

ANTITHESIS

A Review of Contemporary Christian Thought and Culture

INSIDE:
**Overpopulation Mythology
and
A Debate On Birth Control**

"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 – the saved and the lost – to which super-natural Christianity is committed."

John Dewey

"The Christian cannot be satisfied so long as any human activity is either opposed to Christianity or out of connection with Christianity. Christianity must pervade not merely all nations, but also all of human thought."

J. Gresham Machen

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Observing the Current...

World Events and Weak Stomachs

The day had been far too hot anyway. I think I overheard CNN declare that this had been the hottest day in the history of everything everywhere. Our twin girls had stuck to each other all day like moist Zest soap bars. They thought I was playing another cruel joke on them, though they couldn't tell me because they don't speak any human language. I also knew that something was amiss when the local electricity monopoly actually called us to find out how we were doing.

My stomach was already queasy when I sat down to worry about world events. Then it began. I read that the Soviet paper *Izvestia* reported that "an unknown person, going behind the barrier, threw two fire bombs at the parapet of the Lenin Mausoleum." Not to worry, the flames were quickly extinguished and the rebel was taken in by guards of the Department of Safe-Guarding Public Order on Red Square — these guards are apparently something

like our Forest Rangers with nice uniforms.

My head started spinning as I worried about how such an incident might lead to a change in the Soviet Constitution. These worries grew when I read that the perpetrator "explained the reasons for his act to the police as follows: 'My action speaks for itself.'"

"Shut up," explained V. Kirsanov, the interrogator.

I had to read something else. I learned that Taiwanese officials were seriously determined to make their future capital Peking (not Beijing to them). They even have Chiang Kai-Shek's body ready and waiting to be transported back to the mainland. Such a crazy long-shot is hard to believe. I would find it easier to believe, say, that Mandela would some day be hailed as a democrat or that Bush would endorse a tax hike.

My stomach couldn't take much more. Then my copy of *New Realities* arrived and I popped a but-

ton when I read Milton Friedman reflecting on the works of Krishnamurti. Friedman reports that his hero, the well-known Krish, for short, was sixteen when the New Age Theosophical Society proclaimed him to be the reincarnation of both Christ and Buddha. Those wild teenagers: what will they think of next?

I finally picked myself off the floor when I discovered that the author was just some crazy with Milton Friedman's name. The real Friedman doesn't even like to say words with "murti" in them.

I had just about had enough of world events, when I glanced over and read that Malaysia had hanged seven men and women for trafficking 28lbs. of heroin, "enough to spoil the lives of a lot people," according to the report. Finally some sanity in the world. At last a country that isn't hounded by such things as the tyranny of Biblical political constraints.

I unstuck my twins again and tried to sleep. DMJ

The "Hour of Power" is Running Out of Time

Due to the escalating costs of television broadcasting, competition from "info-mercials," and continuing repercussions from the televangelist scandals of recent years, Robert Schuller's nationally syndicated "Hour of Power" program has hit some hard times as of late. The situation is so dire that Schuller reportedly told the *Orange County Register* that he will shut down the "Hour of Power" in all or some of the 179 U.S. broadcast markets unless viewers donate \$3.2 million to cover the debt of the program.

Despite the fact that Schuller's empire consists of the \$20 million Crystal Cathedral, a \$23 million Family Life Center, and untold millions in prime real estate holdings, Schuller refuses to sell off assets to help defray the programming costs of the "Hour of Power." "We could sell a chunk," Schuller noted, "but that would be like the government subsidizing something that should be paid for by the private sector."

Before we jump on the no-government-subsidy bandwagon inherent in Schuller's analogy, consider the following blip in Schuller's reasoning: while "Hour of Power" viewers contributed \$17 million of the \$20 million needed to build the Crystal Cathedral (and another \$14.7 million to Schuller's local congregation), Schuller now refuses to sell off some of his empire's viewer-funded assets in order to assist the "Hour of Power" in its time of need.

On his own analogy, who subsidizes whom? Didn't the "private sector" already contribute its fair share? Predictably, Schuller now touts that good business dictates that he not co-mingle funds. In essence, what Schuller's position reduces to is the following: as long as benefits continued to flow in, it was good business to co-mingle, but now that benefits need to flow out, its good business not to co-mingle.

True, Schuller may not resort to sensationalistic antics such as climbing to the top of a tower and refusing to come down. And he may not implore people to put their hand on the television so they can "feel the warmth of the Lord." But like such faith healers, he has told people what they wanted to hear, tickling their ears and pandering to their man-centered worldview.

Perhaps his present difficulties are due at least in part to the fact that his theology — or rather anthropology — has left viewers spiritually malnourished. And maybe, just maybe, after a steady diet of this pap, his viewers are beginning to discover that they could find the same nutritional value in *Psychology Today*, albeit without the baptized vocabulary. After all, at least *Psychology Today* doesn't ask for donations. DGH

Ode to "Pro-Choice"

Can anything good come out of the *Los Angeles Times*?

True, the *Los Angeles Times* has long been a bastion of modern liberalism, often touting that political line on various issues — including abortion. And this liberalism doesn't stop with ideas. It has even extended to names, subtle names which put a spin on issues from the outset of any serious inquiry.

Take the abortion debate, for example. While the *Times* has long donned the pro-death movement with the laudatory appellation "pro-choice," it has dubbed the pro-life movement as "anti-abortion." In fact, the *Times*, just last year, defended this policy tooth-and-nail, against strong opposition, a swarm of letters, and several pickets. Like a bad magician who didn't fool anybody, the *Times* continued its all-too-obvious sleight of hand which simultaneously sweetened the wells in favor of the pro-death camp, while poisoning the wells against the pro-life camp. The *Times*, as Thomas Campbell once wrote, be-

came enamored with "the magic of a name."

Recently, however, the title "Pro-Choice" has vanished. That's right, the *Times* no longer uses the term. In its place, the *Times* now uses terms such as "abortion rights advocates," "supporters of legal abortion," and "those who favor abortion rights."

Why the sudden change? According to Managing Editor George Cotliar, the name-change is an attempt to "bring greater precision and fairness" to its coverage of the abortion debate. And the *Los Angeles Times* is not alone. While the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* have long-avoided the "pro-choice" label, the *Chicago Tribune* dropped it about a year ago.

While boding farewell to "pro-choice" is a move toward "greater precision and fairness," the new labels are still far from accurate since they do not remove the subtle hint that those in the "abortion rights" camp are for certain rights while we in the "anti-abortion" camp are *against* them.

It is much easier, you know, to be a friend as opposed to being a foe, to take the affirmative side of a debate rather than the negative, to say "yes" as opposed to saying "no."

Of course, one could just as easily characterize the pro-life community as those who are "human rights advocates" (or "supporters of human rights" or "those who favor human rights") and characterize the pro-death camp as those who are "anti-human rights." Talk about sending Planned Parenthood into orbit! How quickly we would hear of "unfair bias" and lack of "journalistic integrity." Maybe PP would even take out a full page add to put the *Times* to shame (just ask AT&T!).

The moral of this story is that no matter what label "abortion rights advocates" wish to use, we in the pro-life camp should still be wary, since abortion is not, in the words of Shakespeare, "a deed without a name." For just as a rose would smell as sweet by any other name, even so abortion is murder by any other name. **DGH**

The Coming National Youth Service

Desperate times seek desperate measures. The President and Congress are actively proposing numerous national service programs aimed to resolve desperate challenges, such as drug abuse, poverty, illiteracy, and pollution by "reestablishing," according to Senator Sam Nunn, "this country's tradition of civic obligation." He and others are "calling for a new basis of citizenship in which citizens are once again asked to give something back to their Nation."

Though numerous forms of national service, such as the Peace Corps, have been instituted, none of them has had the national scope envisioned by recent proposals. The more comprehensive national service program would compensate "volunteers" with educational and competitive grants, stipends, and loans to work in a natural resource or human service settings. The stated aim of the programs is to provide work experience, education, and basic skills while serving in government agencies, hospitals, parks, schools, social service organizations, and public lands. The

final Senate version of the national service plan was slated to cost around \$125 million.

The Senate bill's prime sponsor, Sen. Edward Kennedy, claims that "the goal is to make such programs...available to every student in America from kindergarten to college," and hopefully lead students to make "volunteerism a lifetime commitment." Supporter Sen. Barbara Mikulski adds, "This is a good program for our kids.... It is a way to help us build better citizens."

Therein lies the greatest danger. A "citizen" is an exclusively political manner of viewing a person, and a national youth service program will only serve to further politicize our culture from kindergarten to college. We politicize a culture by inculcating the destructive idea that all of life is somehow dependent and intertwined with civil power. A politicized culture falsely imagines that wealth, education, jobs, community service, social change, etc., are all and only products of politics. A people committed to this outlook is trapped in a mentality that

the only way to achieve genuine progress is to lobby, vote, and gain government-coerced privileges at the expense of others. The result is an ever-growing cultural atrophy.

Government service programs not only politicize and thus damage a culture, such programs also assume a twisted understanding of "volunteerism." First, the government attempts to instill habits of altruism by paying people off. I'm all for paying people for their labor, but don't call it altruism. Moreover, our government is the *last* institution qualified to teach altruistic service. Secondly, this "volunteerism" is especially perverse since it will pay persons to be altruistic with money that was not voluntarily given by other persons.

Finally, the church has only itself to blame for the political popularity of such potentially destructive policies. Civil expansion will naturally fill the vacuum left by weak families and churches. The proposed program is just one symptom of a humanistic culture gasping for some vain form of communal unity. **DMJ**

A Dollar a Day Keeps the Baby Away

"Our Final Jeopardy answer is: 'The best way to prevent an unwed teenage pregnancy.' We turn first to our third place contestant, Mr. Christian, whose Final Jeopardy question is..."

"What is total abstinence?"

"Oh, I'm sorry Mr. Christian, but that approach is way out of tune with our modern era."

"Next we turn to Ms. Educator who was in second place at the end of Double Jeopardy. Ms. Educator's Final Jeopardy question is..."

"What is birth control distributed at taxpayers' expense to students at campus family planning clinics?"

"While that was a good answer Ms. Educator, unfortunately it wasn't quite what we were looking for."

"Finally, we turn to our returning champ, Mr. Pragmatist (sometimes known as Mr. Statist), whose Final Jeopardy question is..."

"What is pay teenage girls not to get pregnant?"

"You're absolutely right, Mr. Pragmatist..."

Sound like a Hollywood game show? Not quite. About five hundred miles north of Hollywood, the real Mr. Pragmatist, California Assemblyman Bruce Bonzan, recently authored legislation which will create three pilot programs designed to stem the tide of un-

wed teenage pregnancies. How? By paying girls between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who have already had one unwed pregnancy a dollar a day not to get pregnant. But wait! There's more: in order to collect from the state money tree, and in order to convince the rest of us that there's no such thing as a free government handout, the girls must also attend mandatory support groups.

And Bronzan was laughed right out of the capitol building, right? Not exactly. The California Assembly overwhelmingly approved the measure (55-19), and sent it to an uncertain fate in the California Senate. Sad to say, California is not alone. Other state governments have either already passed, or, like California, are in the process of passing similar measures.

Why? According to proponents, the California measure would save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars each year in welfare and medical costs, motivate teenage girls to stay in school, and reduce unwed teenage pregnancies.

Aside from the fact that there is no hardfast data to substantiate such wishful thinking, this measure is based on wholesale pragmatism (i.e., the greed factor is justified because it produces a desired social end). But the measure is flawed for other reasons, too. Why, for

example, would an unwed girl opt for only a dollar a day when— if she has a child — she can take several dollars a day out of the cash register of current welfare programs? If money is the motivating factor (which the measure assumes), then such girls have no reason not to play the game to win by opting for the bigger payoff.

What of the support groups? Do they provide sound moral teaching and solid principles to prevent unwed pregnancies? Not really. According to a California Assembly "analysis," the classes are designed "to stimulate feelings of camaraderie, commitment, and self-esteem and to help them avoid getting pregnant again." Hmmm. That sure sounds like the kind of ammunition teenagers need on prom night!

In light of this legislative wisdom, why stop with unwed pregnancies? Why not pay thieves not to steal? Drug pushers not to sell their stuff? Deadbeat spouses not to skip child support payments? Lead-footed drivers not to speed?

In fact, why don't we cough up a dollar a day to prevent legislators from drafting and approving such ludicrous legislation? Only one problem though: we already pay them far more. And that's our real jeopardy.

DSH

Covenanting Collectivists

Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* magazine — the evangelical baptizer of contemporary collectivist ideology — recently gushed over the Justice, Peace, and The Integrity of Creation World Convocation, a program of the World Council of Churches. Wallis declared that the "life, energy, and spiritual power of the gathered global church [at the convocation] are something to behold. This is the great contribution of the World Council of Churches" (*Sojourners*, May 1990).

The goal of those convening was to "integrate biblically the most pressing questions facing the world." Wallis rehearses tiresome collectivist rhetoric common to such guilt-ins, "The urgency of justice [read redistributionism], the longing for peace, and the cry of creation [read Luddite environmentalism], are no longer fragmented agendas, but rather have become the unified and common struggle of our many faith communities."

The most important work of the convocation, according to Wallis,

was the "covenanting together." The participants "covenanted" in response to the debt crisis, the environment, world militarization, and racism. Other participants apparently couldn't control their excitement and enthusiastically made "covenants" between member Israelis and Palestinians, between Northern Nations to reduce "greenhouse gases," between "liberation" groups, between Europeans and Koreans for a re-unification of Korea, between youth delegates everywhere "to act together in the future," between Europeans and Asians to "fight the exploitation of women worldwide," between delegates from the East, West, and South "in the face of the moral collapse of the two major world systems," and many others.

What makes all this gushing so nauseous is not its utopian naiveté, common to all collectivists, but its commitment to political solutions. On the face of it, Christians should be averse to abject hope in political solutions. Political solutions are, in the

nature of the case, short term, coercive, and destructive. We've choked heavily on such collectivist political prescriptions for over a century, to no avail. Yet the alternative to collectivism is not some form of nihilistic-individualism, but the comprehensive gospel of Christ applied to all areas of life.

