters no voice in the matter, they are still in accordance with the spiritual laws of the kingdom of God.

When the union is concluded, the Church, contrary to pagan custom, {60} does not impose duties on the woman only. She requires them also from the husband. She says the wife must be amiable; by chastity, by gentleness of manners, by simplicity of character, by charity towards all, and by submission to him to whom she has voluntarily given herself before God, she must venerate and seek only to please him. A Christian poet of the fourth century has given these counsels to a young girl in verses full of truth and delicacy. On the other hand, the Fathers require that the husband shall respect his wife, that he shall surround her with his care, that he shall treat with gentleness and goodness the companion of his life, the mother of his children; that he shall love her more than his own parents, even to death if need be, as Christ gave Himself for His bride, the Church; that he shall protect and instruct her, that he shall correct her with love, and if unfortunately she remains deaf to his counsels, he shall bear it patiently, without sending her away or ill-treating her.

The conjugal union, in which the husband and wife are united by such great duties, was originally looked upon as too close to be dissolved by death; an alliance of two immortal souls ought to last throughout eternity. For this reason, several of the early Fathers pronounced against second marriages. According to Athenagoras, the man who marries again commits a decent kind of adultery. Tertullian, after he had adopted the rigid system of the Montanists, absolutely condemned second marriages. His reasons are not generally of great weight, though he expresses very pure feeling, as when he says that the husband being near God, the surviving wife will be more closely united to him when she sanctifies her remembrance by prayer. She will thus live with him in spiritual communion and holy harmony that nothing can disturb. Tertullian had been less decisive before he accepted the



tenets of Montanism. In his two books to his own wife, he begged her not to remarry if he died first; however, he added that if this did not suit her inclinations, a second marriage was not contrary to the law of God. This was the opinion held by the apostles, founded on the idea that in the heavenly world perfect love will be no longer fettered by difference of sex, according to the words of Christ, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven" (Matt. 22: 30).

This more lenient doctrine, already held by Hermas and by Clement of Alexandria, finally prevailed in the Church. Widowers and widows were advised not to marry again. To the last were plainly pointed out the difficulties inseparable from a second marriage, in the education of the children of two mothers, as well as in the remembrance retained by the husband of his last wife, which might shadow the happiness of the new union. Ambrosius, and especially Chrysostom, treat this subject with as much charity as delicacy. Neither they, nor the other Fathers who advise voluntary widowhood, condemn second marriages. They do not find them {61} forbidden by the law of God, and consequently it is not sinful to engage in them. Often they ought even to be advised. According to Jerome a young and rich widow, exposed to a thousand temptations, ought to marry again if she is not sure of herself; for a second marriage is preferable to a disorderly life. It is true that some Councils caused widows who remarried to submit to temporary punishment, but they did not excommunicate them. After the time of Augustine it was a heresy to condemn second marriages.

The same high idea of the holiness of marriage that we have been endeavoring to bring out, ruled the Christian belief as to divorce, which was so frequent and so easy in paganism. The Church unreservedly condemned these causeless separations, so many scandalous examples of which were to be seen in pagan society. Adultery was the only admitted cause of separation. When the Fathers commanded chastity in marriage, and made reciprocal fidelity one of the holiest conjugal duties, they at the same time reminded the world that adultery is one of the gravest violations of the law of God. The councils excommunicated those who were guilty of it, and they were only received again after long penitence. From a general point of view this was only to reinforce the reprobation in which the adulterer was held

even in pagan society; but we know that that society made exceptions in regard to the transactions of men with a certain class of women. These exceptions the Church could not allow to exist. Contrary to pagan laws and customs, and in consequence of Christian respect for reinstated woman, it is no longer she alone who is thought capable of committing adultery. The doctors of the Church vigorously attack the pagan pride which accused woman alone, whilst man claimed to be free. Henceforth the unfaithful husband was held to be as guilty as the wife who violated her duty. He is even blamed the most, for he has not the excuse of weakness. He has power, and should employ it well. He ought to give his protection to her who is trusted to him, and to set an example of virtue, that he may not give her an excuse for vice.

The lightness with which the pagans treated concubinage was strongly condemned by the Fathers. How could they admit the distinction made by Roman society between the concubine and the prostitute? For them, according to Augustine, without excuse for bachelor or widower, any person besides the wife with whom man has to do, falls into the category of prostitutes, with whom only a disgraceful and illicit union can be formed. Jerome says on this subject, "The laws of the Caesars are different from the laws of Christ. What Papinianus ordered differs from what Paul taught. The pagans loosen the reins which restrain man's unchasteness. Violation and adultery are forbidden with free persons, but are allowed with slaves or at the *lupanar*, as if the sin did not depend on the wish of the person who sins, but on the position of the person with whom he sins! {62} With us, on the contrary, what is not permitted for women is also forbidden for men."

Adultery, being in its own nature a rupture of the conjugal bond, ought to entail separation, but according to the opinion of the Fathers this should not be an absolute rule; at least, it need not be carried to the length of divorce. There are only a few isolated voices in favor of divorce after adultery. Epiphanius holds that the innocent wife sent away without reason by the husband, or compelled to leave him on account of his unfaithfulness, may marry again without sin. Hilarius of Poitiers and Asterius are of the same opinion. The greater part of the Fathers, feeling the scandals of pagan society, and wishing to increase the gravity of conjugal engagements, always give their opinion against another marriage after a separation, although this power was still

allowed by the civil laws. If it is a sin for a husband to live with his wife when he knows that she has committed adultery, he becomes guilty of the same crime if, after having sent away his unfaithful wife, he marries another. This opinion, which had been already expressed by Hermas, became that held by nearly all the Fathers. It was founded on the purest Christian feeling. The holiness of marriage necessarily made it indissoluble. If one of the two violated it, the fault should be punished by separation, but this should be only temporary, until the repentance of the guilty one. The opening for reconciliation is there, and the penitence of the one and the pardon of the other should ensure redoubled affection and fidelity.

The Councils by their decisions sanctioned the advice of the Fathers. That of Elvira, AD 305, excommunicated the woman who, after leaving her husband on account of his adultery, should marry another. She might not receive absolution until the death of her first husband. Some years later the Council of Arles limited itself to asking, under the form of advice, that those husbands who had adulterous wives should not marry again, in the hope of a mutual reconciliation. The prohibition soon became, notwithstanding, the general law of the Church.

We should not have said all on this subject without speaking of the teaching of the Church in reference to fallen women. On the one hand she insisted on the duty of men to be chaste, as much for the sake of their own morality as for the sake of the women that pagan morality put defenseless in their hands. In the midst of the unbounded licentiousness of the latter age of the empire, the Fathers continually taught that impurity is a crime against God, defiling His noblest creatures, destroying both the soul and physical beauty, whose worth consists in virgin purity. On the other hand, the Church, following the example of the Saviour, who held out His hand to the adulterous woman, called to her bosom those unfortunates whom paganism degraded and held in the ways of vice. She purified them, and gave them pardon and peace in the love of Christ. Forbidden baptism, {63} or excommunicated, as long as they lived in infamy, they were forgiven and received when, giving up their profession, they gave proofs of penitence. The Church gained glorious martyrs from amongst these rescued ones. Afra died for the Saviour, in Augsburg, with three servants, who, having followed her in vice followed her also in conversion. Pelagia, a celebrated actress

and courtesan at Antioch, was converted, and retired into a convent, from whence the prefect, assisted by the law of his time, vainly tried to drag her back to the theatre. She spent the remainder of her life in this retreat, showing her gratitude to Christ by the humble piety of her conduct. These facts prove the power of Christianity to arouse the deadest souls, and also the energy of woman's nature, which can be raised by the hand of Christ from the deepest abyss; whilst the charity of Christian society receives and welcomes the sinner whom the world first abused and then despised.

### *Children*

The Christian spirit, by raising woman and sanctifying marriage, changed the family (which till then had only had a civil importance) into a religious institution. It modified the relations between parents and children without weakening the authority of the first or the respect and obedience of the second.

In our first part we saw that the pagan father only accepted his child if he promised to become a robust and useful citizen, and if he was not too poor to bring him up. The pagan mother, on her side, freed herself by abortion or exposure from the result of her too often criminal loves. From the earliest times the Christians reprovved these barbarous customs. The Church, animated by a touching solicitude, blessed and protected little children because "of them is the kingdom of heaven." She respected human nature even in the child which had not yet seen day, and desired that when born he should be the object of his parents' tenderness, whatever might be his physical state. The Fathers declare that to cause a child to perish by abortion is to destroy the work of God. It is to become a murderer, as much as if the child was born into the world. It is to take life from a creature who is already the object of Divine goodness. God, who has no respect of persons, who judges them neither by appearance nor age, is the Father of all life, however incomplete it be. The Apostolic Constitutions also compare abortion to homicide. Those guilty of it are excluded for ten years from the Church, although the civil law did not yet punish this crime.

The Church holds the custom of the exposure of children in equal horror. The Christians bring it as a severe reproach against pagan society. Justin Martyr sees in it one of the proofs of the hardening of heart

which comes from idolatry; for if it is not killing the children, it is at least debasing {64} human nature; knowing that those who are saved are generally destined for shame or slavery. A hundred and fifty years after Justin, Lactantius expresses himself with a vigorous eloquence against this custom, which was so deeply rooted in ancient morality. "How can any one imagine that fathers have given to them the right to kill their newborn children? It is an act of the greatest impiety. If God sends souls into the world, it is for life, not death. However, there are men who believe that it does not soil their hands to take from these hardly formed beings the life they have not given them. Do not hope that they will spare the life of the stranger, these men who do not spare their own blood! Without contradiction, they are deeply perverted. What shall I say of those who are led by false affection to expose their children? Can we consider those innocent who offer their own bowels as prey for dogs, and kill them more cruelly than if they were strangled? Who can doubt that it is impious, thus to trust one's own to the pity of others? Even when it happens that the exposed child is taken by someone who will feed him, it is still the father who is guilty of having sold his own blood to servitude or prostitution! ... He may as well kill his child as expose him. It is true these murderous fathers complain of their poverty and imagine they have not enough to bring up a family; as if the wealth of the world was completely in the power of those who possess it, as if God did not every day bring the rich to poverty, and raise the poor to plenty! If then a man cannot feed his children through poverty, it is better that he should keep away from his wife, than that he should destroy with impious hands the work of God."

The Fathers not only attacked the cruel excesses of paternal powers amongst the pagans, but tried to sanctify the feelings of affection that Christianity had unlocked in the heart. The child, from his earliest days, is brought into the kingdom of God; he is received into the Church by baptism; he cannot be excluded from the grace which that sacrament assures to him the possession. "If old sinners," said Cyprian, "are received in the Christian community, with how much greater reason shall the newborn child be received, who has not yet committed sin?" This care was not confined exclusively to legitimate children. Natural children, even those of adulterers, are equally creatures of God;

they are under His paternal protection, and consequently worthy of the charity of the Church.

Children are souls trusted to parents who are responsible for them; the blame will fall on the parents if the children are lost.

This tightening of the bond which unites them, brings fresh sources of happiness in fulfilling their duties towards their children, their fellow-citizens in the kingdom of God. The old, inflexible harshness of the Roman father must disappear, to be replaced by an authority tempered with love. The father must think of his son as his equal in natural dignity, and destined to continue the race of children of God in the world. Certainly he must {65} teach him respect and obedience, but not by treating him like a slave. In teaching him to know and love the law of God, he will cause him to learn also to submit his will to that of his parents.

This religious education is strongly enforced by the Fathers, particularly Chrysostom. This great man and eloquent interpreter of the Christian spirit sees in the absence of religious education, as much as in the misery and needs of humanity, the cause of the decadence of the world. Men occupy themselves, he says, in gaining honor and riches, that they may leave reputation and fortune to their children, for whose souls no one cares. This neglect is a great sin, for it gives the children to eternal death, and helps to ruin society. What has upset the whole world is, that man has not cared more for his own "children." Chrysostom and all the other Fathers see no salvation but in religious education. They speak of this continually in the most emphatic terms. They wish that at an age when the will is still flexible the children should be led in the good way; that they should receive pious impressions at an early age; that they may grow up through fear of God and love of Christ, to wisdom, faith, humility, and charity; that in their earliest years the great principles of the Christian life may be impressed upon them. To bring this about, parents should undertake the education of their children themselves, instead of leaving it to ignorant and often irreligious slaves.

It was chiefly to the mothers that the Church gave the care of the earliest religious education. The father, engaged in other things, could not always consecrate to this duty the time it claimed; besides, the mother, by her sweeter, more patient and loving nature, is more likely to

awaken pious feeling in the childish soul. Pagan moralists knew nothing of the mother's influence; they did not say much of the education of daughters, to which maternal solicitude is first directed by the doctors of Christianity. Chrysostom and Jerome insist on the duty of mothers to train their daughters in pious and simple manners, that they may some day make good wives, capable of ordering a household, and in their turn training children for heaven. The Christian mother must also influence her sons. Whilst in pagan society they were soon taken from their mother, who was restricted to her own part of the house, or who freed herself only to enter the paths of vice, we see them trusted by the Church to maternal tenderness, from whence in their earliest years they drew the germs of spiritual life. Several of the most illustrious doctors owed their greatness to their pious mothers. History has preserved the memory of Monica, the mother of Augustine; of Nonna, mother of Gregory of Nazianzus; of Anthusa, mother of Chrysostom.

In the early time of the Church, Christian children were taught only in their own families. This could not be otherwise whilst Christian society was surrounded by dangers and persecutions. It has been asked whether Christians sent their children to pagan schools, or whether they refrained through {66} conscientious scruples. There is no historical evidence on the subject, but it is allowable to suppose that those who refused to hold public office because they would not join in idolatrous rites, would also refuse to trust their children to masters who, whilst teaching them the fables of paganism, would at the same time have familiarized them with its morality. In proportion as the Churches were organized, there were doubtless schools for children, as well as for adults who were being prepared for baptism or the ministry. The first traces of schools that may be called primary are met with in the fourth century. The schools were kept by priests. Children went there after the age of five. The monks had made meritorious efforts for the education and instruction of youth. Basil, during his rule, made it a most essential duty; he gave valuable counsel on the method of treating children, and accustoming them to a wise discipline. It would lead us away from our subject to give more ample details relating to the establishments for the literary and religious instruction of adults. It must suffice us to have proved that under the influence of Christianity education took a religious, and consequently an infinitely more moral, character than in the

ancient world. When the Fathers refused to separate instruction from education, into which they introduced the Christian element, they rendered a service to humanity that only blind spirits will refuse to recognize. Yet even today there are men who wish to banish from education the element which irritates them; we must hesitate at no sacrifice to preserve its influence; the salvation of the world is at stake.



# THE PURITAN FAMILY AND THE CHRISTIAN ECONOMY

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*Richard Flinn*

All God's creatures and ordinances are good ... but some are more excellent than others. And marriage being of this latter sort, is not holy only, but even honorable also. "Marriage," saith the Apostle, "is honorable among all men"—and no disgrace then to any man. So we are to esteem of it, and not to condemn what God hath graced, or to dishonor what He hath honored. We shall but wrong the giver in debasing His gift.—*Thomas Gataker*<sup>33</sup>

One of the most significant goals of the movement known as Puritanism was that of a godly society. It was widely accepted that to achieve this end God had ordained four basic institutions: the commonwealth (the state), the Church, the family, and (later) the school—as a subsection of the family institution. All of these institutions formed a symbiotic, interlocking whole. All were equally under the law of God; all had specific functions to perform with respect to the whole. The intent of this article is to discuss the specific role and functions of the family in the creation as a whole—that is, how the family related to, and was in turn dependent upon, the other institutions within the "Christian Economy." My purpose is primarily one of description; the treatment is not exhaustive. Rather, I have drawn heavily on the works of some of the most influential early Puritans—Cartwright, Perkins, and Greenham—intending by this means to establish the *Zeitgeist* with respect to the family within which the later Puritans moved.

## *1. The Foundational Nature of the Family Institution*

While long overlooked, it cannot be questioned that the institution of the family and marriage assumed, for the Puritans, a role of para-

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33. Cited in Everett H. Emerson, *English Puritanism From John Hooper to John Milton* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968), 211.

mount importance. An indication of this is given by a glance at Dod's *Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, published in 1603. This was the outstanding Puritan work on the Decalogue, and in it the major areas of ethics and axiology were carefully and deliberately worked out. William Haller notes that a huge place was given within this code to the duties of husband and wife and of the family in general.<sup>34</sup>

William Perkins, a seminal Puritan theologian, reflects the dignity, honor, and importance placed upon marriage when he argues that as a {68} state or calling it was far more excellent than the single life. He cites four reasons:

1. It was ordained of God in paradise above and before all other states of life.
2. It was instilled upon solemn consultation among the three persons of the Trinity.
3. God blessed marriage.
4. Marriage was appointed by God to be "the foundation and seminary of all other sorts and kinds of life in the commonwealth and in the Church."<sup>35</sup>

It is this last statement which interests us in particular. Not only was marriage the foundation of the creational order, it was also the very seed plot, the breeding place, the nursery of all society. Within the structure of this institution, God had ordained that man would be schooled and trained for his work of subduing the creation, whether it be in the state, the Church, the school, or the family. The health, vitality, and sanctification of the family were inextricably connected with the sanctification of the whole society. Moreover it was not an institution which could operate independently of the other institutions of society. Its function, although basic, was also complementary to the role of the Church and the state. In Richard Greenham's image, fathers of families, by teaching and applying doctrine at home and administer-

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34. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 120.

35. William Perkins, *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward, The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics, no. 3 (Abingdon, Berkshire, England: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 419.

ing discipline within the same, had to join hands with the magistrate and the minister; in their respective administration of the Word of God, each complemented and reinforced the other. In this way, godliness would spread over the land.<sup>36</sup>

The Puritans taught, then, that God had given the family basic societal functions to perform within the fabric of society and the creation. William Perkins summarized these in a table of four purposes of marriage and the family:

1. Procreation of children for the propagation of and continuance of humanity.
2. The procreation of a holy seed, whereby the Church of God must be kept holy and chaste so that there might be a holy company of men to worship God always upon the earth.
3. After the Fall it was God's sovereign means to avoid fornication and slake the lusts of the flesh.
4. To aid all the parties in the marriage in performing their respective callings and duties in a better and more comfortable manner.<sup>37</sup> {69}

Assuming that Perkins is representative of the general position, the remainder of this article will be on exposition of these four general rubrics.

## 2. The Procreation of Children

There is nothing particularly distinctive or startling here. Two comments need to be made. Firstly, that the procreation of the human race was a primary purpose in marriage did not mean that barrenness was grounds for divorce. On the one hand, children were not the only purpose of marriage, so lack of children was insufficient grounds for divorce or for any otherwise immoral action to compensate for sterility.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, the fruit of the womb was wholly dependent upon God. Therefore, the only ground for divorce was adultery or fornication, which break the very bond and covenant of marriage. The

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36. Cited in Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 153.

37. Perkins, *Work*, 420.

38. Gordan S. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion: His Place in the Development of Christian Piety* (London: Epworth Press, 1957), 56.

innocent party could and should forgive the other upon his or her repentance, however. Interestingly, Perkins also taught that both husband and *wife* could legitimately require a divorce, which view stood in stark contrast to the consensus of the time.<sup>39</sup>

In the second place, we should not conclude that the wife was regarded as a mere “baby-machine,” or as part of the goods and chattels of her husband. We confront here a stereotype of Puritan domestic relations that is mythical. In fact, the Puritan concept of marriage was based upon the patriarchal mode as according to the Scriptures. The wife had to be subordinate to her husband in authority, but she was equal to her husband in her title to grace and independent responsibility before God.<sup>40</sup> Because of this, women had their own spiritual pilgrimage to conduct and men tended to give high regard to their spirituality, wisdom, discernment, and gifts. It was right for a woman to be given authority and responsibility in the home or elsewhere as God had so gifted her, but He would never gift her for roles, or intend her gifts for roles forbidden in the Scriptures. The letters of Samuel Rutherford to the wives of his flock at Anwoth give a striking example of how a woman could be regarded as a counselor, confidant, sister in the faith, and a source of encouragement.<sup>41</sup> Haller encapsulates the position when he notes that although the wife was the weaker vessel, she was responsible to the same law of God, and God had given her a husband to compensate for her frailty.<sup>42</sup> Husbands, then, could not lord it over their wives, using them as tools or mere instruments, but “husbands and wives should treat one {70} another with loving dignity.... Above all there must be patience, and a readiness to forgive even the sin of adultery.”<sup>43</sup>

Ian Breward, in an introduction to the practical writings of William Perkins, notes that so reformed was the Puritan view of marriage and

39. Perkins, *Work*, 425–26. Willful desertion as a ground for divorce was apparently not considered by Perkins.

40. Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 120–21.

41. Samuel Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford: A Selection* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973).

42. Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 121.

43. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 56.

the relationship between husband and wife that “the position of women in England aroused comment among foreign visitors, who felt that the weaker sex had more privileges there than elsewhere.”<sup>44</sup> We must dismiss the pejorative stereotype and affirm that the centrality of childbearing in Puritan marriage meant neither a using nor abusing of wives by their husbands. The Puritan’s trembling before the Word of God precluded such abuses.

### 3. *The Procreation of a Holy Seed for the Church*

It is immediately apparent that the second major purpose for marriage flows directly out of the *Weltanschauung* of covenant theology. One of the divine callings of Christian parents was to be involved in the work of producing the holy seed of the Covenant. In this way, God has been pleased to build up the Church of Christ and the number of the elect. The health, growth, and well-being of the Church achieved through the raising up of godly children was to be a primary end in marriage. Married life was to be deliberately structured toward this end.<sup>45</sup> What did this mean, however, in specific terms? Firstly, parents had to enter into marriage and the task of raising children with humble, repentant hearts, sanctifying the process through prayer and the Scriptures. Consider, for example, Greenham’s colorful description of unsanctified sex in marriage and its results:

Christians therefore must know that when men and women raging with boiling lusts meet together as brute beasts, having none other respects than to satisfy their carnal concupiscence and to strengthen themselves in worldly desires, when they make no conscience to sanctify the marriage bed with prayer, when they have no care to increase the church of God and the elect, it is the just judgment of God to send them monsters, untimely births, or disfigured children, or natural fools, or else such as having good gifts of the mind and well-portioned bodies, are most wicked, graveless, and profane persons.<sup>46</sup>

Parents, then, should consciously plan to procreate children in such a manner that the fruit of the marriage be an enrichment of the Church.

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44. Ian Breward in Perkins, *Work*, 413.

45. See Greenham’s discourse on this subject in Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 148-53.

46. *Ibid.*, 150.

Secondly, parents should be aware of the possibility that God may have given them children which He would later call into official positions in the Church. This interdependence between the family and the Church is {71} underscored when Perkins argues that in training and educating children the *first* objective of the parent was to be aware of any better gifted and intelligent children, and these had to be set aside, consecrated to God, and brought up in the study of the Scriptures, that they might “serve afterward in the ministry of the Church.”<sup>47</sup>

It is worth noting here that the integration of covenant theology into the doctrines of both Church and family included a consideration of the negative aspects of the covenant also. Unfaithful parents often had the judgment of God inflicted on them through their children. The aspects of covenantal curse were openly applied to the family. Judgment upon parents was seen to take two forms: firstly through ungodly children who caused great shame while they lived and who caused even greater pain when they were cast into hell. Covenant theology gave no room for laxity or presumption on the part of the parents, at least in the Puritan *milieu*. Having children was indeed a mercy, argues John Flavel, but if they perished from want of knowledge, where was the mercy in that?<sup>48</sup> He goes on to cite seven or eight reasons why parents must instruct and train their children in godliness. Amongst these are the creational closeness of the parent-child relationship (“... what child can choose but relent, while a parent is speaking with a melting heart to him about his eternal concerns?”);<sup>49</sup> and God’s direct charge to parents to care for the souls of their children. But not the least of the reasons cited was the fear of the curse of the covenant falling upon one’s children. He writes:

What shall comfort you at the parting time if they die, through your neglect, in a Christless condition? O! this is a cutting consideration, my child is in hell and I did nothing to prevent it; I helped him thither! Duty discharged is the only comfort in that day.<sup>50</sup>

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47. Perkins, *Work*, 431.

48. John Flavel, *The Works of John Flavel*, 6 vols. (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), 4:374.

49. *Ibid.*, 4:540.

50. *Ibid.*, 4:374.

Secondly, covenantal judgment could also be administered to lax parents temporally. Cartwright, another early Puritan, argued that the first duty of parents was joining in prayer for their children. They were to pray specifically for a “godly posterity,” so that:

In the birth the children bee comly and not monstrous in coming forth like monsters which might be a grief unto them or an occasion that the wicked should speak evil of the Gospel.<sup>51</sup> {72}

The first duty of the parents, then, was to pray that their children be a source of blessing to the Church. This was to be engaged in at the conception, gestation, birth, and, indeed, throughout the life of the child. The second duty was to consecrate suitably gifted children for leadership in the Church. Then, general guidelines were given for training children in righteousness and godliness. Perkins suggested that there were three general principles given by God for this end. Firstly, the child should be admitted into the fellowship of the Church by baptism. Secondly, the seeds of godliness and religion should be sown in the heart of the child as soon as it could understand anything. As the child grew in years care should be taken that it grew commensurately in grace and knowledge. Finally, Perkins noted that the instruction of children in learning and religion must be done in such a way that they take it with delight.<sup>52</sup> These first two are straightforward enough, but the last principle serves to explode another widespread myth with regard to the Puritans and their family structure. Puritan parents are often painted as being harsh and tyrannical disciplinarians who, while remaining aloof from their children, expected their progeny to be seen and not heard and behave as adults when they were seen. While undoubtedly there must have been disciplinary excesses, the writings of the Puritan divines demonstrate the bankruptcy of the stereotype. Rather, instruction was to be tailored to the level of the child. Care must be taken, wrote Perkins, that they be allowed moderate recreation for their years. When children did go astray they must be

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51. Thomas Cartwright, *Cartwrightiana*, ed. Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson, Elizabethan Nonconformist Texts, vol. 1 (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957), 185–86. Notice here again the dual concern of children becoming part of God’s judgment upon the parents, on the one hand, and a curse to the Church, on the other.

52. Perkins, *Work*, 431.

disciplined *first* by the Word of God and, if that did not help, then the rod of correction was to be used. Perkins cautioned his readers that two unjustifiable extremes be avoided—overindulgence, on the one hand, and harsh severity, on the other.<sup>53</sup> To avoid these extremes, care should be taken to adjust physical correction to the psychology of the child; it should be applied, moreover, in love and prayer, and not to relieve the feelings of the parents.<sup>54</sup>

Greenham gives further insight into how extreme severity was to be prevented. He argued that the discipline and correction of children was to be done, not primarily for their sin and fault against the parents, but for their sin against God. Moreover, when a parent observed a child sin, he should “enter his own heart” to see whether the sin originated with him. If the answer was affirmative or probable, then the parent should consider how God’s hand of just judgment might well be upon the parent. In such cases, when the parent would be angry with the child, he should have a holy anger toward himself. He should then repent of his own sin and pray for the healing of the child.<sup>55</sup>

It is clear from the foregoing examples that the tyrannical nature of Puritan education, training, and correction is a misrepresentation. Instead, {73} what can be seen is that in this area, as indeed in all other areas, the Puritans sought to place themselves under the rule of Christ. Discipline and correction was not a personal, autonomous reaction to the self-perceived errors of a child. Instead, it was first of all an expression of jealousy for God and His law; secondly, that law was to be administered prophetically, before physical correction, the latter being used only when necessary. Even then, care had to be taken that discipline was sensitive to the constitution of the child. Finally, and possibly most significantly, the parent, in training his children so that they would build up the Church, had to be repentant and humble before God, applying the same standards (law) to himself as his child.

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53. *Ibid.*

54. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 57.

55. Cited in Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 150-51.



#### 4. Avoidance of Fornication and the Slaking of the Lusts of the Flesh

Perkins posits this as the third major purpose of marriage, providentially ordained by God after the Fall. The desire for sexual continence was a holy and proper motive for marriage. Richard Baxter gives it as one of the reasons for marriage. If one could not remain continent in the single state, then marriage was desirable.<sup>56</sup> Perkins was even more adamant—it was mandatory. For him continence was an excellent ground for marriage. When a child grew to maturity the best endeavors had to be made to provide him with a mate, or at least advise him on the matter. Neglect in this area exposed children to the possibility of whoredom, or wicked and ungodly marriages.<sup>57</sup>

Parents, then, were to encourage their children in marriage, particularly so when they were facing temptations in the area of sexual purity. God's providential answer to lustful temptations was marriage. In choosing a mate for their children, parents ought to prize greatly "purity and wisdom," rather than "beauty or riches," but if it should so happen that a mate have all of these attributes, so much the better! The parents should be all the more thankful.<sup>58</sup> Of course, it goes without saying that parents should be moderate and not force their children to marry against their will. But so seriously did Perkins regard marriage as being God's providential means for the maintenance of holy living that he taught that where parents were negligent in taking care of this aspect of the welfare of their children, the latter should declare the matter first of all to relatives, and then to magistrates for redress.<sup>59</sup>

This serves to reveal something of the Puritan attitude toward sex, which {74} we can characterize as neither prurient nor prudish. Sex was an essential duty of marriage. In itself it was indifferent, neither good nor bad. If sexuality was expressed in a proper way, it became a holy and undefiled action. Like all other aspects of life, it was to be sanctified by the Word and prayer. The Scriptures give the right and

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56. Richard Baxter, *The Practical Workes of Richard Baxter*, 4 vols. (London: Arthur Hall and Co., 1847), 1:395.

57. Perkins, *Work*, 143.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*, 432.

holy manner of conduct in sex. This could be summarized into two principles:

### 1. Moderation.

William Perkins notes:

...even in wedlock, excess in lust is no better than plain adultery before God. This is the judgment of the ancient church, that intemperance, that is, immoderate desires even between man and woman are fornication.<sup>60</sup>

According to Edmund Morgan, excess in the Puritan context meant the point at which earthly delights came to dim the heavenly goal. The Puritan knew how to laugh and love, but neither of these activities ruled or dominated their lives.<sup>61</sup>

### 2. Holy Abstinence.

The Scriptures gave out that there were times when one should engage in holy abstinence from sex. Perkins taught that there were only two such times, namely, when a woman was in menstruation, or during a time of great calamity when both partners were to give themselves to fasting and prayer.<sup>62</sup>

In conclusion, sex was an essential and holy part of marriage. It had three vital functions and fruits in the economy of God. It produced children; it preserved a clean body and a fit temple for the Holy Spirit; and it produced a “lively type” of the communion between Christ and the Church.<sup>63</sup>

## *5. To Enable the Parties in Marriage to Perform Their Respective Callings and Duties Better*

To every Christian, God had given both general and special callings.

General callings were those applicable to all Christians; special callings varied from person to person. The institution of marriage and the family was given by God to aid Christians in fulfilling their respective callings. The first area in which the institution of marriage assisted was

60. *Ibid.*, 424.

61. Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 64.

62. Perkins, *Work*, 424.

63. *Ibid.*, 425.

that of piety and general sanctification. The central role of the family in the religious development of children has been noted above. Husband and wife, however, were also to sharpen one another and build one another up in the faith. Thomas Cartwright taught that a prominent duty of husband and wife was that they admonish one another. The husband was to {75} admonish and teach his wife. The wife was sensitively to counsel and admonish her husband when he failed in his duty. The husband was instructed to hear such admonition, which was always to be administered in the light of her subjection and in humility, confessing herself to be the weaker vessel.<sup>64</sup> Hence, both husband and wife had to play an active role in the sanctification of the other partner. Marriage, then, like all other activities of life to which men were called by God, was an opportunity for spiritual growth and the expression of Christian piety.<sup>65</sup>

The family was also ordained by God to assist its members in fulfilling their respective special callings. Parents were to prepare their children for, and guide them into, their special callings. Marriage itself was a special calling. It follows that the Puritans believed it to be the duty of Christian parents to educate and prepare their children to be godly and wise parents in their own time. It was not enough for a Christian to be a husband or father. He must be a *Christian* husband and a *Christian* father. The child had to be taught to hammer out the calling of marriage upon the anvil of the Word of God. Firstly, he was to be instructed how to find a good mate and what constituted a good mate. He was also taught how to work, how to be industrious, and how to manage a house. Thomas Gataker, preaching on the value of a good wife, exhorted his listeners to train their daughters so that they:

... be a blessing, not a cross or a curse to those that shall have them ... labor and train them up in true wisdom and discretion, in the fear of God, and such graces as shall make them truly amiable, as well in God's sight as in man's eyes; in housewifery and industry, and skill to

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64. Cartwright, *Cartwrightiana*, 186. This perspective serves to underscore again the thesis developed earlier—that Puritan marriage theology did not allow for women to be regarded as inferior before God. They were to play a direct and active role in the sanctification of their own husbands.

65. Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 120.

manage household affairs: that so they may be helpers to their husbands, and not hinderers, as to that end they were made at first.<sup>66</sup>

It follows concomitantly, that God had ordained that the family prepare and guide children into all other special callings. Perkins admonished parents in this very area. Rather than letting their children be applied to any condition in life, it was the duty of parents to make fit callings for their children, and children fit for their callings. To ascertain what constituted a proper calling for their children, they had to take cognizance of two things in their children: their inclinations and their natural gifts. Finding a fit calling for one's progeny was of great importance. Parents were forbidden to gratify their own ambitions through their children. Rather, they had to submit to the rule of God in their lives and the lives {76} of their children, mediated through the Scriptures and through providence. Perkins concludes:

The truth is that parents cannot do greater wrong to their children and the society of man than to apply them to unfit callings.<sup>67</sup>

In summary, we have seen that in Puritan theology, the family and marriage was understood to be foundational to God's created order. In each of the four major purposes given of God to the family there was a foundational element. The family was given by God to procreate the human race, to maintain the health and growth of the church, and to prepare men for their respective callings. It was also providentially given by God to help prevent fornication and maintain one's body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Rightly did Perkins call the family "the seminary of all other sorts and kinds of life in the commonwealth in the Church."<sup>68</sup> Moreover, we have seen how, as the family functioned so as to fulfill these goals, all of the family—both parents and children—were to be self-consciously under the law of God, and that law was the same law for *all* family members. The law that bound children equally bound the parents. The law that bound the wife, also bound the husband. This meant that the aristocratic authority structure of the Puritan family (husband head of wife, parents head of children, etc.) did

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66. Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 215.

67. Perkins, *Work*, 460.

68. *Ibid.*, 419.

not become an *autocratic* authority. It remained *theocratic* at every point.

### 6. The Puritan Family at Worship

Finally, a treatment of the Puritan family would be incomplete without a discussion of how the family worshipped. A not-well-known publication of the Westminster Assembly is crucial here—namely, “The Directory for Family Worship.”<sup>69</sup> This directory was adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647. It gave instructions as to why, when, and how each family was to worship privately within their own homes. An indication of the seriousness with which the Puritans viewed this duty is given by an introductory statement, added by the assembly when it adopted the measure. We read:

... the Assembly doth require and appoint ministers and ruling elders to make *diligent search and enquiry*, in the congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any family or families which use to neglect this necessary duty; and if any such family be found, the head of the family is to be first admonished privately {77} to amend his fault ... after which reproof, if he still be found to neglect family worship, *let him be, for his obstinacy in such offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord’s Supper*, as being firstly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend.<sup>70</sup>

The conducting and exercise of family worship was made an object of the discipline of the Scottish Church. This is not at all out of character and harmony with the general Puritan conviction with respect to family worship.

Singular in this regard was the Puritan conception of the family or household as a “little church.” Perkins described the family as a little church, Gouge called it the “seminary of the Church and commonwealth,” and Baxter characterized the home as “a church ... a society of Christians combined for the better worshipping and serving God.”<sup>71</sup>

69. This can be found printed in the Free Presbyterian Church’s edition of the Westminster Confession of Faith, published by Free Presbyterian Publications, Glasgow.

70. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Publications Committee, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1973), 418. Emphasis mine.

71. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 55.

Lewis Bayly taught that “what the preacher is in the pulpit, the same the Christian householder is in his house.” He was quoting Augustine.<sup>72</sup> To this end, the family was to assemble at least twice a day for worship. In the morning they gathered to call upon the name of God before they began the works of their respective callings. In the evening, when the family had known the blessing of God upon the labor of the day, they prayed for the protection of God through the night. When families practiced this kind of devotion they were “even a kind of paradise upon earth.”<sup>73</sup> The reference to the Garden of Eden is obvious.

We should not imagine that this conception of the family as a little church and the householder as a preacher produced rampant ecclesiastical atomism. This was prevented by the binding of private family worship to the corporate worship of the Church. The primary ordinance for maintenance of this bond was the Sabbath. The Lord’s Day was the grand climax of Puritan household religion.<sup>74</sup> Lewis Bayly described how the family was to observe the Sabbath. It was prepared for on Saturday night. Sunday morning devotions were briefer to allow for private meditation and the walk to church. During the service, the family worshipped together. After church, at dinner there was an examination upon the sermon. Those who remembered well were commended, but the head of the household was not to discourage weaker members. The objective was to ascertain what of the sermon was understood, to further explain it, and to make direct application to the family. The afternoon was taken up with {78} catechetical instruction and works of mercy for the poor and the sick.<sup>75</sup> In this manner the private worship of the family was bound to the Church and under the indirect authority of the officers of the Church.

Thus the Puritan family lived, served, worshipped, and glorified God in the Church, in the state, and in the creation at large. Such a high view of the family was the bedrock of the Puritan social reformation. While the Reformation had recovered the importance of the family, the

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72. *Ibid.*, 57.

73. Perkins, *Work*, 417–18.

74. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 63.

75. Cited in *ibid.*, 64. Morgan notes a similar phenomenon in New England family worship. Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 102.

Puritans restored it to its proper position in the social order. Herein lies one of the oft-neglected strengths of the Puritan reformation.

# INFANT BAPTISM AND COVENANTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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*David H. Chilton*

The ground of infant baptism is the command of God. Believers and their seed after them, in their generations, are required to keep God's covenant, and part of that obligation involves the administration of the covenant sign to the children of believers (Gen. 17:1–9). This all Presbyterians of the Reformed persuasion profess to believe. Yet (perhaps due in part to parental affection, and in part to the desire for godlike control over the covenant) we have suffered from a perennial temptation to ground baptism upon something else. For many, the basis of baptism is the Church's presumption that the infant is elect or regenerate. For others, baptism is necessitated by man's need for regeneration, and thus the rite is seen to produce the new birth. The Baptist view (which will not be studied directly here) finds the ground of baptism to be man's decision and his testimony to the world. The one thing these differing views have in common is their refusal to allow the sacrament to rest upon God's authoritative word; rather, they have determined to substitute a humanistic justification for it.

With such a start we would quite naturally expect further errors down the line. One usual concomitant of these false views is, for instance, belief in the guaranteed salvation of all who die in infancy (or, at least, of all believers' children who die), with *its* accompanying doctrine of an "age of accountability." Now, do not misunderstand: I am not presenting a case for the damnation of infants. But where *in Scripture* is there any clear teaching one way or the other? Granted, there is evidence that David's infant son went to heaven when he died (2 Sam. 12:23). There are also biblical indications that some infants have been regenerated, even in the womb (e.g., Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:15). Thus, it is possible that infants who die may be saved, and it is therefore possible that *all* infants who die go to heaven. But the Bible simply does not give us a definite word on the matter, which is why the Westminster Confession



of Faith wisely went no further than the affirmation: “Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ” (chap. 10, para. 3). The Confession’s teaching is unequivocal, however, in its insistence that infants are not saved because of any inherent virtue or sinlessness, but solely by God’s grace. How different this is from the common opinion (even among “Reformed Evangelicals”) that God does not hold children responsible for sin until they have reached a mystical point of sudden accountability. Yet David, under {80} the inspiration of the Spirit of God, wrote that he was in sin at the moment of conception (Ps. 51:5), and that “the wicked [i.e., all men] are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Ps. 58:3). If we believe in the Holy Scriptures, we must reject the pagan notion that infants are innocent or unaccountable; God’s word has declared otherwise.

Another false notion occasionally found among professing Christians is that the application of water produces an immediate change in the child’s standing before God. Although this view is certainly not found in Calvin or the Reformed confessions, it is not uncommon to hear it expressed (or, more likely, assumed) by members of orthodox congregations. What is the explanation for this? One definite cause has been the endless stream of sacralistic pedagogical literature which has flooded the church, seeping into even the most orthodox groups. A relatively mild but significant illustration of this is the defective teaching on baptism found in the *Catechism for Young Children*,<sup>76</sup> a Reformed publication used in numerous churches and Christian schools. Question 130 of this catechism asks, “Why should infants be baptized?” The answer is then given: “Because they have a sinful nature and need a Saviour.”<sup>77</sup> Now, in favor of this statement, it must be conceded that were men without a sinful nature or need of salvation, baptism would be unnecessary. Had there been no sin, the covenant of which baptism is a sacrament would never have come into being. To a certain extent, then, the teaching of the catechism has validity. Yet, as it stands, such an answer is misleading for two important reasons.

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76. *Catechism for Young Children: An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism* (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, n.d.).

77. *Ibid.*, 29.

First of all, the argument by itself proves too much. If the sole justification for baptism is possession of a sinful nature and need of a Saviour, this is reason not only to baptize children of believers, but *all* children, and in fact *all people*, since all are sinners. This doctrine, if consistently applied, would result in massive, indiscriminate baptisms. Sin is universal, as the catechism correctly states (Q. 35); if the presence of sin is the only requirement for baptism, baptism too should be universal. Now, while this roughly approximates the position of the Roman Church, it is of course ridiculously unbiblical, and thoroughly opposed to the orthodox Reformed faith. None of those who drafted the *Catechism for Young Children*, I am sure, would espouse this view. And yet, because of unclear language (and so, to some degree, unclear thinking), it has found its way, in principle, into a publication of a Reformed church.

The second problem, however, is much more serious. The clear implication of the catechism's doctrine is that baptism will somehow take care of the sinful nature and need of a Saviour. In other words: Baptismal {81} Regeneration. Compare this statement with that of the heretical Origen: infants are baptized "because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away."<sup>78</sup> The two differ only in that the regenerative power of baptism is expressly taught by Origen, whereas it is merely hinted at by the catechism. That such an implication was probably unintentional sadly renders it no less *clear*.

Several objections have been offered to the foregoing analysis, however. First, it has been argued that this particular catechism is not an official standard of any church and thus should not become an issue of controversy. But when, in the history of the Christian Church, has false teaching ever *first* appeared as part of an official creed? It is the very nature of heresy to be subtle, to present itself at the beginning in harmless dress, thereby allowing people time to become accustomed to its forms of expression. It is only later, when men's consciences have been numbed and dulled, that doctrines once abhorred receive official sanction. Apostasy never springs up overnight; there are always precursors, little-headed actions and decisions which do not somehow seem

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78. Cited in W. Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, vol. 1 (London: Griffith, Farran, Browne & Co., n.d.), 51.

momentous until the damage has been done. In the current situation, unfortunately, the standard catechisms are not in popular use for training children. But the *Catechism for Young Children* is. To protest that it is not official is simply beside the point if the common faith does not square with the creeds. To be sure, the new catechism boasts itself as “An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism,” but is this the case? I challenge you. Go to the young people of most supposedly “orthodox” Reformed churches and find out how many have studied the Shorter Catechism. But be forewarned: they might not know what it is. The truth is that the formal standards of the church have been dropped and replaced (if replaced at all) with an informal, doctrinally inferior one.

A second objection points out that the newer catechism is, after all, for young children who are incapable of assimilating complex theological formulations. Such a catechism, we are told, must not attempt precision, but should rather summarize that which is readily available elsewhere in the more extensive official creeds. Although the basic assumption here could well be questioned (this writer has been teaching a three-year-old the Westminster Shorter Catechism for over a year; it *can* be done), I will allow it for the sake of argument. I am not contending that simplification of doctrine as such is wrong. But is distortion a necessary component of simplicity? Of course, the Reformed doctrine of baptism is somewhat complex, and the fine points are still being investigated. But I would suggest that if we cannot teach a doctrine to young minds without teaching heresy, we had better leave off teaching altogether. {82}

Thirdly, as some have countered, the statement in question need not be interpreted in an unorthodox manner at all. Various elders, in conversation with me, have waxed eloquent in their positively medieval-sounding expositions of what the catechism does *not* mean. But let’s remember that the children who are being taught this catechism are not erudite, scholastic theologians with years of practice in hedging, dodging, and weaseling. As naive uninitiates, they simply hear the statement and, if they can add two plus two, draw heretical conclusions therefrom. All too often one finds adolescents growing up assuming their own regenerate status, not having been told that the new birth is not hereditary (John 1:13). On one occasion, an elder approached me about a high school Sunday school class I was teaching. In making con-

versation, I mentioned my concern for the salvation of several young rebels in the group. The elder was appalled at such a suggestion, and subjected me to a lengthy lecture on “covenant theology,” the point of which was to remind me that all children of believers are regenerate already. But surely this is to commit the same deadly error made by the apostate Jews, who considered mere membership in the covenant a guarantee of salvation. Jesus said, however, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (John 8:39). The *true* “child of Abraham” is the one who has been justified by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:6–9). Only the believer is the genuine heir of the covenant promises (Gal. 3:14–18, 22, 29); the true “Jew” is the one who has received not merely the external sign, but the internal grace (Rom. 2:28–29), and therefore not all who are *of* the covenant are *in* it in the full sense (Rom. 9:6–16). As William Cunningham has well said:

Neither parents nor children, when the children come to be proper subjects of instruction, should regard the fact that they have been baptized, as affording of itself even the slightest presumption that they have been regenerated; ... nothing should ever be regarded as furnishing any evidence of regeneration, except the appropriate proofs of an actual renovation of the moral nature, exhibited in each case individually; and ... until these proofs appear, every one, whether baptized or not, should be treated and dealt with in all respects as if he were unregenerate, and still needed to be born again of the word of God through the belief of the truth.<sup>79</sup>

Belief in either baptismal or hereditary regeneration has always plagued the church, with many writers seemingly bending over backwards to add fuel to the fiery Baptist polemic. Consider this from Charles Hodge:

Those parents sin grievously against the souls of their children who neglect to consecrate them to God in the ordinance of baptism. *Do let the little ones have their names written in the Lamb’s book of life, {83} even if they afterwards choose to erase them.* Being thus enrolled may be the means of their salvation.<sup>80</sup>

79. William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 291.

80. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), 588. Emphasis added.

The Baptist T. E. Watson recoils in understandable horror: “This is astounding. Is Hodge serious? Does he really believe that the Lamb’s book of life is, as it were, a heavenly baptismal roll?”<sup>81</sup> And Hodge is by no means the gravest offender in this regard. Examples may be multiplied.<sup>82</sup> Is it then any great wonder that our churches are doctrinally defective, when our theologians are out to sea themselves?

The major reason for this sacerdotal undertow is the confusion of covenantal *responsibility* with covenant *blessing*. It is often assumed that the Abrahamic Covenant (of which the New Covenant is the fulfillment) simply involved guaranteed blessing. Books on baptism are packed with promises to parents that their children will be saved. Perhaps the most glaring example of this from the Reformed camp is also one of the most popular modern works on the subject, *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, by Pierre Marcel.<sup>83</sup> Marcel informs us that, as a child is presented for baptism, “God tells us many things about *this child*.”<sup>84</sup> What things? He continues:

Now, because of the promises of the covenant sealed by this baptism the parents and the Church are strengthened in the faith which causes them to consider this infant as a child of God and a lamb in Christ’s fold. They know that he no longer belongs to the race of Adam, that he is placed under the direct protection of the Lord, and that God loves him and regards him with affection. They know that this child is the heir presumptive of salvation.<sup>85</sup>

Of course, this is in direct contradiction to Marcel’s alleged belief that covenant children “cannot assume that they are the heirs of *salvation*.”<sup>86</sup> Marcel thus seems to be saying that while we may *presume* the child is regenerate, we may not *assume* he is! Marcel is trying to strad-

81. T. E. Watson, *Baptism Not for Infants* (London: Henry E. Walter Ltd., 1962), 77.

82. For a more recent (and more objectionable) discussion see Norman Shepherd, “The Covenant Context for Evangelism,” in *The New Testament Student and Theology*, ed. John H. Skilton (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), 51-75.

83. Pierre Marcel, *The Biblical Doctrine of Infant Baptism* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1953). Also published under the title: *Baptism: Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Co., 1973).

84. *Ibid.*, 225.

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*, 114.

dle the fence, apparently, but I think I know which side his weight is on. Parents, he states, “ought to be reasonably assured” that their children are “in possession {84} of the life of the covenant”;<sup>87</sup> “beyond doubt the promises of the covenant will be fulfilled” when parents ask God to be faithful to His promises;<sup>88</sup> and “children are members of the visible Church ... *in virtue of the work which He has promised to accomplish in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.*”<sup>89</sup> But is this true? Has God *promised* to regenerate believers’ children? Not according to Romans, chapter nine. God chose Isaac and rejected Ishmael, Abraham’s two sons (vv. 7–9): God loved Jacob and hated Esau, both of whom, certainly, were “covenant children” (vv. 10–13). As Greg Bahnsen has correctly noted in his study of Galatians 3:15–18:

The promises of God were never intended for all the fleshly descendants of Abraham, but rather these promises were delivered to the one singular “family-seed” of Abraham who is Christ (the Messiah). Whatever benefit a man is to have from God will be derived via Jesus Christ, in whom and to whom are all the promises of God. One can be part of this blessed family which is Christ’s only by faith.<sup>90</sup>

Meredith Kline has cogently argued that the notion of *covenant* itself does not simply involve promise, but rather responsibility.<sup>91</sup> As Dr. Kline examined the meaning of the covenantal sign of circumcision and baptism, he realized that they pointed to “the potential of both curse and blessing.”<sup>92</sup> Because the covenant is a declaration of God’s lordship over us and thus of our responsibility to be faithful to Him, the covenantal symbols signified both the blessing upon obedience and the curse upon disobedience. In the sacrament we symbolically undergo the judgment we deserve, acknowledging that if we are unfaithful to the terms of the covenant, we will suffer in reality that which we are portraying in symbol. In addition, the man who enters

87. *Ibid.*, 111.

88. *Ibid.*, 113.

89. *Ibid.*, 123 (emphasis mine).

90. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1977), 510.

91. Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968).

92. *Ibid.*, 90; cf. 81.

into this covenant comes in not as God's equal but as His vassal, committing himself and all he has by oath unto the Lord. In other words, "covenant" is violently misinterpreted if, on the one hand (with the Baptists), we see it atomistically, merely in terms of the believer himself, without noting its fundamental ties to his authority over his family; and it is misinterpreted just as dangerously, and more so, if on the other hand (with the sacerdotalists) we conceive of it in such organic terms as to destroy the doctrines of God's sovereign grace. Baptism is primarily "a sign of coming under the jurisdiction of the covenant and particularly under the covenantal dominion of the Lord."<sup>93</sup> And it is *this fact* which is the basis of infant baptism: the vassal acknowledges in this {85} rite his responsibility to consecrate all of those under his legitimate authority to the Lord of the Covenant, vowing to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Thus conceived,

... the rite does not prejudice the ultimate issue of the individual's destiny one way or the other. It places him under the authority of the Lord for judgment and tells him that as a sinner he must pass through the curse; yet it also calls him to union with his Lord, promising to all who are found in Christ a safe passage through the curse waters of the ordeal.<sup>94</sup>

According to Kline's thesis, then, baptism does not "tell us" anything about the child (in Marcel's sense). But this is not to deny the covenant children all blessing whatsoever; on the contrary, their privileges are very great. As J. H. Thornwell observed:

Their baptism has brought them, as contradistinguished from others, into the same relation to the promises of the covenant into which circumcision brought the Jew as contradistinguished from the Gentile. To them belong, in a special sense, the Oracles of God, and "to them pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises".... If then, it be asked, What profit is there of baptism? we answer, Much in every way.<sup>95</sup>

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93. *Ibid.*, 79.

94. *Ibid.*, 82.

95. J. H. Thornwell, *Collected Writings*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 330–31.

The fact that circumcisonal regeneration was not promised to the covenant children in the Old Testament did not prohibit them from high privilege; and our refusal to attribute magical qualities to the New Covenant should not blind us to its many values. Neither, however, should our appreciation of covenantal blessing obscure from view the awful truth that blessings are rendered curses by abuse. Such was the situation with proud, unbelieving Israel, upon whom Jesus pronounced the curses of Matthew 23–25. From this perspective Thornwell describes the condition of today’s covenant children:

The vows of God are upon them, they have been consecrated to the Lord; and when they pervert their faculties and strength to the service of themselves or the world, they are guilty of a more aggravated profaneness than could ever have been imputed to the Jew, if he had gone into the temple and taken the vessels of the sanctuary and perverted them to his private use.... To this must be added the enormity of guilt which they contract by unbelief. They cannot sin like other sinners. They cannot be exalted to heaven and then expect a gentle fall.... Beyond controversy, it is a great privilege to be a member of the visible Church; and beyond controversy the despising of such a birthright is no common crime.<sup>96</sup> {86}

Covenantal responsibility is a major reason for the scriptural emphasis upon godly instruction, *within the family*, of the covenant children. The head of the household, in consecrating himself to God, has taken a serious oath, binding himself and all he has to the Lord. And with each successive baptismal consecration, that oath acquires increasing depth as the vassal undertakes responsibility for the training of yet another unit in the next generation. The head of the household offers his children to God in baptism, confessing that they too deserve the curse, recognizing the ritual as God’s sign of His total claim upon their lives. And because God blesses the conscientious application of His law-word, obedient parents do have both a reason to hope for God’s saving grace upon their children, and “praying ground” to ask for it. But let us always remind ourselves that covenantal blessings are dispensed in the divine response to faithful obedience as we fully acknowledge Christ’s lordship in every sphere of life. The covenant salvation passes from generation to generation, not by wishful thinking or speculative theol-

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96. *Ibid.*, 331.



ogizing, not by assuming or presuming, but solely by God's sovereign grace on the basis of the finished work of Christ, who alone has fully kept the covenant, meeting all its demands for the sake of His elect people. And to this end, that our children might be saved, we must teach them according to the advice given in Psalm 78:5–7: we instruct our offspring, on the one hand, to flee from their own self-righteousness and “set their hope on God, and not forget the works of God”; and on the other hand, to “keep His commandments,” in order that they may not be consumed. The responsibilities of the covenant are tremendous; yet God has not left us alone. He has promised that we shall be strong for all things through Christ who strengthens us. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.”

# FAMILY AUTHORITY VERSUS PROTESTANT SACERDOTALISM

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*Gary North*

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Peter's announcement of the universalization of the Old Testament priesthood was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel that they, if they were obedient to His commandments, would become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Ex. 19:5–6). It is this New Testament passage, perhaps more than any other, which has served Protestants as the foundation of their opposition to the Roman Catholic Church's system of sacerdotalism, the doctrine that a priesthood mediates salvation between God and men. The heart of Luther's message, salvation through faith alone, necessarily challenged the sacerdotalism of his day, and it earned him excommunication. He had denied the mediatorial position of the priesthood as the sole agency for the dispensing of personal salvation to church members. In opposition to sacerdotalism, Luther preached that most Protestant of doctrines, the priesthood of all believers.

(Actually, this was not the most Protestant of doctrines. The one doctrine universally held in the seventeenth century by every Protestant church, from the highest of high church Anglicans to the wildest of the Anabaptist of Fifth Monarchy sects, was the identification of the papacy with the antichrist. This doctrine was inserted into the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 25, section 6, to the embarrassment of modern American Presbyterians, who have seen fit to footnote this passage into oblivion, and quite properly so. However, it is interesting to witness the most orthodox of Presbyterians drop the one doctrine which was the touchstone of Protestant orthodoxy from Luther's day until about 1930. At least they set a most-needed precedent,

namely, confessional revision of even the most universally accepted traditions of Protestantism. They recognized that the presence in the Confession of unsubstantiated human opinion, in contrast to clearly revealed biblical truth, should not be tolerated, once men realize that the traditional opinion is incorrect. It is a precedent that should be honored.)

The problem with the priesthood of all believers, in the eyes of most ecclesiastical authorities, is that one never knows exactly where such a {88} doctrine will lead. From the beginning, Luther and the other orthodox Protestant reformers worried about this theological weapon. It was an ideal tool in their battles against Roman Catholic priests, but it could also be used effectively by revolutionary sects against the authority of ordained Protestant ministers. Since these ministers were usually on the side of the political authorities in the struggle against the revolutionary sects, the leaders of the left-wing sects found it convenient to preach this doctrine to their followers. The doctrine was immediately modified by Lutheran and Calvinist theologians. While the priesthood was not to be understood as the sole means of imparting grace to the faithful, meaning special grace or saving faith, the ordained leaders still had to be respected as ministers of God and as leaders within the congregations. They were more than laymen, possessing the exclusive rights of administering the sacraments, which were reduced from seven to two, baptism and holy communion (the Lord's Supper). The Westminster Confession, after limiting the sacraments to these two, adds: "neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained" (chap. 27, sec. 4). The word "priest" once again became synonymous with "ordained minister."

In what ways, then, have New Testament believers become priests? In what ways are we priests in a new and different sense from Old Testament believers? What did Peter have in mind when he announced this fulfillment of prophecy? The doctrine has to mean more than a merely negative claim that Protestant laymen no longer have to regard as sacraments five of Rome's seven rites. In what active, official ways are all of us priests? For four hundred years, this doctrine has been only a negative argument used by Protestants to challenge the monopolistic claims of Rome. It is not that Protestant churches acknowledge that lay-

men are priests in any positive, official sense, but only that laymen are freed from five-sevenths of the sacramental claims of a rival priesthood. The two remaining sacraments must be administered by an ordained, exclusive clerical order. Therefore, the priesthood of all believers is still interpreted by Protestant churches as meaning the priesthood of *few* believers, ecclesiastically speaking, and in traditional Christian theology, ecclesiastical authority is what really counts.

The Protestant doctrine of the priesthood has remained dualistic. The offices of the Protestant visible churches have been equated with the office of Old Testament priest, and, subsequently, the sacramental offices have been reduced to one, that of minister. However, the priesthood of all believers has still retained some life as a formal theological concept, though carefully and systematically emptied of content. The priesthood that is now universalized has been limited to the role of family religious leadership. This “universal priest” has authority in his household, but this authority does not extend into the visible church in a formal sense. The “universal priest” is not ordained in any formal church ceremony, nor is {89} he called in any special way into official ecclesiastical service to the flock. In fact, the universal priesthood *is* the flock, to be led by the pastors, and occasionally sheared by the unscrupulous. The Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is summarized thusly: “There are priests, and then there are *priests*.” This is in stark contrast to the Roman Catholic position, “There are priests, and then there are *priests*.”

Priests in the Old Testament possessed extensive sovereignty. They served as medical officers who had the power of quarantine (Lev. 14). They served as direct oracles of God (Num. 27:21). They served as judges and civil servants. They offered sacrifices. They were bearers of authority.

The modern Protestant doctrine of the priesthood, meaning church officers, now limits the authority of the priests to strictly ecclesiastical authority. Deacons operate charitable services, elders make judgments in disputes among church members, and ministers (possibly assisted by elders) perform the two sacraments. Rare is the pastor who anoints the sick with oil (James 5:14–15). The role of the priest has been drastically reduced institutionally. Ministers preach, administer a pair of sacraments, make decisions with the ruling elders, and cooperate with dea-

cons. They have many unofficial church tasks, such as weddings, funerals, visiting the sick, raising money, and so forth, but these tasks are not defined as being part of the office of priest as such. To make such a claim would be to risk reviving the old Roman Catholic sacerdotalism. The modern priest is therefore marked by these special features:

1. Ordination of some kind
2. The exclusive right to administer two sacraments
3. The right to execute ecclesiastical discipline

Some Protestant churches also include preaching in the list of exclusively priestly functions. Presbyterians and Episcopalians are fussy in this regard, though some exceptions are allowed some of the time. To gain access to the pulpit on a regular basis, you must be ordained. Since the Calvinist tradition has emphasized the marks of the true church as being the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments (and sometimes including the exercise of church discipline), the minister has tended to become the exclusive true priest, since he alone is ordained to perform all of these tasks.

What is the meaning, then, of the priesthood of all believers? *Historically*, the meaning within the orthodox, conservative Protestant churches has been this: a fine weapon to use on Roman Catholics, an illegitimate weapon in the hands of sects—sects being defined as those who use the weapon against others besides Roman Catholics—and a pleasant, painless doctrine which is seldom mentioned any more. *Theologically*, the priesthood of all believers ought to be understood to mean that every believer serves as a *mediator of God's covenantal authority* in the tasks associated {90} with the subduing of the earth. The New Covenant of Jesus Christ announces God's victory, in time and on earth, over Satan's rival claims. If we are priests, then each person should bear the signs of such authority. The Protestant rule should be: "The universalization of *all* priestly functions, unless specifically limited to one group by explicit biblical testimony."

### *Ordination*

There is no question that the Bible limits access to the offices of elder and deacon. The bishop (*episcopose*) must be male, the husband of one wife, sober, patient, and a man who rules well in his own household (1

Tim. 3:1–5). Likewise, deacons must be grave, honest, not greedy, husbands of one wife, and good rulers over their children (1 Tim. 3:8–12). If we are to believe what we read, at least two unconventional conclusions seem obvious. First, bishops (elders) and deacons must be married men, or at least widowers. Probably a man unlawfully deserted or divorced by his wife would still be eligible. Second, it should be pointed out that bigamists are not eligible, indicating that in the past, churches have been unwise in allowing missionaries to ordain tribal chieftains as church leaders when they were married to several wives. (Forcing them to unload all but one wife was even worse, since the older wives would be forced to go, turning them into social pariahs or even prostitutes.)

If the second conclusion is correct, then we should ask ourselves another question. Is a polygamist forever barred from full church membership? If a pagan from a polygamistic culture is converted, and if he cannot lawfully be compelled to divorce his wives within the framework of the prevailing culture, on what basis can he be excluded from full membership? The early church seems to have faced this problem squarely. Such a man was not permitted to assume the offices of elder or deacon. The New Testament does not exclude the polygamist from membership, however. The coming of Christian culture is not a radically discontinuous event. It must first shape the pagan culture during the period of transition. Christianity is socially conservative, despite the fact that it is radical to the core with respect to the secular foundations of social and political order. Orthodox Christianity acknowledges that Christians have sufficient time, over many generations, to subdue the earth to the glory of God. Christians count the costs of cultural transition, or should, protecting the integrity of the church (no polygamists as officers) while simultaneously refusing to create social chaos (forcing all but one wife out of their home). Even in our own culture, we have no way of coping with the problem of the woman who marries a married man, having been deceived by him. She is given no legal rights with respect to his estate. She is counted as a non-wife. The injured party is penalized and is forced out of a home which she had relied on. There is something wrong here—something which {91} contemporary Christian social and legal theorists have been content to ignore.

There is another argument which must be considered. Some theologians have concluded that since Paul was a bachelor, the strict interpretation of his language regarding “the husband of one wife” must be abandoned, that is, *if* a man is married, he must be married to only one wife. There are two errors in this approach. First, it assumes that Paul was a bachelor. The Bible nowhere tells us this. He was unmarried, but as to whether he was a bachelor or a widower, the Bible is silent. The one passage that is used to prove that Paul was a bachelor, 1 Corinthians 7:7–8, proves no such thing. It proves only that he was single. He was addressing both single people and widows or widowers: “For I would that all men were even as I myself.... I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.” To argue from silence that Paul was in fact a bachelor, and then to conclude that it is lawful to ordain bachelors, since Paul was ordained, is not valid exegesis or logic. The second error in this approach is to conclude that Paul’s miraculous conversion and ordination by Christ (Gal. 1:1), even if he was a bachelor, is a valid argument to be used against the specific injunctions of this specially ordained apostle. Why should we set aside his stated rules for ordination just because God ordained him in a unique way? God may have set aside this general rule in order to achieve a specific purpose, just as He allowed both Rahab and Ruth to become part of the covenant line of Christ (Matt. 1:5), despite the fact that Moabites and other Canaanitic peoples were supposed to be screened for ten generations before they could become full citizens of Israel (Deut. 23:3). Paul’s apostleship was already unique, whether he was a bachelor or not. When we ordain men to the offices of the church through conventional means, we are not to conduct the ordination in direct opposition to the requirements set forth by God’s Word. We are not to enact our own miracles or special rules when God’s standards are stated clearly. There is nothing unclear about the requirement concerning a man’s having to be the husband of one wife before he can seek or accept the office of deacon or elder.

It is very interesting to observe that both deacons and elders have to prove themselves first as husbands and fathers, or at least as husbands, before they are to be ordained. They must have already exercised godly, competent authority. *The family is therefore the primary training ground for church officers*—not seminaries, and not even fully accredited, four-

year colleges. It has been the long-standing practice of Reformed churches to substitute proficiency at taking formal academic examinations in place of demonstrated competence in heading a household. The footnote has therefore replaced the family as the preferred screening device for ordination to the teaching eldership, which supposedly must be distinguished from the ruling eldership. (The Presbyterian version of the doctrine of the priesthood {92} of all believers has always been: "There are priests, and then there are priests, but most important there are *priests*.") If a man wants to be a minister, he had better have his footnotes in order, whether or not he has his family in order, or a family at all.