In one sense, however, I am glad that evangelical collectivists enjoy spending their time on naive political "solutions." By focusing on grandiose plans, they leave the rest of us alone to work on real change. Long-lasting change, such as that which was empowered in first-century Jerusalem, builds step-by-step, little-by-little. We attempt to Biblically train ourselves, our churches, our local communities, and most importantly our children, so that they will faithfully train their children and so on. This is one way genuine covenantal living operates. Nations and faddish collectivist ideologies will rise and fall, but God's covenant is sure.

DMJ

An Act of Compassion

James Sauer

Things were looking up for Carol Johnson. After taking off four months for her maternity leave, she was going back to work at her old job as Assistant Office Manager at Firmwell Industries. Her daughter Melissa would be dropped at the Jolly Family Day Care Center each day on Carol's way to work. Sure, it cost some, but how else is a single mother going to live? Carol depended on this job, and it was a tight budget. Looking over the coming year's personal economic situation, however, brought some confidence to Carol. Things were looking brighter. Then tragedy struck:

- Her car brakes need replacing — \$497.45.
- Her company took a bad turn in the profits for the quarter. No promotion, no raise. And there was rumor that middle management positions like hers might have to give back 5%.
- One worker in her department was laid off: Carol would have to fill in for half those duties plus her own.
- John — the significant other in her life — was cheating on her. That would have been bad enough, but it was with another man. For all she knew, she might have AIDS.
- Her friend Nicole called and cancelled their planned trip to Bermuda in July.
- Her rent went up \$65 a month.
- Her aerobics instructor became a born again Christian.
- They cancelled her two favorite soap operas. No more after work evenings with the VCR.
- The price of Brie cheese doubled.

Carol was at wits end. Her whole life was collapsing. The stress was incredible. "Something had to give, I was falling apart," said Carol to a friend. She felt alone, no one to turn to. Her emotions were a wreck. She just had to work things out for herself.

The worst thing of all was that Carol began to have negative feelings about Melissa. "I began to resent her. My time. My freedom. My rights as a human being. She would cry. There were diapers. I was not feeling good about myself. I began to have negative feelings about everything. My sleep was off. I didn't even want sex. And all this seemed to come to Melissa's door. I even had guilt feelings about my resentment. I knew I wasn't giving Melissa the quality time she needed; yet I just didn't have that time. I had things to worry about."

"Finally, I realized that my love for Melissa transcended the present situation. If things continued as they were, my negative feelings would grow worse. Melissa would be unloved. She would suffer. That wasn't fair for either her or me. Little girls need love; and Mommies need their freedom. It was a difficult decision, but I struggled with it. The answer was obvious, but I didn't want to admit it. Melissa had become a financial and emotional drain on me.

I loved her too much to let her have a mother who couldn't live to give her the things she needed in this life — the things the other children had: children's designer jeans, Cabbage Patch Dolls, and an education in the best prep schools. I knew what I had to do. I called friends and shared my decision. They all supported me, acknowledging

that it was my choice. One must go on living. That afternoon I made arrangements to have Melissa quietly put to sleep. Cremation would follow."

"When I went to Rev. Charolette Forting-Wordsworth at the New Ecumenical Church of Personal Development, she gave me just the words and comfort I needed." The Left Reverend Forting-Wordsworth said: "God wants you to do what is best for you and Melissa; she doesn't want either of you to suffer. It isn't right to burden Melissa with your life problems. Perhaps later on in life you will have found yourself, and gotten your life together; perhaps then you'll be ready for a child again. Until then, you've got to make these difficult decisions. God understands, believe me, she loves you dearly."

Carol is now readjusting to life without Melissa. "What I had to do was painful. Some people don't understand that. It took bravery and a special kind of courage that I didn't know I had. I had to recognize that sometimes infanticide is the most compassionate thing a mother can do. It was for Melissa. It was for me. It was for everyone involved. I loved Melissa so much — the thought of her being unhappy broke my heart. I had to put her down." Δ

James Sauer is Director of Library at Eastern College, author of over one hundred published articles, reviews, and poems, and an elder in the Presbyterian Church in America.

The Growing Move Toward "Life Chains"

As more Pro-life advocates recoil from the unbiblical Ghandianisms of "Operation Rescue," a fresh form of protest is making headway.

A "Life Chain" protest is an extended line of hopefully tens of thousands of committed Pro-Lifers who stand arms length apart along a designated route for a set period of time. They each hold a placard with the same message: "Abortion Kills Children."

Such peaceful protests have already received tremendous support. *Citizen* (June 18, 1990) reports that "28,000 came out March 18 for the second San Diego Life Chain, which

stretched 15 miles. 20,000 people had turned out one month earlier for the first one." Other California Life Chains received similar outpourings of support: Orange County (17,000), Riverside (6,000), Bakersfield (7,500), Fresno (10,000), and Los Angeles (10,000).

Organizers report that, following a Life Chain demonstration, participants regularly show enthusiastic support for further action. Rebecca Hagelin, communications director of Concerned Women for America claims that, "This project has potential for nationwide attention. It's peaceful, it's creative, and it emphasizes prayer"

(Cited *Ibid.*). The brilliance and potential power of such a protest deserves praise. We should expect to see a re-energizing of the entire Pro-Life community through such efforts.

Life Chains require relatively little preparation and money, but they do require a dedicated organizing committee. For information on organizing a Life Chain, write to:

Royce Dunn c/o
Please Let Me Live
3209 Colusa Highway
Yuba City, CA 95993
(916) 671-5500

Samuel Adams: Re-Evaluating a Journalistic Calvinist

**Contrary to the
conventional
caricature,
Samuel Adams
stands out as a
Biblical thinker
whose journalism
moved a genera-
tion.**

Marvin Olasky

Ever since the publication half a century ago of John C. Miller's *Samuel Adams: Pioneer in Propaganda*, Samuel Adams has typically been portrayed by historians as a vengeful leader wracked with envy and desiring to build a political movement by whatever deceitful means might be necessary.¹ The most popular journalism history text, *The Press and America*

by Emery and Emery, provides the conventional view: Adams "never forgot that his father had been ruined by [restrictive credit] laws and that he had thereby been cheated of his patrimony Somehow, Adams had to whittle the aristocrat down to size."² Emery and Emery have Adams, out of pique, supposedly writing "smear attacks" that attempted to "arouse the masses — the real shock troops — by instilling hatred of enemies."

A reading of Adams' collected letters shows that, if *The Press and America* appraisal is correct, Adams lied not only to his enemies but to his friends as well. Unlike Michael Deaver and other recent public relations puppeteers, Adams told his friends that attempts to use cynical means to produce supposedly worthy ends were not only wrong but counter-productive: "Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt."³ If Adams was a man bent on

¹ John C. Miller, *Samuel Adams: Pioneer in Propaganda* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936).

² Michael and Edwin Emery, *The Press and America*, 6th edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1988), p. 58.

³ Included in William Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams* (New York, 1865-1868), three vols., I, pp. 22-23.

destruction, it is curious that he was so critical of the politically-arousing Stamp Act attack on the home of royal governor Thomas Hutchinson, which he called an action of "a truly *mobbish* Nature."⁴

Furthermore, if Samuel Adams was a loose cannon, it is also peculiar that he spent more space in many of his columns defining the limits of protest than egging on his followers. Adams' strong sense of lawfulness is indicated by his thinking concerning two protests, those following the Stamp Act demonstrations of August, 1765, and that which culminated in the Boston Tea Party of 1773. Adams backed the former action because legislative methods and petitions already had failed; the House of Commons would not listen so the demonstration "was the only Method whereby they could make known their Objections to Measures."⁵ Adams also planned the Tea Party, but made it clear that nothing except tea was to be destroyed; when the patriots dressed as "Indians" accidentally broke a padlock, they later replaced it.⁶

A close look at Adams throws doubt on the conventional historians' cartoon version of him. This article attempts to provide a different, and more accurate, view of Adams the man, journalist, theoretician, and center of influence.

Adams the Man

If transported to our present age of television journalism, Adams would have been a washout: he had a sunken chest, a sallow complexion and "wishy-washy gray eyes."⁷ Adams' lips twitched and trembled, for he suffered from palsy. His clothes were drab and sometimes sloppy. Besides, Adams was a financial misfit who lived in an old, shabby house, and wrote much but earned little. John Adams put the best complexion on the surface prospects of his cousin when he wrote that "in common appearance he was a plain, simple, decent citizen, of middling stature, dress, and manners."⁸

Looking beyond appearances, however, Adams possessed advantages. His good classical education made ancient times as real to him as his own; references to the political ups and downs of ancient Israel, Greece, and Rome came easily to his pen. He had the ability to write under almost any conditions. Adams typically composed his columns after evening prayers; his wife Elizabeth would go to bed but would sometimes awaken in the middle of the night and hear only the sound of her husband's quill pen scratching on and on. But when Adams had to, he could write forceful prose amidst a town meeting.

With all his talent, Adams was modest. He did not write about himself, and had no problem with being

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 60.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, p. 10.

⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence* (New York, 1957), p. 22, tells this story.

⁷ Donald Barr Chidsey, *The World of Samuel Adams* (Nashville, 1974), p. 9.

⁸ Quoted in Stewart Beach, *Samuel Adams: The Fateful Years, 1764-1776* (New York: 1965), p. 13.

in the background. Many journalists today make themselves the stars of their stories, but Adams believed that "political literature was to be as selfless as politics itself, designed to promote its cause, not its author."⁹ Adams' self-effacement has made life harder for some historians: John Adams wrote that his cousin's personality would "never be accurately known to posterity, as it was never sufficiently known to its own age." (A minister wrote on October 3, 1803, the day after Adams' death, that there had been "an impenetrable secrecy" about him.¹⁰) But Adams' willingness to have others take the credit worked wonders during his time. He chaired town meetings and led the applause for those who needed bucking up; for example, he pulled John Hancock onto the patriot side and promoted Hancock's career.

What Adams, had he written about himself, probably would have stressed, was his orthodox Christian belief in the God of the Bible. The Great Awakening had made a permanent theological impression on him. That impression is evident in Adams' writings and actions, in his prayers each morning and in his family Bible reading each evening. He frequently emphasized the importance of "Endeavors to Promote the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ," and in good or bad times wrote of the need "to submit to the Dispensations of Heaven, Whose Ways are ever gracious, ever just."¹¹ During the struggle of the 1760s and 1770s, Adams regularly set aside days of fasting and prayer to "seek the Lord." When Adams, in 1777, wrote to a friend about the high points of one celebration, he stressed the sermon delivered that day; the friend wrote back, "An epicure would have said something about the clams, but you turn me to the prophet Isaiah."¹²

Adams the Journalist

Adams was a traditional New Englander in his theology and style of living: John Adams called Samuel the Calvin of his day, and "a Calvinist" to the core.¹³ (William Tudor in 1823 called Adams "a strict Calvinist...no individual of his day had so much feelings of the ancient puritans." For Tudor, that meant Adams had "too much sternness and pious bigotry."¹⁴) Yet, Adams as journalist did not merely rely on established procedures; he altered the practice and significance of American journalism in four ways.

First, observing that "mankind are governed more by their feelings than by reason," Adams emphasized appeals to the whole person, not just to a disembodied intellect.¹⁵ Emotions were to be taken seriously,

⁹ Quoted in Pauline Maier, *The Old Revolutionaries* (New York, 1980), p. 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹ Harry Cushing, ed., *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, 4 vols. (New York, 1904), vol. I, p. 33, and vol. III, p. 220.

¹² Maier, p. 47.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴ William Tudor, *The Life of James Otis* (Boston, 1923), pp. 274-75.

¹⁵ *Writings*, III, p. 284. Adams' willingness to emphasize emotional, human interest stories has bothered some historians.

for the "fears and jealousies of the people are not always groundless: And when they become general, it is not to be presum'd that they are; for the people in general seldom complain, without some good reason."¹⁶ Adams assumed democratically that an issue of importance to the populace is not silly. He argued that ordinary citizens could "distinguish between 'realities and sounds;' and by a proper use of that reason which Heaven has given them, they can judge, as well as their betters, when there is danger of slavery."¹⁷

Second, Adams emphasized investigative reporting more vigorously than any American journalist before him had: He did so because "Publick Liberty will not long survive the Loss of publick Virtue."¹⁸ Adams argued that it was vital to track activities of those

who are watching every Opportunity to turn the good or ill Fortune of their Country, and they care not which to their own private Advantage.... Such Men there always have been and always will be, till human Nature itself shall be substantially meliorated.¹⁹

He went on to praise exposure of leaders who "having gained the Confidence of their Country, are sacrilegiously employing their Talents to the Ruin of its Affairs, for their own private Emolument."²⁰ At the same time, however, Adams emphasized restraint in such exposure, as he emphasized restraint in all actions: Only those "capable of doing great Mischief" should be held up "to the publick Eye."²¹

Third, he combined sensational exposure with an emphasis on political restraint. So far was Adams from "revolution" in the way the term was used in the French Revolution and afterwards that he described, in the *Boston Gazette* in 1768, how

the security of right and property, is the great end of government. Surely, then, such measures as tend to render right and property precarious, tend to destroy both property and government; for these must stand and fall together.²²

He opposed dictatorship, whether popular or monarchical:

The Utopian schemes of levelling, and a community of goods, are as visionary and impracticable, as those which vest all property in the

¹⁶ *Boston Gazette*, January 21, 1771.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Writings*, IV, p. 108.

¹⁹ *Boston Gazette*, January 21, 1771.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Writings*, IV, pp. 106-107. Adams realized extremely well the dangers of investigative journalism to the journalist: he noted that the writer who exposes does so "at the Risque of his own Reputation; for it is a thousand to one but those whose Craft he puts at Hazard, will give him the odious Epithets of suspicious dissatisfiable peevish quarrelsome &c."

²² *Boston Gazette*, April 4, 1768.

Crown, are arbitrary, despotic, and in our government unconstitutional. Now what property can the colonists be conceived to have, if their money may be granted away by others, without their consent?²³

Some of the patriots did not share Adams' emphasis on restraint, and it is not hard to compile a list of patriots' "mobbish" acts. Yet the principles of the revolutionaries, and most of their practice, emphasized defense of property and freedom of accurate political expression.

Fourth, Adams always tried to make connections between attacks on political rights and attempts to restrict religious rights. In a *Boston Gazette* column that he signed, "A Puritan," Adams described how he was pleased with attention paid to politics but:

surpriz'd to find, that so little attention is given to the danger we are in, of the utter loss of those *religious Rights*, the enjoyment of which our good forefathers had more especially in their intention, when they explored and settled this new world.²⁴

He saw acquiescence in political slavery as preparation for submission to religious slavery:

I could not help fancying that the Stamp-Act itself was contrived with a design only to inure the people to the habit of contemplating themselves as the slaves of men; and the transition from thence to a subjection to Satan, is mighty easy.²⁵

Adams the Theoretician

It is astounding that some historians have seen Adams solely as a political plotter; for Adams, the religious base came first. One of his arguments against imposed taxes was that the money could go for establishment of a state "Episcopate in America...the revenue raised in America, for ought we can tell, may be constitutionally applied towards the support of prelacy..."²⁶ Adams favored investigative reporting and appropriate emotional appeal because he wanted readers to know about and *care about* attempts to take away their freedom, political and religious. He opposed destructive revolutionary acts because he saw them as eventually

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

reducing freedom, political and religious — with the results of the English civil war as a case in point. From all these strands Adams was able to weave an understanding of when journalists, and citizens generally, should be willing to fight.

The understanding came out of the Puritan idea of *covenant* and its political-economic corollary, *contract*. In 1765, Adams had written of himself and his neighbors,

We are the Descendants of Ancestors remarkable for their Zeal for true Religion & Liberty: When they found it was no longer possible for them to bear any Part in the Support of this glorious Cause in their Native Country England, they transplanted themselves at their own very great Expence, into the Wilds of America...²⁷

Their ancestors took those risks in order to establish "the Worship of God, according to their best Judgment, upon the Plan of the New Testament; to maintain it among themselves, and transmit it to their Posterity."²⁸ Crucially, they did so on the basis of a signed contract: "A Charter was granted them by King Charles the first," Adams noted, and "a successor charter" was granted (through the lobbying of Increase Mather) in 1691.²⁹

Adams, in column after column, explained the basis of the contract: The colonists "promised the King to enlarge his Dominion, on their own Charge, provided that They & their Posterity might enjoy such

and such Privileges."³⁰ Adams wrote that the colonists "have performed their Part, & for the King to deprive their Posterity of the Privileges, therein granted, would carry the Face of Injustice in it." Colloquially, a deal's a deal, and London's attempt to tax the colonists was one indication that the deal was being broken, since the charter gave the colonists "an exclusive Right to make Laws for our own internal Government & Taxation."³¹

In emphasizing the breaking of the contract, Adams was not developing new political theology. John Calvin had written that "Every commonwealth rests upon laws and agreements," and had then noted "the mutual obligation of head and members." John Cotton, following that line of argument, had concluded that "the rights of him who dissolves the contract are forfeited." Puritans

²⁷ Adams, *Writings*, I, p. 27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 27-28.

³² See John W. Whitehead, *An American Dream* (Westchester, IL, 1987), p. 62.

Increasingly, the patriot journalists saw such exposure of corruption as part of their calling; soon, as Adams has written in the *Boston Gazette*, the British learned that "there is nothing so fretting and vexatious, nothing so justly TERRIBLE to tyrants, and their tools and abettors, as a FREE PRESS."

long had insisted that just as God establishes a covenant with man, so kings have a contract with their subject (and although God would never break His agreement, kings might). But Adams took that idea and developed from it a theory of when writers should criticize and when they should refrain from criticism. Once a government had been established along Biblical principles, criticism of its departure from those principles was proper — but criticism designed to topple the government in order to establish it upon new principles was improper.

To put this another way, what could be called a conservative revolution, one designed to restore previously-contracted rights, was proper, but a social revolution designed to establish new conditions was not. This made sense not only as a pragmatic way to avoid bloodshed and chaos, but because of Adams' belief (expressed as early as 1748) that societies in any case represent the strengths and weaknesses of their members. The real need in a contract-based society, he argued, was for individual change (which can lead to social change) and not for social revolution.

Adams' Influence

Although it is difficult to trace direct patterns of influence, it is worth noting that other New England writers soon followed Adams' lead (or arrived at similar conclusions through other means) in arguing that London had broken its contract with the colonists. John Lathrop declared in 1774 that a person who "makes an alteration in the established constitution, whether he be subject or a ruler, is guilty of treason." He asserted that colonists "may and ought, to resist, and even make war against those rulers who leap the bounds prescribed them by the constitution, and attempt to oppress and enslave the subjects...."³³ Lathrop, like Adams, concluded that King and Parliament, by attempting to lord it over colonial assemblies, were overthrowing England's constitution.³⁴

Patriots outside of New England also expressed many of the ideas that Adams had brought forth so vigorously. The *South-Carolina Gazette* expressed concern that British officials were claiming "the power of breaking all our charter."³⁵ A columnist in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* declared that "resisting the just and lawful power of government" was rebellion but resisting "unjust and usurped power was not."³⁶ The *Virginia Gazette* saw British authorities moving to apply "the Rod of Despotism" to "every Colony that moves in Defence of Liberty."³⁷ In Connecticut, the *Norwich Packet* argued that liberty was like an inheritance, "a sacred deposit which it would be treason against Heaven to betray."³⁸

³³ John Lathrop, quoted in Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (New York, 1928), p. 181.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *South-Carolina Gazette*, June 20, 1774.

³⁶ *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 27, 1775.

³⁷ *Virginia Gazette*, June 20, 1774.

³⁸ *Norwich Packet*, November 6, 1775.

The patriotic journalists also were with Adams in pointing to specific violations of the contract, rather than raging against the British system generally. For example, Massachusetts citizens were supposed to be able to control their own government, with the royal governor having a relatively minor role and not a large bureaucracy, but Josiah Quincy, Jr., in the *Boston Gazette*, showed how "pensioners, stipendiaries, and salary-men" were "hourly multiplying on us."³⁹ In New Hampshire, the Executive Council was supposed to provide the governor with a broad array of colonists' views, but the colony's correspondent complained in the *Boston Evening-Post* that relatives of Governor John Wentworth filled all but one Council seat of it.⁴⁰

Increasingly, the patriot journalists saw such exposure of corruption as part of their calling; soon, as Adams has written in the *Boston Gazette*, the British learned that "there is nothing so *fretting* and *vexatious*, nothing so justly TERRIBLE to tyrants, and their tools and abettors, as a FREE PRESS."⁴¹ Isaiah Thomas, editor of *The Massachusetts Spy*, adopted Adams' theme in noting that, without a free press, there would be "padlocks on our lips, fetters on our legs, and only our hands left at liberty to slave for our worse than Egyptian task masters..."⁴² But again, the emphasis (as in Adams' writing) was on officeholders' betrayal of existing laws, not on revolutionary imposition of new ones: The mission of the *Boston Gazette*, its editors declared, was to "strip the serpents of their stings, and consign to disgrace, all those guileful betrayers of their country."⁴³

The patriotic restraint demanded by Adams generally continued right up to the beginning of warfare. Even in 1774, under extreme pressure, Adams' response to the Intolerable Acts, contained in a resolution passed by Suffolk County, continued to emphasize contract, not revolution. The resolution recommended economic sanctions against the British and proposed the formation of an armed patriot militia, but it also attacked any attempt

by unthinking persons to commit outrage upon private property; we would heartily recommend to all persons of this community not to engage in riots, routs, or licentious attacks upon the properties of any person whatsoever, as being subversive of all order and government.⁴⁴

Newspapers portrayed the war, once begun, as a defense of order and legitimate government: "We have taken up arms, it is true," the *Virginia Gazette* noted, "but this we have undoubted right to do, in defence of the British constitution."⁴⁵

³⁹ *Boston Gazette*, October 3, 1768.

⁴⁰ *Boston Evening-Post*, June 16, 1770.

⁴¹ *Boston Gazette*, March 7, 1768.

⁴² *Massachusetts Spy*, October 8, 1772.

⁴³ *Boston Gazette*, March 7, 1768, column signed "The True Patriot."

⁴⁴ Quoted in Benjamin Hart, *Faith and Freedom* (Dallas, 1988), p. 262.

⁴⁵ *Virginia Gazette*, December 8, 1775.

Conclusion

Samuel Adams had his counterparts in other colonies: Cornelius Harnett was called "the Samuel Adams of North Carolina" and Charles Thomson was called "the Samuel Adams of Philadelphia."⁴⁶ But Adams himself was the best at taking Bible-based theories and heightening them journalistically. His printed response to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence shows Adams at his finest. He wrote that "the hand of Heaven appears to have led us on to be, perhaps, humble instruments and means in the great providential dispensation which is completing."⁴⁷ He stated plainly his sense of the Declaration of Independence:

We have explored the temple of royalty, and found that the idol we have bowed down to has eyes which see not, ears that hear not our prayers, and a heart like the nether millstone. We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom alone men ought to be obedient.⁴⁸

He explained that previous generations

lopped off, indeed, some of the branches of Popery, but they left the root and stock when they left us under the domination of human systems and decisions, usurping the infallibility which can be attributed to revelation alone. They dethroned one usurper, only to raise up another; they refused allegiance to the Pope, only to place the civil magistrate in the throne of Christ, vested with authority to enact laws and inflict penalties in his kingdom.⁴⁹

Adams followed those statements with his key rhetorical question: "Were the talents and virtues which Heaven has bestowed on men given merely to make them more obedient drudges, to be sacrificed to the follies and ambition of a few...? He responded,

The hand of Heaven appears to have led us on to be, perhaps, humble instruments and means in

⁴⁶Maier, p. 3. Many historians have attacked Adams' beliefs and his methodology. John Eliot in 1807 called him "austere...rigid...opinionated." [A *Biographical Dictionary* (Salem, 1807), p. 7] James Hosmer in 1885 did not like the "sharp practice" that Adams as journalist sometimes used (Hosmer, *Samuel Adams* (Boston, 1885), pp. 68, 229, 3680. See Maier, pp. 11-16, for a discussion of twentieth century historiographical trends.

⁴⁷Quoted in Benjamin F. Morris, *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1864), p. 115. Some historians have mistakenly assumed that references by Adams and his contemporaries to "Providence" meant a movement away from belief in a theistic God, when exactly the opposite is true: reference to God's Providence distinguished theists from deists who posited a clockwork universe in which God had created all but then gone on vacation.

⁴⁸Samuel Adams, *An Oration Delivered at the State-House in Philadelphia, to a very Numerous Audience, on Thursday the 1st of August, 1776* (Philadelphia, 1776).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

the great providential dispensation which is completing. We have fled from the political Sodom; let us not look back, lest we perish and become a monument of infamy and derision to the world!⁵⁰

Such editorial fervency moved a generation. It may move us today also, if we have ears to hear. Δ

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

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IN UPCOMING ISSUES OF ANTITHESIS

- Tensions in Science & Naturalism
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The National Covenant: Life Blood of Scotland

An Overview of Scottish Presbyterian History — Part Four

**Following Mary's
abdication, Scotland
again struggled
against an absolut-
ism which, accord-
ing to Knox's suc-
cessor Andrew
Melville, sought
"to pull the crown
from Christ's head"**

L. Anthony Curto

When Queen Mary of Scotland abdicated her throne in 1567, her son James VI was still an infant and thus too young to rule. As a result, Scotland was governed by regents until 1587. The first regent, James, the Earl of Moray, was a strong Protestant and defender of the Reformed cause. The Earl of Moray's appointment upset the Hamilton clan, who had James assassinated in 1570. This death was a serious setback to Knox and the Reformed Kirk (church).

The two succeeding regents, Lord Lennox, grandfather of King James, and Lord Erskine, the Earl of Mar, served only a brief period. Lord Lennox was assassinated in 1571, and Lord Erskine died shortly after assuming the position of regent in 1572. Following these deaths, the Earl of Morton assumed the regent's seat, which he would hold until 1587, though his influence was evident until his death in 1591.

Morton was a strong Protestant but was closely tied to the English. He envisioned the church along much more Anglican lines, and this distressed the Reformed Presbyterians. Despite this difference, when Knox died in 1572, just two days after Morton became regent, Morton reflected, "There lies one who neither feared nor flattered any flesh."¹ With Knox now out of the

way, the advantage fell to Morton. He began his Anglican changes by introducing the "Tulchan Bishops" into the government of the church. The common title came from detractors who used "tulchan" to describe the straw-stuffed calf skins used to trick cows into producing milk; they saw the new bishops as similarly misleading the people into the episcopal way.²

The Reformed Kirk was compelled to abide by these episcopal innovations because the King, now fourteen years old, had come under the persuasive influence of Lord D'Aubigny, a Frenchman believed to be an agent for both France and Roman Catholicism.

Many believed that the Reformed Kirk was doomed. This sentiment increased when Morton ceased serving as regent in 1587, and D'Aubigny was appointed Lord High Chamberlain and Duke of Lennox. D'Aubigny openly aimed to destroy all Scottish ties to England, but he needed to remove Morton from the scene completely in order to accomplish this goal. He ultimately achieved this goal by falsely linking Morton to the death of Lord Darnley, the King's father. Morton was executed, and D'Aubigny now had control and the King's ear.

Many Protestants had long viewed D'Aubigny with suspicion, and the Morton incident confirmed their fears. In response to D'Aubigny's actions, the General Assembly instructed John Craig, a colleague of John Knox, to draft a Protestant confession of faith, which would later serve as the basis for the National Covenant. The Protestants not only formulated a new confession, they also entered into the King's Covenant of 1581. This covenant bound the parties to uphold the King and the true religion against all usurpation.