Some readers may think that I am exaggerating. Not at all. Consider the official denominational standards of the church which regards itself, with good evidence, as the most thoroughly Calvinistic Presbyterian church in America, and probably the world.

Because it is highly reproachful to religion and dangerous to the church to trust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men, the presbytery shall admit a candidate to licensure only if he has received a bachelor of arts degree, or its academic equivalent, from an accredited college or university. He must also have completed at least two years of study in a theological seminary.<sup>97</sup>

The overcoming of ignorance and weakness is clearly understood to be a direct function of training in some institution of higher education which is accredited, meaning approved by the apostate, godless, rebellious intellectuals who are warring against orthodoxy. An unaccredited Christian college is insufficient; better to be a graduate of a state-financed, officially neutral, apostate university. The implications of this kind of standard cannot be overemphasized. It indicates that the ministers, as distinguished from ruling elders, will have been compromised with secularism, to one extent or other, in their educational backgrounds, and it also indicates that they will be tempted to set themselves apart from ruling elders on the basis of prior performance of certain academic exercises. After all, as the same book states, "The

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97. *The Standards of Government Discipline and Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1965), 19.



office of the minister is the first in the church for dignity or usefulness.”<sup>98</sup>

Significantly, these same standards do not mention any requirement for godly rule in a household, either for the ruling elder or for the so-called teaching elder. Furthermore, nothing explicit is stated in these standards concerning the absolute requirement that churches remove from high office any man who subsequently loses control over his household. No definition of godly household rule is offered. What is specifically mentioned is the requirement of formal academic training for the so-called teaching elder. (The requirements were softened somewhat in the post-1968 version of the church’s standards: candidates now need only a year and a half of seminary.)

The Bible requires that *all* elders (bishops) be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2). The Bible sets forth *one* set of standards for ordination (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Tit. 1:5–9). {93} The official tasks of the elders are always identical (1 Pet. 5:1–11). What is the basis for distinguishing teaching elders from ruling elders? Romans 12:6–8 lists these gifts: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, ruling, mercifulness. Surely these are not separate offices. The other great passage in Scripture which deals with the division of labor within the church, 1 Corinthians 12, also cannot be used successfully to establish multiple elderships: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28). Yet attempts are made to single out “governments” or “governings” as the basis of pluralized elderships. What, we might ask, became of teachers as a separate office? Answer: it was a separate office which has been swallowed up, somehow, by teaching elders.

“The office of the minister,” the denominational handbook continues, “is the first in the church for dignity and usefulness.” But “minister” is defined as teaching elder, and subsequently distinguished from (elevated above) ruling elder. The biblical citation is 1 Timothy 5:17. This is such a blatant misreading of the Bible that it indicates how weak the theory of the plural eldership really is. What is studiously ignored is

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98. *Ibid.*, 83.

1 Timothy 5:18, which provides the context of Paul's message, namely, remuneration for services rendered:

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine [speech and teaching]. For the scripture sayeth, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his reward. (1 Tim. 5:17–18)

The attempt is made to separate “elders who rule well” from “they who labor in the word and doctrine.”<sup>99</sup> However, as any Presbyterian, Baptist, or other elder can tell you, the “double honor” of American Protestantism is not connected with a salary. The laborers, in this case, are clearly not worthy of their rewards, if by rewards we have in mind (as Paul did) cash, checks, or money orders, which are the modern equivalent of corn (grain). Naturally, the “especially” crowd does receive its financial reward. Somehow, the magical word “especially” converts “double honor” into cold cash. Ministers get paid.

What should we conclude? First, all elders deserve salaries, depending upon the kind of services rendered. Secondly, the only differences between elders are in terms of personal gifts, and these gifts are multiple: teaching, helps, governments, etc. The “especially” refers to greater intensity of service, not a separate office within the church. He who preaches, teaches, and does public service that cannot be handled by other elders in a particular {94} local congregation is entitled to greater pay. It is symbolic of the lack of contribution, lack of effort, lack of importance, and lack of real power held by today's so-called ruling elders that they are not reimbursed financially for their labors. If we accept the principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire, then we have to conclude that modern churches rate the value of services provided by ruling elders at just about zero. Yet this is precisely the opposite of Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 5:17. In the modern church, the ruling elder is not worth double honor, or even single honor. The payment given to ruling elders indicates the modern church's assessment of the supposedly separate office: it is strictly ornamental—a kind of comforting reminder of the first-century church. And if this analysis is denied, and the ruling elders really are significant, then those within the

99. *Ibid.*, 84.

present denominations who would defend the office condemn themselves, for they pay these men nothing. (Of course, they pay ministers very little. Orthodox Christians want their religion, but they want it cheap.)

What we have seen in the hierarchical denominations, as well as in a significant number of the congregationally ordered churches, is the continuing elevation of formal academic performance over the requirement that church officers be competent heads of families. The family, which is the training ground of all service and authority, is forgotten. Protestant sacerdotalism has imitated Rome. The self-policing ecclesiastical hierarchies screen candidates in terms of essentially bureaucratic performance standards. *Robert's Rules of Order* is preeminent. The academic degree is supreme. And we find, much to our surprise, that church hierarchies are less like families and more like university faculties or low-level branches of the bureaucratized civil government. Institutionally, the salt has lost its savor. We find the same pettiness, arrogance, and incompetence in making decisions in church assemblies that we find in university life or civil government.

Ordination is a valid concept. It is intimately linked to family authority. When it is separated from the training ground of family life, ordination becomes bureaucratic. So it is with Roman Catholicism, which long ago reversed Paul's dictum and required all priests to be the husbands of no wife. So it has been in modern Protestantism, liberal and conservative. The family has been deemphasized, and the result, universally, has been the bureaucratization of the churches.

When churches begin to depose ordained men who have not ruled their families well, there will be hope. When churches separate one elder's tasks from another only in terms of each elder's specific talents and the local church's needs, there will be hope. When all elders are paid in terms of their value to the church, there will be hope. Until then, the best we can do is hope for hope—or, as the case may be, hope against hope. Bureaucrats are almost impossible to dislodge, as is the bureaucratic mentality. {95} The reform will have to come from below, if it comes at all to our existing ecclesiastical structures. In all likelihood, it will take several generations and the creation of competing ecclesiastical organizations. The existing leaders are pledged to their faith in plural elderships, academic degrees, accredited colleges, and

zero pay for ruling elders. They had to swear their allegiance to the system in order to get their jobs. The testimony of the Bible has been suppressed too long; the tradition of the formally educated (certified) minister has been with us too long. Crisis will bring change. It is questionable whether voluntary reform will. We can always hope for the best. We can also work to bring reform.

### *The Administration of the Sacraments*

The priesthood in the Old Testament had an almost exclusive monopoly of administering the sacraments. (The exception was the father's role in the family ceremonies during Passover.) Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, and then only once a year (Lev. 16). But with the death of Christ, the final high priest, the veil of the temple was rent (Matt. 27:51). The holy of holies no longer was separated from the rest of the temple. The kingdom of priests was established.

Who has the authority to perform the sacraments in New Testament times? If we are all priests, does each Christian have the right to administer the sacraments? If not, why not? Is the mark of the priest, meaning the *priest*, his exclusive monopoly of administering the sacraments? In other words, is the administration of the sacraments the exclusive right of ordained church officers?

The answer of virtually all Christian churches is *yes*, the church officers have the exclusive right of administering the sacraments, at least in the normal course of events. Protestants limit the sacraments to baptism and the Lord's Supper (holy communion), and these are the exclusive right of ordained men, or in the case of liberal or Pentecostal denominations, ordained men and women.

Before considering the accuracy of this Protestant position with respect to the administration of the sacraments, let us examine the nature of the sacraments.

#### **Baptism**

Baptism, argue Christians generally, is the New Testament equivalent of the Hebrew rite of circumcision. It is now administered to both males and females. Baptist groups, who are immersionists, focus on the death and resurrection of Christ and the symbolic link of immersion to this theme. They also baptize only those who have made a profession of

faith, arguing that a person's birth into the family of God comes at the time of conversion, and therefore baptism at birth should remain parallel to circumcision in a {96} spiritual sense, not a physical sense. They do not baptize infants because infants have not yet been born into the spiritual family of God. Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Episcopalian churches sprinkle or pour, rather than immerse, focusing on the cleansing symbolism of sprinkling, the cleansing from sin (Ezek. 36:25). They believe that infants should be baptized, paralleling the rite of circumcision more closely.

Meredith G. Kline's monumental but brief study, *By Oath Consigned* (1968), departs from both positions. He argues that baptism is indeed the Christian replacement of circumcision, but he finds a unique meaning to circumcision that has been ignored by Christian scholars for hundreds of years. Circumcision was the mark of the covenant; specifically, a *law* covenant. This covenant placed a person under the rule of a sovereign God, in the same way that treaties between kings and vassals were made by rulers in the ancient Near East.<sup>100</sup> Circumcision meant that a person was being placed under the two-edged sword of the law covenant: unto blessing for obedience, or unto destruction for disobedience. Circumcision, as a sign of the law covenant, served as a seal of the promise to the elect or as a seal of doom to the cursed. The same rite performed both functions.<sup>101</sup>

Baptism is a testimony to the covenant of redemption in exactly the same way. Its form is that of water. This, argues Kline, refers back to the water ordeals of the Old Testament (and ancient Near East in general) such as Noah's flood, the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan, Jonah's three days in the sea, and other symbolic oath signs.<sup>102</sup> Thus, he concludes, immersion is probably the preferable form of baptism for adults, not because it symbolizes the death and resurrection of Christ, but because it is like the water ordeals that were symbolic tokens of covenant curses and covenant deliverances.<sup>103</sup> However, Kline also

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100. Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), chap. 1. The essays were first published in the mid-1960s in the *Westminster Theological Journal*.

101. *Ibid.*, chap. 3.

102. *Ibid.*, chap. 4. See, for example, Isaiah 54:9-10.

believes in infant baptism, since it has the same meaning as circumcision. It does not affirm the automatic inclusion of the baptized child *into* the covenant; it only affirms his placement *under* the covenant's two-edged promises. Kline is, therefore, a Presbyterian immersionist, though he thinks that infants may be sprinkled.

Those of us who have been convinced by Kline's research and arguments have a different view of the sacrament of baptism from the views held by traditional churches. The essence of the rite of baptism is therefore *covenantal authority*. The one who baptizes another places that person under the terms of the new covenant. Of course, every man is always {97} under the rule of God's law, but the ceremony of baptism is the way in which the confessing Christian affirms the covenant, either for himself or for his children. He places himself and his children under law. The baptizing person affirms that he, too, is under God's authority. Baptism, therefore, is not the mark of salvation as such; it is the mark of godly subordination and authority. As in the passages of Deuteronomy 8 and 28, adherence to the law brings blessings, and disobedience brings judgment. The Christian announces that he has faith that Jesus Christ fulfilled the terms of the covenant, suffered its curses in place of the Christian, and subsequently brought him to salvation. Christ's obedience to the law covenant is the foundation—the only possible foundation—of the covenant of absolute and unconditional promise. The covenant of law is fulfilled in Christ; the covenant of promise therefore has its legal foundation; the covenant of redemption is delivered to God's elect.

When Shechem sinned with Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, he decided to ask Jacob to allow him to marry her. Jacob's sons promised to allow this if each man in the city became circumcised. Hamor, Shechem's father, was prince of the city. He agreed to the covenant which was proposed by Jacob's sons. All the males of the city were circumcised. Then Levi and Simeon slew every one of them. Jacob criticized them for their action in slaughtering the men (Gen. 34).

What was the meaning of this circumcision? The city symbolically placed itself under the rule of God. Not every man was a believer, but every man was circumcised. The prince and his household had been

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103. *Ibid.*, 83.

circumcised, and all were under the prince's authority. The men of the city consented to the rite of circumcision. When Levi and Simeon murdered them, they violated the covenantal law, as Jacob realized. The city had placed itself, ritually, under the law of God. The brothers had transgressed the terms of the covenant, and Jacob feared for his life. The people in the land of Canaan would understand the nature of the violation of a covenantal sign between the Hebrews and the city.

The issue was not conversion. The issue was *covenantal authority*. The men of the city had accepted the symbol of covenantal authority. They were subordinate to their prince, and he had placed them under the terms of the covenant, whether to blessing or destruction. By destroying the city's males, the sons of Jacob had executed unlawful judgment, for the men of the city had publicly offered a sacrifice for the sin of Shechem when they submitted to the rite of circumcision. There had been no new crime committed by the ruler or his people that warranted judgment by Jacob's sons. Jacob understood this.

Baptism, since it is an extension of circumcision, should extend to all those under the permanent or covenantal authority of a baptized converted man. An unconverted wife should be baptized when her husband {98} is baptized. Why? Because she is now under the administration of God's law. She vowed to love, honor, and obey him; now that he is under the rule of Christ's law, she is, too. So are the children. If we had permanent servants, or long-term contracts for our servants, they would also be baptized (Gen. 17:10–13). The criterion is not personal affirmation of faith in the atoning work of Christ. The criterion is the position of subordination to a ruler who has placed himself under God's law and the ministers of God's judgment. This is why Abraham circumcised his servants (Gen. 17:27).

Obviously, a person who professes faith in Christ's covenant of redemption will want to express his acceptance of salvation by placing himself under the rule of God's law. Thus, he will want to be baptized, assuming he understands the rite of baptism. The New Testament makes it ever so clear that it should be an easy matter to get baptized. As soon as a man understands the nature of salvation, he may request and receive the rite of baptism.

We might call this doctrine "the right to a speedy baptism." It is as fundamental to Christianity as an American's right to a speedy trial.

And like this latter constitutional right, it is frequently ignored and even resisted by the respective authorities. When Philip explained the Old Testament messianic passage being read by the Ethiopian eunuch, the eunuch asked, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Had he been living in the twentieth century, and had Philip been a Presbyterian, the answer would have been, “Well, I’m not an elder, so I can’t baptize you. Also, you will have to go through a six-week introductory class. Then, you will have to be examined by the session. If you get through all this, you will be allowed to be baptized.” Fortunately for the eunuch, who was going about his business, Philip answered differently: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Philip immediately baptized him (Acts 8:26–38).

Philip was a lawfully appointed deacon. Indeed, he and Stephen were among the very first deacons ever ordained to the office (Acts 6:1–6). He was not an elder. On what basis, then, do modern churches not accept as valid the baptisms performed independently by a deacon? How is it that the Westminster Confession of Faith states that both sacraments must be dispensed only “by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained” (chap. 27, sec. 4)? The answer should be clear: *Protestant sacerdotalism*. The plain teaching of Scripture is insufficient to overcome the entrenched tradition of sacerdotalism. Ironically, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church are less sacerdotal, with respect to the validity of baptisms performed by laymen, than most of the Protestant churches. They both acknowledge that while it is improper for laymen, women, or heretics {99} to baptize people, once performed, neither church requires rebaptism. The Lutherans hold the same view. The Reformed churches are silent in their creeds concerning this possibility. Ministers alone may baptize.

The case of the baptism of the Philippian jailer and his household is informative, though not to the modern sacerdotalists. The jailer had been about to commit suicide when he found the cells unlocked, but Paul told him not to fear, since everyone was still in his cell. The jailer was relieved. He came and bowed before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spoke unto him the word of the Lord,



and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. (Acts 16:30–33)

These observations are in order. First, he was baptized in his own home, or in a place so close to his home that all the household came with him to hear and to be baptized. The next verse reads: “And when he had brought them into his own house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” Second, there is no indication that they journeyed to a river to be immersed. A reasonable conclusion is that they were poured or sprinkled. Far more important than the mode of baptism was the speed of the baptism.

In contrast to the New Testament, consider the words of Y. Feenstra, in the conservative and Calvinistic *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, on the topic, “Baptism (Reformed View)”: “The place of administering baptism should be in the midst of the congregation, in public worship. The church as an organization was entrusted by Christ with its two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and it is un-Biblical for individuals to usurp the prerogatives that belong to the church alone.”<sup>104</sup> In the next paragraph, he writes, “As to the time of administration, we can only say that it is to be sought for as soon as possible.” But “as soon as possible” must be interpreted in terms of “in the midst of the congregation, in public worship.” Baptism of schismatics and heretics is lawful, he says, unless those baptizing are not Trinitarians. However, such baptism must be “administered in a circle of Christian believers, at the hands of a Christian minister qualified to perform the baptismal act....”<sup>105</sup> Baptism by heretical ministers is tolerable; baptism by laymen is not. This is sacerdotalism.

On the other side of the traditional controversy stands Baptist apologist Paul K. Jewett. He is not concerned about the speed of baptism, but he is also not concerned about the ordination of the baptizer: {100}

Inasmuch as our Lord did not prescribe it, Baptists have never contended for a precise rubric of administration with reference to external circumstances. It is immaterial whether the candidate be baptized

104. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 1, ed. Edwin H. Palmer (Wilmington, DE: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964), 536.

105. *Ibid.*, 537.

immediately upon conversion or after a period of instruction; whether baptism take place in a river or in a baptistry made for this purpose; whether it be administered on some festival day, as Easter or Pentecost, or on any day; and whether the administrator be duly ordained or a layman.<sup>106</sup>

Nevertheless, his next sentence tells us what is important: “Of course all worship is to be decent and in order, and therefore baptism may not be privately administered at the whim of any individual, but only in the presence of the assembled church and by someone duly appointed thereunto.” Busy Ethiopian eunuchs need not apply.

Both Feenstra and Jewett can agree on two points: the assembled church in a worship ceremony is the only proper place of baptism, and the baptism must be administered by someone approved by the church. Feenstra, following the traditional Reformed view, wants only ministers to baptize people; Jewett is willing to allow laymen to do it, if they are church-approved, that is, in some way ordained. But the institutional church, assembled in official worship, is the heart and soul of Protestant baptism. This is also the heart and soul of Protestant sacerdotalism.

For the Philippian jailer, the prime consideration was his own profession of faith. This was also true of the Ethiopian eunuch. A deacon could administer the rite, or an apostle. It could be done in a river, in a house, or perhaps even in a jail. Baptism could be by immersion and (it would seem) by some mode utilizing less water. What was central, administratively, was *speed*, not congregational worship.

Modern churches do not take the circumcision-baptism analogy so seriously that they require infant baptism on the eighth day after birth, as was required for Old Testament circumcision. Some churches, of course, do not baptize infants at all, but no one forces an adult to wait for any specified length of time. But they all require some waiting. The worship service of the church is seen as more important than the rapidity of baptism.

Let us face squarely the explicit testimony of the Book: the presence of the congregation was not required—not for John’s baptism, not for the baptisms performed by Christ, not for apostolic baptism. Second,

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106. *Ibid.*, 518.

let us face the testimony of Acts 8: deacons may perform lawful baptisms. Third, let us face the testimony of every known baptism in the New Testament: no lengthy screening by elders was practiced. A man was entitled to baptism, at the minimum, immediately after making a profession of faith, if he was in the presence of any church officer. The evidence is overwhelming.

Let us return to our original question. What is the meaning, institutionally, {101} of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers? The priests of the Old Testament performed the sacrifices and the rituals. In our era, and in fact from the days of the early church, formally ordained people have laid claim to an exclusive monopoly to the administration of the sacraments, however defined. What ecclesiastical manifestation of the universalization of the priesthood can we find?

In some Protestant churches, the election of candidates to the various church positions is made by the congregations, including the votes of women. There is some sharing of the ordination authority. But this is not a priestly function as such, nor was it in the Old Testament. The sacramental function is officially lodged in the office of elder, or more narrowly, the minister. Have we become a kingdom of priests? What is the institutional sign of this transformation?

In the case of baptism, the rite symbolizes subjection to the law of God in a covenant. That covenant is personal (damnation or salvation), but it also has institutional implications, since all authority under God is mediated through duly ordained institutions. Not one single institution, but institutions: family, church, civil governments, voluntary associations, etc. Sacramental authority is lodged in the church, for it was to the church that Christ assigned the responsibility of preaching the word, discipling nations, and baptizing (Matt. 28:18–20). Baptism, therefore, is strictly a function of the priesthood. But what constitutes the priesthood?

Any case for the monopoly of baptism in the hands of church officers—not strictly ministers, or elders, but all: minister, elder, and deacon—must be made in terms of a theology of the covenant. Paul warned Christians living in the midst of an apostate civil government that they should take their disputes to wise men in the congregation (1 Cor. 6:5). However, he did not specifically say that the judge in the church must be ordained to church office. Given the framework of gifts

within a particular church, it may be that some layman has better judgment in certain types of cases than the elders. However, final authority to impose ecclesiastical discipline is in the hands of ordained elders. Therefore, we might conclude that baptism by church elders is required, since they administer the discipline of the covenant, and baptism involves the acknowledgment of the authority of the covenant law structure. There is one overwhelming exegetical problem with this argument: Philip, a deacon, baptized. Deacons are not elders, nor do they participate in the administration of church discipline.

Once it is admitted that New Testament precedents are binding, or if not binding in every case, then at the very least are lawful exceptions to present tradition, then the theologian of the covenant is faced with a most difficult problem. If the diaconate is not properly an office relating to primary church authority—the hierarchical ecclesiastical institution of discipline under God and in terms of His biblical law structure—then the case for {102} the monopoly of baptism in the hands of church officers must be altered drastically. (Abandoned, preferably.)

Before continuing into more uncharted theological waters, let us recapitulate. It is wholly unwarranted to limit the administration of baptism to elders, and it is especially unwarranted to limit it to “ministers of the Word,” a distinctly extra-biblical, sacerdotal caste. Any confession, creed, or church which so limits the administration of baptism is clearly in the wrong. The example of Philip destroys such a position. To be somewhat rationalistic about it, a universal positive is destroyed by a single negative. We cannot say, “Baptism is always administered by elders.” Unless we want to say that the example of Philip is somehow irrelevant because of the specific leading of the Holy Spirit—with the Holy Spirit temporarily revoking the “ministerial” monopoly on a one-time-only basis—then we must conclude that the traditional creeds are erroneous when they create a monopoly of baptism for the office of elder, let alone minister.

When we go further, broadening the office of priest, we leave behind a position that is clearly incorrect. We leave behind a position which has explicit biblical testimony against it. We now face the difficult problem of argument from other principles, an argument which at points faces biblical silence. All we know is this: what now passes for

orthodoxy is incorrect. We may make other incorrect conclusions, but if we stay where we now are, we are sure to be incorrect.

We begin with the principle of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9). We add to this the doctrine of baptism: a rite symbolizing man's life under the law covenant of God, with its two-edged promise of blessing for obedience or cursing for transgression. We see from the examples of Acts that speed of baptism, if not a universal requirement, is nonetheless a universal right of the believer. No man can be refused immediate baptism by a deacon or elder who has witnessed to him, once the man has made a very simple profession of faith. There is not the slightest evidence that Philip, Paul, or Silas recommended any delay. Next, there is strong evidence that speed of baptism takes precedence over any hypothetical requirement that baptism must be performed within a formal church worship service. For that latter position, there is no positive evidence and two very strong cases of New Testament evidence against it: the eunuch and the jailer.

What, then, is my preliminary conclusion? Simply this: he or she who is capable of preaching the gospel to an unbeliever is capable of baptizing that person. If the baptized person is the head of a household, everyone under his or her lawful, covenantal authority should also be baptized. If speed of baptism is primary, as the New Testament evidence certainly indicates, then the person who has brought the message of salvation to the person now professing faith should encourage the other to be baptized. Why? Because the person has just affirmed the sovereignty of God in {103} salvation, and he thereby immediately places himself under the covenant of redemption. If he delays his baptism, he is saying symbolically that he can operate outside the terms of the covenant for as long as the ecclesiastical authorities delay in baptizing him. He is testifying, ritually, that he is in a temporary zone of immunity. There is no such zone of covenantal immunity. The early church taught, in some instances, and in some periods, that the remission of sins provided by baptism could be voided by subsequent sins. Sinners therefore waited until they were dying before asking for the rite of baptism. While not so theologically confused as men were in those days, modern Protestants partake of an analogous error. The error is formal, pertaining to the symbolic meaning of the ritual of baptism, and not substantial—based on a false doctrine of salvation—but it is

nonetheless an error. The delay of baptism ritually affirms a temporary suspension of the covenant's authority over the person. It does this for the sake of a theology which is essentially sacerdotal in nature, a theology which in this instance places the doctrine of the institutional church and its officers above the doctrine of the covenant of redemption.

Notice what I am *not* saying. I am not saying that the church, through officers of the church, should not baptize people. I am not saying that it is always wrong to have the congregation present. I am not saying that women should be allowed to speak, and therefore to baptize, within the worship service of the church, since Paul specifically prohibits women from speaking in the churches (1 Cor. 14:34–35). What I *am* saying is that under normal circumstances, the speed of baptism is more important than the consideration of who baptizes or where. If the confessor is hesitant to be baptized until he or she receives further instruction, then it is all right to wait until someone can offer such instruction. But if the confessor acknowledges Christ's position as the Son of God, and acknowledges his reliance upon Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross, then the person is ready for baptism.

To impress the new convert with the authority of the church, it might be valid to call an elder or minister on the telephone and have him come to the new convert's home for further witness, instruction, and baptism. In an antinomian culture such as ours, the presence of an ordained minister of discipline might be helpful. But it must not be made a requirement, since the testimony of Philip's baptism of the eunuch stands in opposition to the concept of the monopoly of baptism in the hands of an elder-minister. What is *convenient* in any place or time must not be made a universal, formal rule.

What we must get through our heads is that baptism is not universally a mark of justification. It is always a mark of *sanctification*. Sanctification means that a person is *set apart* in a special way under God's authority. Paul tells us that the unregenerate husband or wife is sanctified by the {104} presence of the believing partner in the marriage (1 Cor. 7:14). This does not mean that the partner is saved by marriage rather than by grace through faith; it means that the partner is treated in a special way by God, for he or she becomes the beneficiary of living with someone who is formally under God's covenant of salvation, and

therefore who is reforming his or her life in terms of God's law. We baptize children because of the position of a believing parent. This is why we should encourage unbelieving wives and children to be baptized, for they are now operating under the authority of a man who is governed by the terms of God's covenant. They are now sanctified by being subordinate to God's law.

Baptism should *not* be understood as a sacrament which symbolizes or authorizes full membership into the church. Children do not vote in church assemblies. In some churches, women who are not widowed may not vote. (Numbers 30:9 indicates a similar distinction between widows and divorced women on the one hand, and married women and unmarried women on the other. A widow's vow is immediately put into operation; a married woman under a husband's authority cannot be held to the performance of her vow if her husband rejects it on the day that he hears of it. The same is true of the unmarried woman: her father can nullify the vow.) Baptism is simply a symbol of God's two-edged covenant, the acknowledging of God's lawful sovereignty over the individual and all those in covenantal subordination to him or her, in the case of the widow.

The concept of democratic voting in a church is a Protestant doctrine of the independents and the Presbyterians. Where laymen vote for officers, an immediate problem appears. How are the less qualified, less educated, less sanctified (in the sense of progressive sanctification) members able to decide between two candidates for office? Will not the "lowest common denominator" principle operate in a church democracy, just as it has operated in political democracy? To mitigate this very real problem, churches have screened candidates for membership. They have required some sort of training before believers are accepted into the church. Only after the completion of such training is the rite of baptism administered. Churches have delayed the rite of baptism for the sake of preserving the integrity of the church, since all baptized people, or at least baptized males, who join the church can vote. Baptism has been linked directly to full voting membership, at least with respect to new converts.

People transferring membership from other churches are not required to be rebaptized, but they normally are interrogated and instructed, if necessary, in the doctrines of the local church before they

are allowed to become full voting members. What we should conclude, then, is that there is no automatic relationship between baptism and full church membership, in the sense of voting membership. The screening should indeed take place before full voting membership is granted; what is wrong today is that churches {105} spend time in screening candidates prior to baptizing them. Churches do not seem to comprehend that the same principle applies to the newly baptized convert which applies to the person seeking a transfer of membership: baptism precedes full voting membership; it does not automatically confer such membership. In fact, some churches may feel under pressure to hurry the screening process in order to get the professing convert baptized. The screening process is thereby downgraded, and the “lowest common denominator” principle takes over. The screening process should probably be tightened, but the delay in baptism should be drastically shortened. They are two separate operations, governed by different principles. Screening protects the theological integrity of the church. Baptism symbolizes the covenantal subordination to God and God’s covenant by the believer. A believer has a right to baptism; he does not have a right to vote in church elections.

We know that in the parable of the sower, three of the four seeds eventually die. Only one grows to full maturity (Matt. 13:3–9, 18–23). This points to the necessity of a far more lengthy screening process. It would not be unwise to wait as long as a year before bringing candidates into full voting membership, though some sort of formal examination process should be used to allow more rapid progress. The Bible required some nationalities to wait three generations, or ten generations, before they could enter into full membership in the congregation of the Hebrews (Deut. 23:1–8). However, the Moabites were in the ten generation classification, yet Ruth was awarded full membership, entering into the covenant line when she married Boaz (Matt. 1:5). Her remarkable faith was rewarded, and she and her seed did not have to wait ten generations. Full voting membership in the church should be analogous to full membership in the Hebrew commonwealth. Men should have access to the sacraments and benefits of the church long before they have attained full voting membership. The element of democracy in modern churches makes mandatory a more thorough



screening process. A period of probation for new converts helps protect the church's integrity.

The person who is baptized in his own household thereby acknowledges that he is now under God's authority. By having others in his household baptized, he declares that they, being under his authority, are also under God's authority. He simultaneously affirms that he is under God's authority and a person required to exercise godly dominion in terms of that authority. Jesus was under authority and therefore the bearer of authority—the testimony of the Roman centurion which so impressed Jesus (Luke 7:2–9). All men are to exercise dominion (Gen. 1:27–28; 9:1–7), but those who acknowledge this responsibility under God are true saints. This is a central fact (probably *the* central fact) of the meaning of the priesthood of all believers. {106}

A priest exercises authority as a sovereign. So does the head of a household, including a widow or divorced woman. If baptism took place today in the households of new converts, the priestly role of the family leader would be symbolized far more effectively. Baptism within the confines of a church worship service does not convey this important meaning nearly so effectively. Church baptisms are not invalid. Unmarried persons living in pagan households or living alone should be baptized in church. People converted in a church meeting may wish to be baptized immediately, or that evening, in the place of their conversions. Nevertheless, the testimony of the Acts is that household baptism is lawful, and in our era, when the family is under fire, and men have abdicated their family responsibilities as heads of households, there would seem to be valid reasons for returning to the precedent of the Acts. Other members of a household might be more likely to understand the nature of the spiritual change which has put them in a newly sanctified (though not justified) position as family members. They are now subordinate to God through the family priest, who will henceforth mediate God's authority, though not salvation. To the extent that Protestant sacerdotalism distorts and clouds this new relationship, it has compromised the integrity, responsibility, and authority of the family. By restricting the location in which baptism is supposedly lawful—an official church worship service—Protestant sacerdotalism has compromised the very institution which is to serve as the training ground of elders and deacons. *Baptism is a meaningful symbol,*

and it has not been accidental historically that its administration has been centralized and that the tradition of household baptism has been suppressed. The doctrine of the priesthood of few believers had to be manifested through its own symbolic rituals if it was ever to gain widespread acceptance among laymen—the lawful priests whose authority was steadily being transferred to a far narrower group.

It is significant that Kline refuses to go this far in the extension of the covenant principle. He argues in the final chapter of *By Oath Consigned* that the New Testament does not provide a clear-cut directive with respect to the baptism of servants—children, yes, but not servants. The reason for this hesitancy is Kline’s belief that the Old Testament kingdom law structure has no validity in New Testament times. This position has been ably refuted by Greg Bahnsen in the appendix devoted to Kline in Bahnsen’s book, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (1977). Kline distinguishes the cultural authority which has focus in the covenant family (and, apparently, only in the family) from the “cultic authority focus in the assembled, worshipping congregation with its special officers.” The kingdom-cultural focus of the Old Testament kingdom is no longer in existence, Kline argues, since it was a temporary phenomenon. Kline’s amillennialism is clearly visible in his explanation of the meaning of the Old Testament {107} kingdom, for that kingdom merely pointed to the final consummation, something which the New Testament structure of biblical authority does not do, for some reason or other.

The kingdom of Israel was, of course, not another Caesar-kingdom but, uniquely, the kingdom of God institutionally present among the nations. Its earthly cultural form was symbolic of the ultimate integration of culture and cult in the world of the consummation. The judicial infliction of cultural sanctions by its officers typified the final messianic judgment of men in the totality of their being as cultural creatures. This institutional symbolization of the final judgment and eternal kingdom disappeared from the earthly scene when the Old Covenant gave way to the New.