Nevertheless, the King's counselors still controlled the young King. In 1583, a group of Protestant Lords attempted to break this control by kidnapping the King. This group, the "Ruthven Raiders," received their designation from the Ruthven Covenant of 1582, to which they had bound themselves. This covenant read as follows:

We, underscribing, considering the present danger apprehended to the ministers and professors of God's true religion within this realm, the peril of the King's Majesty's own estate and crown, and of such as have been obedient to his authority, and the abuse and confusion of the Commonwealth in all estates: being therefore of necessity moved, to come and remain with his Majesty, until the time that remedy and reformation of the same be provided; therefore, in God's fear, and in his Majesty's obedience, we have avowed and sworn, and by the tenor hereof faithfully bind and oblige us to another, that we shall concur in resisting of the evils intended by whosoever persons, against God's true religion, the person and authority of the King's Majesty, our Sovereign Lord, and ourselves, in seeking and providing redress and reformation of the enormities and abuses in the Commonwealth, to the establishing of the same true religion, and reformation of justice, good order and quietness to the own integrity, according to the Word of God, and loveable laws

¹Burleigh, J.H.S., *A Church History of Scotland*, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), p. 34.

²*Ibid.*, p. 196.

and customs of this realm: and shall take honest, true, and plain part with others esteeming, reputing, and holding all suddanties and occasions that have fallen, or shall fall out against any one of us, in particular, and all enterprises attempted by any one of us, in prosecution of this honest, godly, and lawful cause, to be common to us all, without shrinking therefrom, for any thing that may be opposed to the contrary, for any past offence or quarrel among ourselves as we will answer to the Eternal God, our due obedience to the King's Majesty our Sovereign, and upon our honour, faith, and truth.³

Over two dozen Lords had affixed their names and lives to this covenant.

After kidnapping James VI, the Ruthven Raiders held him for two years until he finally was able to escape. Shortly after he returned, Sir John Maitland successfully negotiated a treaty, the "Protestant League," which would later become the foundation of a common Protestant union between the two countries.

James VI, however, held to a Divine Right view of his authority, and thus stationed himself as the supreme head of both state and church. This absolutist commitment set him in direct conflict with the Reformed Kirk of Scotland and Knox's successor, Andrew Melville.

Andrew Melville

Andrew Melville returned to Scotland two years after Knox's death, after serving for the previous ten years in France and Geneva with Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor. Beza praised Melville to Scottish Kirk's General Assembly in a letter of 1574: "The greatest token of affection the Kirk of Geneva could show to Scotland was that they had suffered themselves to be spoiled of Mr. Andrew Melville."⁴

The General Assembly appointed Melville as Principal at the College of Glasgow, where he quickly gained prominence. Morton, recognizing Melville's growing influence, tried to persuade him to adopt episcopacy and offered him a large benefice in Grovan. Melville refused. Later the General Assembly appointed him to the Chair of Theology and Principal at St. Andrews, where he served for many years.

Melville was well aware of the threats against the Reformed Kirk. In 1582, He declared before the General Assembly that the King's party intended, "to pull the crown from Christ's head, and wrest the Sceptre out of His hand."⁵ Moreover, the Assembly sent several protests to James VI and His Council, expressing their concerns and seeking redress. At one point, the Earl of Arram, one of the King's party, became enraged by their actions and retorted, "Is there any here that dare subscribe to these articles." Melville and his fellow-laborers took the challenge and boldly replied, "We dare and will render our lives in the cause."⁶

³ Lunsden, John, *The Covenant of Scotland*, (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1914), p. 116.

⁴ Howie, J., *The Scots Worthies*, (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1775), p. 91.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Later, in February of 1584, Melville was called before the court of James VI and accused of preaching against the King and his authority from Daniel 4. Even though the Earl of Arram, who prosecuted the case, failed to provide sufficient evidence to make his case, the court ordered Melville to prison in the Edinburgh castle. Melville later escaped with the help of some friends and went into hiding for two years. The acting Archbishop, Patrick Adamson, appointed by the king, excommunicated Melville, which infuriated the populace. Melville was later able to return to St. Andrews, when the Synod of Fife excommunicated Adamson for immorality.⁷

The King's court, dismayed by the continuing actions of the General Assembly, overturned the independence of the church by passing the Black Acts in 1584, which prohibited any ecclesiastical assembly to meet without the King's consent and required that all ministers were to accept the rule of the bishops of the church.

Throughout this time, Melville found himself in conflict with the King. Melville often served as a representative of the ministers before the King who at one point inquired, "Who sent for Melville?" Melville replied, "Sire, I have a call to come from Christ and His church, who have a special concern in what you are doing here, and in opposition to whom Ye are here assembled; but be Ye assured, that no counsel taken against Him shall prosper; and I charge you, Sire, in His name, that you and your Estates here convened favor not God's enemies, whom He hateth."⁸

Sunshine Before the Storm

The religious tensions appeared to ease in 1589. King James travelled to Denmark to marry a young Danish girl, and Robert Bruce, a preacher and a close friend of Melville, was appointed to the Council of Regency and was later chosen to crown the new Queen from Denmark. James vowed to be a good husband and king and even promised to better the Scottish Kirk's situation. He called the Kirk, "The sincerest Kirk in the world," and referred to the church of England as "an evil said Mass in English, wanting nothing but liftings."⁹ He also promised to defend the Kirk "so long as I brook life and crown."¹⁰

Shortly following these events, the Act of 1592 passed which reestablished presbyterianism in Scotland. The Act called for a church government made up of synods, presbyteries, and local sessions, the abolishment of episcopal restrictions and bishops, remuneration of ministers, and confirmed all the liberties for the true church of Christ.¹¹

Protestant people and leaders viewed these turn of events as favorable to their cause, and all seemed to be going well until Philip of Spain attacked England. Scottish nobles had plotted with Philip in this invasion, and James VI was called upon to take action. First, James

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁹ Burleigh, *Church History*, p. 204.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

exiled the responsible nobles but later allowed them to return, much to the furor of many. Melville reminded James at a 1596 assembly that he as King "was God's silly vassal and that there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and His kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James VI is, and of whose kingdom, not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member he was."¹²

James realized that if there were no bishop, there would be no king. He had to act. He summoned a preacher, David Black, for allegedly preaching sedition. Black was a protégé of Melville and refused to appear arguing that the King had no jurisdiction over the pulpits of the Kirk. The King had Black arrested and tried in Edinburgh. The people of the city revolted and the King threatened to harshly sanction the people if they did not banish all ministers who opposed the King. The city council complied and the time of peace ended.

One immediate drawback of the Act of 1592 was that it granted the King the power to designate the meeting location of the yearly General Assembly. James used this to his advantage. He would designate the time and location of assemblies which best served his own ends.

James gained the most advantage when he ascended to the English throne in 1603. With the help of the English church, he could secure greater control in Scotland. In 1606, Melville was called to London, and two bishops attempted to persuade him of the superiority of episcopal government, but Melville remained undaunted. Bancroft, the Archbishop of Canterbury, successfully persuaded the King to banish Melville from the realm, and Melville was exiled to Sedan in France, where he spent his remaining years teaching at a Huguenot seminary.¹³

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

In Scotland itself, James reestablished bishops in the Scottish church and exiled many leading Presbyterians. In 1618 he established the Articles of Perth which once again patterned the worship of the Scottish Kirk after the English model. The Articles required, among other items:

- 1) That the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ should be received kneeling
- 2) That the sacrament might be administered to the sick privately
- 3) That baptism might be administered in private homes where necessary
- 4) That children of eight years of age should be confirmed by the Bishop
- 5) That holidays be established for the birth, passion, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord, and for the sending of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

James appeared to have won the war, but he seriously underestimated the commitment of the Scottish people. Instead of bequeathing his son, Charles I, a realm in submission, he gave him a kingdom tensing for a fight. In a few short years, the Scottish people would rise and willingly seal their commitment with their blood. The Scottish people would see God move remarkably in their midst, glorifying their blessed King Jesus. Δ

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

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Population Growth as Blessing or Blight?

Contemporary doomsayers continue to spread dangerous overpopulation mythology, but where's the crisis?

E. Calvin Beisner

On our way into the hospital for the birth of our first child one bright and shiny day in 1985, my wife and I saw a bumper sticker that said, "Beam me up, Scotty. This planet sucks!" We laughed. Little did we know.

"The world has cancer," said a top Rockefeller Foundation official in 1962, "and that cancer cell is man."

No longer are people desirable in themselves. Indeed, they are a curse on the land. They are the "population bomb," a "population explosion," and "people pollution." Or as Kingsley Davis puts it, "In subsequent history the Twentieth Century may be called either the century of world wars or the century of the population plague."¹

Why such a gloomy view of people? Because there are too many of them, that's why. At least, that's what proponents of population control believe, and they have frighteningly vivid ways of telling us:

The current rate of growth, continued in 600 years, would leave every inhabitant of the world with only 1 square yard to live on. By the year 3500, the weight of human bodies on the earth's surface would equal the weight of the world itself. By the year 6000, the solid mass of humanity would be expanding outward into space at the speed of light.²

¹ Kingsley Davis, "The Climax of Population Growth: Past and Future Perspective," *California Medicine*, vol. 113, no. 5, p. 33.

² "How Many Babies Is Too Many?" *Newsweek*, vol. LX, no. 4 (July 23, 1962), p. 27.

Or take this cheery picture:

A British scientist recently calculated that with the population of the world now about 3 billion and doubling every 37 years, we will reach the ultimate terrestrial limit of 60 million billion humans in somewhat less than 1,000 years. At that state, people will be jammed together so tightly that the earth itself will glow orange-red from the heat.³

(Do these statisticians, calculators in hand, ever consider that people might lose their taste for making love long before these prognostications come true?)

What's Happening With Population?

Statistical games can be fun. They can also be misleading, which I suppose is why someone coined the aphorism, "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." In fanning the flames of the population scare, statistics are more misleading than fun.

Consider, for a moment, applying statistical growth-rate projections to another sort of population: inmates in American state and federal prisons. In 1980, there were 315,974; in 1981, there were 353,674, an increase of 10 percent; and in 1982, there were 396,072, another 11 percent. Suppose this same growth curve continues, so that we add 12 percent the next year, 13 percent the following, and so on. In the year 2012, 415,389,484 Americans will be in state and federal prisons. Now that is a frightening prospect, particularly granted that the total U.S. population projected for that year is only about 315 million.⁴ Apparently we're going to have to find an extra hundred million people just to fill our prisons; and that doesn't even address the question of who will guard us all. (Juvenal's old enigma, *Sed quis custodiet ipsos Custodes?*—"But who shall guard the guards themselves?"—suddenly takes on new meaning!)

What's wrong with this projection of prison population? The computations are impeccable. The trend sample, the method of defining the trend, and the assumption that the trend will continue forever are wrong. Why assume that the prison population will grow by 1 percent more each year than the last? Why not average the growth rates of the three years and use that as a steady rate? That would have yielded far lower long-term growth. Furthermore, had we looked back a few more years, we would have found that prison population actually fell by about .2 percent per year in 1961 through 1965 and by about 1.4 percent per year in 1966 through 1970; that it grew by only about 4.5 percent per year in 1971 through 1975; that it grew by 6.2 percent per year in 1976 through 1980; and that it grew by about 2.8 percent per year in 1951 through 1960. Overall, from

³ "Population Explosion and 'Anti-Babyism,'" *Life*, vol. 58, no. 16 (April 23, 1965), p. 6.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1984*, p. 194, Table 325; p. 8, Table 6. This takes the highest of three estimates, of which the middle is about 285 million and the lowest about 260 million.

1950 through 1982, prison population grew an average of only about 4.3 percent per year, and the occasional declines show us that any increase at all is not inexorable.⁵ From this longer-term perspective we might have learned that trends can slow, quicken, or even reverse, dependent on outside variables.

Furthermore, while prison population as a proportion of total population continued to rise through 1986,⁶ public pressure to reduce prison expenditures began to rise, too, so that today there is growing pressure for alternative sentencing, especially for nonviolent offenders, that could result in substantial reductions in prison populations, both absolutely and as a percentage of population.⁷ Statistical trend projections often fail to take into account external variables like this—variables that can quicken, slow, or reverse trends.

Projections and Retrojections

So what's wrong with the population projections cited above? A simple question might cast doubt on their validity: What happens if we figure population *retrojections* instead of *projections* using the same criteria? Take, for instance, the projection based on population's doubling every thirty-seven years (i.e., annual population growth of 1.945 percent). What if we halved the population for every thirty-seven years into the past? The projection was made in 1965, with the population at roughly 3 billion. So in 1928 world population would have been 1.5 billion, in 1891 750 million, and so on, back to when Adam and Eve were created not (*pace* Archbishop Ussher) in 4004 B.C., but in A.D. 818! Poor William the Conqueror might have been surprised to learn that he could have brought not 7,000

⁵ Viewing the prison population not as an isolated phenomenon but as a proportion of total population reinforces the lesson. In 1950, federal and state prison inmates constituted .1103 percent of the population; in 1960, the proportion was .1186 percent of the total population; in 1965, .1095 percent; in 1970, .0967 percent; in 1975, .1133 percent; in 1980, .1392 percent; in 1981, .1534 percent and in 1982, .1702 percent. Recalling that baby-boomers began to reach their late teens and early twenties, ages at which crime rates tend to be highest (*Statistical Abstract... 1984*, p. 194, Table 324) from the late 1960s through the 1970s, and that sentencing was relatively lenient during the late 1960s and became tougher throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, gives rational explanation to the increase in prison population. We can expect a marked decline in prison population as proportion of total population (and probably also in absolute numbers) as the median age of the population rises.

⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1988, p. 175, Table 305.

⁷ See Charles Colson and Daniel Van Ness, *Convicted: New Hope for Ending America's Crime Crisis* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989).

men with him to the Battle of Hastings in A.D. 1066, but, at most, 143 men, women, and children—the whole world's population aside from his enemy King Harold and himself.

Okay, let's be generous. Let's assume that population growth has only been half as fast in the past as it is today—doubling every seventy-four years (.973 percent per year) instead of thirty-seven. Then creation occurred in 267 B.C. How about half as fast as that—doubling every 148 years? Creation in 2623 B.C. Half as fast yet (annual growth .24 percent)? Creation in 7211 B.C. The population scaremongers are in deep trouble unless they're prepared to endorse young-earth (or at least young-mankind) creationism.⁸

What's wrong with population growth projections (and retrojections) like the frightening (and humorous) ones cited above is that they arbitrarily, and stubbornly, assume steady growth rates over long periods of time. But growth has never been steady over long periods. Sometimes it has been fairly rapid, sometimes very slow, sometimes even negative.

Growth and Equilibrium

In fact, reliable estimates put world population as recently as 1650 somewhere between 465 million and 545 million.⁹ Assuming the lower figure for a moment, an average population growth rate of roughly .67

percent per year would yield the present population in

⁸ No wonder some creationists think population retrojection is a plausible way of giving support to the idea of recent creation. See, for example, Henry E. Morris, ed., *Scientific Creationism*, General Edition (San Diego: Creation-Life, 1974), pp. 167-169, where Morris argues:

...an average population growth of 1/2 per cent per year would give the present population in just 4000 years. [More precisely, 4,464 years retrojecting from three billion 1965.] This is only one-fourth the present rate.

...It is essentially incredible that there could have been 25,000 generations of men with a resulting population of only 3.5 billion. If the population increased at only 1/2 per cent per year for a million years, or if the average family size were only 2.5 children per family for 25,000 generations, the number of people in the present generation would exceed 10^{2100} , a number which is, of course, utterly impossible (as noted in an earlier chapter, only 10^{130} electrons could be crammed into the entire known universe).

⁹ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism 15th—18th Century*, 3 vols., Volume 1: *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 43. Baudel lists three estimates of world population in 1650: United Nations Bulletin, December 1951 (estimated 470 million); Carr Saunders (estimated 545 million); Kuczynski (estimated 465 million).

It was not enough that God should say, "Be fruitful;" He added, "and multiply." And it was not enough that He should say, "Be fruitful and multiply;" to make the goal clear, He added, "and fill the earth."

the intervening 340 years—by and large, the healthiest centuries in humanity's history, and hence probably the centuries of fastest population growth. Earlier growth was surely much slower, viewed as a long-term average; Braudel suggests about .173 percent per year from A.D. 1300 through 1800, which is only about one-tenth the present rate.¹⁰

Regular growth, in fact, is the exception, not the rule of history. More often, population rises and falls in various regions. For instance, population in the lower Diyala region of Iraq grew from about 10,000 around 4000 B.C. to about 90,000 in 2000 B.C., but fell to about 15,000 in 1000 B.C. It skyrocketed to about 300,000 at the time of Christ and to about 840,000 in A.D. 900. But it plummeted to under 400,000 in the next two hundred years and by about 1800 was only about 50,000. Then it skyrocketed again in the next 150 years, reaching about 750,000 in 1950—still about 90,000 less than it was a thousand years before.¹¹

Again, the population of central Mexico plummeted from nearly 26 million in the early sixteenth century to under 2 million in the early seventeenth.¹² The population of Egypt went from about 2.5 million in 700 B.C. to 25 million in 525 B.C., then fell to about 7 million around A.D. 75, rose to nearly 30 million in A.D. 541, fell to about 10 million in A.D. 719, rose to about 25 million in A.D. 1010, then fell in fits and starts to about 2.5 million around 1750, after which it rose to about 30 million by 1966.¹³

Forecasts of stable population growth rates assume that governmental, political, economic, and social organization remain unchanged and that no major wars, epidemics, or natural disasters occur.¹⁴ Yet none of these assumptions has proved true over long periods of time in any part of the world. Indeed, the stable growth forecasts even assume that no minor fluctuations in such naturally unstable things as agricultural harvests occur. Yet historical studies indicate that parents in heavily agricultural societies time births by harvests, having more children when harvests are good and fewer when they are bad.¹⁵ The steady trend forecasts also ignore the complex variety of reasons why birth rates fall as societies progress from less developed to more developed.¹⁶

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41. Compare *Statistical Abstract...1984*, p. 857, Table 1503. A growth rate of .173 percent per year, by the way, if held constant, would put the creation of Adam and Eve in 10,937 B.C.

¹¹ Julian Simon, *The Economics of Population Growth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), p.15.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁴ Van Bueren Stanbery and Frank V. Hermann, *Population Forecasting Methods* (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, Urban Planning Division, June 1964), p. 6. cited in Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Myth of Overpopulation* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1969), pp.18f.

¹⁵ See, for example, Simon, *Economics of Population Growth*, pp. 317, 331.

¹⁶ Two major reasons for declining birth rates with increasing economic development are: (1) In less-developed countries, where agriculture constitutes a large proportion of the economy and is conducted mainly by physical labor rather

The Demographic Transition

Why, then, has there been such sudden—some call it explosive—population growth all over the world¹⁷ in the last century or two? Will such growth continue, or will population level off (or even decline)? The answer to the first question gives us pretty good footing for a tentative answer to the second.

Population specialists refer to this century or so as a period of *demographic transition*, a time when population patterns went through a major change. Before this period, most populations were characterized by high birth rates and high death rates. Average life expectancy was low—in the late-twenties in most countries—and infant and child mortality was high. Hence few people lived to old age, and lots, in some countries and periods as many as half, never made it to childbearing age. With the onset of the Industrial Revolution and the great multiplications of per-capita income that it brought, however, death rates plummeted: fewer people died in childhood, and more people lived to old age. But birth rates, for a while, stayed what they had been. As a result, there were far more people alive at a given time. Soon, however, birth rates began to fall toward equilibrium with death rates. Parents no longer had six or eight children, hoping to see three or four grow to maturity; instead, they bore the same number of children they expected to see mature.

The result of this transition has been a sudden and steep increase in population, followed by a leveling off of population at new, higher equilibrium levels. Population levels historically have not been described by a sweeping, exponential curve, but by a series of wide plateaus, each followed by a sudden upward curve. Indeed, the most accurate long-term picture of population growth rate was probably given by Ronald Freeman

than with extensive use of machinery, children mean additional farm labor which makes them economically advantageous to their parents, giving parents an economic incentive to maximize their reproductivity. But in more-developed countries, where manufacture and service industries predominate and are conducted by extensive use of machinery requiring extensive education and training, children do not constitute such a clear economic advantage to their parents; indeed, they usually constitute an economic drain to their parents, giving parents an economic incentive to limit family size. (2) In less-developed countries, infant and child mortality rates tend to be high, so that parents need to have more births than the children they hope to have. (And when more children survive than they expect to, they count it an economic blessing since those children can help with agricultural work.) But in more-developed countries, infant and child mortality rates are low, so parents need only bear the number of children they hope to raise to maturity. For more extensive discussion of these and other reasons for falling population growth rates as countries develop economically, see Simon, *The Economics of Population Growth*, Part II: "The Effects of Economic Conditions on Fertility."

¹⁷ Actually, the rapid growth didn't occur simultaneously "all over the world." It occurred first in the more-developed countries and later in less-developed countries. The timing in both groups of countries was determined largely by the coming of an economy capable of producing the food, medical care, and other forms of wealth that could significantly lower infant and child mortality rates and lengthen adult life expectancy.

and Bernard Berelson, who saw it as holding almost perfectly steady at about .1 percent per year from 8,000 B.C. to A.D. 1800, shooting up to about 2 percent around 1950, and collapsing back to about .1 percent a century or so later after which it will stay there for many centuries.¹⁸ On a line graph, the result is a long straight line with a narrow upward spike in the middle of it spanning the years 1800 to 2000.

The demographic transition has occurred at different times in different countries, is still in process in some, and is just beginning in a few, but it seems likely that if the pattern of the transition continues, worldwide population will level off around the middle or end of the next century, probably somewhere between 8 and 15 billion, mostly likely around 10 billion—from 60 percent above to double or triple the present population.¹⁹ Population forecasts that fail to take the demographic transition into consideration and therefore warn of incredibly high populations in the foreseeable future are absurd because they assume that a short-term pattern is actually a long-term trend.

Nonetheless, while the long-term forecasts of the doomsayers may be indefensible from the stand point of legitimate demography and statistics, there is no denying that there are more people in the world today

¹⁸ Ronald Freeman and Bernard Berelson, "The Human Population," *Scientific American*, September 1974, pp. 36-37, cited in Herman Kahn, William Brown, and Leon Martel, *The Next 200 Years: A Scenario for America and the World* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1976, p. 29, Figure 4.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the demographic transition, see Paul Demeny, "The World Demographic Situation" in *World Population & U.S. Policy: The Choices Ahead*, ed. Jane Menken (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), pp. 27-66; Kahn, Brown and Martel, *The Next 200 Years*, pp. 32-34; Simon, *Economics of Population Growth*, pp. 25-27 (Simeon cautions that the theory of demographic transition might be brought into question by recent population trends in some countries, where the birth rate does not appear to be declining following industrialization as rapidly as it did in western industrialized countries, if at all; p. 26); Max Singer, *Passage to a Human World: The Dynamics of Creating Global Wealth* (Indianapolis: Hudson Institute, 1987), p. 332, note. Singer has a good common-sense qualifier to predictions made on the basis of the theory of the demographic transition:

Personally I am skeptical about the standard view that population will "level off"—if that is taken to mean constant world population. I don't see why each country should come to exactly the level of fertility necessary to keep population constant. I believe that some countries will have growing populations and other declining populations, and that many will fluctuate above and below net replacement rate (over period of generations or centuries). Nor do I see why countries with declining populations should exactly balance those with rising populations. So in the long run world population may rise or decline from the level at which it reaches [sic] when the current burst of growth ends. The current burst comes from the transition from poverty to wealth. We can see why that burst will end; what we can't see is the long-term impact of continued wealth, or of widespread great wealth (i.e., US levels of income or higher).

than there have ever been at any one time in the past.²⁰ That can raise the specter of crowded living conditions; shortages of food, even to the extent of widespread famines; exhaustion of natural resources; and life-threatening pollution. In the face of these perceived threats to human well-being, many influential people, especially in civil government and the media, call for increased planning and control of population and economic growth by the state. Determining what we, as Christians, should think about such matters requires our seeing what the Bible says about population and examining carefully the empirical interrelationships among population growth and various aspects of human well-being.

Now let's look at two questions: (1) What does the Bible say about population and population growth in general? (2) Is the world, or are various parts of it, full already?

The Bible on Population

While it nowhere explicitly addresses questions about population growth and its effects on human well-being, the Bible still has a good deal to say about people—particularly about people begetting more people.

We begin at the beginning, even before the creation of man. When God had made the creatures of sea and air and declared them good, He "blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth'" (Genesis 1:22). From the very first, then, it is apparent that the God of Scripture favored bountiful life. Indeed, the depopulation of the earth at the time of the Flood was the effect of His judgment for sin (Genesis 6-7). Abundance of life, not scarcity, is God's plan for the world. This applies not only to the animal world, but also to mankind. For precisely what He said to the birds and fishes, He said also to Adam and Eve after creating them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

The piling up of words with similar meanings in these passages indicates the intensity of God's intention.

For the 10 billion worldwide, equilibrium figure, see Demeny, p.65, and Singer, p.332 (where he depends on projections by the World Bank, the Population Reference Bureau, and the United Nations). For projections of equilibrium for individual nations, see International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, *World Development Report 1986* (New York/Oxford/London: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 228-229, Table 25; of equilibrium for the world, see Demeny, pp. 48ff., et al.

²⁰ "[A] common misleading impression about world population is that a large proportion of all the people who have ever lived are alive now. This is very far from the truth. A well-thought-out estimate is that 77 billion human beings were born from 600,000 B.C. to 1962 A.D.: 12 billion up to 6000 B.C., 42 billion from 6000 B.C. to 1650 A.D., and 23 billion from 1650 A.D. to 1962 A.D. Compare this to the 4-5 billion who may be alive now."

Julian L. Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), p. 161. Simon's calculation assumes a much longer human history than young-earth creationist Christians would agree to, but even granted a shorter human history his basic point is probably still defensible.

It was not enough that He should say, "Be fruitful;" He added, "and multiply." And it was not enough that He should say, "Be fruitful and multiply;" to make the goal clear, He added, "and fill the earth." Three Hebrew words work together to express the strength of this intention: *pārāh*, "blossom, bear fruit,": *rābāh*, "become many or numerous, become great, grow, increase"; and *mālê* "fill, overflow."²¹

Fill the Earth

In light of fears of overpopulation, the last word, *mālê*, is crucial. Moses used the same word in writing that the glory of Yahweh "filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34, 35).²² Elijah used it when he told men to "[fill] pitchers with water (1 Kings 18:33). In the absolute, it is used to describe the Jordan River overflowing its banks (Joshua 3:15). The Greek verb *plēroō* which translates *mālê* in the Septuagint, precisely expresses its meaning; it means to fill completely so that nothing is left over.²³ Is the earth "filled" to this extent? Certainly not, and it appears unlikely that it will become so in the foreseeable future, particularly with the slowing population growth rates that historically have accompanied industrialization and economic betterment. (We will return later to the empirical, yet value-laden, question of whether the earth is getting crowded.)

This preference for fruitfulness, multiplication, and filling the earth continues after the creation narrative. Following the Flood, God told Noah to release the animals and birds from the ark "that they may breed abundantly [literally, "swarm," NASB margin] on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth" (Genesis 9:1). And shortly thereafter, by mandating capital punishment for murder, He made more explicit than ever the preference for life: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate [literally "swarm in," NASB margin] the earth abundantly and multiply in it" (Genesis 9:6, 7). The Hebrew word translated "swarm" in these two verses is the same verb used to describe the plague of frogs that swarmed over Egypt (Exodus 8:1-15). It conveys the idea of a tremendous number of objects densely populating an area.