Why the symbol of final judgment “of men in the totality of their being as cultural creatures” should have been abolished by the New Covenant, Kline does not explain here. He just states that it was. There is an *implicit dispensationalism* in Kline’s position—a radical cultural discontinuity between the law-order of the Old Testament and the law-

order of the New. There is also an *implicit social antinomianism* in his view of culture, for the civil government is not required to enforce Old Testament civil law, and the officers of the church do not possess such authority. Only Christ possesses such authority to judge, and in our age, this power is not manifested in any earthly institution, despite the fact that the authority of Christ over all the creation was announced clearly only in this age (Matt. 28:18). Christ's royal authority is simply a limiting concept until the final judgment, meaning a theory which has no institutional, earthly manifestation. As Kline writes near the end of his book: "In this age of the church, royal theocratic authority with its prerogative of imposing physical-cultural sanctions resides solely in Christ, the heavenly King. The judicial authority of the permanent special officers whom Christ has appointed to serve his church on earth is purely spiritual-cultic. Cultural sanctions have no place, therefore, in the functioning of the central and dominant cultic authority focus of the New Covenant community, and it would violate the spirit of the church's distinctive mission in the present age if such sanctions were to be introduced in connection with the auxiliary family (-household) focus of authority."

It is understandable why Kline, as an amillennialist and a social antinomian, should be hesitant to permit the baptism of unregenerate wives and servants on the basis of the authority conferred by God to the confessing head of the household. The family priest is really not a priest in the ecclesiastical sense, and Kline, like all Protestant sacerdotalists, sees the priesthood only within the framework of the sacramental, monopolistic, cultic institution we call the visible church. In short, there is no meaningful kingdom of priests, so we are still bogged down in the doctrine of the priesthood of few believers. Kline has removed the kingdom in its broad, {108} authoritative, and judicial sense, relegating it to a mere symbol, one which passed into history with Christ's advent, or at least with His resurrection. The only focus worth talking about is the so-called "cultic authority focus in the assembled, worshipping congregation with its special officers." The realm of external legal sanctions is turned over to Satan and his host—sanctions in no way connected with the explicit requirements of Old Testament biblical law. The new focus is the church, meaning the institutional church. Thus, it should hardly come as a surprise that Kline's amillennialism and his

social antinomianism have led him to a truncated concept of the covenantal law-order, and an equally truncated view of all other authority structures apart from the institutional church. That he refuses to extend the circumcision-baptism rite to the entire household, as it was in the Old Testament (Gen. 17), is fully in line with his opposition to the reign of Old Testament law in New Testament times. There is no kingdom of priests simply because there is no kingdom, institutionally speaking. Therefore, laymen cannot be priests, institutionally speaking.

In conclusion, baptism is the mark of covenantal subordination. It testifies to God's lawful authority over us and to our acceptance of this cosmic reality. Baptism is the ritual oath symbol of New Testament vassals who affirm their subordination to a sovereign Lord. Therefore, my tentative though strongly felt opinion is this: *the messenger who brings the announcement of our Lord's sovereign authority and sovereign grace has a right to baptize the new convert.* The position of the messenger as a lawful priest indicates this. Second, the principle of a man's right to a speedy baptism indicates this. Third, the symbolism of a delayed baptism—a temporary period of covenant suspension—testifies to this. If this conclusion is absolutely and unquestionably incorrect—which the creeds and traditional practices of most Protestant churches necessarily declare—then it must be shown which principle or principles override those favoring the right of speedy baptism by the person who has brought the message of salvation. Who is the priest?

For reasons of cultural heritage, or geographical circumstances, or a sense of propriety, a particular church in a particular period of time may *recommend* one or another time and place of baptism, though its goal should be speedy baptisms in households as a general rule. It takes time to alter deeply felt and long-honored church traditions. Nevertheless, to insist that “ministers of the Word”—defined narrowly as teaching elders or their equivalent—are alone permitted to baptize, is to go beyond Scripture. A reform of the creeds is mandatory. At the absolute minimum, deacons must be allowed to baptize without prior consultation with elders.

### ***Communion (The Lord's Supper)***

Protestants recognize this as the other of the two New Testament sacraments. {109} Like the sacrament of baptism, this one is shared by all believers who are under the authority of God's covenant of redemp-

tion. It is open to all of the faithful. It is an ordinance which testifies to the continuing faith in Christ by His people.

Protestants deny that participation in any sacrament automatically confers the blessings of salvation on anyone. Protestants therefore deny baptismal regeneration and regeneration through communion. The sacraments are aids in bringing the message of faith to the attention of both saved and lost, but faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). It is the written and spoken *word* which is the means of communicating faith, not the sacraments. Sacramental symbols illustrate truths that have been revealed to us through the word of God. They have an important purpose, or series of purposes, but the word is primary.

Protestants have usually sought to link holy communion with the Hebrew rite of the Passover. The New Testament refers to “Christ our Passover” (1 Cor. 5:7). The first instance of holy communion occurred during the Passover week in Jerusalem, on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread (Matt. 26:17–30). Jesus gathered the disciples into the upper room and broke bread with them. Chapters 13–17 of John record His instruction to them during this first communion service. It is not unwarranted to equate communion with the Passover, paralleling the equation of baptism and circumcision. But the equation is not, in either case, like a mathematical equation. The two halves are not equal. They are linked over time and across the two testaments, but there are differences.

The Passover was the central ritual of the Hebrews. It was an intensely familistic ritual. Each family was to select a lamb, on the tenth day of the first month of the year, separating it from the midst of other sheep and goats (Ex. 12:3–5). On the fourteenth day of the first month, the lamb was killed, in the evening hours. It was then roasted and eaten throughout the night, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (12:6–9). “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S Passover” (12:11). No leavened bread could be eaten for the next seven days (12:19). The father’s role in this ceremony was central:

And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land

which the LORD will give to you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. (12:24–27)

The Passover in Jesus's day did not involve standing all night, as it had {110} on the first Passover night. Jesus sat down with His disciples (Luke 22:14). But He shared His knowledge of the coming events with them, as a father might have shared with his children the story and meaning of the Passover. He broke bread with them—presumably unleavened bread—and shared wine from the cup. Then He exhorted them, “this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19b). He then explained His message of victory to them: “And I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29–30). Here was the announcement of a kingdom of priests who will execute judgment. They were meeting together as friends, not in their own homes, indicating that henceforth a man's true family is with his friends in the faith. This does not mean, however, that the household communion service is now revoked.

Early in the Acts we find recorded the practice of the “breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42). Fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers were practiced at communal meals. “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46). Later in the Acts, the author records Paul's visit to Troas. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ...” (Acts 20:7a). There is no doubt that the communion meal had become part of the regular church meeting. They came specifically to break bread. Nevertheless, the practice was not limited to weekly worship services.

Paul's message to the Corinthian church was that it had transgressed in many areas, and among these areas was the communion feast. There were divisions and heresies within the group (1 Cor. 11:18–19). In this fragmented setting, each person came to eat his own dinner, with some people going hungry in the midst of the others. Paul asks them if they haven't got homes to eat in. Such divisive behavior is contemptuous of

the church and shames the poor (11:21–22). Paul reminds them of Christ's words at the last supper, how they should eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of His body and blood.

Some came to the meeting drunk. Obviously, this was in violation of good conduct. Paul warns them that a person who partakes of the communion meal unworthily thereby drinks and eats damnation to himself, “not discerning the Lord's body” (11:29). This is a central passage, and it has created dissension among the theologians. What does “unworthily” mean? More important, what does “not discerning the Lord's body” mean?

Because this was an official meeting of the church, all things were to be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). Drunken communicants were a contradiction in terms. So were solitary eaters. They were to eat their meal together. If they were hungry before coming to the Lord's table, they {111} were to eat beforehand. There was to be unity in the fellowship of communion, not division, whether theological division or division in the speed and time in which the meal was to be eaten. It was still a ritual meal, although it was more than a wafer and a thimbleful of wine, more than a thumb-size bit of “enriched” white bread. Modern Christianity has reduced the meal to a *symbol of a meal*. In contrast, the Corinthians had forgotten the symbol of Christ's death and were treating it as if it were nothing more than just another meal. Neither group comes close to either the Passover or the last supper.

Those who refused to respect the sensibilities of other brethren, especially the poor, but also the feelings of those who resented drunkenness, were drinking and eating unworthily. They were not taking seriously the sacramental character of worship and fellowship. They had forgotten that they were in church, reenacting a basic historical event in the history of the church. The church of Jesus Christ is referred to by Paul as the Lord's body, and it should come as no surprise that the great chapter dealing with the diversity of gifts within the unity of the body of Christ is 1 Corinthians 12, beginning a few lines after the words, “not discerning the Lord's body.” What Paul meant should be clear, but apparently it is not clear to many Christians. *The discernment of the body refers to each participant's awareness of the unity of the church in fellowship during the celebration of the communion meal.* There were divisions in the church, so Paul criticized them (11:18–19).

They were not meeting and eating together, as one people in fellowship, so Paul criticized them (11:20–22). In short, Paul perceived the existence of schism in the church, and he devoted the second half of this chapter and all of 1 Corinthians 12 to a consideration of the need for church unity. There was a great need for healing within the body of Christ, His church.

Those who ate and drank in a disorderly fashion were converting the Lord's Supper into something else. Their actions symbolized their commitment to a divisive interpretation of the symbol of communion. They were testifying to the *disunity of Christ's kingdom*—the kingdom promised by Christ at His last supper. They had converted a symbol of spiritual unity and victory into a symbol of disunity. This was the setting of Paul's warning against eating and drinking unworthily. They had not discerned the Lord's body, meaning the church's presence, in the divided communion feasts of Corinth. This was not mere negligence; it was inevitably a symbolic act, for which damnation was and is a suitable punishment.

Later theologians have misinterpreted the phrase, “not discerning the Lord's body,” by focusing attention on the bread which was and is eaten in the communion service. They have argued that the concern of Paul was over the lack of theological understanding within the church, specifically in their inability to understand that the bread which they ate stood for Christ's {112} body, which He sacrificed on the cross. But the verse does not make this mistake: “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” Had he said, “not discerning the Lord's body and blood,” then we could conclude that Paul's concern related to their lack of understanding of the meaning of the *elements* of the supper. But their lack of understanding was much deeper than that; they had failed to understand the meaning of the sacrament's role within the church, the body of Christ, of which they were the members. They showed no respect for other members. (The word “members” is applied to parts of the body in the next chapter, and the dual meaning in English—members of a group and members such as fingers—conveys Paul's message quite well.)

This misinterpretation of Paul's phrase, “not discerning the body,” has led to a horrendous error on the part of Reformed theologians.



They have limited the attendance at the Lord's Supper to adults and young adults. They have feared that young children might fail to understand the *symbolism* of the *elements* of the supper. They have feared that children who eat these elements in ignorance of their symbolic meaning thereby eat and drink damnation unto themselves. But Paul was concerned about the Corinthians' failure to recognize church order. It takes little training to teach a child that church is a special place, that he must behave in an orderly way. Children are alert to special ceremonies, and they can hardly keep from asking what this or that is all about. Modern Protestants have closed the communion table to children because they are afraid that the children will not understand the implications of the elements, and therefore that they will "not discern the Lord's body." The ghastly irony here is that it is the theologians, not the children, who have misunderstood the words of Paul. Paul's concern was with the church, not the elements.

The Passover was aimed at the children of the household. It was designed to elicit questions from the children, and the father of the house was to use this opportunity to explain the meaning of the ceremonies. The Passover was a means of training children. Its symbols could be passed on to the children more readily because the children participated in the ceremonies. Once again, we see that *the family is the training ground for the faithful*. The father in the Old Testament directed the sacrament of the Passover, sharing this responsibility with the high priest, who entered the holy of holies during this special annual festival. In his household, he was indeed a priest, at least for one week each year.

What about the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? The modern churches limit the sacramental character of the feast to operations performed by the elders, or by the minister of the word. If the minister of the word does not direct the eating and drinking of the elements, there is therefore no Lord's Supper, no holy communion. The practice of the modern church has, in {113} theology as well as in practice, removed totally the strong element of family participation and family authority found in the Passover. Incredible as it seems, the modern churches have *removed* the element of priesthood possessed by the father in the Old Testament. Despite the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the traditional concept of the Lord's Supper has thwarted the exercise

of the priestly function by fathers within their households. Modern Christianity has taken away from the father of the house the sacrament which he lawfully administered prior to Christ. The universalization of the priesthood has come to mean the abolition of the lawful administration of a sacrament by laymen which the Passover had not only permitted, but insisted on. In this sense, modern churches have, in theology and in fact, adopted a new doctrine in direct contradiction to Peter's announcement: "The priesthood of *fewer* believers." Fewer believers, proportionately, perform a sacramental function today than in the Old Testament. Modern Christianity has removed the sacramental privileges from the family in order to strengthen vastly the position of the minister or so-called teaching elder. It has centralized ecclesiastical power and prestige, all in the name of the priesthood of all believers. George Orwell had a good name for this kind of theology. He called it "doublespeak."

Consider the anti-parallels between the sacrament of the Passover and today's sacrament of holy communion. In the Old Testament, the sacrament was intensely familistic. In our day, the sacrament has been emptied of all family responsibilities. It is true that the disciples met with Jesus and not their families, but He had called them into apostolic service, away from their families temporarily. The practice of household worship and the breaking of bread immediately returned in the days prior to Pentecost. The sacrament was restored to families, and increased from once a year (in the case of the Passover) to possibly several times each week, as converts visited each other's homes and broke bread in fellowship. The church authorities of the next century began to centralize the sacrament of holy communion, and this process has been continued until the present. The church family has sought to replace the household's sacrament.

Another anti-parallel is the element of child training. The Passover was designed to rear up godly, informed children who understood the meaning of the ceremonies. In today's setting, children are excluded from the communion service. Again, it represents nothing less than a frontal attack on the family by the ecclesiastical bureaucracy. Out of concern for children's souls, and out of a misinterpretation of Paul's words, the leaders have kept the sacrament from children, who in pre-Christian times would have been full participants.

The Passover involved every family, as well as the labors of the ecclesiastical priests. The communion service makes the individual almost wholly passive, and the minister and his helpers wholly active. In some {114} cases, there are no helpers; the minister serves the communion by himself. It is significant that the church has removed the signs of decentralized authority, the institutional buffers between central power and individual action. The minister offers the sacrament, actually creates the sacramental character of the “feast” (a thimbleful of wine or grape juice and a thumb-size bit of bread), and the “universal priests” sit quietly, each one alone in his chair or pew, waiting solemnly to receive the elements. This thin, pale reflection of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the upper room or in the joyful households of the early church is offered in the name of refined theology—the best that the theologians could come up with.

The supposed parallels between the Passover and the modern Lord’s Supper are a sham. There are no parallels, except in the rarefied atmosphere of shared theological symbols. The blood of the Passover lamb was shed and its flesh eaten, and we eat the body of our Lamb when we eat the bread. There is a symbolic carry-over from the Passover. But as the sacrament is actually practiced, there is only the shadow of resemblance. Frankly, the so-called shadow of the Old Testament sacrifice and sacrament possessed far more substance than the modern church’s version. The modern church has the shadow, institutionally speaking. The modern church has reversed the teaching of the Book of Hebrews, which states clearly that the Old Testament practices were shadows of the New (8:5; 10:1). Today’s “universal priest” has far less sacramental authority than the Old Testament layman. Modern Protestant orthodoxy has turned upside down the biblical message concerning the priesthood. The Passover served better food to its participants, nutritionally, emotionally, educationally, and in terms of ritual symbolism.

An exceedingly ingenious argument has been used by theologians and church historians to call attention away from the record of the Acts. They have, for well over a thousand years, distinguished the Lord’s Supper from something called the *agapé* feast of the New Testament. That is, whenever the breaking of bread in households is mentioned in the Acts, the scholars find nothing except a special feast of the “primitive church” which has long since died out. It was merely

transitional, the true rite being the Lord's Supper, that is, the denuded communion practice of whichever church the scholar belongs to. In short, that which is biblical is relegated to the historically transitional, a local practice of the Jerusalem church; that which is approved by church tradition in any particular denomination is called the Lord's Supper. A typical example of this approach is found in the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (1873), edited by McClintock and Strong, under the topic, "Lord's Supper":

The Agape, as belonging to a transient phase of the Christian life, and varying in its effects with changes in national character or forms of civilization, passes through many stages; becomes more and more a {115} merely local custom, is found to be productive of evil rather than of good, is discouraged by bishops and forbidden by councils, and finally dies out. Traces of it linger in some of the traditional practices of the Western Church.<sup>107</sup>

That is to say, the constant tendencies toward ecclesiastical centralization and sacerdotalism found in the early medieval church finally overcame the familistic and far more household-oriented communion ceremonies of the New Testament church. Unfortunately, this is not the way traditionalistic theologians and scholars say it.

We now come to that passage which, perhaps more than any other passage in the Bible, sends shivers of foreboding down the spines of sacerdotal authorities: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Here was the basis of the early church's so-called *agapé* feasts, meaning the original form of holy communion. This doctrine of Christ's presence is intimately related to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. It affirms that when members of the priesthood get together, God is with them in a direct way, just as He was with the priests of the Old Testament. Members of the early church could celebrate the Lord's Supper, breaking bread in fellowship, from house to house, precisely because Christ was present with them.

There is absolutely no evidence in the Scriptures that a church officer was present at every such meeting. In fact, it would be surprising if there had been enough church officers to accompany every feast,

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107. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. 5, ed. John McClintock and James Strong (New York: Harper & Bros., [1873] 1891), 512.

since 3,000 converts were added to the assembly on one day alone, a fact revealed to us in the verse immediately preceding the first reference in Acts to the breaking of bread (Acts. 2:40). (One thing is certain: with that rate of growth, the early church was not able to wait around for ministers of the Word to graduate from an accredited university and attend at least three semesters of seminary.) What the message of the Acts seems to be is that the Lord's Supper was universally celebrated on a decentralized basis, with families visiting families and sharing the meal together. And why not? Christ had promised to be among such groups, and He had not said that an ordained elder had to be present with the group in order to obtain His special presence. Church officers may have been present on many occasions, and they may have then led the ceremonies, but there is no evidence indicating that they were present at every communion service, and there is no evidence that Christ required them to act as officially appointed leaders at every feast.

There is no doubt that sects have abused the doctrine of the special presence of Christ, but this does not deny its validity. Christ honors His {116} word, even in the midst of schismatic assemblies. We must face the fact that there is very little New Testament evidence describing the Lord's Supper as practiced by the early church, especially with respect to what went on in those assemblies. Therefore, to limit the sacrament of the Lord's Supper exclusively and universally to rites directed by a "minister of the Word" is to go far beyond the evidence of Scripture. Once again, we find that the institutional church has monopolized the use and administration of a sacrament on the basis of theological inference—inference based entirely on a doctrine of a priesthood which is sacerdotal and highly centralized. The universalization of the priesthood is denied, for the mark of a priesthood, namely, the lawful administration of the sacraments, has been prohibited. Once again, we see the operation of a different doctrine, the priesthood of few believers. In the case of the Lord's Supper, virtually the whole of the Passover tradition had to be abandoned in order to achieve this ecclesiastical concentration of authority. The head of the Hebrew household prior to Christ was permitted to administer a sacrament at least once each year. Two centuries after Christ, the institutional church's authorities were

already involved in an effort (one might better say “conspiracy”) to abolish even that minimal precedent of the priesthood of all believers.

If Christ is in the midst of two or three Christians when they get together for prayer or celebration, what is unique about the church’s weekly worship service? First of all, the worship service is under the care of specially screened elders. These men are supposed to have been screened and tested in terms of a rigorous set of criteria. They serve as heads of the local congregation. They preach, direct the sacraments, and discipline the congregation. The household Old Testament ritual of the Passover meal was not intended to replace the sacrifice of the high priest in the temple. The high priest’s actions served as the ritual foundation of the household sacrifice. Similarly, the legitimacy of household communion performed by heads of households is not intended to be a substitute for the authorized and required public assembling of the whole congregation (Heb. 10:25). The regular and formal worship service of the church is primary; the household feasts are supplementary celebrations. God established regular offices in the church which provide authority (elders) and charity (deacons), indicating the permanent nature of His institutional church. But the permanence of one ecclesiastical institution over time and geography should not be understood as denying the legitimacy of family sovereignty which has sacramental functions within the protecting framework of church discipline and order. The Protestant heritage of multiple authorities—the denial of any final authority on earth, except for the Bible—should be upheld. Sacerdotal tendencies must be removed from Protestantism, and the monopolization of the doctrine of Christ’s presence by the institutional {117} church and its corporate worship services is unquestionably an outgrowth of sacerdotalism. We need *plural institutions* and a *unified eldership*, not a plural eldership and a single visible institution in which Christ is allowed to manifest His presence.

Notice what I am *not* saying. I am not saying that officers in the church should never administer the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. I am not saying that the Lord’s Supper should not be a basic part of a church’s worship services. Indeed, New Testament evidence indicates that the Lord’s Supper ought to be at least a weekly affair, as Calvin strenuously maintained, and which is presently maintained by the Church of Christ.<sup>108</sup> I am not saying that women should lead in the

church worship services. What I *am* saying is that ecclesiastical authorities have not been given an exclusive right to administer the sacraments. Furthermore, the sacrament is lawful for laymen to administer and enjoy in the absence of a church officer and on any day of the week that seems convenient to them. They are to practice self-examination, just as Paul required (1 Cor. 11:28). Self-examination does not require the presence of a church officer. Naturally, the feast should be orderly. Drunkenness is prohibited. But to break bread ritually at the end of a regular meal, or at a special gathering of friends who are members of God's family, is not an infringement on the lawful authority of the institutional church. If these meetings become lawless, or if unbelievers are deliberately allowed to come to the feasts, then church discipline is proper and required, but the universalization of the priesthood involves the universalization of personal responsibility, and a church officer does not need to be present to police each and every gathering at which two or three saints are gathered together. Christ will be there, and this is surely sufficient.

The centralized church, like the centralized civil government, operates on the premise that an officer must be present at important gatherings in order to direct or monitor each decision. Church officers too often operate as if the purpose of church discipline were not fundamentally negative, suppressing that which is unlawful when it becomes a public matter, but leaving men free to work out their own salvations with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12b). Lower assemblies of the church constantly look for guidance from some higher board rather than acting forcefully in good conscience and awaiting any decision which might come on appeal. The result, in church and state, is rather like the story of the two men who were assigned to the task of swatting a fly, with one man using the swatter and the other man giving him directions. The fly finally died of old age. The fly is very much like the problems that are sent up and down the Presbyterian chains of command, with each level asserting the right of the church to intervene, {118} and

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108. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. 4, chap. 17, sec. 44: "Thus we ought always to provide that no meeting of the Church is held without the word, prayer, the dispensation of the Supper, and alms."

with nobody ready to take full responsibility for a final, irrevocable decision. They demand authority and then flee responsibility.

Sacraments must be administered by priests. What we must decide is this: who is the priest? Second, under which conditions does he have lawful authority to perform his duties? Finally, must every instance of every sacramental observance be performed within the confines of the official worship service of an institutional, visible church?

Biblically, there is far less warrant for the ecclesiastical monopoly over the Lord's Supper than there is for a monopoly over baptism. Baptism is a rite based on the acceptance of God's lawful authority over a person's life. An authority structure of some kind is implied by the very nature of the sacrament. But the Lord's Supper, as described by the New Testament, is a time of fellowship, rejoicing, prayer, thanksgiving, and real food. It is a *celebration*. It is linked to households as much as it is linked to church assemblies. The structure of ecclesiastical authority is further in the background than it is in the rite of baptism.

The Lord's Supper is a time to eat. There must be life in the sacrament, some sense of full participation, some sense of active involvement. God has given us this rite for positive reasons: thankfulness, celebration, fellowship, and remembrance of His liberating sacrifice on the cross. Modern Christians tend to forget that there is another reason why we need a meaningful, enthusiastic Lord's Supper. It is the lurking threat of occultism and demonism close behind or beneath the thin veneer of Western culture. Christians forget that the rules of the Lord's Supper set forth by Paul were preceded by Paul's warning against the idolatrous celebration of demonic sacraments. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21). In the previous verse, Paul announced: "... I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." The tradition of rationalism within Calvinistic circles has blinded men to the fact that devils exist, that they have perverse communion festivals, and that man can be as close to them in such services as they are close to Christ in His. In fact, Paul never specifically affirms the special presence of Christ at a communion festival; he *does* affirm the presence of demons at theirs. The reason why Old Testament law prohibited the drinking of blood was theological, not simply aesthetic (Lev. 7:26–27). Blood drinking, cannibalism, and drunkenness are



familiar features of various occult celebrations. Men need a holy alternative. Christians need an emotionally satisfying sacramental celebration, not an austere, rigorously symbolic act devoid of personal interaction and fellowship. We need something simultaneously sacrificial and enjoyable, like the “holy wastefulness” of the tithe of celebration (Deut. 14:22–27).

The problem, symbolically speaking, with the modern communion service {119} is that it is *doubly symbolic*. The Passover symbolized God’s deliverance of His people through the shedding of innocent blood, namely, the blood of an unblemished lamb. The Passover looked forward to the final shedding of blood by Christ on the cross, but the Hebrews could see this only dimly. They were to look backward at a real event, their deliverance out of Egypt, and forward to the shedding of innocent blood. Because of their place in the history of redemption, they were required to look backward primarily, to the exodus. They had clearer information about the past than about the future. Similarly, Christians are to look backward, to Christ’s work on the cross. Christians are also to look forward, to the day in which we shall eat and drink with Christ in His kingdom, executing judgment (Luke 22:30). Yet it is obvious that the forward-looking kingdom aspect of the original communion service has no part in any modern Protestant denomination’s official ritual of communion (so far as I am aware). Christians look backward as much as the Hebrews did during Passover. We look back, however, to two events: the original supper in the upper room and to the cross. The early Christians had a real meal, where real bread was broken and real wine was consumed (which was why some men were drunk in the Corinthian church—they were not drinking grape juice). The early Christians therefore had a meal like the one Christ and the apostles shared. The meal was to be a symbolic reminder of Christ’s offer of His body and blood on Calvary. But the modern church does not have a real meal. The modern communion service is a symbolic meal which points to a real meal which points to the crucifixion. Modern sacerdotalism has refined the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper so that its message must pass through an extra layer of symbolism—the symbol of a meal—to impart its message. Having obscured the original forcefulness of the communion symbol, the modern churchmen then exclude children from the symbolic celebration (which is a

time of silence, solitude, and solemnity—a peculiar symbol of original celebration) because children may not “discern the body,” meaning they may not understand the symbolism of the elements. The bits of bread are rightly called elements, for they are tiny symbolic scraps representing what once was a real meal.

The great loser in the modern version of the Lord’s Supper is the child. The child has no part to play. Compared to the youthful Hebrew of pre-Christian times, he is cut off from the sacrament. We do not give our children the opportunity to celebrate even the pale ritual we have filtered through layers of ecclesiastical tradition. We have neglected the training of our children through ritual participation.

Regarding the sacraments in general, we ought to conclude that we are still laboring in the shadow of Roman Catholicism. Protestant sacerdotalism has continued the traditions of centralization, monopolization, and the priesthood of few believers. Protestants have officially affirmed the {120} priesthood of all believers, yet the church authorities deny the right of laymen to administer the sacraments—the mark of the priesthood. If we are to overthrow the dead hand of sacerdotalism, we need to expand the role of laymen in the administration of the sacraments and expand the role of the sacraments outside of the narrowly ecclesiastical church worship service. We must heed the warning of the nineteenth-century social philosopher, Laménais: *centralization breeds apoplexy at the center and anemia at the extremities.*

### *Institutional Discipline*

A priest exercises godly, lawful discipline within his sphere of authority. He serves as God’s representative. A priest who cannot exercise discipline is not a priest. He disciplines (subdues) his portion of the earth to the glory of God.

There is no question that within the confines of the institutional church the elders have the monopoly of imposing sanctions for disobedience to God’s law. This is the foundation of the church’s ability to cleanse itself from the unrighteous (1 Cor. 5). There is a screening process involved in the selection of church elders, namely, prior experience in ruling a family.

Before a man is a priest of the congregation, he must be a priest of his own family. The centrality of the family in church life could not be

made any plainer. Bachelors should not be ordained. They have not proven themselves within the priestly confines of the office of family leader. The celibacy requirement imposed by the Roman Catholic Church was imposed for purposes of ecclesiastical centralization. It created a sense of ultimate loyalty and dependence upon the church's ecclesiastical hierarchy. A priest in the Roman Catholic Church is not permitted to have rival institutional claims on his loyalty and energy. The institution of the family helps to remind men of their multiple loyalties in life. A man learns the limits of the possible when he rules over a family. The constraints imposed by reality keep church authorities in their proper place. This sense of reality is not the same as writing term papers.

The fact that every saint is a priest should not blind us to the fact that there are distinctions of authority and honor within the priesthood. Church officers have special authority. Paul affirms this principle (1 Tim. 5:17–18). No priest has lawful authority in every area of life. No human institution possesses ultimate and total sovereignty. All authority is limited by biblical law. This is why the church contains as many priests as it has adult members. When a person can vote in a church meeting, or give advice, or teach a class, or take responsibility for making decisions, he has become a priest. Nevertheless, there are higher and lower priests, greater and lesser priests, within the confines of a single institution. A lesser priest in one institution (the church) may be a supreme priest in another institution (the military). {121} A man may take orders from one person in a particular institution and subsequently give orders to the other person when both are operating in a different institution. This is one good reason why mutual deference and respect should be basic to any higher priest. No one is in high authority in every human institution. *A pastor is a priest, not because he is a pastor, but because he is a Christian.*

The priesthood, like the sacraments, exists beyond the confines of the ecclesiastical offices. The Christian is a priest in principle at all times. He is a priest vested with priestly authority and responsibility only within the confines of a few human institutions. We are a kingdom of priests. A kingdom is wide, and Christ's kingdom is growth-oriented. Its ultimate goal is total domination, under Christ: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy

that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:25–26). To limit the royal priesthood to the institutional church is to deny the universality of the kingdom of God, equating it instead with the institutional church. This, too, is a theological heritage of Roman Catholicism. The church is equated with the kingdom; the kingdom is then restricted to the spiritual, or else it is understood as the universal external reign of the institutional church; and either conclusion leads to error. The church shrivels under pietism or becomes tyrannical under ecclesiology. In any case, the priesthood is narrowly defined and centralized with a vengeance. The idea that a man can be a priest in other spheres of life is ignored. The priesthood is equated with ecclesiastical officeholders.

Romans 13 affirms that God ordains the higher powers. This does not mean that men must always obey the officials of the civil government. If the passage meant this, then Peter could not have uttered his challenge to the state: we must serve God rather than men (Acts 5:29). But there are lawfully ordained higher powers. A plurality of authorities exists, and men are required to obey them. “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same” (Rom. 13:3). Paul’s language concerning the ruler could not be clearer: “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (13:4). When the saint finds himself in the role of law enforcer, he is a saint-priest. He is ordained. He executes judgment. He administers discipline. He is fulfilling his tasks as a member of a royal priesthood. Lawful authority, when coupled with personal conversion to Christ, results in a Christian priestly office. The office is not always ecclesiastical, but it is nonetheless priestly. This is why Paul refers to the ruler as a minister of God. All authority is from God; therefore, all officeholders or bearers of authority, in any institution or setting, are ministers. They possess limited sovereignty. {122}

Not every office may have developed special sacraments, although many of them seem to have ritual observances that serve as the equivalent of ecclesiastical sacraments. They have marks of authority, a chain of command, and methods of discipline. But a Christian is doubly a priest, for he always exercises authority somewhere as he subdues his

portion of the earth (Gen. 1:28), yet he also has the right to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper under some conditions. The word of God therefore makes itself felt in every institution, in every chain of command, as the kingdom expands over time.

What we must guard against is the assertion of absolute monopoly by any person or group of persons within any human institution. No person, no institution, and no lawful authority can ever claim total and final sovereignty. This is why it is necessary to reaffirm the doctrine of the royal priesthood in our own era. *The quest for absolute sovereignty is basic to the institutions of secular humanism.* To the extent that false doctrines of Protestant sacerdotalism complement these centralizing trends, the church is compromised. E. L. Hebden Taylor, an ordained Anglican priest and sociologist, has put it very well:

Within temporal reality we find a diversity of offices. In order to see the integral unity of these diverse offices it is necessary to turn to the biblical revelation of Jesus Christ as the Supreme Office-bearer in the creation whom we are told is God's Prophet, Priest, and King. All the diversity of offices on earth find their concentration in the office of Christ as Covenant Head of the creation. As such Christ is the full and complete Office bearer, and He is therefore the origin and source of all power exercised on earth. Our Lord has delegated only partial sovereignties to men. In him alone all these earthly sovereignties are united in an undivided service of God that involves nothing less than the preservation and redemption of the whole of human life.<sup>109</sup>

### *Protestant Sacerdotalism*

Taylor's observations on the implications of Protestant sacerdotalism are well founded and to the point. The worst implication is the *negative position of the layman* within churches that have adopted centralized sacerdotal tendencies.

In the New Testament Church the "elders" never assumed the authoritative status *vis-a-vis* the laity which they have come to acquire in the Western world. In the New Testament we look in vain for the Western distinction between the *ecclesia docens* and the *ecclesia docta*; between the clergy, whose privilege it is to teach and instruct, and the laity, whose duty it is meekly to attend; the lay theologian was as com-

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109. E. L. Hebden Taylor, *Reformation or Revolution* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1970), 413.

mon in the New Testament Church as he is rare in the Western world. It was not thought necessary in the New Testament to wear a clerical collar in order to speak with authority of the things of God. For modern {123} Western Christianity, on the other hand—both Catholic and Protestant—the very words “layman” and “laity” have been severed from their biblical roots and have acquired a purely negative meaning. The layman is no longer one who through the mysteries of baptism and confirmation has become a member of a priestly body, the *laos* or people of God. He is considered only in terms of what he is *not* and cannot do. He is an outsider, a non-expert, in short, one who is not a parson or a minister.... Excluded from any active part in the worship services of the church, deprived of his extra-liturgical apostolate, the layman is left to his own private devotions. As a result there has been developing over the centuries a rank spiritual individualism leading to religious subjectivism and sentimentalism. Piety, in the modern sense, has become an inadequate substitute for a ministry involving every member of Christ's Body and embracing every legitimate field of human activity. Something has surely gone wrong. The Son of God did not take our human nature upon himself in order that we might be turned some into parsons and presbyters while others are turn[ed] into parishioners and laymen. The apostolic vision of a re-created universe has faded, giving place to a dualistic world, half sacred, half secular. There is no real cure for all this without a recovery of the true sense of the worship services of the church as a corporate action of the whole Body of Christ in any one locality.<sup>110</sup>

There can be little doubt that Taylor's conclusion is correct: “Today's Protestant minister, as to his place and function in the church, differs in actual *practice* very little from his Catholic counterpart.” Protestant sacerdotalism has compromised the concept of the universal priesthood, just as Protestant scholasticism compromised the concept of *sola scriptura*—the absolute supremacy of the Bible. Roman Catholic traditions were borrowed heavily by Protestant church officers, and secularism now threatens both with institutional paralysis. The Counter-Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church was more successful, ecclesiastically, than either Roman Catholics or Protestants realized at the time. Most Protestants still have not understood what has happened.

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110. *Ibid.*, 417–18.

## Questions

This essay is a preliminary study of the nature of the New Testament priesthood. It is intended to be a starting point, not a final set of conclusions. There are numerous immediate questions that should be dealt with by churches and Christian scholars. Yet we can rest assured that such a project will be resisted by the established institutional authorities. Some of the traditions of sacerdotalism are over 1,500 years old. It will no doubt take the coming of the realized kingdom to eliminate some of these traditions. Nevertheless, we need to consider these following issues, laboring toward days of institutional reform.

If the mark of the priest is ecclesiastical ordination, in what way are the {124} universal priests of New Testament times ordained? Is there a church ritual which should be added? Why is there no reference to an ordination ceremony for laymen in the New Testament? Or was there one which we do not recognize? If it is baptism, then we face an immediate problem. Should not the baptized (ordained) person gain access to full church membership? If so, then the church would have to screen candidates prior to baptism. But the New Testament does not authorize lengthy screening. If it is the granting of voting membership, an extra-biblical requirement made necessary because of modern practices of church democracy, then a baptized but non-voting church member cannot be a priest. Nevertheless, Peter says that all believers are part of the royal priesthood. Or does he? Is he referring strictly to full church members? Or, finally, is conversion itself the mark of a true priest, the only ordination necessary? Is this “ordination by God” comparable to that experienced by Paul on the road to Damascus?

It may be possible that ecclesiastical ordination is not required for lawful priesthood. If so, then the previous questions are unnecessary. My own opinion is that a man can be a priest without visible ordination by another man, and therefore ordination is a function of two events: conversion and lawful access to any position of authority. There can be special ordination ceremonies for church officers, but saints are nonetheless priests without such ordination.

What should the mode of baptism be? In churches, adults should probably be immersed, if Kline is correct concerning baptism as a sign of the Old Testament water ordeal-oath. For infants, pouring seems more appropriate. In the home, however, immersion is inconvenient

unless the family owns a swimming pool with water in it. Most families are not so blessed. The family shower would be a reasonable compromise, symbolizing the Noachian rains, but somehow the shower does not seem dignified. Showers are reserved in America for fully dressed coaches of victorious athletic teams at the end of a championship season. *Pouring* would probably be preferable, since it involves sufficient water to make it somewhat of an ordeal, or at least a unique experience. No single mode should be universally required.

If laymen are not legitimate baptizers, the church must come up with a reason for their exclusion. What could that reason be? It cannot be that church elders alone have the authority to discipline members, and hence the exclusive right to baptize, because Philip, a deacon, baptized. It cannot be that church officers preside over the worship service, because the New Testament authorizes baptism outside the assembly of worship. Indeed, it was rare in the New Testament to have baptisms specifically confined to a worship service—or explicitly stated to be such. Is ecclesiastical ordination the criterion? If so, there is no explicit evidence to this effect {125} in the New Testament. Is it the preservation of order (1 Cor. 12:40)? But baptism need not be administered in a worship service, and Paul was writing about the disruptions of the Corinthians' worship services. To preserve church order outside the worship service, an elder need not be present on every occasion; he needs only to have God's authority behind him as a warning. If mere tradition is the reason, then the church must define rigorously what is meant by the phrase "kingdom of priests," as well as specify just what active role laymen-priests have in the official, biblically sanctioned structure of the New Testament church. The church must therefore define the negative (what laymen-priests are not biblically entitled to do) and the positive (what they are biblically enjoined to do), both inside the institutional church and outside.

In the case of the Lord's Supper, what should the role of the family be? It is quite true that the family of believers is the primary family. Christ told us that genetic families would be split over the confrontation between believing and unbelieving members of these families (Matt. 10:34–37). Nevertheless, the link between the symbolism of the Passover and the symbolism of the Lord's Supper should be enough to convince us that some elements of family worship should be preserved



in the New Testament rite. If we have become a kingdom of priests, it would seem preposterous to eliminate the one element of sacramentalism possessed by laymen in the Old Testament, namely, the administration of the Passover rite within the family. There should be some role for fathers in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. How could it be arranged? In the case of a household celebration, it is easier to perceive. A special after-dinner feast of bread and wine could be shared within the family, or between the family and the visitors. Fathers or household heads of the host family could give the warning to eat and drink in remembrance of Christ. In the church service, it is more difficult to contemplate. The children should not ask the fathers questions here, as they did in the Old Testament, unless it could be done quietly and in good order. But it might be possible for families to sit together at a common table or series of tables set up specifically for the Lord's Supper. The father might break the bread and pour the wine at his family's table, or in that section of the common table devoted to his family. The minister could break loaves, passing them to the fathers, who would in turn break them further. The same would hold true for the wine.

### Conclusions

We can list the following clear-cut conclusions with respect to *church officers*:

1. There is no valid formal distinction between elders.
  - a. There may be differences of gifts among elders.
  - b. Functional differences must not be written into church law.<sup>{126}</sup>
  - c. Requirements for ordination are identical.
2. All elders are entitled to remuneration in terms of services rendered.
3. Deacons do not administer church discipline.
4. All officers must be or have been competent heads of families.  
Bachelors must not be ordained.  
Bigamists must not be ordained.

5. Ordained officers are not mediators of salvation.
6. Women must not be ordained.

We can list the following clear-cut conclusions with respect to *baptism*:

1. Baptism is a mark of covenantal subordination.
  - a. Baptism does not regenerate men.
  - b. Baptism is a two-edged sword: blessing or destruction.
  - c. Infants of a believer must be baptized.
2. Baptism may be performed by deacons.
3. The authority to administer baptism is not based on the authority to enforce church discipline.
4. Baptism may be administered in households.
  - a. The presence of the congregation is not mandatory.
  - b. Immersion could not be an absolutely universal requirement.
5. Every believer has the right to an immediate baptism.

We can list the following clear-cut conclusions concerning the *Lord's Supper*:

1. The Lord's Supper is symbolic of Christ's death on the cross.
2. The Lord's Supper is a meal.
3. The Lord's Supper may lawfully take place in households.
4. The Lord's Supper involves the participation of children.
5. The Lord's Supper looks forward to victory and judgment by believers.
6. The Lord's Supper is open to all baptized church members in good standing.

We can list the following *tentative* conclusions concerning *baptism*:

1. Laymen, including women, may sometimes lawfully administer baptism.
2. The unsaved wives and children of believers may be baptized.
3. Immersion is symbolically preferable for adults who are baptized in churches.
4. Baptism does not confer full church membership.
  - a. A period of screening is valid.
  - b. The right to vote in church elections comes after screening.
5. Delaying baptism symbolizes a temporary period of covenant suspension.

We can list the following *tentative* conclusions concerning the *Lord's Supper*: {127}

1. Heads of households may lawfully administer the Lord's Supper.
2. The Lord's Supper need not be an official ecclesiastical function.
3. Real wine should be served, rather than grape juice.
4. Bread should be broken as part of the ceremony.
5. The Lord's Supper is a celebration.
  - a. Participants should not be silent.
  - b. Participants should not be solemn.
6. The family should be integrated into the church's communion service.
7. The Lord's Supper is not sacramentally different from the *agapé* feast.

The rise of Protestant sacerdotalism has paralleled the decline of family sovereignty within the church. The centralization of authority and prestige by the so-called teaching eldership has been at the expense of earlier assignments to officers, such as teacher and evangelist; teaching elders have absorbed these earlier separate functions, not ruling elders. Every movement toward institutional centralization, beyond that set forth in the Scriptures, leads to individualism and fragmentation within the laity. Laymen feel cut off from responsibility within the church and tend to focus their concerns on activities outside the church—activities often unconnected to the concept of a universal kingdom and a universal priesthood of believers.

The family is the authorized training ground of all church officers. The rise of Protestant sacerdotalism was made possible, to a great extent, by the substitution of formal and specifically extra-biblical academic requirements for office. These academic qualifications necessarily limited access to the eldership, making necessary a new, unbiblical division within the eldership, the creation of the office of teaching elder. A *bureaucratic elitism* was and is the inevitable result—an elitism based not on successful performance in a real-life institution, the family, but successful performance in a narrow world of formal scholarship. Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians-Anglicans have been most guilty of this deviation from biblical standards, along with New England's Congregationalists, but the independent churches—Baptists, Methodists, Friends, Campbellites, etc.—have now adopted the same error, though to a lesser extent.

A disastrous consequence of this Protestant sacerdotalism has been the elevation of the university, and later on the seminary, to a place of uncontested authority. From a historical point of view, we have to say that the university is, in practice, an anti-Christian institution. Its standards of performance are geared to autonomous rationalism. These standards, historically and without exception, have dragged every known Christian university into a compromising secularism within two centuries, and usually within a few decades. Because the university and the seminary are independent {128} of the church, yet attendance at them a requirement of ordination, they have become enemies of the church's independence under God. Protestant scholasticism was a product of the university, and Protestant sacerdotalism is the end result. The lure of Greek speculation, Kantian speculation, or Marxist speculation proved too great for tenured faculties to resist. A rival institution, with different standards and radically different goals, became the training ground of ministers. The result has been the destruction of orthodoxy in every large hierarchical denomination except the Missouri Synod Lutherans, since they alone in this century threw the liberals (invariably referred to in the press as “moderates”) out of their main seminary and into the cold, cruel world of nontenured, non-subsidized teaching in the midst of a PhD glut. Protestant orthodoxy committed suicide, in principle, on the day that it aban-

doned the family and substituted the university as the training ground of church officers.

Find yourself a Christian college. Find a college which adheres exclusively to any historic creed. Find a college which enforces discipline on every faculty member in terms of the creed. Find a college which systematically fires anyone who teaches the content of his discipline in terms of secular standards. Find a college where the administration knows the difference. Find a college which refuses to take a nickel of federal or state financing, so as to maintain its independence. Find a college where the board of trustees enforces anything, ever, in terms of any intellectual principle whatsoever. Find a college without faculty tenure. Find a college out of debt. Such a college does not exist in the twentieth century. (You notice that I did not even mention accreditation. I am not a utopian.)

The whole structure of ecclesiastical authority must be revamped if the churches are to be saved from the continuing curse of Protestant sacerdotalism. They must be restructured from top to bottom. They must return to New Testament standards and scrap the trappings of medieval Roman Catholicism. They must reintegrate the family into the life of the church. They must clean house on the seminaries that supply their ministers, if necessary, and at the very least, see to it that the ministry is equally open to anyone who meets the standards of 1 Timothy 3. The seminary was a jerry-built academic institution which was created to counteract the secularism of the American colleges and universities that had departed, universally, from the faith, and that was 150 years ago. The churches have not yet learned the lesson of *sola scriptura*. They have preferred to take the accredited shortcut of *scriptura cum academia*. That shortcut has led into the ditch.

You will know that a serious reform has been made when the old ministerial apprentice system is revived, and the seminary is recognized for what it has always been in fact, namely a graduate school of academic theological speculation. We need such institutions, but not to train ministers. You {129} will know that progress has been achieved when the churches stop ordaining bachelors and start revoking the ordinations of those who refuse to marry. You will know that the millennium has arrived when churches systematically remove from office any elder or deacon whose wife or children cannot be restrained by

him in their disorderly, long-term rebellion. The likelihood of this is so remote that postmillennialists should consider its probability only after several days of fasting and prayer. It is enough to make an amillennialist out of anyone.

I offer this as a possible sign of the end of the millennium and the imminent return of Christ: when orthodox seminaries stop the practice of raising the salary levels of faculty members who complete Ph.D.s in atheistic universities (or any university, for that matter). As the great literary critic Edmund Wilson once put it, we missed our opportunity during World War I when we failed to abolish the PhD as a German atrocity.

Then there is that final possible Christian academic reform: orthodox seminaries will cease the revamping of their curriculums and hiring policies in response to the demands of the seminary accrediting agencies, which are universally run by apostates, higher critics, Barthians, and atheists. This reform will be made, I am quite certain, only after the return of Christ, the resurrection, and the Day of Judgment. After that date, most of the officials in the accrediting agencies will be safely in hell. And you can rest assured that every seminary president will send a frantic letter to all donors in order to explain to them the reason why the seminary's accreditation has not yet been renewed by the regional accrediting board, and to assure them that this in no way reflects unfavorably on the overall academic program of the seminary.

# ADOPTION: THEOLOGICAL TREASURE AND MODEL FOR THE HOME

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*Greg and Cathie Bahnsen*

## *A Theological Treasure*

John Owen called it “our fountain privilege.” In virtue of it Luther viewed Christ as the “mirror of the fatherly heart of God.” R. A. Webb wrote of it as the sweetness of our most intense worship, the solace amid our most desperate calamity. Of what were these teachers speaking? The biblical doctrine of *adoption*. Yet oddly enough, among evangelical writers very little attention has been paid to this glorious truth of God’s word. The treatises devoted to its exposition from the time of the Reformation can likely be numbered on one hand—due, perhaps, to an unhappy tendency among theologians to subsume the topic of adoption under the categories of justification and/or regeneration. Salutary departures from such de-emphasis, however, are evident in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the writings of John Murray, and most recently J. I. Packer’s *Knowing God* (InterVarsity, 1973). The latter challenges us with these words, “Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption” (182).

## *The Term and Its Background*

The Greek term for “adoption” in the New Testament is common to inscriptions of the Hellenistic period; it literally means the “placing (instating) as a son” of one who is not so by birth or naturally. The term is used explicitly only by Paul; however, the concept is utilized elsewhere in the Old and New Testaments.

Although the Mosaic Law makes no mention of adoption, and although the Levirate institution (Deut. 25:5–10) and laws regarding inheritance (Num. 27:8–11) removed a motivation for adoption which figured prominently in the Graeco-Roman world, the idea is by no means absent from the Old Testament. The first instances which portray an adoptive function attribute it to women who, being barren, give

their females slaves to their husbands with a view to adopting the children they may bear (e.g., Gen. 16:2; 30:5–13). In this manner the barren wife deemed herself to be the mother (e.g., Sarai said to Abram, “Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her”) who retained power over the children born to the union (e.g., Gen. 21:10). In such cases of vicarious parentage the {131} handmaid was said to *bring forth her child on the knees of the wife* (Gen. 30:3)! The practice of taking a household slave and adopting him into the family as a son is seen very early in Abraham’s adoption of his devoted steward, Eliezer (Gen. 15:2); although Abraham was childless, the servant was designated by Abraham “a son of my house.” Jacob adopted two sons of Joseph in some sense, thereby enabling Joseph to receive an uncustomary double share of the father’s heritage (Gen. 48:5–6; note how in distinction from later offspring Jacob says of Ephraim and Manasseh, “now your two sons ... are mine”). Scripture speaks elsewhere of adoption, both directly (Genubath, 1 Kings 11:20) and by implication (Jarha, 1 Chron. 2:34ff.)—the best-known examples being such important Hebrew leaders as Moses (Ex. 2:10) and Esther (Esther 2:7, 15). So we see that adoption was not a foreign idea to the recipients of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament we have as a backdrop the very common custom of adoption among both the Greeks and Romans. The adoptive father could extend to the son of another family the privileges of his own family authority and inheritance, either during his own lifetime or through a last will and testament; in Greece the adopted party was called upon to *accept* the legal obligations of the new father, whereas in Rome the emphasis fell upon the *transfer* of the binding paternal authority to the power and control of the adoptive father. In recognized practice, someone who was financially well off but who needed an heir and perpetuator of the family name would adopt a young adult male (rather than an infant) as his son on the basis of demonstrated worthiness and fitness. Paul utilizes the technical term for adoption five times in his writings (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), and the concept is clearly applied by John (e.g., John 1:12; 1 John 3:1; Rev. 21:7); hints of it show up at other points as well (e.g., Heb. 2:10; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:3, 17, 23). Thus adoption is an important New Testament theme.



In the context of this historical and social background, the Scripture presents adoption as a free action of God by which men are graciously brought into a filial relation with Him and enjoy the benefits of that status and privilege. By adoption believers are restored to divine favor, accepted into the family of God, and entitled to an eternal inheritance. The chapter, “Of Adoption,” in the Westminster Confession of Faith summarizes the theological doctrine in this way:

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and {132} chastened by Him as by a Father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

The following exposition of the theological treasure of adoption can only highlight aspects and implications of the rich scriptural teaching. It is to be noted before beginning that theological adoption relates distinctly to the diverse functions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that it has eternal and temporal facets; that in redemptive history there was a specific past experience, is a definite present enjoyment, and will be a glorious future climax of adoption; that adoption characterizes our saving relationship to God as well as the manner of ethical life we maintain before Him.

### *Adoption and the Heavenly Father*

Obviously, adoption is concerned with the fatherhood of God in relation to men. But just here a critical theological dispute arises between two points of view. According to theological liberalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, man’s filial relation to God was a basic model and inalienable to man. Adoption involved the essential and universal fatherhood of God as well as the natural and inherent sonship of man to Him. Jesus Christ advanced beyond this *natural* sonship and by His life realized the ethical and spiritual, filial *ideal* of the race; those who partake of His spirit are adopted into gracious sonship as well.

Over against this perspective on the fatherhood of God stands the Reformed tradition, which does not see man as a son of God in virtue of anything in his constitution as a creature of God, but solely in virtue of God's gracious and saving work whereby sinners are adopted into God's family. Essential sonship is a status that belongs only to Christ as the eternal Son of God; all other "sons" of God are redeemed from sin and adopted as sons thereby. This Reformed perspective is *theologically* supported by God's word; its thrust, over against that of liberalism, is biblical. However, Reformed writers differ as to whether the basic liberal premise has any *textual* support in Scripture at all. John Murray says, "It is true that there is a sense in which God may be said to be the Father of all men," and he gives citations from Scripture (*Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Eerdmans, 1955, 134–35). But J. I. Packer declares, "The idea that all men are children of God is not found in the Bible anywhere" (*Knowing God*, 181).

However one may resolve this dispute, the important fact remains that whatever references to the universal fatherhood of God there may be in Scripture, they are relatively few, and the predominant interest of the biblical writers was in that intimate relation of sonship and fatherhood constituted by redemption; the constant theme of the good news is *saving* adoption. God is a Father to His chosen people, those who through a {133} gracious supernatural gift come to trust Christ as Savior from sin. This is *not natural* sonship, but adoptive. It is an extraordinary status, a merciful change of relationship effected by God's free decision. Men who view their creaturehood as a guarantee of adoption abrogate the gospel: "You are all sons of God *through faith* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26); "you have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but you have received the *Spirit of adoption* whereby we cry, Abba Father" (Rom. 8:15). God's sons are not born as such through flesh and blood, but rather by the will of God (John 1:12–13). This underscores the beauty of the doctrine of adoption.

Adoption as a salvific doctrine is associated with God the Father because divine *fatherhood* is a *redemptive* relationship, but also because God *the Father* is portrayed in Scripture as the *specific agent* in the transaction of adoption. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God" (1 John 3:1). Such passages as this refer specifically to the first person of

the Trinity. The same person whom *Jesus* called “my Father” was also designated the father of Christ’s *disciples* (e.g., John 20:17); *Jesus* could speak of “my Father who is in heaven,” and yet in speaking to His followers could refer to “your Father who is in heaven.” In New Testament titles for God the personal name of the first person of the Trinity is often rendered “the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*” (e.g., Rom. 15:6; 1 Peter 1:3), and this is the same person referred to in the salutation, “Grace to you and peace from God *our Father* and the Lord *Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 1:7). The one who is specifically our Father, then, can be distinguished from the Son and Spirit (1 Peter 1:2–3; 2 Thess. 2:16). He is not only the intertrinitarian Father of the eternal Son, *Jesus Christ*, but He is specifically *our Father* by *adoption* as well. The filial relations are not identical, but the *Father* in both cases is the same.

### *Adoption and the Past*

Although adoption is a present enjoyment of the child of God, it has a past dimension that should not be lost from sight. In the first place, the Father’s adoptive designs trace back to His purpose before the foundation of the world. Paul teaches us that adoption was the precise object or aim of predestination: “He predestined us to *adoption* as sons through *Jesus Christ* to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph. 1:5). Our highest privilege and deepest confidence as sinners saved by grace—that by adoption we should be able to call God “Abba Father”—is rooted in the action of the Father in the eternal counsel of redemption; that is the ultimate source of adoption, and thereby the stability of our assurance that we are sons of God. God’s purposes are efficient and unfailing, and He has purposed from before creation that we should be adopted into His family.

To accomplish this predestined purpose God would send His own Son {134} in the fulness of time. But preparatory to the Son’s advent and redemptive work God first *adopted Israel*, the nation, as His son. Israel of old sustained a filial relation to God based on His gracious, electing love: “Israel is my son, even my firstborn” (Ex. 4:22–23; cf. Deut. 14:1; 32:6, 19; Isa. 1:2; Jer. 3:4; Hos. 11:1; Mal. 1:6; etc.). In Romans 9:4 Paul speaks of this Father-son relation as adoptive; he designates the Israelites as those “to whom belongs the adoption as sons....” It is instructive for present-day believers, however, that Israel’s adop-

tion is set in contrast to that enjoyed by us in the New Testament. The Israelites were God's children, but children under age, children under the tutelage of the elementary Mosaic economy with its ceremonial law. This was a preparatory and pedagogical sonship, set in triumphant contrast to the filial experience of the New Testament believer: God sent His Son in the fulness of time in order fully to redeem us, so that "we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:5)—mature, full-fledged sons, unlike the child-heir who did not differ at all from a slave, being under the law as a tutor (Gal. 3:23–24; 4:1–3). "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:24–25). There has come a transition from being like a slave to being fully a son (4:7), on account of which we no longer call God simply "Master" (as though under bondage) but "Father" (Gal. 4:6; cf. Rom. 8:15).

### *Adoption as Present Privilege*

The grace of God exhibited in His adopting of Israel as a nation is accentuated all the more when we realize that individuals who have trusted in God's Son for salvation have themselves been transferred from an alien family of condemned sinners into the family of God Himself—have been personally adopted by the Father. This is a present gift of God's *grace*, for according to our own *nature* we were "sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) and "children of wrath" (v. 3). Unlike the Roman custom of adopting a person with proven worthiness, God has adopted us despite our extreme *unworthiness*! Scripture offers us two particular actions of God which illustrate the magnitude of God's mercy and love: the *cross* of Christ (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:8–10), and the adoptive gift of sonship—"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John 3:1). Our character and record have not made us worthy to be part of God's family and bear His name, and yet He has brought us out of the degradation of sin and instated us in His home. It is a free gift of kindness to those adopted—not done out of duty, but because God the Father was pleased to choose us for Himself.

Moreover, just as the love of human parents does not end at the completion of the legal process of adoption, so also God's fatherly care continues to be exercised toward us and demonstrated to us throughout

our {135} Christian experience and all eternity. Even as the human family requires stability and security, an eschewing of arbitrariness and indirection, in order for there to be mature development and joyful confidence in the children of the home, so also God's blessing of adoption is enduring and steady—ever assuring His children of their position and its permanence. The grace of adoption is a continuing benefit, reflecting the unceasing love of the Father to the objects of His redemptive choice. This is operative through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer; those led by the Spirit are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14). They have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, and this Spirit bears witness internally that they are the children of God with an assured inheritance (vv. 15–17); nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord (vv. 35–39).

This privilege of adoption is not simply a future hope, for John says that a parameter of God's amazing love is that we should be called sons of God; and immediately he appends the assurance, "and we are" (1 John 3:1). In the very next verse he confirms the claim, declaring, "Beloved, now are we the children of God." It is noteworthy that the first blessing of the gospel mentioned by John is that of adoption. It is by the bestowment of a right (or authority) that we become children of God, just as in common civil adoptions known to the ancient world: "as many as received Him, to them He *gave the right to become children of God*, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12), and this filial relation is acquired not by natural means, but by the adopting Father's own will (v. 13). As Athanasius stressed, the word "become" evidences adoptive—not natural—sonship; it is not a right inherent in man, but something "given" to him by God. The sonship is a pervasive theme in John's canonical writings. It entails fatherly love (John 16:27) and fellowship (1 John 1:3) and honoring (John 12:32). By it believers enjoy freedom from bondage, the special care of the heavenly Father, filial confidence in Him, and free access to Him at all times.

Although this redemptive blessing is inseparable from other elements in the order of salvation, it is still a distinct act of God's grace, a benefit coordinate with and additional to justification and regeneration. Thus it should not be identified with them or construed in terms of them. Neither justification (our legal acceptance with God) nor regeneration (the renewing of our hearts) speaks specifically of the

privilege of belonging to God's *family*. Like justification, adoption moves in the realm of forensic, legal action; it deals, not with a natural benefit, but with the bestowal of a new position. However, justification views God as our *judge*, concerned with legal standing; adoption sees Him as our *father*, expressing family affection. Like regeneration, adoption is intimately associated with the internal work of the Holy Spirit. However, regeneration is distinguishable {136} from, and prerequisite to, adoption. The bestowal of authority to become sons of God is given to believers, those who have faith (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26), and this faith in turn requires regeneration (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). Therefore, adoption can be viewed as subsequent to regeneration. In regeneration we are born again and equipped with the *disposition* consonant with, and necessary to, the new status established by adoption; we are given a filial character. In adoption the Holy Spirit makes us *conscious* of our sonship and enables us to *exercise* its privileges. These differences ought to make us appreciate the richness and manifoldness of God's saving provision for sinners.

### *Adoption and Christ, the Eternal Son*

We have observed above that there exists an important distinction between the sonship of Christ as the second member of the Trinity or God-sent Messiah and the adoptive sonship of redeemed sinners. Christ is the unique and exclusive, eternal Son of the Father—"the *only-begotten* from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). When alienated sinners come to be adopted as the Father's sons, they do not partake of Christ's own sonship and enter into the life of the Trinity or prerogatives of the Messiah. Christ is the Son in a special way according to Scripture. Thus Christ never spoke with His followers of "our Father" in a sense of grouping himself with them in the same filial relationship; rather, He was careful to distinguish between "my Father and your Father" (John 20:17). God sent *His own Son* in order that we might receive *adoption as sons* (Gal. 4:4-5). The diversity needs guarding.

Yet this difference between eternal or messianic sonship and adoptive sonship serves to emphasize the glorious character of those ways in which the two are associated. The unique Son and redeemed sons have the same Father; there are shared fellowship and benefits. Paul teaches

that believers are *children* of God through Christ's redemptive work, and as such they are "joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). Christ the firstborn has gained the inheritance of the Father, and yet we partake of that treasure with Him. Jesus is not ashamed to call those sons being brought to glory His *brothers*, saying, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me" (Heb. 2:10–13). We are adopted in Him, and to us *His brethren* He proclaims the name of God (cf. Matt. 28:9–10; John 20:17–18). The amazing thing is that the unique and eternal Son of God should *not be ashamed* to consider us in this light, in the category of His own brothers! The wonder of salvation is in this fact again reflected.

### *Adoption and the Holy Spirit*

Even as adoption is the work of the Father, stemming back to His predestinating counsel, and accomplished through the work of the Son, making us joint-heirs with Him as a brother, so also adoption is tied closely to {137} the saving operations of the Holy Spirit—Himself designated precisely as "the Spirit of *adoption*" by Paul in Romans 8:15. In the operations of salvation the Holy Spirit gives us new life, enlightens our minds, convicts us of sin, brings us to faith, and empowers obedient living. These truths are indispensable, but the ministry of the Holy Spirit has been truncated if we fail to see as well His work of assurance in the lives of God's children. In contrast to Roman Catholicism's deprivation of the confidence of salvation, and in contrast to Pentecostalism's thirst for mystical and extraordinary works of the Spirit, Reformed theology places great stress on the Spirit's *common* work of deepening the believer's filial *confidence*. With increasing clarity and sweetness the Holy Spirit makes believers realize the meaning of their adoption into sonship.

Paul teaches that *because* believers are *sons*, "God has sent the *Spirit* of His *Son* into our hearts" (Gal. 4:6). That the Holy Spirit is here called the Spirit of God's Son complements and enriches the significance of the title in Romans, "the Spirit of *adoption*." God sent His Son to reconcile us to Himself and by redemption to make us sons; to those who enjoy this adoption into God's family is sent the Son's Spirit, who fosters filial affection and moves them to look to God as to a Father—in the attitude of sons who cry "Abba, Father." Paul repeats this truth in

Romans 8:15–16 with some elaboration. The Holy Spirit works inwardly in believers to bring them to a *conscious reflection* on that filial status that has been bestowed on them. He takes away servile dread and replaces it with the conviction that we have been accepted by the Father as sons, thereby generating confidence: “you have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry Abba, Father” (v. 15). Moreover, the Spirit keeps us conscious of God’s gracious work in our lives, adding to the witness of our own spirits that we are God’s sons (ascertaining our status by inference) *His own witness to us internally* (assuring us by an immediate communication to the regenerated heart): “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (v. 16). This distinct and conjoint witness to our sonship is a continual work of the Spirit in which we can daily rejoice as believers, avoiding the barren diversions of Romanism and Pentecostalism.

We now see how adoption is the work of the complete Trinity: the Father’s predestined bestowal of a new status, the Son’s redemptive work to make us His brethren and joint-heirs, the Spirit’s assuring presence. It has its root before creation, its preparation in the experience of Israel, and its present enjoyment by New Testament believers. Its significance also extends to ethics and eschatology, as we can briefly observe.

### *Adoption and the Behavior of Sons*

Biblical teaching about adoption is not narrowly soteriological, pertaining {138} to one’s saved or lost status before God. It is an extensive model for *sanctification* as well; that is, it is presented as a *normative* category, one which pertains to Christian behavior and holiness. Knowledge of one’s adoption is seen as genuine when it controls one’s Christian walk and living. Adoption explains why the believer is zealous to keep God’s law—namely, to please his newfound Father. It is the one who practices righteousness that is born of God, says John (1 John 2:29). Indeed, those who are born of God do not practice sin, which is to say they resist engaging in lawlessness (1 John 3:4, 9). Just as family resemblances can indicate to others what family we belong to, so also the obedient or lawless character which is displayed in a person’s life tells you whether he is a child of God or otherwise: “By this the chil-



dren of God and the children of the devil are obvious; any one who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:10). If God is our Father, then obedience to Him is automatically called for. Believers are born of God as His children (1 John 5:1–2); they are instilled with filial affection by the Spirit of adoption, and “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (v. 3). Given this context and understanding, the full impact of Jesus’s words can impress us: “Whosoever shall do the will of God, *the same is my brother and sister*” (Mark 3:35). Those who are joint-heirs with Christ their brother, those who know the Spirit-given love of God, those who have been adopted as the Father’s children *must* demonstrate lives of obedience.