Population Growth Is a Blessing

It is important to note that in each of these instances, the command to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the earth and swarm in it (Genesis 1:22, 28; 8:17; 9:1,7) comes in the context of God's blessing. "God *blessed* [the

fish and birds], saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill ...'" (Genesis 1:22); "God *blessed* [the man and woman]; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill...'" (Genesis 1:28); "God *blessed* Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth....Swarm in the earth abundantly and multiply in it'" (Genesis 9:1, 7). A teeming population, then, should normally be thought of as a blessing, not a curse.

This is the general principle in regard to all mankind, represented first in Adam and then in Noah. If anything, it is intensified in regard to the elect people of God, as we see in God's promises to Abraham: "...I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you..." (Genesis 12:2); "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them....So shall your descendants be" (Genesis 15:5); "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly....And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations....And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you" (Genesis 17:1-6). This promise was renewed to Isaac (Genesis 26:4, 24). So it was a sign of God's blessing on Israel that the nation, by the time of the exodus, had grown to be "as numerous as the stars of heaven" (Deut. 10:22; cf. 1:10; cf. Genesis 47:27).²⁴

Growth didn't stop being a blessing after that. Instead, it was promised as a blessing on Israel's obedience: "And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle." (Deut. 7:13; cf. 30:5). In contrast, a decline in population was one form of curse God might send on

²⁴ Estimates of Israel's population at the exodus vary. The one firm figure we have is that there were 603,550 men twenty years old and above. Some scholars extrapolate from this a total population of about 2 million (e.g., Ronald B. Allen and Kenneth L. Barker, notes to Numbers in Kenneth L. Barker, general editor, *The NIV Study Bible* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985], p. 190). This figure is based on the assumption of one wife and two children to every man twenty or older. However, demographics of less-developed agricultural peoples indicate that assumption may be far from correct, leading to a serious underestimate of Israel's population at the time. Marriage in such societies tends to come around the ages of fourteen to sixteen, and birth rates tend to be considerably higher than mere replacement rates. An assumption of four to six children to each man over twenty and his wife would not seem unlikely. This would yield a total population estimate for Israel of 3 million to 5 million at the time of the exodus. As an aside, it might be interesting to consider Israel's population density in Goshen (the region in Egypt in which they resided) prior to the exodus. At 2 million, their density would have been 800 to 1200 persons per square mile. (Goshen's specific area is not known. Rough estimates indicate that it was roughly forty to fifty miles square—i.e., 1,600 to 2,500 square miles.) At 3 million, their density would have been 1,200 to 1,875 per square mile. At 5 million, their density would have been 2,000 to 3,125 per square mile. Very few modern countries have such high population densities.

²¹ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1907] 1978), pp. 826, 915, 570.

²² Cf. 2 Kings 8:10, 11; Isaiah 6:1; Jeremiah 23:24; Ezekiel 10:3; 43:5; 44:4; 2 Chronicles 5:14; 7:1, 2.

²³ See J. B. Lightfoot, "On the meaning of *plēroō*," in J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, [1879] 1974), pp. 257-273; R. Schippers, *pleroō*, in article "Fullness," in Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 733-741.

His people if they rebelled (Deut. 28:62, 63; Lev. 26:22).²⁵

Not only in mankind in the aggregate, but also in individual nations and families, population growth appears in the Bible as a blessing from God. "In a multitude of people is a king's glory, but in the dearth of people is a prince's ruin" (Proverbs 14:28).²⁶ As with nations, so with families: "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. . . ." (Psalm 127:3-5). "How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD....Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine, within your house, your children like olive plants around your table" (Psalm 128:1, 3). It is difficult to reconcile the present preference for small families—usually not more than two children per couple—with this Biblical view of children. Ordinarily, Christians should welcome, not try to avoid, additional children.

As we approach New Testament times, the promises of numerical growth to Israel broaden to include a prophesied extension of the people of God, the believing Gentiles who would be grafted into the olive tree (Romans 11:17-21).

For "it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants" (Romans 9:8), and hence rightful heirs of the promises to Abraham (Romans 4:13-16). This is how it comes about that "the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and...that, in the place where it is said to them, 'You are not My people,' it will be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God'" (Hosea 1:10; cf. Romans 9:26). This new body, including believing Jews and Gentiles alike, will grow so large that, like "the host of Heaven" and "the sand of the sea," it will be innumerable (Jeremiah 33:22).

God's original intention, then, was for man to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). That intention was renewed in the covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:1, 7), and again with Abraham (Genesis 17:2) and Isaac (Genesis 26:4, 24), then with the nation of Israel (Deut. 7:13). Then it was renewed with all believers (Hosea 1:10; Romans 9:26). And in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul tells us that God "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on *all* the face of the earth, having

determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation" (Acts 17:26, emphasis added). Clearly the Bible envisions, as part of God's purpose, a tremendous human population spread over the globe.

Is the Earth Full Already?

Nonetheless, the Bible is not specific about the magnitude of population that corresponds with the idea of filling the earth. After all, we're not frogs, and perhaps what it means for people to swarm is not quite what it means for frogs. Is it possible that mankind is on the verge of filling the earth, or has reached it already, or has surpassed it, so that now we suffer from overpopulation? Anyone who travels extensively, whether by ground or by air, certainly doesn't get that impression.

**Contrary to what seems common sense,
we get more land, food, and other re-
sources, and less pollution per person,
as the world's population grows.**

Is the World Crowded?

Are teeming cities gobbling up the world's land? Certainly not. One study in 1974 indicated that all human settlements—including everything from tiny tribal

encampments to multi-million-person cities—took up only about 1 percent of the land surface of the earth.²⁷ The percentage isn't likely to have grown much since then, especially since population growth has tended, worldwide, to be more rapid in densely populated than in sparsely populated areas. Even if only one-fourth of the earth's land surface were suitable for human habitation, total human settlements would cover only 4 percent of that area. And as the market value of habitable space rises, new technology will be found to make more land suitable for habitation.

If the United States, with their population density of roughly 68 per square mile, aren't crowded, what about the world, with its density of about 96 per square mile (excluding Antarctica)?²⁸ On the average, hardly. That density equates with 290,400 square feet per person, or space equivalent to 237 median-sized American single-family homes or 9.68 foot ball fields. Put another way, if all the people on earth were spread evenly over its land area (excluding Antarctica, but including inland waters), each would have a square to himself measuring 539 feet on each side. If each person stood in the middle of his square, his two closest neighbors would be 539 feet away (the length of 1.8 football fields), and his

²⁵ See also Jeremiah 42:2; 5:6; 14:16; 15:3; 16:4; Ezekiel 14:15.

²⁶ This proverb sets forth a view of population precisely contrary to notions common to the modern population-control movement, which sees large, dense populations as weakening rather than strengthening nations. As we proceed in this chapter and the following, we will see why the Biblical view is consistent with empirical evidence that refutes the modern anti-growth notion.

²⁷ C.A. Doxiadis and G. Papaioannou, *Ecumenopolis, the Inevitable City of the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), p. 179, cited in Jacqueline Kasun, *The War Against Population: The Economics and Ideology of World Population Control* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), p. 37.

²⁸ *Statistical Abstract . . . 1988*, p. 19, Table 21 (U.S., 1986), and p. 795, Table 1378 (world, 1987).

next two closest would be 1,078 feet, or 3.6 football field lengths, away.

We can get another perspective on world population density by asking what would happen if the world's population were packed into a smaller area. If all of the projected 5.32 billion people living in 1990 live in the United States, population density would be 1,470 per square mile, about 7 percent less than it was in Taiwan and about 24 percent less than it was in Bangladesh in 1987.²⁹ If everyone were to live at densities equivalent to the 1980 density of America's central cities (3,551 per square mile), they could live in a single city with four equal sides measuring 1,224 miles (i.e., about 41 percent of the U.S. land area). If everyone lived in Texas, population density would be 20,304 per square mile (1,373 square feet of land area per person), slightly under twice the density of Singapore and three-tenths the density of Macau in 1987.³⁰ In that case, Texas would form one giant city with a population density less than that of many existing cities, and leaving the rest of the world empty. Each man, woman, and child in the 1984 world population could be given more than 13,300 square feet of land space in such a city (the average home in the United States ranges between 1,400 and 1,800 square feet). If one-third of the space of this city were devoted to parks and one-third to industry, each family could still occupy a single-story dwelling of average U.S. size.³¹

Or if all 5.32 billion were invited to a giant party in Anchorage, Alaska, each could stand in a ground area of nine square feet (a square with three-foot sides), leaving all the rest of the world empty.³² (An architect friend, by the way, tells me that this is about the room-occupancy density at which discomfort begins to turn to panic.)

What About the Future?

In general, then, the world is not "overpopulated" in any meaningful sense of the word. Crowding exists in some places—mainly in inner cities—but it is not necessarily bad. For many people its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Mankind is a long way from filling up the earth (Genesis 1:28; 9:1, 7).

But how long will things stay this way? Are we on the verge of overrunning the earth's capacity to provide all that we demand? Before we look at the future, though, we need to address one misconception.

It is not the earth that provides what human beings demand. In fact, aside from a marginally adequate biosphere, the earth provides us with very little. Only about 25 percent of the surface of the globe is land, and of that only a small part is suitable for habitation without man's building shelter to protect himself from

the elements. Even land itself—for agriculture, industry, transportation, and habitation—is as much a product of man's making as it is a given; most land is unsuitable for most uses without considerable alteration. Mere hunting and gathering would, in those parts of the world where they are rewarding at all, afford sufficient food for only one to two person per square mile. It is man's mind operating through his body—both gifts of God—that provides most of what man wants and needs as he reshapes, reconstitutes, and recombines what he finds in nature. In an important sense, the earth has no resources; it has only raw materials, materials that man, by applying knowledge and muscle and machine, turns into resources.

This cautionary note taken, what of the future? Will population overrun the supply of land? What, in fact, will population be at various times in the future? Unfortunately, reliable population forecasting over the long haul is probably impossible, as demonstrated by repeated failures in the past. Consider, for instance, Julian Simon's brief review of authoritative population projections:

... we have seen some astonishing flip-flops in world population forecasts. As of 1969, the U.S. *Department of State Bulletin* forecast 7.5 billion people for the year 2000, echoing the original UN source. By 1974, the figure quoted in the media was 7.2 billion. By 1976, Raphael Salas, the executive director of the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) was forecasting "nearly 7 billion." Soon Salas was all the way down to at least 5.8 billion. And as early as 1977, Lester Brown and the Worldwatch Institute (which the UN is supporting) dropped it down again, forecasting 5.4 billion people for the year 2000. This change must be astonishing to laymen—to wit, that the forecast for a date then only twenty-three years away, when a majority of the people who will then be living were already living, could be off by 2 billion people, a change of more than a third of the total current forecast. Does this example of forecasting "science" give us any reason to be impressed by population predictions?³³

Simon then adds, "Nor is there reason to believe that contemporary forecasting methods are better than older one."³⁴

Why? A variety of reasons might be given. Clearly the population-control efforts supported by the United Nations, the United States Agency for International Development, and a coterie of semi-public agencies based mostly in the United States have had some effect in reducing population growth rates.³⁵ By at-

²⁹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 794-795, Tables 1376, 1378.

³⁰ For Texas land area (262,017 square miles), see *Statistical Abstract . . . 1984*, p. 202, Table 338. For Singapore and Macau's densities, see *Statistical Abstract . . . 1988*, pp. 795-797, Table 1378.

³¹ Kasun, *War Against Population*, p. 37.

³² For Anchorage's land area (1,732 square miles), see *Statistical Abstract . . . 1984*, p. 28, Table 29.

³³ Simon, *The Ultimate Resource*, pp. 169-171.

³⁴ The United Nations Fund for Population Activities recently forecast a world population in the year 2100 of 14.2 billion (Linda Feldmann, "UN: World Population Heads for 14 Billion," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 17, 1989, p. 7). Only time will tell whether that projection is any more sound than those we saw earlier.

³⁵ For an excellent survey of the various population-

taching conditions of government-sponsored birth-control programs to promises of U.N. and U.S. aid, these efforts have reduced birth rates in a large number of developing countries.

More important, however, is the simple unpredictability of much human action. People are not machines; they cannot be programmed and expected to behave as ordered. They have imagination, hopes and fears, emotions, volitions, and goals. These and many other determinants of human action change relative to a constantly changing environment. Begetting and bearing babies are human actions, and like all other human actions they are determined by humans' constantly changing hopes, fears, goals, and choices. In a world in which so many things change so rapidly, it is intellectual suicide for anyone to pretend to predict with accuracy and reliability what large numbers of people will do over long periods of time.

What will happen to population after the next century or two? Will it continue in equilibrium, grow slowly or quickly, or fall slowly or quickly? It is impossible for finite, time-bound minds to know. While there are good reasons to believe that population growth rates will diminish considerably from what they have been in the last two centuries, probably dropping to about a tenth of a percent per year,³⁶ we cannot unflinchingly project what will happen by extrapolating recent and present conditions into the distant future, precisely because the recent and present conditions will not obtain at that time. From the Christian perspective of faith in a God of providence, however, we can be confident that human

growth-control groups, see Kasun, *The War Against Population*, Chapter 7, "The Movement, Its History, and Its Leaders." Kasun shows how the groups are related, where they get their money, and how they often circumvent federal rules against the use of federal money to support abortion and coercive birth control programs.

³⁶ Kahn, Brown, and Martel adopt as reasonable a projection by Ronald Freeman and Bernard Berelson of decline in population growth rate from the worldwide rate in 1976 of just over 2 percent per year to about .1 percent per year (roughly the rate throughout prior human history until 1776 and resuming before 2176, according to the model). On that assumption (population doubling every 720 years) we could expect the

population will never present an insuperable problem.

One thing that should be clear by the end of this discussion, however, is that if historical trends³⁷ continue (and there is no reason to think they are reversing themselves), there is no rational basis for believing that population will ever outgrow its ability to provide for itself using the resources it develops—including the resource of space in which to live and work and play (which is what we really mean, after all by *land*). On the contrary, what we learn from history is that over the long haul and on the average per-capita health, economic well-being, and psychological well-being tend to improve faster than population grows. Contrary to what seems common sense, we get more land, food, and other resources, and less pollution per person, as the world's population grows. This view indicates not an idealistic faith in man (something entirely contrary to my belief in original sin and total depravity), but faith in the marvelous providence of God working through His creatures despite their moral corruption. Δ

world's population to reach 40 billion about 2,000 years from now. See the graph showing population growth rates from 8000 B.C. to A.D. 8000 in *The Next 200 Years*, p. 29, adapted from Freeman Berelson's "The Human Population," *Scientific American*, September 1974, pp. 36-37.

³⁷ Here, as we did above, we are distinguishing trends from patterns. The historical trend is for the product of labor and capital to grow faster than population. A recent pattern (the demographic transition discussed earlier) has been for population to grow rapidly (but still less rapidly than economic production). The pattern has a reasonably definable beginning, middle, and end; the trend seems likely to continue indefinitely.

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Nevertheless, the mythology continues...

The Humanist magazine ran the following fallacies in their May/June 1990 issue in a Werner Fornos article entitled, "Gaining People, Losing Ground."

"The dangers inherent in a world population outgrowing its environmental resources demand a new commitment to reshaping our future. We in the industrialized world—especially the United States—need dynamic political change...."

"Meanwhile, the world's population of 5.3 billion is expected to reach 6 billion by the middle of this decade, and, at the present rate, it will *double* within forty years. What most people don't realize is the exponential nature of the population explosion..."

The Rhetoric of Rescue

Operation Rescue apologists zealously defend their methods, but do they dishonor the name of Christ?

David Hagopian

In the May/June issue of *Antithesis*, we had an opportunity to examine what Scripture teaches about our duty to obey civil government.¹ In particular, we saw that Scripture teaches that all authority comes from God who commands us generally to obey civil authorities — even when they may permit evil in our midst. According to Scripture, Christians must disobey civil authorities only when such Christians satisfy

the Biblical criteria for disobedience, that is, only (1) when they are commanded to sin (either by being commanded to do what God forbids or by being forbidden to do what God commands) and (2) when they have no legal means by which they can obey God. After examining the relevant Biblical principles regarding when civil disobedience is Biblically justified, we also examined the best case for Operation Rescue² and saw that proponents of O.R. err when they claim that they are commanded to sin (forbidden to do what God commands) and when they assert that they have no legal means by which they can obey God.

While the previous article provided an opportunity to evaluate the main argument O.R. advocates marshal to justify O.R. (as well as its cast of supporting arguments), it did not address many other subsidiary arguments proffered by O.R. apologists. In the interests of thoroughly analyzing the rhetoric of “rescue,” this article will evaluate these subsidiary arguments — be they theological, historical, consequential, or legal — and show that such arguments fail to pass Biblical muster. As with the previous article, we will ultimately see that, while Scripture lauds the end O.R. pursues, it by no means lauds the illegal and physically coercive means by which O.R. seeks to bring about that end. As

¹ Hagopian, David, “Forgive Us Our Trespasses? A Biblical View of Civil Disobedience and Operation Rescue,” *Antithesis*, Vol. 1, No. 3, May/June 1990, pp. 9-14, 33-39.

² As with the previous article, we shall abbreviate “Operation Rescue” as “O.R.” throughout this article.

such, O.R.’s illegal and physically coercive tactics are not Biblically justified. In the end, then, the *rhetoric* of “rescue” simply does not accord with the *reality* of “rescue.”

I. Theological Arguments

A. The Example of Christ

Many O.R. advocates attempt to justify their illegal and physically coercive tactics by appealing to the example of Christ as taught in Scripture. In particular, O.R. advocates often appeal to Christ’s temple cleansings, interposition, and resurrection.

1. Temple Cleansings

Many O.R. proponents claim that since Christ twice resorted to physical coercion to cleanse the temple and since we are to imitate Christ, such coercion is Biblically justified.³ It is true, of course, that on two separate occasions, Christ forcefully ejected from the temple those who profaned the true worship of God by turning God’s house into a den of thieves. But contrary to what O.R. advocates purport, the temple cleansing accounts provide absolutely no support for O.R.’s illegal and physically coercive tactics. Because the temple cleansing accounts are distinguishable from the present case of O.R., O.R. advocates cannot properly appeal to these accounts to justify their own brand of physical coercion.

First, note carefully that *the temple was Christ’s (God’s) house* (Mk. 11:17). Thus, far from legitimizing trespass (as O.R. advocates proffer), *Christ actually expelled trespassers* from His house!

Second, as He expelled these trespassers, Christ did not cling to an arbitrary distinction between violence and non-violence, as do members of O.R.⁴ According to John 2 (which describes the first temple cleansing incident early in Christ’s ministry), Christ formed a whip out of cord, physically drove the moneychangers and their sacrificial animals out of the temple court, poured out their coins, and overturned their tables. Not exactly non-violence! And toward the end of His earthly ministry, Christ again cleansed the temple — without clinging to an arbitrary distinction between violence and non-violence — by casting both buyers and sellers out of the temple, overturning tables and chairs (Mk. 11:15), and refusing to permit anyone “to carry goods through the temple” (Mk. 11:16).

Blocking entrances? Isn’t this precisely what O.R. does? Again we must resist superficial appeals to supposed proof-texts in support of O.R. Read in context, the temple cleansing accounts teach us that Christ

³ Lindstrom, Paul, “Operation Rescue,” (promotional video).

⁴ Advocates of O.R. adamantly insist that their tactics are non-violent; see e.g., Foreman, Joseph, debate with David Hagopian, “Is Operation Rescue Biblically Justifiable?” (May 13, 1989). I am indebted to Greg Price, an Orthodox Presbyterian Pastor, for bringing many of the refutations of the temple cleansing accounts to my attention.

didn't just sit on the sidewalk and sing hymns! He used dramatic force by physically driving the moneychangers out of the temple and physically preventing them from entering the temple. Thus, if the example of Christ proves anything at all, it proves that O.R.'s professed commitment to non-violence is arbitrary.

Third, unlike O.R., Christ did not expel the moneychangers to save physical life. Rather, Christ cleansed the temple to preserve God's honor and to enable God-fearing Gentiles to gain access to the area of the temple in which they could worship God. The trespassing merchandisers set up their booths in the outer court of the temple where God-fearing Gentiles came to pray and seek God (since only Jews could enter the inner court to bring their sacrificial offerings). Because God promised that Gentiles would come to the temple to worship Him (Is. 2:2), God-fearing Gentiles were encouraged to seek God and His salvation in the outer court area of the temple. Thus, when the merchants infested this outer court area, they prevented God-fearing Gentiles from worshipping God. When Christ cleansed the temple, then, He enabled God-fearing Gentiles to gain access to the outer court area so that they could worship God. This is why Christ, as He cleansed the temple, quoted Isaiah 56:7 and rhetorically asked, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?'" (Mk. 11:17, emphasis added).

Fourth, while Scripture indeed commands us to imitate Christ (e.g., I Cor. 11:1, Phil. 2:5, I Jn. 2:6), there are many aspects of Christ's life which are unique and which are not recorded in Scripture as a literal example for His followers to imitate literally such as His incarnation, transfiguration, triumphal entry, substitutionary death, and physical resurrection. The temple cleansings are also unique events which Christ never intended His followers to reduplicate literally. Calvin concurs when he writes:

Now there is no doubt of the fact that He is testifying to Himself as King and High Priest, who presides over the temple and worship of God. This must be stressed, in case some other person should ever give himself the same licence. Admittedly the zeal which fired Christ is well suited to all worshipping people, but before anyone rushes into wild action on the pretext of imitation he must see what his calling demands and how far we should go according to the commandment of God....[T]hose who have no public authority must fight with the freedom of their tongues what they cannot correct with force.⁵

Put simply, many events in Christ's life — including the temple cleansing incidents — are to be interpreted as typological and not literal examples. Far from teaching us literally to eject false worshippers from our churches or to use physical force — albeit minimal force — to conform others in society to a Christian ethic, the temple

cleansing accounts teach us to have zeal for the true worship of God.

With the historical and literary context of the temple cleansing accounts clearly in mind, we can see that these accounts give absolutely no credence to O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics. Instead, these accounts teach us that Christ drove trespassers out of His house — without clinging to an arbitrary distinction between violence and non-violence — in order to allow God-fearing Gentiles to worship Him, not to provide His disciples with a literal example to follow.

2. Interposition

O.R. proponents claim that just as Christ physically interposed Himself between God and sinners on Calvary's hill, so "rescuers" interpose themselves between abortionists and unborn children.⁶ This analogy, like all of the analogies we have examined so far, is false for several reasons.

First, when Christ interposed Himself between a just God and unjust sinners, He did not violate any human law. When members of O.R. allegedly interpose themselves between abortionists and babies, by contrast, they violate human law precisely by their chosen method of interposition. Because O.R.'s interposition is illegal whereas Christ's was not, Christ's interposition provides no justification for O.R.'s illegalities.

Second, while Christ interposed Himself "physically," He did not thereby physically coerce others to abide by God's dictates. Thus, when O.R. apologists claim that they interpose themselves physically even as Christ did, they equivocate on the meaning of "physical interposition."

Third, Christ's interposition is distinguishable from that of O.R. in that Christ did not interpose Himself between a holy God and unholy sinners on the mere possibility of saving sinners in general. Rather, Christ died specifically to redeem His people.⁷ And He perfectly accomplished that task by dying once for all, the just for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18).

Fourth, the analogy is easily reduced to absurdity. If, as O.R. advocates suggest, O.R. intervenes between an abortionist and a baby as Christ does between God and sinners, the analogy makes (1) the abortionist the functional equivalent of God (oops!), (2) the "rescuer" the functional equivalent of Christ (rather complimentary, eh?), and (3) the baby the functional equivalent of a sinner. Why is this analogy being pushed to its extreme? To force its proponents to justify why they employ it. Presumably, they proffer this analogy to prove that Christians are to follow Christ's example of self-sacrifice.⁸ But, when Christ self-sacrificially interposed Himself between God and sinners, He did so at the direct command of God to fulfill the covenant promises of God by saving His people once and for all. He neither violated civil law nor physically coerced others in the process.

⁶ Foreman, debate with Hagopian; Kennedy, D. James, Forward to Terry, R., *Operation Rescue* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1988), p. 6.

⁷ See Williamson, G.I., "Unlimited Atonement," in this issue of *Antithesis*, pp. 38-39.

⁸ Foreman, debate with Hagopian.

⁵ Calvin, John, *New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972 [1555]), Vol. III, pp. 3, 4.

O.R. advocates claim that Christians should follow Christ's example. Indeed, Christians should follow Christ's example.

3. Resurrection

During a recent debate, one O.R. advocate claimed that Christ violated civil law when He broke the Roman seal on His tomb.⁹ This argument is specious and fails to justify O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics.

First, there is no textual evidence whatsoever that Christ was the one who broke the seal. This advocate simply assumed what he had to prove — something he did quite often during the debate. Since Scripture itself doesn't say who broke the seal, this argument is nothing more than an unsubstantiated argument from silence.

Second, even assuming Christ Himself broke the seal, it is doubtful whether in so doing He thereby violated the Roman law in question. If such a law existed, it hardly was intended to apply to the situation where the seal was broken from the inside-out. Thus, even if Christ did break the seal, it is questionable whether he ever violated the intent of the Roman law at all.

Third, even if Christ violated the letter of the Roman law by breaking the seal (or any other human law for that matter — e.g., Sabbath laws — as O.R. proponents are fond of asserting), He did so in accord with the Biblical criteria for such disobedience. After all, every Sunday school student knows that Christ did nothing apart from His Father's command (Jn. 5:19-20, 30; 6:38-40; 12:49-50; 14:31; 15:10, etc.). Since God commanded Christ to do everything, which includes commanding Him to rise from the dead and exit the tomb (Jn. 10:17-18), and since Christ rose from the dead physically (thus leaving no other means to exit the tomb), the Roman law forbade Christ to do something God had specifically commanded Him to do, and left Christ with no alternative but to do what He did. Thus, even assuming Christ violated a Roman law by breaking the seal on His tomb, He abided by the Biblical criteria for such disobedience. Put simply, the living Word cannot and does not contradict the written Word!

B. The Example of Esther

Some O.R. proponents maintain that violating laws prohibiting trespass is Biblically justified since Queen Esther trespassed into King Ahasuerus' inner court in order to rescue the Jews from death.¹⁰ If members of O.R. would read the story about Esther carefully, however, they would quickly see that Esther did not illegally trespass when she approached King Ahasuerus unannounced.

⁹ Foreman, debate with Hagopian.

¹⁰ Terry, R., "A Response," [responding to Bill Gothard's critique of O.R.], (Binghamton, NY: Operation Rescue, n.d.), p. 9: "Actually, Esther is a beautiful example of a rescue mission. She trespassed with a right attitude and with much prayer to save the lives of others. That's exactly what rescuing babies is all about. Thank you, Esther."

True there was a general law which forbade trespass. Esther herself summarized this law as follows: "All the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death...." (Esther 4:11). But if one were to read on, he would note that the general law forbidding trespass was subject to one exception, as the text itself makes clear: the one who was not summoned would be put to death "unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live." In other words, there was general law forbidding trespass which was subject to one exception¹¹ (which we shall refer to as "the golden scepter exception").

The only remaining question, therefore, is whether Esther fell under the purview of the golden scepter exception when she approached the king. A few verses later, we find that Esther indeed fell under the golden scepter exception: "And it happened that when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter" (Esth. 5:2, 8:4).

Once again O.R. supporters have not done their homework! Far from illegally trespassing contrary to the king's dictate, Esther ultimately was invited by the king to approach his throne. She didn't take the law into her own hands as do members of O.R. And she didn't physically coerce others to conform to a godly ethic. Instead, she diplomatically approached the king and persuaded him to exercise his authority to remedy an unjust situation. And God blessed her. Oh that God would raise up more Christians like Esther!