In sanctification the Holy Spirit can be said to enable believers to act like children of God. They aim to manifest a family likeness, imitating the Father (Matt. 5:44–48). They would maintain the family honor, seeking to glorify the Father alone by good works (Matt. 5:16; 6:1–18). They wish to further the family’s welfare, loving their brethren (1 John 3:14–18; 4:21). The *fatherhood* of God is the basis for Christian prayer (Matt. 6:9) and expectancy (Matt. 7:7–11), the warrant behind a life of trust in God’s provision (Matt. 6:25–33), and the reason why we can accept chastening as yielding the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:6–7, 11). The whole of the Christian life and ethic can be portrayed as the outworking of adoption as God’s sons.

### *Adoption and the Future*

Adoption is also an eschatological doctrine, bespeaking the final consummation. The climax and completion of our adoption will bring with it the new heavens and earth, and as such the doctrine of adoption shows us the glory of the Christian hope, and in this future dimension will gain wider appreciation in the believer. Because we are adopted as God’s sons, we have a promised inheritance as heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16–17; Gal. 4:7)—which includes our glorification with Him (Rom. 8:17; 1 John 3:2). This {139} inheritance and glorification pertain to our *physical bodies* as well as to our inner life. There is to be a marvellous glory revealed in us as the sons of God (Rom. 8:18–21), and Paul describes this filial glorification as “the redemption of our body” at the resurrection (vv. 23, 11). This bodily resurrection which we look for-

ward to is identified succinctly by Paul as “the adoption as sons”—it is the consummation, the realization, of what we anticipate in our present spiritual experience as God’s children. The full fruition of the present privilege of adoption will come publicly at the resurrection of our bodies, and this will be the sign that creation itself has been emancipated from bondage (vv. 19–22). All of nature will be renewed when our adoption process is final! Hence adoption is an eschatological hope, causing us to “groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting the adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.... With perseverance we wait eagerly for it” (vv. 23–24). We conclude, then, that adoption is indeed a rich theological treasure in Scripture, being the concern of the triune God from before the world was created through the consummation of all things.

### *Model for the Home*

The importance of adoption to the Christian is more than obvious from the previous discussion: it touches on the redemptive work of the triune God, spanning from before creation to the eternal kingdom. Adoption is a precious and far-reaching theme in Scripture. Recognition of this fact, and reflection upon the elaborate details of the biblical teaching about adoption, should hopefully correct the attitude and outlook of many believers regarding the desirability and dignity of adoption in the home life of married Christians. It is surprising how often the theology of Scripture is required to be “lived out” in practical ways—is to be paralleled in our attitudes and actions. God’s word presents the need for this outworking of our doctrine at many points.

Gospel doctrine lays stress on how God has loved us; this belief is worked out as we love others (1 John 4:11). Christ came in great humility, and so we should be humble before each other (Phil. 2:3–5). He gave humble service to others, and calls us to do likewise (John 13:15). The Lord did not seek His own profit, and that is a model for our own behavior (1 Cor. 10:33–11:1). Like him we should be willing to receive the word in much tribulation (1 Thess. 1:6). We too must take up a cross (Matt. 10:38) and be willing to suffer as He did (John 15:20; Col. 1:24; 1 Peter 2: 19–21)—with innocent, non-retaliatory endurance. It is a central truth of Christianity that the Savior sacrificed His life for us; likewise, we are called to such sacrificial love for our brethren (John

13:34; 15:13; Eph. 5:1–2; 1 John 3:16). As forgiven by God, we must reflect that doctrinal treasure {140} in our forgiveness of others (Matt. 6:12; Eph. 4:32). Even as Christ had first to suffer and then enter His glory, so also we can be required to endure hardship as a prelude to exalted privileges (Luke 24:26; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 1:9). The list could go on and on. But the underlying point is simply this: Christian *doctrinal treasures* are often *models* for Christian life and behavior. Our theology suggests a *manner of life* that is appropriate to the believer. Thus Paul could exhort Philemon to work out his theology in a practical situation; as one who knew the grace of God that transfers men from the status of slaves to emancipated family members in the kingdom, Philemon could apply his theology in a very practical way, by seeing the runaway slave, Onesimus, as now a brother. In so doing he would be imitating his Father in heaven.

Likewise many Christian couples and parents would do well to reflect on the theological treasure of adoption, considering what significance it can have for family life, and what part it might play in their homes. Minimally, their *attitude* toward adoption should imitate the high value it has in the divine plan of salvation; maximally, they may perhaps be led to work out their theology by showing the same compassion on a human level, *utilizing* adoption as an expression of parental love and a way of further extending the gracious kingdom of Christ. According to God's word, the Lord is a father to the fatherless, and He makes a home for the lonely (Ps. 68:5–6). Accordingly, it is no surprise that one of the tests of genuine religion is a man's concern for orphans (James 1:27). The prospect of adoption offers the possibility of imitating the redemptive love of the Father toward the homeless. Adoption is not simply a theological treasure, it is *perhaps* a model for your own home.

### *Children in Need of Homes*

Should a Christian couple consider adoption? We think that many should. "But," you object, "I've heard that there are no children available for adoption." Just what is the present adoption situation?

It is true that there are far fewer healthy babies available than there are prospective adoptive parents. In most large American cities there is a three-to-five-year wait for children in this category. There can be

quite a long wait for any healthy child under school age. In some areas couples are told that their names will not be put on a waiting list at all. Reasons given for this “baby-shortage,” as it is called, are (1) the increased number of abortions and (2) the increased number of unwed mothers who are keeping their babies.

A couple thinking about adopting today should be as flexible as possible in considering the type of child with whom they would be able and willing to share their home. For there *are* many children who do desperately need the love and security of a permanent home they can call their own. Across {141} the seas there are homeless children whose governments, in working with various American agencies, have cleared the way for them to be adopted by families in the United States and Europe. Here at home there are: older children, thousands of whom are now in foster-care programs; mentally and physically handicapped children of all ages; biracial children also of all ages; and sometimes sibling groups.

### *Changing Trends and Procedures*

Up to the 1850s, attitudes toward adoption were not usually humanitarian but focused on serving the needs of the adopter (adoption as a means of obtaining an heir). Adoption laws passed by several states in the 1800s focused on the welfare of the child. Beginning with the early 1900s an important part of the adoption procedure was “matching” a baby to his adoptive parents, i.e., color of hair, eyes, ethnic background, I.Q., religious background, etc. Often the idea behind this was for the child to blend so well into the family that his adoptive status would be hidden. Many parents would go to great lengths to “protect” their child from finding out that he was adopted. This way of handling things was encouraged by many adoption agencies.

Today there are many changing trends in adoption. Neither the needs of the child are thought to be exclusively important nor the needs of the adopters. The social work profession now believes the purpose of adoption is to effect a *mutuality of need*. The need of the applicants for respect and support in their desire to love and care for a child is felt to be as mutually important as the child’s need to have a good home and parents who love him. A vast amount has been written in recent years in all areas of the adoption experience—effects on the bio-

logical parents who give up their child, adjustments of the adopted child, and studies of the various motives for adoption. As a result of this research and published personal narratives, adoptive parents are encouraged to be truthful with their child concerning his adoption from a very early age. Most are being encouraged to share whatever information they have concerning his background with their child and to answer openly his questions as they arise. It had been thought at one time that adjustment was made easier in direct ratio to the closeness of the “matching” process. Cases where the fact of adoption could be seen at a glance (adoption of older children into a family, trans-racial adoption) were studied and began to prove to make for a healthy and realistic relationship. These cases, where the child was certain from the outset that he was adopted, have so influenced the adoption trend that it would be unusual now for an adoption worker to encourage adoptive parents to hide the fact of adoption regardless of the age at which their child was adopted.

In order to find homes for older children and others with special needs, {142} adoptive parents often need no longer own their own homes, be a certain age, have a certain income, be subject to a fertility test, be a nonworking mother, be married a certain amount of time, be married at all, or wait a prescribed amount of time for a home study. Each item in the above list represents change in the standards previously imposed on prospective adoptive parents. In many agencies some of these traditional standards are still in effect, but requirements seem to become more flexible as adoptive parents become more flexible in stating what they consider to be an adoptable child. This is not to say that it has now become easy to adopt. It is not that there is no criteria for establishing the suitability of a particular home as an adoptive home, but rather that the criteria have changed in many ways. A reputable agency will still give a most thorough home study. This is beneficial both to the prospective adopters and the adoptee.

Another big change has occurred, again perhaps because of the special needs of children now being adopted. In the past it was almost exclusively the childless couple or couples unable to have as many children as they desired who became adoptive parents. Today there are many choosing to adopt who already have children and who are able to give birth to as many children as they want. In the past this latter group

need not even have applied to adopt, as most agencies had limits on the number of children already in the family. Today these same agencies see the experience of these parents as most valuable in dealing with the special needs of the older child.

A common note in the stories of couples who adopted in the past, even as recently as ten years ago, is often that a baby was placed in their home with such a short interval between application and placement that they hardly had time to prepare for the child's coming. Today such timing would be unusual. In only rare cases would a placement be immediate. To the prospective adoptive parents, any type of adoption procedure seems to be a series of endless delays.

With most agencies suffering staff shortages, the couple desiring to adopt must first, after filing an initial application, go on a waiting list until an adoption worker becomes available to do a home study. This could be as little as six months or as much as two years. Closer to the time of the home study, so that all information is up-to-date, a longer, more comprehensive application is completed along with a financial statement and references. The home study itself may be made over a period of several months or several weeks, with visits to the office of the adoption worker and her visits to the home. Then another time of waiting begins—a relatively short wait for an older or handicapped child, a very long wait for a healthy baby or preschool-age child, a six-to-nine-month wait in the case of most intercountry adoptions. After a child is placed, the adoption worker visits in the home and keeps in touch to see how the adjustment is progressing. {143} Most state laws require a time period of six months to a year from time of placement before legal adoption may take place.

A Christian couple will suffer the same anxieties and discouragements that all prospective adoptive parents go through. Patience in accepting God's timing is slow in coming. Christians can put to use the seemingly endless waiting time and view it as the blessing of a sovereign Lord as they daily pray for the child the Lord will give them and for themselves in their preparation for parenthood.

### *Motives*

Childlessness continues to be the strongest motivation to adopt. Concern for overpopulation is given by many people as a reason for

adopting. Some want to find a playmate for an only child. “We want to adopt a child who would otherwise end up dead or begging,” say a few would-be adopters.

All prospective adoptive parents are asked *why* they want to adopt. In the case of a couple unable to have children of their own the answer might seem obvious. But motive problems sometimes do arise even in these cases. People who feel they have only half a marriage without children, who have not found deep satisfaction in the marriage relationship itself, are at a weak point to think about bringing another person into that relationship. Childless couples often feel under social pressure to adopt. When friends start saying, “Isn’t it a shame...,” some couples may simply not feel accepted without children. Often the motive of one partner is simply to please the spouse by giving in to the other’s strong desire to adopt. It is easy to see parent-child problems and even husband-wife tensions arising very quickly in this situation. A childless couple is sometimes even motivated to “save” a floundering marriage by adopting a child. It is evident that a child cannot accomplish such a huge task, nor is it fair to ask him to try.

A child adopted for the purpose of assuaging another child’s loneliness and need for a playmate is bound to be a disappointment to all concerned. The new member of the family may turn out to be a competitor rather than a playmate. He may need a seemingly insatiable amount of attention, not from a sibling, but from a parent. A prospective adopter with this motive seems to be viewing the prospective adoptee only as a “giver.” He seems not to be viewing the child in a balanced way—both as a responsible member of a group and as an individual with the need to take as well as to give.

Some motives are too impersonal taken by themselves, for instance seeking to relieve world overpopulation. Let us at this point refer the reader to R. J. Rushdoony’s *The Myth of Overpopulation* for a thorough treatment of that subject and go on to say that (not setting human responsibility aside) God does supply *all* the needs of every covenant family. Therefore, {144} the Christian certainly does not *need* to think about adoption as an answer to the so-called overpopulation problem. But for the person who is convinced that overpopulation is a problem, that by itself will not stand as a motive for adoption. One who is not motivated in an additional and more personal way will be ill-equipped

to deal with the problems that are unique to the adoption experience. For when that child arrives on the doorstep, the belief that one has done his little part in solving one of the world's big problems is not necessarily going to equip that person to be a parent who is ready to help tackle that individual child's everyday problems.

A humanitarian concern for those in this world who face a dismal future can certainly be a valid starting point in thinking about adoption. But as was the case in our previous consideration, by itself it is an impersonal motive. Such motives often lead the parent to expectations of gratitude from the "rescued" child. No parent-child relationship can be based on expectations of gratitude. The adoptive parent who has these expectations is in for a shock as their child daily displays the same selfishness, the same greed, the same lack of humility as is common to all sinful human nature. The parent cannot have in mind some unspoken "deal" with his child-to-be: "I'll give you my home, clothes, food, education, necessities, luxuries—and you give me your undying gratitude." What the parent must expect to give is himself. That is what the child in need of adoption has been robbed of. He needs the most normal as possible parent-child relationship. He needs the same loving, understanding, instruction, and discipline that a child born into the family would receive.

The whole area of motive is made complex by the fact that very few prospective adoptive parents have thoroughly thought out an answer to the question, "Why?" They have a general feeling that the child will make a richer, fuller life for them and that they will do the same for the child. Adoption should be viewed as much more than a Christian kindness. To bring a child into a home blessed by Covenant Promise is a privilege regardless of whether the Lord chooses to bring that child into that home by birth or by adoption. All life belongs to God. When the Life-Giver Himself entrusts a parent with the life of a child, both the privilege and the responsibility are awesome.

### *Intercountry Adoption*

After World War I up to 1953–54, rarely were more than 500 foreign-born children adopted by American families each year. These were usually from countries such as Germany, Japan, Italy, and Greece. Between 1954 and 1968, over 10,000 children from Korea alone had



been placed in homes in the United States, most of these being the offspring of American fathers and Korean mothers. By 1972, close to 3,000 families in Minnesota alone had adopted children (many adopting more than one child) mainly {145} from Korea, also from Vietnam and Colombia, and a few children from each of numerous other countries.

What factors determine the popularity of particular countries for those interested in intercountry adoption? With the first group of countries mentioned in the above paragraph, there was an immediate, but for the most part temporary, need to find homes for war orphans, deserted children, and children whose fathers had been stationed in those countries and whose mothers could not care for them. For numerous other countries, poverty is given as the number one reason for huge numbers of abandoned children and thus the continuous need for adoptive homes. Among these countries, some inspire more interest than others by prospective adopters because of the particular adoption situation there (types of children available, etc.), plus the ease with which a child is released for adoption. Many underprivileged countries with thousands of children in need of homes have decided that they can care for these children themselves and are not cooperative in encouraging intercountry adoption. Others of these countries consider intercountry adoption another form of American imperialism.

Colombian adoptions are approved by the Ministry of Colombian Welfare, and many United States citizens are now adopting from that country. The majority of children in orphanages there are mestizos (Spanish and Indian); most are in good health and range in age from newborn to grade school age.

The Korean Ministry of Social Affairs lists poverty as the number one reason for abandonment of children in their country. American interest in the children of this country began after the Korean War, when it was reported that tens of thousands of children wandered the streets, and institutionalized orphans numbered in excess of 50,000. The plight of the mixed-blood child in Korea was an especially sad one, and hundreds of American families began adoption proceedings. Within Korea, the practice of adoption of children with no blood-ties was almost unknown. Today the practice is slowly becoming acceptable, but as yet the number of in-country adoptions is very small. The

numbers of abandoned children have slowly decreased over the past thirteen years, but these still number in the thousands and thus the continued need for adoptive homes. The Korean government is one of those which encourage intercountry adoption as one way of dealing with their severe problem of homeless children. Because of all the above factors, because of the availability of babies and young children, and because of the availability of a number of studies showing the adjustment of these children to their new homes to be most exceptional, Americans continue to be interested in adopting Korean children.

The couple considering intercountry adoption, which is usually trans-racial adoption, must be certain that they can fully accept a person of a {146} different race as a member of their family. That means thinking ahead to when that very appealing little baby or toddler becomes an older child or an adult. The couple's feelings and beliefs about race must come out of the ambiguous stage and be dealt with head on. Thinking ahead to the years when this adopted child begins to date and show interest in marriage will raise questions that must be answered. The couple must be willing to educate themselves to become sensitive to their child's world. They must get away from a misty vision of saving children from emotional and physical destitution and possible death and get down to the realities of the amount of help this one individual child they adopt will need in adjusting to this new home, new people, new foods, new culture, new language—much more “newness” to adjust to than for the in-country adopted child. Even a pre-school-age child will have a great awareness that the people he is growing to love look different from him. He will want to resemble those he loves; he will need to understand why he is different, and he will have to learn that difference is not a bad thing. Before a couple proceeds with an intercountry adoption they must look ahead to the teenage years, when their child may become especially interested in knowing more about himself. They must see themselves as able to share as much about their child's background and country as they themselves know. They must give the child reason to be proud of many aspects of both his heritage as a Korean or Indian, etc., and his heritage as their child, as an American.

## Common Objections

Jan de Hartog in his book *The Children*, which is considered a classic in the adoption field, lists common objections to intercountry adoption and his answers to these objections. These will be listed here with a summary (and in some cases supplementation) of each of Mr. de Hartog's answers.

### 1. "Adoption is not the solution."

De Hartog states that what the giver of this objection means is that because not all of the children from foreign lands who are in need of permanent homes can be brought here, none should be. This objector is right in thinking that a single adoption is not the solution to an entire nation's adoption problem. But the reasoning of his argument is obviously fallacious when applied to numerous other situations. For instance, a person sighting ten persons trapped in a burning house would try to save as many as he could, even if he were certain from the outset that he didn't have time to rescue them all. As de Hartog states, under this all-or-none reasoning, "Jesus' miraculous healings would be viewed as impermissible demonstrations of preferential treatment."

### 2. "They can be looked after much better in their own familiar environment."

There can be no doubt that being uprooted from one's own culture can {147} be problem-causing, no matter how young the child is when the uprooting takes place. But de Hartog feels that it is obviously preferable to be placed in the arms of a loving foreign woman than to be left in an institution to die or to grow up to a hopeless future in one's own country, where there is not enough food and where one's orphaned status makes him ineligible for legal employment. Says de Hartog, "There is no substitute for the life-giving comfort and warmth of being hugged, nuzzled and loved by one motherly woman," and it is certain that it is impossible to receive this individual attention in even the best of institutions.

### 3. "Why not a child from your own country?"

De Hartog urges the prospective adopter not to become too introspective at this point. The question is perhaps misplaced. It seems to imply that one's compassion should be exclusively toward the homeless of one's own nation. There is certainly nothing Christian about such

exclusive nationalism. De Hartog's answer to the person calling him to task in this way is, "That's a good question. If you feel so strongly about it, why don't you?"

**4. "Did you know that they are bought from their mothers?"**

De Hartog states that this rumor cannot be substantiated. Even if such a thing were taking place, the child would certainly be the innocent party of the transaction and should not be made to continue homeless because of the sins of others.

**5. "In this country they would be horribly spoiled."**

It is true that outside of the home the children are often praised and admired and their parents are told how lucky they are to have such darling children. De Hartog considers this adulation to be harmless, especially in view of the fact that they are sometimes received in a less-than-generous and benevolent way as well.

**6. "They will never be really yours."**

A prospective adopter might take this as a dire warning indeed. Part of de Hartog's retort may be worded thus: "Is any child given by God to a couple either by birth or adoption ever one's 'own'?" If what is meant by this objection is that a person would never have the same relationship with a child adopted from another land as he would be with a natural born son or a child from his own country, the objector had better listen to the adamant protests of thousands of adoptive parents who would beg to differ. De Hartog himself reports to have an extremely deep-rooted and affectionate relationship with his own adopted Korean daughters.

**7. "You will never love them the way you love your own children."**

Do parents who have had children born into their family ever love their {148} adopted children as much as they do their own flesh and blood? God will never put them in a situation in which they have to choose between their children. Love never occurs automatically. God commands parents to love their children, and God *enables* them to love.

Is the one who raises this type of objection saying that that which is most basic to parenthood is in essence biological? It would appear that this is the case. And the thinking behind the objection can easily be shown to be fallacious. A biological bond does not prevent abuse, abandonment, and total rejection. The lack of that biological relation-

ship does not prevent true parenthood. Adoptive parents testify that the time comes when “our adopted daughter” becomes merely “our daughter.”

### Therefore . . .

We have seen why adoption is so precious to the Christian as a theological truth, and how it can be a model for living—one important way to express Christian concern for the homeless. We have further seen that adoptable children are still available, have discussed the proper motives for, and surveyed fallacious objections to, adoption of such orphans. The Christian family is an ideal candidate for expressing the compassion of adoption; it can appreciate the theological parallel, be properly motivated and oriented, and provide the needed context of covenant nurture. In a twofold way, soteriological and familial, *adoption* is a vehicle for God’s kingdom.

### Selected Further Readings

The amount of material presently available on the subject of adoption is vast. The following books were found to be especially helpful as we’ve prepared for our own adoption experience:

Amann, Louise Raymond. *Adoption and After*. New York: Harper and Row, 1955.

Chinnock, F. W. *Kim: A Gift From Vietnam*. New York: World Publishing Co., 1969.

de Hartog, Jan. *The Children*. New York: Atheneum, 1968.

Kramer, Betty, ed. *The Unbroken Circle*. Minneapolis: OURS, 1975.

McNamara, Joan. *The Adoption Adviser*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975.

Margolies, Marjorie. *They Came to Stay*. New York: Coward, McCain, and Geoghegan, 1976.

# THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF FAMILY, MARRIAGE, AND SEX

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*E. L. Hebden Taylor*

Amongst the varied approaches to the study of family and marriage that have been adopted by secular humanist scholars we may distinguish the following.

## *The Historical and Evolutionary Approach*

The evolutionary and historical approach to the study of family and marriage arose out of the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. The attempt was then made to apply Darwin's evolutionary and biological scheme to the course of human history. Discussions of origins, coupled with notions of evolution and progress, were found in the writings of Lewis Henry Morgan, Friedrich Engels, J. J. Bachofen, Edward Westermarck, and others. In his *Ancient Society*, Morgan claimed that society had passed from a stage of savagery to a stage of barbarism to a stage of civilization, and that in each stage, family and marriage had assumed different forms. Others contented themselves with descriptions of family life at various periods in the history of Western civilization. They wrote, for example, of the Hebrew family, the Greek family, the Roman family, the medieval family, and the family during the period of the Renaissance. In his monumental *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, G. E. Howard has provided us with by far the most exhaustive history of marriage ever written.<sup>111</sup> With increased knowledge concerning the customs of preliterate peoples provided by anthropology and ethnography, origins were sought among the customs of primitive men. Inspired largely by cultural and social evolutionism, there was an increasing effort made to reveal the evolutionary

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111. George E. Howard, *History of Matrimonial Institutions*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904).

emergent aspects of the family as an institution. An assumption was often made of a parallel evolutionary development in which stages 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 followed in inevitable sequence. It was not uncommon to identify stage 1 with primitive promiscuity (Morgan, Bachofen, and Briffault) and stage 5 with our contemporary custom of monogamy. In *Social Change and History*, R. A. Nisbet points out that Morgan was able to arrive at such an evolutionary classification simply by logically arranging the material he drew from ethnography and Western history into an evolutionary {150} development. Yet the evolutionary development he claimed to find in the data had simply been read *into* the data in terms of the *logical* progression from the simple to the complex. Nisbet says of this methodology:

What we have, in fact, in the so-called developmental series is a finely graded, logically continuous series of “stills” as in a movie film. It is the eye—or rather, in this instance, the disposition to believe—that creates the illusion of actual development, growth or change.<sup>112</sup>

In this way, the dogma of evolution came to replace the biblical revelation that God created male and female and ordained that husband and wife should live together in monogamous marriage from the beginning of history.<sup>113</sup> Man was now proclaimed to be merely a highly developed animal with his sexual functions existing only for the sake of procreation. Social scientists now began to spin their so-called “scientific” theories without any reference at all to the God of the Bible. They rejected the Bible utterly as the source, foundation, and key to knowledge about anything at all, including family and marriage. Sex was stripped of its religious, personal, and spiritual dimensions and was now spoken of in purely naturalistic terms. The English doctor, Havelock Ellis, produced a six-volume work titled, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*,<sup>114</sup> entirely within the conceptual evolutionary framework of evolutionism. To accept this evolutionary framework has become the

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112. Robert A. Nisbet, *Social Change and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 197.

113. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973), 362-68, for a first-rate discussion of the biblical teaching about “Marriage and Monogamy.”

114. Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 2 vols. (London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1948).

scholarly thing to do, as Edward Wilson of Harvard University makes clear in his recent work *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*.<sup>115</sup>

### *Conceptual Frameworks for the Study of Family and Marriage*

In 1960, Reuben Hill and Donald Hansen published an important article in the journal, *Marriage and Family Living*, in which they suggested five alternative frameworks that can be adopted to study the family. They perceived the family field as currently being a considerable distance from an adequate theoretical synthesis, but as being at the stage of employing several definable *conceptual frameworks*.<sup>116</sup> They pointed out that these frameworks are not theories or explanations but rather viewpoints from which to analyze and describe family structure and behavior, and that as such they represent what F. S. C. Northrop calls “the natural history stage of inquiry” in his book, *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities*.<sup>117</sup> Conceptual frameworks are descriptive standpoints from which to view an aspect of reality; they are not theories as such.

According to Hill and Reuben, there are five clearly definable frameworks being utilized by students of the family, namely, the interactional, the structure-functional, the situational, the institutional, and the developmental.

In 1966 F. Ivan Nye and Felix M. Berardo published a book titled *Emerging Conceptual Frameworks in Family Analysis*. The frameworks included were anthropological, structure-functional, institutional, interactional, situational, psychoanalytic, social-psychological, developmental, legal, and Western Christian. These eleven orientations are by far the most exhaustive list available to date, even if we include the more recent work of Wesley R. Burr, *Theory Construction and Sociology of the Family*, published in 1973.<sup>118</sup>

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115. Edward Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975).

116. Reuben Hill and Donald A. Hansen, “The Identification of Conceptual Frameworks Utilized in Family Study,” *Marriage and Family Living* 22 (1960): 229-311.

117. F. S. C. Northrop, “The Natural History Stages of Inquiry,” in *The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1948), 35-58.



While it is neither feasible nor desirable to discuss all of these categories, we shall examine some of them. Before doing so, we would like to point out that these various approaches merely reflect the diversity of the various aspects of God's creation, that is, the confessional, the ethical, the juridical, the aesthetic, the economic, social, lingual, historical, analytical, psychical, biological, and physical. As the family and marriage function in all these aspects of God's creation, it is not surprising that social scientists should put forward various conceptual frameworks in studying them.

### *The Interactional-Symbolic Approach*

Perhaps the most widely used conceptual framework for analyzing the family has been symbolic interactionism, which is concerned with the process of interaction between human beings conducted at the symbolic level (for example, through language). In this view, man is seen as becoming fully human only through this interaction between the individual and his society. Symbolic interactionists emphasize the ability and the need of humans to be creative, actively seeking to alter and change the environmental conditions in which they live. George Herbert Mead and the founders of this sociological school were not so naive as to think that humans were unlimited in the extent to which they could change these {152} living conditions. They admitted that everybody must operate within certain constraints. But the symbolic interactionists are adamant in rejecting the idea that human beings act blindly because of instinctual urges. Each human being has a mind—a mind which is used creatively.

The interactionist approach focuses upon family members in intimate contact with each other. Its emphases include the socialization process whereby the child acquires a social “me,” as well as the roles that family members play. The child observes the roles played by family members, and he then incorporates these roles of “me’s” within his own personality structure. In processes involving family members there is an interaction of roles and of role-taking. We come to take the “signifi-

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118. F. Ivan Nye and Felix M. Berardo, *Emerging Conceptual Frameworks in Family Analysis* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), and Wesley R. Burr, *Theory Construction and the Sociology of the Family* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973).

cant other's" role as our own. Thus, for example, the little girl imagines herself as being a mother while playing with her dolls. Because it is concerned with the relation between individual and family group, this approach is a social psychological approach. Beginning especially in the work of Burgess,<sup>119</sup> its emphases include psychological and interpersonal adjustment in the family, the roles that the family members play, and the kinds of relationships that develop in a family setting. The scholar studying family behavior from the symbolic interactionist perspective focuses on a small number of individuals who, by occupying certain position-roles in the family, behave in certain patterned ways toward one another. Much of the research using this approach, for example, has examined parent-child and husband-wife relationships.

A weakness of this approach is that little effort is made by symbolic interactionists to relate these behaviors to the broader social and historical context within which these behaviors occur. Thus, the symbolic-interactionist approach is usually called social psychology, while the structure-functional is labeled sociology. In our view this distinction is inappropriate, since both approaches must be considered sociological, the difference being in the level of behavior at which each is directed. The former may be thought of as *micro*-sociological and the latter approach as *macro*-sociological.

### *The Structure-Functional Approach*

This approach is exemplified in the writings of William J. Goode, Myer Nimkoff, and Robert Winch. The questions asked by this approach are: What different sorts of family structure are there? How does the family system articulate with other societal structures, such as the economic, educational, and religious? What functions does the family perform on behalf {153} of the individual or his society? This is an ahistorical approach that assumes that at any given point in time, the various structures of society tend to be coherent, consistent, and able to perform specific functions. Thus, members of this school have

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119. Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction* (Waltham, MA: Toronto, 1970), and Ernest Burgess and H. J. Locke, *From Institution to Companionship* (New York: American Book, 1945 and 1953).

debated for years over what are the minimal functions of the family as an institution in society.

There is some consensus that the family has existed in all known societies of mankind. However, just how crucial the family is to the existence of a society has not produced as much consensus. Some sociologists see the replacement function as the central *raison d'être* of the family. Ira Reiss has suggested, however, that the core function of the family is to provide nurturant socialization to its dependent young. It is this function, according to Reiss, that characterizes all families in all societies.<sup>120</sup>

When the family is viewed at the micro-level of analysis, the concept of *function* has proved quite useful. Taking into account the functional prerequisites of replacement, socialization, production, and distribution of goods and services, maintenance of law and order and of individual and group motivation, many sociologists have attempted to see how different races and classes differentially perform replacement, health, socialization, economic, religious, and other functions. *Generally for this school of thought, man is not created in the image of God but of society.* A harmonious family and marriage system is defined in terms of its adjustment to the larger social system in which it is embedded rather than in terms of its obedience to God's law. Man is seen as a *functional*, not a *religious*, being.

Another criticism we may make of the structural-functional approach is that it places an undue emphasis on structure and functions and so tends to ignore the "dynamics" of interaction within the family. Other critics have attacked the structural-functional assumption that all social systems, whether at the societal or at the familial level, strive for a rather constant state of equilibrium or balance. In other words, it ignores the biblical teaching that family and marriage have become deformed by man's original and actual sinfulness and hence like all human institutions are subject to conflict, pain, and misery. Newer studies in history, such as that of D. Hunt, *Parents and Children in History; The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (1970), and psychiatry, such as those of Jules Henry's *Pathway to Mad-*

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120. Ira L. Reiss, "The Universality of the Family: A Conceptual Analysis," in *Readings on the Family System* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), 11-26.

ness (1971) and *Culture Against Man* (1963), as well as R. D. Laing's *The Politics of the Family* (1971), have undermined the idealistic view of the family advocated by the structural-functionalist school. In different ways, they suggest that definitions of family normality and pathology are much harder to draw than had been thought. Studies {154} of families of battered children and of schizophrenics have revealed a dark side of "normal" family life which in the past had been explored only in literary works.<sup>121</sup>

### *The Confusion Between Structure and Function*

William J. Goode in his contribution to the first volume of *Sociology Today*, titled, "The Sociology of the Family," points out that there is much confusion today about the relationship between "function" and "structure" in discussions about the nature of the family. He writes:

Current confusion about the relations between "function" and "structure" are similar in divers ways to the confusion about the conceptual twin to structure-function—i.e., "status-role."

Here let me say merely that to assert "Y" is functional is now inexcusably imprecise, and is often an implicit value judgment. The kernel of a functionalist approach—and almost all good sociological theory is functionalist—is that it imposes on us an alertness to some boundary-maintaining system, which exhibits the general properties of homeostasis, cohesion, self-reproduction and interdependence of parts.

Functionalism is a halfway house on the road from intuited, concrete descriptions and relations which are mainly ideal-typical, to causal relations and descriptions based on analytic variables. Even now, it is necessary to specify "functional for what?" so that in essence one says, "Y functions to raise-(lower) the value of X." X in this case may mean "integration of the parts of the system" or, indeed, may refer to any variable in the system or to the system as a whole. Thus, unless "the function or functions of Y" means the definition of Y ... it must mean the consequences of Y, i.e., increasing or lowering the value of variable X.

There is *no* distinction between function and structure, except that which the theoretical problem of the analyst imposes. What is func-

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121. D. G. Gil, *Violence Against Children* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), and R. E. Helfer and C. H. Kempe, eds., *The Battered Child* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

tion for one system and theoretical context is structure for another. To label one attribute or element a function is merely to indicate the direction of movement or effect toward which our attention is directed. That is, by so labeling it, we indicate that we are seeking to account for it, and we usually account for it by locating the relevant structures, activities, or mechanisms which cause it. What is labeled “structure” was in turn produced by some set of factors or forces, and the object of our investigation may come to focus on how that element or factor occurs; when we thus move to such a question, what before was a “structure” thereupon becomes “function”—always, of course, within a newly designated system.<sup>122</sup> {155}

The confusion between “function” and “structure” in secular humanist sociology here referred to by Goode is, of course, due to the humanists’ lack of a sure ordering principle of investigation in God’s revelation in the Holy Scriptures which alone reveals the existence of the great law-order of God’s creation. Unwilling to recognize the existence of the Creator or of His Law-Order, secular humanists are bound to misinterpret the so-called “facts” of the creation. This is because they refuse to admit the necessity for norms or values as the criteria for deciding what is to be accepted as factual, dismissing such norms and values as subjectivistic value judgments. Goode admits as much when he talks about making “implicit value judgments” in the quotation above. *In other words, the “structure-function” dualism in modern secular sociology is a reflection of the underlying dualism between facts and values in contemporary social science. It reflects the inherent confusion of scholars who are gripped by the modern nature-freedom religious ground motive, that is, the antinomy between the science ideal and the personality ideal.*

Why does such a dualism arise? The answer is that such secular social scientists like to think of reality as consisting ontically of the (logical) human subject over against the object (world), that is, the cognitive, inner world of human consciousness and purposes over against an external, objective, empirical, and “factual” world. Once we start from this *a priori* split of reality into “subject” and “object,” difficulties are bound to arise, and the contradictions become inescapable. One is

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122. William J. Goode, “The Sociology of the Family,” in Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom, and Leonard S. Cottrell Jr., eds., *Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), 187-88.

saddled with false dilemmas that one is never able to shake off his back, for example, the question of the universality of the family. The subject (exhausted, so to speak, in the *logical* function) is wrested out of its place in the coherence of the meaning of reality; it no longer exists under the law-order of God's creation but is "free" and autonomous. But it is the insurmountable obstacle for such apostate subjectivists that they are obliged to admit the existence of some kind of external "ought" or law-order outside themselves. That is to say, although social scientists may not wish to recognize an irreducible law-order which holds for subjects as well as objects, for example, for the family as well as for its individual members, they must account for it in some way. One way to climb out from under the law-order as it applies to the family is to talk about the family's "structure" and "functions." But as Goode points out, this is to make value judgments. By what criterion does one judge whether one is talking about a family rather than, say, a labor union, since both are conceived in union and born in labor?

To speak of the family's structure and functions instead of the family's divinely laid down creational ordinances is only an apostate way of trying to account for the inescapable creation norms given in God's creation, namely, the structural principles for family and marriage. By means of such {156} concepts as "structure" and "function," social scientists bring in by the back door what they have thrown out of the front door of their laboratory. They try to build up their theory of family and marriage by an appeal to the so-called "neutral" facts, leaving out of account all normative considerations. *But in doing so let us be sure to observe that they then lose hold of the very facts they are trying to understand.* For in every "positive" fact of human society, including the "facts" of family and marriage, there is not only some inescapable divinely laid down structural principle or norm for family and marriage, but also a degree of conformity to or deviation from the creation norm—a divine command laid down upon man to realize or to positivize in history; *not* a structural law in the sense of the natural laws of physics and chemistry.

*This is the issue: by what criterion do we in fact define the family?* In our view, family and marriage can be defined only in terms of their divinely laid down structural principles, which have been stated by Herman Dooyeweerd as follows:

The natural community between a couple of parents and their children under age is not a relationship with an undifferentiated inner destination. If it were, it would disappear in the advance of the differentiating process in historical development. It would then be a rudiment of a former historical phase. But this view is refuted by the facts.

Holy Scripture throws a quite different light on the natural communal bond of the family ... even though it does not give us a theoretical analysis of the typical inner structure. It presents the family as a typical normative bond of love, based upon the natural ties of blood between parents and their immediate offspring. This is a reflection of the bond of love between the Heavenly Father and His human children, unbreakably bound to the tie between Christ and His Church (for instance Gen. 2:24; Proverbs 3:12; Psalm 103:13; and Luke 15)... According to its inner structure of individuality, the natural immediate family is thus an institutional moral community of love between parents and their children under age, structurally based upon biological ties of blood relationship.<sup>123</sup>

This biblically reformational definition of the family as a structure of creation qualified by moral love and based upon genetic blood ties enables us to explain the variations in family types which have developed over the course of history. Thus, even in the case of polygamy, the husband does not form *one* marriage and *one* family community with many women; rather, he forms a *separate* marriage community and a *separate* nuclear family with each woman. Thus, even the polygamist has entered into many marriages and many families simultaneously. With each woman with whom {157} he procreates a child he has formed a *separate* nuclear family unit.

According to God's Word, marriage is founded upon the sexual biological attraction of a man for a woman and vice versa and thus marital sexual relationships must never be depreciated as they are in asceticism. Yet marriage is also qualified by the permanent typical bond of moral love of one man for one woman occurring between them in their full temporal existence and so expressed in all the law spheres of creation. James H. Olthuis, in *I Pledge You My Troth*, defines the marriage bond as follows:

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123. Herman Dooyeweerd, "The Structures of Individuality of Temporal Reality," in *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1957), 269-70.

God called husband and wife to an exclusive, lifelong partnership of love, or as I prefer, a partnership of troth or fidelity. In a sentence, marriage is a mutual, permanent, exclusive, one-flesh union between husband and wife, characterized by troth or fidelity.

Physical intercourse is an important part of being “one flesh” but the key concept in marriage is troth. If a married couple obeys the central love-command, they will be faithful to each other. Troth involves loyalty, trust, love, devotion, reliability; a husband can count on his wife, and she on him. Troth is not an act which occurs now and then, rather marriage is a state or institution in which troth ought to characterize all its many aspects. Physical intercourse grows out of this troth-intercourse and consummates it as a good gift of the Lord in marriage.<sup>124</sup>

Insight into the vast array of anthropological and ethnological information about family and marriage now available in the libraries of the world is possible only in the light of these biblical norms for the nuclear family and monogamous marriage.

### *The Developmental Approach*

This approach to the study of the family and marriage emphasizes the changes which occur in the family life of the individual as he is born, grows up, marries, raises his own family, and dies. The time span is the life cycle of any nuclear family, and the units of analysis are the stages—childhood, adolescence, marriage, adulthood, and old age—which can be demarcated within the life of an individual and his family. The first use of developmental stages in family analysis occurred in the 1930s, with the work of E. L. Kirkpatrick and his colleagues and the research of P. Sorokin and his associates.<sup>125</sup>

It was soon recognized that the notion of a family life cycle is much more complicated than that of the development of one individual. The {158} number of stages can be influenced by the number of children born (if any), the spacing of the children, the age at marriage of both

124. James H. Olthuis, *I Pledge You My Troth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 20-21.

125. E. L. Kirkpatrick et al., “The Life Cycle of the Family Farm,” *Experiment Station Bulletin*, no. 121 (University of Wisconsin, 1934), and C. E. Kirkpatrick, *The Family As Process and Institution* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1963); also P. A. Sorokin et al., *A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931).



spouses, when the first and last children arrive, and so on. In essence, the crucial problems in delineating stages of the family life cycle are (a) the overlapping of stages, and (b) deciding whether to focus on the first or the last child, or both.

Evelyn Duvall, in *Family Development* (1967), attempted to resolve the problem of overlapping stages by focusing only on the first child. His assumption was that the family learned to adjust to requirements of each new stage with the oldest child, and the adjustment necessary for subsequent children was thus minimal.<sup>126</sup>

The central concept of this conceptual framework is “developmental task,” which has been defined by Duvall as one

which arises at or about a certain period in the life of an individual or family, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by society, and difficulty with later tasks.<sup>127</sup>

Another assumption of the developmental framework is that the success of the family in its tasks is dependent on the complex interactions of family members in meeting their individual developmental tasks. The actions and reactions of each member relative to his or her own life path and those of other family members is of crucial importance. Again, it is assumed by this approach that the family does not exist in a social vacuum. The family is subject to the influence of other social systems such as the occupational world of the parents who work, the school cultures of the children, and the varying social groups to which each of the members belongs. Although the family is not completely controlled by these external systems, neither is it unaffected by them.

### *The Situational Approach*

The situational approach is concerned with adaptation and problem-solving in a family context. How do individuals and the family unit respond to different circumstances and situations that arise, such as the marriage of a daughter, the death of a family member, or even the eating of a meal together? James H. S. Bossard has used this approach to

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126. Evelyn Duvall, *Family Development* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971).

127. *Ibid.*, 102.

examine family ritual, including the contribution of family pets to happiness, and much of the literature on family crises revolves around the problem of adaptation.<sup>128</sup> {159}

### *The Institutional Approach*

According to Hill and Hansen, the institutional approach, like the structure-functional, is concerned with the relation of the family institution to the rest of society, but it is overtly historical in character. The family in a particular society is described as it changes over time. This approach is exemplified in John Sirjamaki's work, *The American Family in the Twentieth Century*,<sup>129</sup> in which he records the American family's current characteristics and the ways in which it has changed in recent history. The focus of this approach is not upon the individual in the family, but upon the family in society over time.

### *Marriage as It Functions in All the Law-Spheres*

The Christian scholar need have no quarrel with these last three mentioned approaches—the developmental, the situational, and the institutional—since he recognizes that family and marriage function in all the law-spheres of God's creation, including the psychological, the social, and the cultural-historical spheres, and that they are interwoven with other societal structures.

Marriage, for example, functions, in all the law-spheres. Thus, marriage has the following aspects, among others: the mathematical, consisting in the unity of the family in the plurality of its members; the aspect of space, in the occupation of a house; the physical-chemical, in the necessity for food and warmth; the biological, in the mating of husband and wife; the physical, expressed in the feelings of togetherness; the lingual, in the use of words of endearment and love; and the historical, since both parents must assist in the development of their children's socialization. The children of a marriage are reared and formed to meet the cultural tasks of the future. In addition, a couple has a God-

128. James H. S. Bossard, *The Large Family System* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1956).

129. John Sirjamaki, *The American Family in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

ordained task to help each other develop culturally, morally, and psychologically. Marriage is also a peculiar community of thought and feeling, where a continuous exchange of ideas and feelings between the married pair occurs. *Love brings about a tuning in on the same wavelengths.* In the juridical law-sphere the structure of authority of marriage is expressed in the fact that it is the husband, as head of the family, who must make the final decisions after due consultation with his wife. Marriage in the biblical-reformational view is not seen as either a monarchy or a democracy, but as a community *sui generis* (of its own peculiar type) with its own internal law.

Such authority in marriage is also expressed in the aesthetic sphere. When a man and his wife are compatible with each other, we speak of a harmonious marriage. This harmony is disturbed when a wife assumes the {160} authority which rightfully belongs to her husband. *At the same time the husband's authority over his wife and children must always be qualified by moral love.* Dooyeweerd says of this aspect of marriage:

The internal structure of marital authority can only be understood from the typical love-union between the conjugal partners in which, according to the divine order of creation, the husband "is the head of the wife." He has to *lead* her, but by no means to *dominate* her, because the female part in the bi-unitary bond is perfectly equivalent (though not equal) to the male element and ought to be fully recognized.<sup>130</sup>

Marriage is finally also a typical community of faith. It is either apostate or serves the living God of the Bible. Apostasy and the service of God are mutually exclusive. It is for this reason that a marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian is dangerous and contrary to the teachings of Holy Scripture which warns us, "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14, RSV).

As we have seen, the various approaches to family and marriage discussed so far in this article reflect this functioning of family and marriage in the different law-spheres of creation. *Unfortunately, some of the modern approaches to the study of family and marriage absolutize one of these law-spheres and then try to explain family and marriage in terms of*

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130. Dooyeweerd, "Structures," vol. 3, 325.

*the one absolutized law-sphere.* Nowhere is this more evident than in the Marxist and Freudian explanations and theories of family and marriage.

### *The Marxist Economic Approach*

If the psychoanalytical approach tends to explain family and marriage in terms of the absolutized psychological law-sphere of creation, the Marxists and Communists try to describe and explain both institutions in terms of the absolutized economic law-sphere.

Marxist sociologists “see” the family institution as being determined by economic organization, especially in the economic exploitation of women by men. In their view, women are the exploited property of men, with their status in society profoundly affected by modes of current economic production and prevailing property rights. Thus, F. Engels, in *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*, saw monogamy as but one stage in the history of the family and of marriage. Rather than some kind of an evolutionary pinnacle at which is found the greatest happiness, the monogamous state and stage of marriage is said by Engels to have ushered in the greatest subjugation of one sex by the other that the world has ever seen. “The modern monogamous family,” he wrote, “is founded on the {161} open or disguised domestic slavery of women.”<sup>131</sup> In another passage, he likened conventional marriage to prostitution. A wife differs from a common whore “only in that she does not offer her body for money by the hour like a commodity but sells it once and for all.”<sup>132</sup> Engels also wrote:

The first class antagonism appearing in history coincides with the development of the antagonism of man and wife in monogamy, and the first class oppression with that of the female by the male sex.... By the side of slavery and private property monogamy marks at the same time that epoch which, reaching down to our own days, takes with all progress also a step backwards, relatively speaking, and develops the welfare and advancement of the one sex by the woe and submission of the other.<sup>133</sup>

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131. F. Engels, *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*, trans. Ernest Untermann (Chicago: C. H. Kerr & Co., 1902), 89.

132. *Ibid.*, 86.

133. *Ibid.*, 89.

### *The Psychoanalytic Approach of Sigmund Freud*

No modern thinker has exerted a greater revolution upon modern people's thinking about sex, family, and marriage than Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis. This revolution resulted from his clinical experience with neurotic patients and his researches into the subconscious level of the human mind. Freud taught that sexual repression, the attitude of shame and guilt, and ignorance about sexual matters were the root causes of neuroses and many other mental disorders.<sup>134</sup>

As a result, Freud and his followers urged the dissemination of knowledge about sex and complete sexual freedom as the panacea for all mental ills. Freud believed that undue sexual restraint, brought about in large measure by ignorance, as well as by moral and social inhibitions, took a high toll of pain and suffering in married life. If repression and self-denial caused the neurotic disquiet, why not reverse the traditional Christian interpretation of morality? Emancipate people from such restraints and inhibitions. Put a new scientific definition upon sex, define it as good, not degrading, shameful, and evil as had been done in Western civilization from the time of the ancient Greek philosophers.

The psychoanalytic approach to family and marriage has been utilized by many writers on family and marriage, for example, William F. Kenkel's *The Family in Perspective* (1966), as well as R. D. Laing in *The Self and Others* (1969) and *The Politics of the Family* (1971).

Such an approach seeks to explain family and marriage in biological-psychological terms. It seeks to systematize our knowledge about family and marriage in terms of the assumption that men and women are under {162} the grip of certain drives inherent in their psyche, that they are controlled in their conscious behavior by the existence of the "libido," of the "Oedipus complex," by "penis envy" of women for men. This approach attributes various patterns of neurotic behavior to unconscious and subconscious motivations. Thus, writers of this school think of the various stages in the expression of love as manifes-

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134. Sigmund Freud, *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (New York: Nervous and Mental Diseases Publishing Co., 1916), and Nathan W. Ackerman, *The Psychodynamics of Family Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1958).

tations of the “libido,” as for example, in the case of narcissism, oral stage, latency period, and adult heterosexual expression. They describe the emotional interactions between family members in terms of fixation, transference, identifications, and introjection, in order to explain earlier and later family behavior. Freudians explain mate selection in terms of the hypothesis that men and women seek marital partners who are substitutes for their parents of the opposite sex in physical appearance and temperament. They claim that breast-fed babies exhibit greater emotional stability in later life than those fed by the bottle on a “formula.” In short, these scholars have absolutized the biological and psychological aspects of God’s creation and have sought to explain family and marriage in terms of it. No Christian scholar disputes the fact that family and marriage function in both the biological and psychological law-spheres. Does not the Bible itself teach that man has been created “out of the dust of the earth”? As a creature of God, man is also subject to the same constraints as the other creatures God made. At the same time, the Christian scholar is obliged to take into account the other side of the biblical teaching about man, namely, that he has been created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26).

### *The Personality and Cultural Determinist Approach*

The so-called personality and cultural determinist approach results from a meeting of minds on the part of anthropologists and psychoanalysts, although some sociologists have also been involved in developing this approach to the study of family and marriage in recent years. These scholars assume that the customary ways of rearing children in their early years establish a personality structure characteristic of the culture into which they have been born. The personalities so shaped and determined tend to perpetuate themselves by the initiation of children into the culture, so that they tend to develop in accordance with the norms of that culture. The observations and interpretations of writers such as Kardiner, Ralph Linton, Margaret Mead, Bateson, Ruth Benedict, DuBois, and others do not always agree, but they are united by their common unstated assumptions that *man is a product only of his cultural and historical environment*. Man is not seen by these scholars as the creation of Almighty God with a cultural mandate to fulfill. Instead, he is seen only as a product of his historical and social experi-

ence. Thus, these writers tend to describe and to explain family and marriage in terms of the absolutized cultural {163} historical and social law-spheres, and the patterns of family and marriage are seen as varying with different historical epochs and social orders. There are no absolute standards or “creation ordinances” laid down for man to realize in his family and marriage relationships, but only relative standards which he must find out for himself in order to survive by making the best adaptation possible in varying circumstances.

### *The Need for an Ordering Principle in the Study of Family and Marriage*

All the above approaches and “conceptual frameworks” are not truly theories or adequate explanations of family and marriage. They are merely broad and relatively abstract guidelines used today by various scholars in their attempts to understand family and marriage. The important thing to note is the fact that all these various approaches, taken independently, tend to describe only a portion of the reality that is family and marriage. According to Hill and Hansen, the family and marriage field of investigation is currently long on conceptual frameworks and short on an adequate theory. *They give us descriptions of the facts but no really valid explanations of the facts.*

The reason for this situation is not hard to find. It lies in the fact that secular humanist scholars lack an adequate ordering principle for their description and explanation of the “facts.” Trying to be neutral and value-free in their approach to the study of family and marriage, they find that the “facts” slip through their fingers and often appear to be at odds with each other, for example the Marxist and Freudian approaches.

The secular humanist schools of thought are united by their radical rejection of any view of the family and of marriage as having been *structured* by God the Creator and of these institutions having been created by God for man’s well-being and blessedness. Instead, they view family and marriage in purely evolutionary and naturalistic terms as having been derived from man’s animal ancestry or as demanded by the functional prerequisites of society. The biblical explanation of the origin and nature of family and marriage is simply ignored in favor of an amoral attempt at being “neutral” or “scientific” and “impartial.”

The empirical data are regarded by all such scholars as being ultimate in nature. Such scholars seem to have forgotten that there can be no neutrality in science, since every scientist approaches his subject matter with implicit assumptions and value judgments regarding the nature and origin of man, of truth, and even of what constitutes a “fact.” Such assumptions depend upon the scientist’s own prior faith commitment in either his own reason, scientific method, and so on. In *A Sociology of Sociology*, Robert W. Friedrichs devoted six chapters of the book to an examination of this claim to neutrality, and he summed up his findings as follows:

We have looked at six phases of the research process that necessarily {164} calls forth value-judgments from those involved—judgments that demand criteria that lie beyond the immediate “givens” of the rhetoric of science. They centered about the selection of a problem, choice of concepts, preference among logics, investment in a particular hypothesis, the level of error one is willing to risk, and whether one will opt for the interests of nonscientists or only for one’s own or those of his subcommunity when faced with responsibility for applying his findings. Although the evidence offered would seem sufficient to defrock the sociological “priest” of his value-free cloak, it is by no means complete. For we shall now examine those additional aspects of social research that not only deny the neutrality of sociologists but may demand an implicit commitment beyond that normally assumed by the community of science as well ... even when involved in social research (sociologists) are unable to avoid making value-judgments that lie beyond empirical adjudication.<sup>135</sup>

The Christian scholar will also point out that human life, and hence its scientific study, cannot be divided up into two realms of “facts” on the one hand, to be studied by scientific method, and “values” on the other hand, to be studied by ethics and theology. *Life is religion*. Men and women will either serve the one true God who has revealed Himself in the Bible as man’s creator, redeemer, and judge, or they will serve false gods and idols by absolutizing various aspects of the creation and as St. Paul says, “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25). Man is not autonomous as secular humanists suppose, but has been created before the face of the Lord to serve Him

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135. Robert W. Friedrichs, *A Sociology of Sociology* (New York: Free Press, 1972), 165-67.



in all his ways. If life is religion as the Bible reveals it to be, then any attempt to divide life into two realms of facts and values is bound to defeat man's attempt to understand himself, his society, or the creation, since all have been created by God and can be understood only in the light of the ordering principle of Holy Scripture. Any attempt at value neutrality in the social sciences is thus bound to result in such false dilemmas as objectivism versus subjectivism, determinism versus voluntarism, individualism versus collectivism.

The Christian scholar will also point out that all science itself rests upon previously accepted presuppositions which are assumed as true. Without such a value frame of reference in presuppositions there could in fact be no science at all, as C. Van Til and H. G. Stoker have made clear in *Jerusalem and Athens*,<sup>136</sup> William Young in *Foundations of Theology*, and Gary North and others in *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*.<sup>137</sup> In {165} *Jerusalem and Athens*, Stoker points out that "the basic presuppositions of science belong to man's prescientific life-and-world-view, science obtains its own meaning from these prescientific presuppositions. Accordingly science can never prove its own presuppositions scientifically.... All science starts with prescientific presuppositions and should responsibly account for them."<sup>138</sup>

The distinction between matters of fact and matters of values, between what "ought" to be and what "is," is false since there can be no facts without values. In *Facts, Values, and Ethics*, James H. Olthuis writes as follows:

Facts do not enjoy an objective, self-sufficient, *an sich* existence. There is no such thing as a "brute fact." It is not that facts stand by themselves and as the occasion affords are perceived as such. Facts can only be known in their meaning-character in relation to a law-order, and can only exist as law-conformable. A certain fact is a fact when and because it answers to a certain law-structure (holding for facts of a typical kind). Facts and law-order are in correlation. Without the law-

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136. E. R. Geehan, ed., *Jerusalem and Athens* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1971), 25-71, for Stoker's chapter.

137. Gary North, ed., *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1976). Cf. E. L. Hebden Taylor, *Reformation or Revolution*, chap. 1., "The Biblical Philosophy of Man, Society, Science and History" (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1970), 9-27.

138. Stoker, in Geehan, *Jerusalem and Athens*, 34-35.

order to define and determine, there could be no facts. Without the facts as those which answer to and subjectively realize the demands of the law, the law-order would be meaningless. Facts only speak when structured. An awareness of law-order is a prerequisite for the acquisition of any knowledge of the facts. Without at least an implicit sense of the diverse law-spheres, one could not assimilate physical, economic, ethical and all other kinds of facts. Nor could one distinguish one kind of fact from another. Any reference to fact is by definition a reference to *some kind* of fact. This means that there are not only so-called “natural” facts (the rustling of leaves, the flowering of a tree ...) but also facts bearing a normative qualification; economic, ethical, aesthetic, etc. (buying a car, caressing a child, enjoying a concert). Apart from normative structures, there is no way to acknowledge the institutions one confronts in reality, such as state, church and family. The relationship or correlation of fact and norm is obvious, for example, when one talks of a *good*. But it is just as real when one names a certain group of individuals a family. How does one know that this particular group is a family? There is only one answer: it meets the norm for the family.... Values in our view must simply be facts, acts, things, events which in a high degree live up to the relevant norms. These values in no wise exist by themselves. Values are *referential* in character and only in this reference to the law-order do they possess meaning. As such, they are only possible as a result of prior subjective recognition of the structural law-order of creation.<sup>139</sup>

Once we grant that no social scientist can avoid making value judgments nor avoid having value preferences, as Fallding calls them in *The {166} Sociological Task*,<sup>140</sup> then we can question the values which have in fact guided most current secular humanist research upon family and marriage in recent decades. In nearly every case, these scholars have left God’s Word out of their scholarship and they have based their research upon faulty or even wrong premises about the nature of man and his purpose in this world. Error comes from assuming a false premise, taken carelessly for granted without proof, and then building upon that premise. *Since the basic presupposition or premise underlying current research into family and marriage is false, namely the assump-*

139. James H. Olthuis, *Facts, Values and Ethics* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum Press, 1968), 186-87.

140. Harold Fallding, *The Sociological Task* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

*tion of man's autonomy in God's world, the entire structure of scholarship built upon it must also be false.*

The basic error of modern secular social science comes from its rejection of God's revelation in the Bible, for in the Christian scholar's view that revelation is the true starting point and premise for any valid knowledge about man, nature, and society. When man substitutes his own false premise, the most vital dimension in the production of valid knowledge is missing.

In the Christian scholar's view the Word of God written in the Bible provides the one ordering principle of life that gives order, coherence, and meaning to all human experience. *The Bible is the foundation and key of all true knowledge.* It is not the sum total of knowledge. It is the *foundation*, the true premise, the starting point, the key that directs and puts shape into the production of further knowledge. God's revelation of Himself as man's creator, redeemer, and sanctifier revealed in the Scriptures is the power by which God opens up our hearts to see our human situation in the framework of reality as it really is by working in us a true knowledge of God, of ourselves, and of the law-order and structure of His creation. The Word of God thus makes us aware of our place in God's creation and provides all our science and scholarship with its proper frame of reference and its only sure point of departure.<sup>141</sup>

Scripture is the Truth of God which reveals to us and makes us see how we stand in relation to God, to our fellow men, and to the world. In its dynamic character, God's Word impinges upon our hearts and directs our scientific thinking in the proper direction. Accordingly, although the Scriptures should not be regarded as the source book for facts investigated by scientists, they would put the set into the scientific saw. The great delusion of scientific humanism is that the saw of science is able to set itself. *The Word of God alone enables us to see the facts studied in the various sciences in their true order, structure, and relationships. The facts do not "speak" to us unless we see them in their proper order, unity, and diversity.* The Word of God clarifies our view of the world at the outset {167}. It provides us with our Archimedean point of

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141. William Young, *Foundations of Theory* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1967). Cf. Evan Runner, "The Bible in Relation to Learning," *Christian Perspectives* (1960).

departure for all our scientific thought by revealing that we did not arrive on this planet by chance but that God created the universe. *By assuming that chance created everything, secular humanist scholars have condemned their scholarly efforts to futility, for out of chance nothing but chance can result.* For the past four centuries, Western scholars have been producing ever-increasing amounts of knowledge without a proper foundation—basing their scientific work upon false premises and erroneous presuppositions regarding man's origin, nature, and destiny. *That is the main reason that modern investigation of family and marriage has been unable to provide us with a truly adequate explanation and theory of these two institutions.*

The vast data gathered by these scholars has turned out to be partial data, never possessing the authority and certainty of ultimate truth, because the men and women who produced it lacked the ordering principle of God's Word. Consequently, neither scientific method applied to the so-called "neutral" facts nor experience by itself can provide the primary ethical and epistemological determinatives for the Christian scholar.

If the Christian scholar really believes that God has spoken to man through His Word, then he will consciously make that Word of God the ordering principle of all his scientific as well as practical activities. *The great tragedy is that for centuries Christian thinkers have allowed their thinking about marriage and sex to be controlled by pagan Greek and Oriental ideas about these two subjects rather than by the cleansing Word of God.* In thus synthesizing the biblical doctrine of family and marriage with Greek-Oriental dualistic ideas, Christians have invited and brought upon themselves the attacks of the so-called "new moralists" who have rightly rejected the old Greek dualistic sexual morality. By this we mean the idea that sex is something to be ashamed of because it is part of the inferior body, whereas man's highest faculty is his reason and intellect. The Church fathers absorbed this pagan dualism of ancient Greece in their teaching about sex, which they labeled as "sinful." They accepted Plato's teaching in the *Phaedro* that man is a soul imprisoned in a body and that the good man will do his utmost to climb out from under the control of his physical passions, which being derived from the body are by the definitions of Greek philosophy evil.

### *The Reformational-Biblical Approach to Family, Marriage, and Sex*

As a response to the crisis in family and marriage brought about by false premises and presuppositions in secular humanist social science, as well as in moralistic and pietistic Christian circles, God has raised up a new school of thought beginning with the work of Abraham Kuyper and continued by Herman Dooyeweerd in the Netherlands and now being carried on in North America by many young Christian scholars. The great merit {168} of this new approach is that it goes back to the Holy Scriptures themselves for guidance in investigating family, marriage, and sex. *It accepts the biblical teaching that everything that God created, including the sexual difference between men and women, is good and therefore must never be disparaged. It does not locate the origin of sin in man's sexual organs but finds it in man's rebellious heart or soul* (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 1:18–28; Matt. 15:19).

This new reformational-biblical approach to family, marriage, and sex seeks to break with all forms of dualism, either of body and soul, nature and grace, of sacred and secular. For the Christian thinkers of this school life is religion, that is, the service of the true God of the Bible or an idol and false absolutization of an aspect of God's creation. It refuses to explain family and marriage in terms of any one absolutized aspect or law-sphere of creation while recognizing that both institutions function in all these aspects.<sup>142</sup>

By making the Word of God the ordering principle of its science and scholarship, it is able to avoid the extremes associated with all non-biblical or sub-biblical approaches to the study of family and marriage. It rejects both the "old" morality of the Church Fathers and the "new" morality of the Freudians and liberal-modernist Christians. It recognizes the God-ordained differences between men and women without demeaning the place and dignity of women in God's creation. Men and women, it believes, have been created by God to be partners with each other in the great task of carrying out the cultural mandate.<sup>143</sup>

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142. Andrew R. Eickhoff, *A Christian View of Sex and Marriage* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 25–28; also Derrick S. Bailey, *Sexual Relations in Christian Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), for a good account of John Calvin's break with dualism.

143. Olthuis, *I Pledge You My Troth*, 6–8.

The writer of this article believes that this reformational-biblical approach to family and marriage alone provides us with a coherent and sane view of the nature and function of family and marriage by placing them within the great structures of individuality which God has ordained for man's well-being. In his *Reformational Understanding of Family and Marriage*, he has attempted to present the main finding of this new approach.<sup>144</sup>

Finally, this new approach, based firmly upon the Word of God, recognizes what is partially true in the findings of the various other schools of thought, both Christian and secular humanist, and in the light of God's {169} Word seeks to sift out the wheat from the chaff in these various approaches to the study of family and marriage. Due to God's common temporal conserving grace, we believe that even secular humanist scholars have much to contribute, once their teaching is divested of its apostate trappings and foundations. Thus, Freud has taught us to understand the depths and mystery of the human heart's sinfulness, while the Marxists have witnessed to the great deformations sinful men brought upon their marriages by their degradation and enslavement of their wives. As we have seen, family and marriage function within all the law-spheres of creation, and hence no true understanding of either institution is possible which ignores the work already done by scholars in the physical, biological, psychological, cultural-historical, economic, social, moral, and confessional aspects of these human institutions. For this reason, we should welcome the insights of such men as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and many other great secular scholars, even though we may have to reject many of their hypotheses and conclusions. The fact that they have been able to give us any such insights at all only goes to prove that the Lord is still sovereign over His creation and that even the unbelievers' wrath still shows forth God's praise and glory (Ps. 76:10), since they are obliged to recognize the true "state of affairs," even when they try to hold down the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

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144. E. L. Hebden Taylor, *The Reformational Understanding of Family and Marriage* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1970). Cf. W. G. De Vries, *Marriage in Honour* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1976); Cleveland McDonald, *Creating a Successful Christian Marriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975); and "Hope for the Family," *International Reformed Bulletin*, no. 46/47 (Summer/Fall 1971).

May God the Holy Spirit inspire the readers of this *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* who have read this article to get busy with the much-needed work of reforming the structures of modern marriage and family life which have been deformed for so long by so much false teaching by helping in the great task of better understanding the nature, functions, and purpose of two of God's greatest gifts to the human race, namely, the human family and marriage. May the Lord help us all to work harder at improving and renewing our own families and marriages, so that the heathen around us may be drawn by our witness also in this sphere of life to the Savior and Redeemer of the world, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who died upon His Cross in order that these two institutions of His creation might be restored to their former beauty, glory, and stability as enjoyed by Adam and Eve before their fall from God's grace in the Garden of Eden. Only in the Garden of Christ's Resurrection is there now to be found any hope of redemption for the human family and marriage.

# 2.

# BOOK REVIEWS



## REVIEWS

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*The Puritan Family*, by Edmund S. Morgan.  
New York: Harper & Row, 1966. 196 pp.; paper, \$2.25.

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### Reviewed by James B. Jordan

Morgan has provided in this volume a set of seven valuable essays on the subject of the Puritan family in New England. The edition here reviewed is an expansion and revision of the 1944 volume bearing the same title. The author's purpose is to examine and summarize the Puritans' ideas regarding marriage and the family.

The first chapter, "Puritanism and Society," provides the setting for the essays which follow. Morgan surveys the Puritan use of the Scriptures as a blueprint for society, the reasons why they kept diaries, and the nature of the various covenants which they saw structuring society. An important section details the Calvinistic and Puritan view of order. Sin basically was seen as a disruption of the order of creation, in which God ruled over the creature. Grace was a restoration of this order. Not only was there order in creation, but also there was a social order, or hierarchy, and the Puritans, designing to restore the grace of order to all of life, were especially careful to honor every kind of superior-inferior relation in society. Wives, for instance, "were instructed that woman was made ultimately for God but immediately for man" (20). The chapter closes with a brief but clear summary of Ramist (Peter Ramus) logic as it bore upon the Puritan view of hierarchy and relationship.

The second essay deals with "Husband and Wife." The Puritan marriage customs are surveyed, especially the emphasis placed upon a joyous wedding celebration. "In accordance with this sentiment, when economy led the General Court of Massachusetts to forbid the sale of cakes and buns in the markets, an exception was made of wedding cakes. From all accounts Puritan weddings were accompanied with plenty of cake, 'sackposset,' and rum for everyone present" (33-34). The legal aspects of marriage are surveyed, from engagement to divorce. Although woman's place was in the home, the responsibilities

which she could assume in that position were quite large. Many Puritans left their finances in the care of their wives, who were regarded as naturally more frugal than their husbands would tend to be. Morgan provides a long and rewarding section on love in Puritan marriages. The Puritan view was that love was not so much the cause as the product of marriage. “The advice was not that couples should not marry unless they *love* each other but that they should not marry unless they *can* love each other” (54). The wooing of a lady was often more financially motivated than anything else, but for the Puritans this did not conflict with “higher” motivations. Morgan closes this chapter with some humorous examples of the Puritan lack of prudery in the area of sex. The embarrassment felt by many modern Christians over plain speaking in the area of sex owes its origin to the Victorian era, not to the Puritan.

Chapter three concerns “Parents and Children.” Contrary to most modern beliefs regarding them, the Puritans did not force their children to slave at sober trades and learning at the earliest possible age. Play and pastime were the occupations of children until around seven, but then the child was to begin his training for adulthood. Idleness in childhood would eventuate in sluggardry in maturity, the Puritans knew full well. A boy usually selected his calling between the ages of ten and fourteen, and since the period of apprenticeship was seven years, this decision was most important. Morgan introduces us to the ways in which a calling {171} was selected, and shows that, though with difficulty, a boy could change apprenticeships if his initial choice proved to be incommensurate with his native capacities. The apprentice lived in the home of his master, and was completely under his care and charge. This leads us to one of the most curious aspects of Puritan life: the fact that Puritan children were frequently placed in homes other than their own for rearing. Morgan, whose sympathy for Puritan culture is marked throughout his work, comments:

In explanation I suggest that Puritan parents did not trust themselves with their own children, that they were afraid of spoiling them by too much affection. The custom of placing children in other families already existed in England in the sixteenth century. Foreigners visiting the country attributed it to lack of parental affection, but Englishmen justified it on the grounds that a child learned better manners when he

was brought up in another home than his own. The Puritans in continuing the practice probably had the same end in view. (77)

Lest the reader misunderstand, the child was thus placed at the age of apprenticeship, not at a very early age.

Arrangements for marriage and dowry come next in the discussion. The parents often arranged the marriage, but could not force the children to marry against their consent. Marriages were based upon social standing (the hierarchy) and were usually accompanied with much haggling over dowry payments. The normal ratio was for the “girl’s parents to give half as much as the boy’s” (82): the system in view here, of giving inheritance to children as they begin life rather than as the parents depart life, is based upon the scriptural pattern shown in the story of the prodigal son, and has much to commend it. In the modern world, where estate taxes will claim a large portion of every inheritance, parents would be wise to turn over portions of their estate to their children early, both to help the children get a start in life and to ensure that the children and not the state receive the inheritance.

The fourth essay deals with “The Education of a Saint.” Morgan discusses the Puritan philosophy of education: since the child was both sinful and ignorant, education had a double purpose. Surprisingly, the Puritans believed in using the rod of correction as little as possible, preferring to try to win the erring child by kindness and evangelical motives. The rod was, of course, always a last resort. “Though it was better to be whipped than damned, it was still better to be persuaded than whipped” (105).

The next chapter, “Masters and Servants,” is of less direct interest to the topic of the book, but contains much insight into the Puritan way of life. Though the servant was directly under the authority of his master in all respects, the Puritan state saw to it that the master did not subject him to physical abuse. The servant was also to be compensated for his labor, depending upon the type of service he rendered. Morgan, always sympathetic to his subject, summarizes:

Servitude in New England was not simply a device by which one class of men got work out of another class. It was also a school, where vocational training was combined with discipline in good manners and guidance in religion, a school of which all servants were the pupils and to which many respectable and godly men sent their children. (132)

The last remark refers to the apprenticeship system.

The penultimate chapter takes up “The Family in the Social Order.” The Puritan church was not composed of individuals but of families. The family was the first church and the first state, both in the history of God’s creation and in the biography {172} of each human being. Thus, the head of each household was an elder who was to conduct family worship. The church could, however, interfere in the family where open sin was involved, censuring rebellious wives and brutal husbands, and excommunicating men who did not sleep with their wives (cf. 141)! Morgan gives a long and interesting discussion of the economic effects of the Puritan extended family. It was expected that a man would give business considerations first and foremost to his kin, and not favor outsiders to the disadvantage to those related to him.

The final chapter is rather more speculative than the rest, and is entitled “Puritan Tribalism.” Morgan’s thesis is that the Puritans became closed in upon themselves and lost interest in the missionary task of the Christian faith, and this because of the fact that so many of their children were not converted. As a result of this, the Puritan preachers spent most of their energy seeking the conversion of the children of the saints rather than spreading the kingdom of Christ to other parts. Morgan has marshaled his facts, and doubtless there is a depressing reality to what he says. Nevertheless, he does not seem to give sufficient credit to the missionary and evangelistic concerns of the Puritan commonwealths. John Eliot was surely concerned for the salvation of the Indians, and J. A. de Jong has discussed other missionary aspects of the Puritan culture (*As the Waters Cover the Sea*, Kampen: Kok, 1970, 43ff.). Thus while Morgan is undoubtedly correct that the Puritan tests for church membership were such as to prevent many children from becoming members, he does not seem to give sufficient attention to the desire of the Puritan preachers to see the evangelization of other peoples as well as their own children.

*The Puritan Family* is well written and easy to follow. The citations are brief and to the point, and well wedded to the flow of Morgan’s text. This book could easily be used profitably in a study by a Sunday School class or by a men’s Bible class. In a day when the family is under assault from the demonic forces of an ever more pagan society, this book could well be consulted by Christians hoping to reform their own lifestyles.

Morgan has been limited almost completely to a discussion of the Puritan view of the family, and is not able to comment extensively upon the actual practices in New England. He has, however, certainly compiled all available information, both theoretical and historical, and the result is a well-balanced narrative. Thorough documentation is referenced for every point, yet the narrative remains smooth throughout.

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***The Assault on the Sexes*, by Jim and Adrea Fordham.**

New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1977. 480 pp., \$9.95.

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**Reviewed by Tommy W. Rogers**

The Conflict of the Ages is a continuing warfare, occupying human time from Genesis 3:15 into the indefinite future. One of the current skirmishes of this continuing battle is manifest in the “sex revolution—women’s liberation” flotsam. Some day there will be a Gibbon (the authors quote Malcolm Muggeridge) “who, looking back across the centuries at our decline and fall, will remark on how, as we systematically destroyed the values and restraints of our inherited way of life, we remained convinced that each ... new assault on marital fidelity, on the home and parenthood, was bound to be conducive to our well-being and enlightenment” (94–95). {173} Make no mistake about it, the liberals, like the Jacobins, mean and intend destructive business. The litany of lib, the authors note, “has taken hold at a time in our history when self-indulgence is at its height and critical thought and intellectual honesty are at an all-time low.” The result, as they demonstrate, “is an ocean of distorted information ... relieved only rarely by anything even resembling serious critical comment” (341). Even so, limited awakening to the integrals of the unisex assault as reflected in ERA has slowed the automatic endorsement by state legislatures that was early received.

The feminists are determined to mold everyone according to their unisex vision. Like so-called liberals in general, they will not be hesitant to impose the mailed fist of compulsion whenever and wherever they can. The more that government can be automated and brought into play, the greater will be the spread of the unisex carcinoma. The

authors feel that the new “progressive” administration is geared “to expedite the installation of liberationist sisters into new positions of federal influence” (466). They assert that the man who stated that “he wanted to be remembered as ‘the president who did for women what Lyndon Johnson did for blacks’ ” and has as president “assured the lib lobby that he would ‘build a base’ of female assistant secretaries from which future cabinet members could be drawn” (467), has helped make the political initiatives of the drive to unisex more threatening than ever before.

The feminists, like the communists, are candid about their depth of revolutionary intent. Yet those who are susceptible to being fooled, or who wish to be, have been co-opted to make the movement more powerful than it would be on revolutionary rhetoric, undisguised, alone. The Fordhams observe that the unisex movement has benefited from ignorance in that most people

... don't know what to think of this movement, because feminists are working on various levels in their push for sex-role revolution. On the one hand, they court public acceptance by striving to create an appropriately mainstream image through the mass media, emphasizing short-term goals such as equal pay, jobs, and education.... less diplomatic factions plug away openly at the whole sex-role revolution, the nature of which most Americans remain perilously ignorant. You hear a great deal about the feminists “image problem.” Thus their dilemma of trying to figure out [how] to conduct a radical revolution without the general public finding out about it. (98)

Key objectives of the unisex agenda are abolition of sex roles (compulsory, where necessary), destruction of traditional marriage and family, legitimization and promotion of homosexuality, “free” universal day care, abortion on demand at public expense, feminist indoctrination in the schools, advocacy of single parenthood, ridicule of the feminine “nest building” perspective, and the adoption and spreading of an “anything goes” sensate cultural ethos. Godly absolutes, of course, are anathema. “While the language of lib emphasizes ‘equality’ and ‘freedom,’ what is actually happening at the psychological and social levels is the breakdown of the sense of commitment and duty that husbands and wives, parents and children, feel for one another” (457).

The systemic relationship between lib and lesbianism is much like that which obtained between “integration” or “civil rights” and com-

munism. According to Kate Millet, radical lib theorist, “lesbian” is a label used as a psychic weapon to keep women locked into a “feminine role,” the essence of which is definition in terms of her relationship to men: “Women’s liberation and homosexual liberation are both struggling toward a common goal: a society free from defining and categorizing people by virtue of gender and/or sexual preference” (32). {174}

Many of the lib boosters, the authors assert, may be classified as “dis-simulibbers” who systematically deny for public consumption many of their radical purposes and assert that they are just for equal pay, liberty, and justice for all. But, according to the Fordhams, “the basic truth about women’s liberation” is that “it’s not meant to be liberation for the individual women who take part in it; *the liberation is for the collective*. At bottom, what is meant is liberation from the traditional laws, customs, and beliefs bearing on the sex roles in Western society” (108).

The trick of revolutionary fermentation is that it creates an environment in which political shifts can happen before people know what is taking place. “Many a club woman who just believes in justice, equality and niceness is serving as the unsuspecting foot soldier of the feminist forces,” with the radical groups providing a flank against which other feminist organizations and individuals appear respectable. The lib mentality has been programmed into the media at every level. News media involvement in restructuring attitudes toward roles of women is apparent in the kinds of women who receive attention and in the way they are described. Even advertising agencies have jumped into the femme lib theme.

One chapter of *The Assault on the Sexes* describes, dissects, and demolishes the new mythology of unisex advocates that nurture is the *only* determinant of behavior (179–205). Life involves a combination of nature and nurture; sex hormones do have a profound influence on capability, reactions, and attitudes. Considerable factual and theoretical evidence is presented in challenge to the emergent and already somewhat well-entrenched wisdom which asserts “that not only are sex differences unimportant, but gender should not affect our thinking in matters of social organization and performance ...” (205).

The authors feel that the unisex proselytizers are asking for denial of the evidence that makes it reasonable to expect different things of

women than of men. But, as they observe, “it’s not rational to fail to take cognizance of the considerable differences between the sexes.... It’s a basic social necessity to reinforce social roles that serve to civilize the stronger, more aggressive male and to protect the female who is the childbearer” (260). “If we didn’t already have a sexual division of labor, the smartest thing we could do to get the world’s work done, to advance civilization and to promote healthy, satisfying human life, would be to invent it” (267).

Possibly the idea of sexual equality among physically unequals has a natural and understandable appeal to the American belief in fair play. We have subjected ourselves to several decades of upheaval in an attempt to assure “equal” opportunity for “minority” groups. Beliefs that all generations heretofore have been hoodwinked by socialization into believing women are physically incapable of competing with men and recognition that, for the first time in the history of personkind, women are full equals, may seem *prima facie* reasonable—unless one asks the questions that strip the hypocrisy from the “equality.” The chapter, “The Case for the Five-Foot-Two Cop,” underscores both the hypocrisy of the movement and the “equality” of equal reward for differential capacity and performance. Irritant examples include the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Paris Island, where women do the “flexed arm hang” instead of chinning; women are given differential aptitude tests at West Point (no pull ups, which, according to the authors, women cannot do) and the Naval Academy (females are *lifted* by males to a position which would be attained by a male chinning, and hold this provided position for three seconds).

The reality, in general, is that women cannot compete with men in any fair athletic competition, particularly in a context where equipment is not of prime importance. The Fordhams illustrate the effect of various anatomic differences {175} in sundry activities from athletics to chess to various forms of employment and job performance. There are some definite limitations to female aircraft mechanics who are unable to maneuver their own tool boxes. Equal pay for equal work frequently turns out to be a necessary placement of women in positions where they do *not* do equal work. Apparently, from the Fordhams’ discussion, women are fouling up the military (except in administrative-type capacities), the service academies, and police and fire depart-



ments across the country as height, strength, aptitude, skill, and performance levels are lowered to allow women to “succeed” equally. General Allen of the Air Force Academy exemplified the sematic and semantic wonders of the new “equality” in announcing that in accepting women “our goal was that we’d work for an equal level of effort in the physical activities rather than an equal level of performance” (230).

... Reports repeatedly indicate that women are helped through training by sympathetic males or programs dedicated to making “equal opportunity” a success. For instance, this is how an FBI woman described her training with a class of men at Quantico, Virginia: “It was heart-breaking at first. I was quite ready to leave by the second day.” But then, she recalls, “the fellows adopted me.... When I had trouble running, two guys grabbed me and dragged me along.” (225)

The lib assault on traditional morality is full-scale and intensive. The college campus, in particular, is a staging area. *Reader’s Digest* editor Lester Velie, reporting on his research for his series, “War on the American Family,” reported that “publishers are knocking themselves out to print books that predict marriage is finished and offer ‘alternatives to marriage and the family.’”

Professors admitted to Velie that even though the incidence of such practices [mate-swapping, group marriage, homosexual marriage, etc.] is actually rare in our society, they were teaching these alternatives to conventional marriage, not just as deviant forms of behavior, but as “workable and possibly even desirable alternatives.”

“We hope,” one professor said, “that our students will begin to question the values that they always have taken for granted (i.e., the values of monogamous marriage and a family) and at least consider the alternatives.” (71)

The public school—more particularly, the minds of the children cast upon it—is a strategic target. Public school courses have been influenced for several decades by the efforts of the National Science Foundation “to shift child development from the values of local communities to those of the new intelligentsia” (71). Rep. John Conlan has stated a succinct criticism to the MACOS<sup>145</sup> program:

“Embedded in the MACOS material is an ‘anything goes’ philosophy which subtly unteaches morality, patriotism, American values, Judeo-

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Christian ethics and beliefs, so that children will be more accepting of a 'world view' rather than an American view." (72)

The healthy reaction was expressed in the observation that one mother working to clean MACOS materials from a school made to the authors: "Well, we are trying to break down the view that it is any of the National Science Foundation's or the school's business to be dabbling in our children's social and political values" (72).

It is easy to understand why such exercises as asking children to read diaries in which other youngsters tell about sexual experimentation and premarital intercourse achievements "are just a few of hundreds across the country that are being {176} challenged in recent years in the national conflict over what social, moral, political and personal values should be taught to children and who should be responsible for teaching them" (73).

The bottom line of feminism is clear. "Only by totally destroying the normal patterns of sexual relationships and roles, can they free women completely from responsibility for domestic life and begin to make men and women equal in every possible way" (35). As one lib hack, the founder of NOW, stated: "Any real change in the status of women would be a fundamental assault on marriage and the family. People would be tied together by love, not legal contraptions. Children would be raised communally; it's just not honest to talk about freedom for women unless you get the child-rearing off their backs" (102).

As might be expected, the campaign to shift loyalties and responsibilities away from the family is accompanied by widespread contempt "for the beliefs and values of people who hold a traditional belief in God" (458). The feminists who are supportive of family life are to be transferred to the federal bureaucracy. The semantic siege by social engineers that defines ever-expanding groups of people as discriminated against and in need of collective services by interventionist social work "professionals" is now "being directed toward the family, which could be its ultimate victim. The kinds of 'help' the government can offer the family are the very invitations to dependency that spell its decline as a vital and elemental institution" (460).

Most American women probably do not have the slightest emotional, intellectual, or political commitment to the ideas or objectives of feminism. Irrespective of feminist failure to convince most women,

the feminists have strongly influenced legislators,<sup>146</sup> and have been successful in creating political and commercial opportunities, primarily for the benefit of upper-middle-class and professional aspiring women. The feminist assault is engineered predominantly by “an elitist force of ... professional women able to influence public opinion and policy out of proportion to their numbers through immediate access to education, government, and the mass media.... the comparative success women’s lib has enjoyed is due to the presence of feminists in droves at the universities, in government agencies and women’s clubs and on the staffs of publishers and broadcasters—and to their ability to coordinate their efforts through a network of social pressure” (157).

This is a well-researched and well-written book on a vital issue. It is marked by clear vision that “the bottom line on the assault on the sexes is really whether we prefer the Total Woman or the Total State” (456).

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*The Significance of J. Gresham Machen Today*, by Paul Woolley.

Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977. 84 pp., \$2.75.

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**Reviewed by Gary North**

This is a peculiar little book. The first half gives some of the details of the life of J. Gresham Machen [MAYchin], the founder of Westminster Theological Seminary, {177} the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Machen was a respected scholar in his day (he died in 1937), a specialist in Greek, and the author of numerous books defending historic Christianity. He was a nineteenth-century political liberal, meaning a defender of lim-

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146. The Fordhams do not discuss the techniques which have been employed in different states in obtaining passage of ERA, nor the efforts of the libbers to eliminate spokesmen from the traditionalist perspective from participation in the International Women’s Year Commission conferences in various states. Illustrative of the techniques employed in obtaining passage of the ERA was payment of teenagers to copy names from phone books and write letters, in different formats and with different writing instruments, to state legislators in advocacy of ERA. This technique has been said to have been instrumental in obtaining passage of the amendment in Indiana.

ited government, federalism, checks and balances, decentralized power, the free market, and personal liberties.

The second half of the book consists of the seemingly random opinions of church historian Paul Woolley, a twentieth-century political liberal. Any similarity between the opinions expressed by Mr. Woolley in the name of Machen and the actual opinions of Mr. Machen is coincidental, at least in the field of social and economic policy. This book might better be titled, *The Significance of the Opinions of Paul Woolley, Using Machen's Name as a Sales Device*. With a \$2.75 price tag, it is doubtful that the sales device will work.

Mr. Woolley has never written very much, for which traditional conservatives in his church have given thanks to God for many years. He was known on the Westminster campus as a consistently liberal political thinker, despite his commitment to orthodox theology. He was regarded as being even further to the left politically than the institution's president, Reverend Clowney, which was no small achievement. He has an incredible memory, as well as the ability to master difficult foreign languages. His bibliographical knowledge is immense. He used to perform a remarkable feat on Sunday evenings in church. Taking the *Trinity Hymnal* as his guide, he would challenge anyone in the congregation to select any of the hundreds of names of the writers of the hymns in the book, to see if Woolley would be unable to give a brief sketch of the man's life. He was never known to be stumped. In fact, a rumor circulated on the campus for years that he would memorize complex railroad schedules as an exercise. (Some would have added "in futility.") His book reviews displayed his voluminous grasp of the data of church history. Yet he could not bring himself to write anything more than brief little books like this one.

The book does give some personal details of Machen's life, though without any reference to the primary sources. He is obviously operating out of memory, which in his case is probably reliable. He dismisses the myth, heard for half a century, that Machen's family had investments in the liquor industry, a rumor passed along for years by fundamentalist opponents of Machen who were appalled by his commitment to traditional Presbyterian beliefs concerning Christian liberty. We see Machen as a gentleman and a scholar, a mountain climber and a friend of students, a battler for orthodoxy and a checkers-playing professor.

This book assumes some prior knowledge on the part of the reader of the events leading up to the split in the northern Presbyterian church in 1936. Readers who have not read Ned Stonehouse's fine biography of Machen will be confused. For some reason, Mr. Woolley neglects to mention Stonehouse's book, or Rian's *The Presbyterian Conflict*, another introduction to these events. The book has no footnotes and no bibliography. Students who have experienced Mr. Woolley's criticisms for using a "poor apparatus" in writing history papers would be astounded and amused to see how Mr. Woolley has abandoned such standard devices. The book would have rated no more than a C+ in one of Mr. Woolley's seminars in church history. Or should I say the first half of the book. The second half would have earned an F, not because the information is useless (some of it is pertinent), but because so much of it is opposed to what Machen believed, given his commitment to a position analogous to the earlier liberalism. This is not one book, but two, in a single paperback cover. {178}

On the *differences between the sexes*, Mr. Woolley defends the economic goals of women's liberation. A woman "should suffer no inequality in reference to respect, opportunity to work, equity of compensation, privilege of service, openness of public facilities, influence in affairs of church, state and family. If there is inequality in these areas she should be liberated from it" (63–64). Yet he has to admit that there are biological differences between men and women. What, then, if the reasons why she cannot attain equality in certain areas of life are directly related to these differences? Women get pregnant, rear families, and obtain financial support from husbands. Therefore, they are higher risks in the employment markets. They do not remain as long in the labor force. They receive less pay than men because of these higher risks, and also (primarily) because other women are willing to compete for lower paid positions. Other women work for less because husbands provide the basic financial support. Pay scales between the sexes are therefore different. In order for a woman to crack existing barriers in the employment markets, she has to work for less than a man, at least initially, in order to overcome existing prejudices against women. Furthermore, should women have equal access to high military positions? Is not Deborah an exception to the rule, a fact recognized by Deborah, who was compelled by Barak to accompany him as leader of the troops

(Judges 4:6–9)? (Mr. Woolley uses Deborah as his Old Testament example for such equality in civil and ecclesiastical influence.)

Mr. Woolley is a staunch defender of *labor unions*. He writes:

There was a time when the legitimacy of an organized trade union was questioned by many Christians. Labor was a commodity on the market. Reducing the supply of the commodity by setting up limitations of time, of place, of value was interfering with an essential supply of a necessity in human living.

In time it became clear that labor was a different kind of commodity from food or housing because it was inextricably connected with the human being who engaged in it. The original purpose of the trade union was to safeguard the health of the worker and his job opportunity. (66)

How does a trade union safeguard the health of the worker? In a voluntary society, there is only one way: by informing the worker of better working conditions in similar factories elsewhere, and thereby placing pressure on the local employer to improve working conditions in order to keep his men from moving to his competitor's firm. The trade union, in a voluntary society, is primarily a self-help institution. Its primary economic function is the transmission of better information about the value of labor's contribution to the production process. But how does a trade union protect a worker's job opportunity? In a voluntary society—the kind favored by Machen—there is only one way: teach workers to work more efficiently than all other competitors for the jobs. But in today's society, with compulsory labor legislation, such as the Wagner Act, the picture is far different. Labor unions (comprising about 25 percent of the U.S. labor force) keep out nonmembers. It is this artificial restriction of competition from other laborers that gives the trade union its bargaining power. This power protects the jobs of existing workers, but only at the expense of nonunion workers who would be willing to work for less. In short, the foundation of modern trade unionism is government coercion—specifically, coercion against nonunion laborers.

The trade union was accurately assessed by the earlier Christians Mr. Woolley refers to, meaning conservative theologians like Machen. The trade union in today's world is an artificial barrier to employment. Labor *is* a commodity, and the trade unions recognize this. They gain their advantages by restricting the {179} supply of those people who

would offer the same commodity (labor) at a lower price. Machen would have understood this, for he had a solid grasp of economics. Mr. Woolley does not understand it. Therefore, he accepts the trade union on the basis of “Christian ethics,” apparently an ethical system based on the principle that suppliers of a particular and unique commodity, labor, can legitimately use government coercion to keep their competitors out of the labor markets.

What about a Christian caught in a secular union, meaning any union? “If the trade union becomes the recognized bargaining agency in a particular trade, a particular factory, a particular industry, it can represent all members, Christian and non-Christian, with equal fairness. Religion can never be imposed by majority vote but Christian principles can safeguard everyone” (67). How do these “Christian principles” protect the laborer outside the union who wants to work and is willing to do so at a lower wage than the union demands? And how can the so-called secular neutrality of the trade union’s leaders represent Christian members fairly, if those members understand the coercive nature of the strike, the slowdown, and the use of the term “scab”?

Mr. Woolley favors the limited use of *abortions* as a means of population control. Don’t quote “thou shalt not kill.” The Old Testament allowed killing in time of war. “Where did the fetus stand in relation to the [sixth] commandment? There is, as yet, no uniformly acceptable answer to that question” (71). What Mr. Woolley means is that there is no acceptable answer to abortionist murderers and their theological accomplices. “Are there acceptable grounds in a biblical sense for abortions? These questions need further consideration.” Yet Mr. Woolley took the affirmative position in a public debate on the question of abortion’s validity several years ago. He has obviously made up his mind. His guarded statements imply that further research is needed, but this means that no universal prohibition can be made before someone with authority speaks (medicine, theologians, or some group). Until then, abortion is not a matter of church or civil discipline, or so the chapter implies. We may debate abortion as scholars; we dare not prohibit it ... yet.

Like all good political liberals, Mr. Woolley is most concerned about *sex education*. We need more of it, of course. We need “a free, frank and open discussion of sexual interests and questions.” Why be prudish?

Talking about sex should be as easy as talking about, say, your favorite recipe. Am I misinterpreting his words? Judge for yourself. “There was no embarrassment connected with sex before the fall. Nudity did not produce shame (Gen. 2:25). Man ate food before the fall and after the fall. There was no more embarrassment after the fall about food than before it. So should it be with sex” (69).

Incredible. He argues that the disruption of life in the area of one human activity (eating) was minimal, and therefore we should not acknowledge that the disruption of another area of life (sexual relations) was of a very different sort. If Mary Calderone and her cronies at SIECUS were going to base their writings in part on theology, there is no doubt that they would use Mr. Woolley as their chief orthodox theologian. He is naive enough to suit their purposes well.

And what, you may ask, has all this to do with the significance of J. Gresham Machen? None, as far as I can see.

What about *pornography*? “Pornography is information that is in bad taste from the Christian point of view” (73). Not a war on the family, not a mass-produced lewdness warned against in the Bible, but information (how very neutral) that is in bad taste (how very innocuous) from the point of view (how seemingly relative) of the Christian. As he says, “Information must circulate freely. The use of it {180} is what the Christian determines for himself in the light of the Bible.” We are told that “censorship is not likely to help, but rather to hinder the execution of the task. The lack of censorship of the information is an advantage because it makes possible meaningful distinctions on the part of the parent or teacher between useful and misleading information.” So if your local public school teacher lets students choose to learn about sex from either *Playboy* or the Song of Solomon, this has to be “an advantage.” An advantage for whom?

The final chapter, on *pietism*, is all right, though undocumented and likely to confuse the average reader, who has not had courses in church history and who has bought the book in order to find out something about Machen’s significance. The chapter contains a total of two brief sentences referring to Machen.

If I were a twentieth-century political liberal, and Mr. Woolley were selling canned tuna fish instead of a book, I would probably report him to the Federal Trade Commission for misleading labeling.



The best thing you can say for this book is that it is unlikely to sell many copies, and its second half is unlikely to be believed by the handful of people who may happen to read it. But it is indicative of the state of the seminary today that Mr. Woolley never hesitated to state his opinions frankly on campus, while the politically conservative faculty members at Westminster Seminary, such as Dr. Van Til and John Murray, chose to keep their political views hidden, sticking to exegesis and their academic disciplines. The liberals use the classroom for their purposes, and the conservatives use the classroom for theirs. Unfortunately, the classroom goals of the conservatives have been far too limited to promote an effective, long-range program of Christian reconstruction. The liberals win by default. That is the significance, not of J. Gresham Machen, but of his orthodox followers who share his outspoken political beliefs but who do not speak out, as he did. Those who speak out are political liberals, and few of them share his orthodox theology.

# PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

## VOLUME 5

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Volume 5 (1978) of *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* will feature symposiums on “politics” and “Puritanism.” Manuscripts dealing with either topic are now being reviewed for publication. Anyone wishing to submit a manuscript for consideration would be wise to clear the topic in advance with the editor. Manuscripts should be between twenty and forty pages in length, typewritten, and double-spaced. The University of Chicago’s *Manual of Style* is preferred, though not mandatory. If accepted, *The Journal* will pay the author \$75 upon publication. Shorter manuscripts (under fifteen pages) receive \$35. Book reviews (five to ten pages) receive \$10; books dealing with the symposium’s topic are preferred. Suggestions concerning the reprinting of important documents or published articles, if accepted, are worth \$20, if accompanied by a clear photocopy of the recommended piece.

Manuscripts suitable for publication in the sections on “Christian Reconstruction” and “Defenders of the Faith” are always given careful consideration, as are suggestions for reprinting. Again, it is wise to clear the topic in advance with the editor. Summaries of dissertations are acceptable.

### **DEADLINES:**

POLITICS: March 15, 1978

PURITANISM: August 15, 1978

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# THE MINISTRY OF CHALCEDON

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(Pr. 29:18)

Chalcedon [kalSEEdon] is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctly Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches.

Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which produced the crucial christological definition: “Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man....” This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the one who is the source of true human freedom (Galatians 5:1).

Christians have generally given up two crucial features of theology that in the past led to the creation of what we know as Western civilization. They no longer have any real optimism concerning the possibility of an earthly victory of Christian principles and Christian institutions, and they have also abandoned the means of such a victory in external human affairs: a distinctly biblical concept of law. The testimony of the Bible and Western history should be clear: when God’s people have been confident about the ultimate earthly success of their religion and committed socially to God’s revealed system of external law, they have been victorious. When either aspect of their faith has declined, they have lost ground. Without optimism, they lose their zeal to exercise dominion over God’s creation

(Genesis 1:28); without revealed law, they are left without guidance and drift along with the standards of their day.

Once Christians invented the university; now they retreat into little Bible colleges or sports factories. Once they built hospitals throughout Europe and America; now the civil governments have taken them over. Once Christians were inspired by “Onward, Christian Soldiers”; now they see themselves as “poor wayfaring strangers” with “joy, joy, joy, joy down in their hearts” only on Sundays and perhaps Wednesday evenings. They are, in a word, pathetic. Unquestionably, they have become culturally impotent.

Chalcedon is committed to the idea of Christian reconstruction. It is premised on the belief that ideas have consequences. It takes seriously the words of Professor F. A. Hayek: “It may well be true that we as scholars tend to overestimate the influence which we can exercise on contemporary affairs. But I doubt whether it is possible to overestimate the influence which ideas have in the long run.” If Christians are to reconquer lost ground in preparation for ultimate victory (Isaiah 2, 65, 66), they must rediscover their intellectual heritage. They must come to grips with the Bible’s warning and its promise: “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18). Chalcedon’s resources are being used to remind Christians of this basic truth: what men believe makes a difference. Therefore, men should not believe lies, for it is the truth that sets them free (John 8:32).

*Finis*