C. Repentance from Bloodguiltiness

O.R. advocates claim that O.R. is an act of repentance to stay the imminent judgment of God on America because of the bloodguiltiness of abortion.¹² A stirring promotional video for O.R. maintains that

if innocent blood is shed and unavenged the entire nation may perish. For example, Judah was destroyed by invading armies because they [sic] were sacrificing their children [II Kings 24:2-4].¹³

Precisely! God judged Judah because its citizens sacrificed their children. And child sacrifice is merely a symptom of the underlying disease of idolatry! So if this text proves anything at all, it proves — on O.R.'s own logic — that "rescues" are justified to prevent idolatry. In fact, Leviticus 20, a text to which some O.R. proponents appeal to support their erroneous view of bloodguiltiness¹⁴ teaches us that the same bloodguiltiness and consequent judgment that rested on those who sacrificed their

¹¹ Keil and Delitzsch concur with this interpretation. Keil, C.F., and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989 [1892]), Vol. III, The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther (C.F. Keil), p. 352.

¹² Terry, *Operation Rescue*, pp. 133-148.

¹³ Anonymous (narrator), "Operation Rescue" (promotional video).

¹⁴ Terry, *Operation Rescue*, p. 144.

children to Molech (verses 1-5) also rested on those who merely consulted spiritists and mediums (v. 6). God promised to cut off both child sacrificers and occultists. What's the common denominator? Idolatry. Hence, if Leviticus 20 justifies "rescues" to prevent murder, then it also justifies "rescues" to prevent idolatry.

But Leviticus 20 doesn't stop after it informs us that bloodguiltiness rests on those who murdered and committed idolatry. Were O.R. advocates to read the entire chapter, instead of selectively appealing to supposed proof-texts, they would see that the same bloodguiltiness that rests on murderers and idolaters also rests on those who practice incest, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality. To be consistent with their rhetoric, therefore, members of O.R. should be willing to stage "rescues" at *bedrooms, brothels, bathhouses, and barns!* Instead, O.R. advocates selectively appeal to the Biblical concept of bloodguiltiness only when that concept superficially appears to support their cause.

This proffered justification not only misunderstands the Biblical doctrine of bloodguiltiness, it also misunderstands the Biblical doctrine of repentance. Repentance does not necessitate the illegalities and physical coercion O.R. perpetrates. Defined properly, repentance means a change of mind — to turn from sin and to turn to God. With that definition in mind, O.R. advocates are at a loss to explain why one must violate the law in order to repent either for himself or on behalf of others.¹⁵ Legal protests and demonstrations, sidewalk counseling, intensive lobbying, and crisis pregnancy work — just to name a few legal means currently available to stem the tide of abortion — would equally be acts of repentance on the logic of this argument. Hence, this argument doesn't justify O.R.'s blatant illegalities. Neither does it justify the way O.R. physically coerces others in society to turn from sin and to turn to God (i.e., to repent). If repentance, Biblically defined, means to turn from sin and to turn to God — to change one's mind — then we must ask O.R. advocates if Scripture ever permits or requires Christians to coerce others physically to change their minds? The answer is all too obvious: the ways of Mohammed are not the ways of Christ!

If the O.R. advocate recoils and claims that he is not speaking about causing others to repent, but rather, is talking about repenting on behalf of others, then he meets with the following obstacles. First, as explained above, he is unable to explain why perpetrating illegality is necessary to repent on behalf of others. Second, while one must bring forth the fruits of repentance (Lk. 3:19), such fruit is the result of true repentance, not the means by which one repents. Third, to assert that O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics are acts of repentance is merely to beg the crucial question at issue. Since when is disobeying Scripture, albeit with pious justifications, an act of repentance?

¹⁵ O.R. rhetoric is ambiguous as to whether such repentance is repentance of others or on behalf of others. On the one hand, Terry has written, "[w]e are urging people to repent," thus suggesting the former interpretation. Elsewhere, such as in the O.R. promotional video, the repentance spoken of appears to suggest the latter interpretation. We will evaluate both interpretations.

D. Dramatic Witness

One variant of the repentance argument above goes as follows: O.R. is a dramatic witness to Christ and against the sin of abortion; this dramatic witness is both a call to repentance as well as an act of repentance.¹⁶ Those who resort to this argument fail to see its obvious flaws. First, this argument is susceptible to the criticisms levied against the repentance argument above. Second, this argument flies squarely in the face with what O.R. spokespersons themselves have adamantly maintained — that O.R. is not out to make a public statement but rather is out to save life.¹⁷ Third, if maximizing dramatic witness justifies O.R., then members of O.R. should kidnap mothers, bomb abortuaries, and kill abortionists.¹⁸ If drama is the goal, then maximize the drama!

After all, shouldn't those saving unborn human babies be able to out-dramatize animal rights extremists who bomb research laboratories, liberate animals, and send death threats to scientists. Once again, though, the rhetoric of "rescue" is inconsistent with the reality of "rescue." Indeed O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive methods may be dramatic. The only problem, though, is that the script for this drama is not the Bible!

E. The Covenant Model

Those familiar with the writings of Gary North and Raymond Sutton are aware of what has become known as the covenant model which consists of five elements: transcendence, hierarchy, ethics, oaths, and succession. Since, according to North, this is the model par excellence for analyzing covenants (both Christian and non-Christian), and since all of life is covenantal, we are told that we must analyze all of life in light of this model. And North's publishing house, Dominion Press, has been busy doing just that — printing book after book, newsletter after newsletter — superimposing this model on most of Scripture and on various social institutions and issues, including civil government and O.R.¹⁹ But one need not get bogged down in the apparent sophistication of this justification to see that it too is found wanting.

There are ample grounds to challenge the veracity of the model directly. But even if we assume the veracity of the model for the sake of argument, it utterly

¹⁶ Leithart, Peter, "Operation Rescue Revisited," *The Biblical Worldview*, November 1988, p. 11. Leithart attributes this argument to James B. Jordan.

¹⁷ See e.g., Foreman, debate with Hagopian.

¹⁸ This rationale was offered to prevent O.R. from "escalating to extremism and violence" since "[i]f a rescue is a witness to Christ, it becomes absurd to argue that it should be violent." Leithart, p. 11. Leithart's conclusion, however, is unfounded since Christ Himself did not cling to O.R.'s arbitrary distinction between violence and non-violence (as demonstrated in section I.A.1 above).

¹⁹ North, Gary, *When Justice is Aborted*, (Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1989); *Trespassing for Dear Life*, (Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1989); and "Are Operation Rescue's Critics Self-Serving?" *Biblical Economics Today*, (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics), December - January 1989, Vol X, No. 1, pp. 1-8.

fails to justify O.R. In fact, the model itself can be reduced to absurdity in the classical sense, in that it can be used both to condone and condemn O.R. simultaneously! How can this be? Were one to study this model carefully, he would note that North infuses into this model the view that state-permitted evil justifies disobedience to the state. But if we were simply to plug the competing view into the model (i.e., that only state-commanded evil justifies disobedience to the state), then this amazingly flexible model would now condemn O.R.

This *reductio ad absurdum* proves that the dispute between proponents and opponents of O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics doesn't boil down to the veracity of the covenant model. Nor does the dispute pit those who are true covenantal theologians against those who, in the vituperative words of North, are "pseudo covenantal theologians." Rather, the dispute is between whether state-permitted or state-commanded evil justifies disobedience to the state. In the end, then, the covenant model does little, if anything, to resolve this dispute. It simply gives some O.R. advocates additional jargon ("covenantalese") with which to obfuscate the debate.

II. Historical Arguments

O.R. rhetoric is replete with emotion-laden appeals to the heroics of Corrie Ten Boom, the abolitionists, and the American colonists. As Christians faithful to Scripture, though, we must not allow ourselves to be led on a leash by emotional appeal. Nor should we allow ourselves to be misled by inaccurate and highly selective appeals to history. Scripture and Scripture alone is our standard — for all that we believe and all that we do.

A. Corrie Ten Boom

Many O.R. advocates appeal to the heroics of Corrie Ten Boom to justify their illegal activities.²⁰ Such advocates claim that if Ten Boom was justified in hiding Jews from German soldiers then members of O.R. are justified in what they do to save the unborn. Careful scrutiny, however, reveals that the present case of O.R. is readily distinguishable from the case of Ten Boom for at least three reasons. First, the German extermination of Jews, Slavs, and Serbs was *state-mandated*. When German soldiers appeared at Ten Boom's door, they personally commanded her, with the full force of law, to sin, that is, to hand over any Jews that were present. The serious student of Scripture would note that this situation falls under the ambit of the Biblical criteria for disobedience discussed in the previous article, since Ten Boom's situation is directly analogous to that of Rahab. By contrast, no member of O.R. is being commanded to sin as the previous article discussed in detail. Second, Ten Boom lived in a country which was illegally and illegitimately occupied and controlled by the German Third Reich, a tyrannical, totalitarian dictatorship, whereas members of O.R. live in the United States, which

is governed by a participatory democracy. Because of these different governments, Ten Boom had no viable legal alternatives, whereas members of O.R. can avail themselves of numerous legal means of saving the unborn. Third, Ten Boom's disobedience was covert, while members of O.R. overtly disobey the state. Other distinctions exist, but these are more than sufficient to obviate the analogy to Ten Boom.

B. The Abolitionists

O.R. proponents appeal to American Abolitionists and argue that, just as Christians were justifiably involved in the "underground railroad" (i.e., violating the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793) by assisting fugitive slaves to freedom (or in working generally to abolish slavery), so Christians may justifiably attempt to save the life of the unborn by violating trespass laws.²¹ Admittedly, this argument strikes an emotional chord with most Americans since most Americans believe that Southern chattel slavery was wicked. But as emotionally powerful as this argument may be, it is mistaken when used to justify O.R.'s illegalities and physical coercion.

On the one hand, we could argue that the abolitionists were Biblically justified in violating the Fugitive Slave Act while members of O.R. are not. To begin with, the Fugitive Slave Act directly commanded those who encountered a fugitive slave to return him to his "owner." Thus, those who violated the Fugitive Slave Act directly disobeyed a law which forbade assisting a slave to freedom. Members of O.R., by contrast, are not commanded by force of law, to abort their children (thus they are not commanded to sin by commission); nor are they forbidden to save life (thus they are not commanded to sin by omission). Moreover, one could argue that those who violated the Fugitive Slave Act had no legal alternatives by which they could assist slaves to safety. As the previous article made clear, members of O.R. have numerous legal means by which they can save the life of the unborn today. Furthermore, unlike members of O.R., when a Christian violated the Fugitive Slave Act by assisting a slave to freedom, he did not physically coerce others in society, contrary to their will, to abide by his ethic.

On the other hand, one could argue that violating the Fugitive Slave Act was not Biblically justified, in which case O.R. advocates cannot justifiably appeal to such violations to justify their own brand of illegality. In particular, it is not entirely clear that the Abolitionists had exhausted their legal alternatives. In order to even make this argument, then, members of O.R. must first assume that, without the illegal acts of the Abolitionists, the American slave trade would have never ended. But is that really the case? Any O.R. apologist familiar with British history will no doubt have heard of William Wilberforce, the dedicated Christian who labored legally, peacefully, and non-coercively for over two decades in Parliament urging the abolition of slavery in the British empire. Through his efforts, slavery was finally abolished

²⁰ See, e.g., Terry, *Operation Rescue*, pp. 106, 110.

²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 102-106; Belz, Mark, *Suffer the Little children: Christians, Abortion, and Civil Disobedience*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), pp. 85-94, 165-169.

in 1839 without a single drop of blood being shed — which is more than anyone can say about the Abolitionist movement in America.²² Despite its good intentions, the American Abolitionist movement, in part, precipitated the Civil War wherein almost twice as many Americans died than in the First World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War combined. Contrary to skewed historical analogies and emotion-laden appeals to days gone by, American history is not our standard. Scripture is our standard. Wilberforce followed Scripture with glorious results. So should members of O.R.

C. The American Colonists

Just as O.R. proponents mistakenly appeal to Corrie Ten Boom and the abolitionists, so they also appeal to the American Colonists, and in particular, to the Declaration of Independence and the War of Independence. If the Declaration and ensuing War were Biblically justified, we are told, then what O.R. does is also Biblically justified.²³ Not so fast.

As concerns the Declaration of Independence, proponents of O.R. need to understand a few historical facts. The Colonies received their charter from the Crown. When the Crown violated the Colonists' rights pursuant to the Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Rights (1628) and the English Bill of Rights (1689), the Crown breached its covenant with the Colonists. The Colonists attempted to resolve their differences with the Crown peacefully. In July of 1775, the Colonists submitted the Olive Branch Petition to the Crown wherein they affirmed their loyalty to the Crown and sought to resolve their grievances peacefully. The Crown, unenamored by the Olive Branch Petition, encouraged Parliament to pass the Prohibitory Act in December of 1775, which in effect, declared the Colonies to be enemies of the Crown and removed the Colonies from the protection and authority of the Crown. Though the Declaration of Independence contained conciliatory phraseology, it also detailed exactly how the Crown had breached covenant with the Colonists.²⁴ Thus, the Declaration of Independence was not an act of illegal defiance, as O.R. advocates purport.

Just as O.R. advocates erroneously appeal to the Declaration of Independence, so they err when they appeal to the War of Independence to justify their disobedience. Even if, after the Prohibitory Act, the Crown could have claimed authority over the Colonists, by the time British troops invaded American soil, the Colonists had already established a lesser magistrate — a new

²² O.R. advocates who appeal to abolitionists would do well to read abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison who were not only interested in freeing slaves but were also interested in punishing slave-owners (erroneously arguing that shedding blood was necessary). Of course, abolitionists like John Brown were just more consistent with the rhetoric of the likes of Garrison.

²³ Terry, *Operation Rescue*, p. 195; "A Response," p.8.

²⁴ On this view, the prior breach of the Crown obviated the covenant between the Crown and the colonies. Modern contract law is somewhat analogous in that if party A substantially breaches a contract prior to the alleged breach of party B, the contract is generally voidable at the option of party B.

government. Thus, the Colonists abided by the Biblical doctrine of the lesser magistrate (which basically prohibits citizens from exercising force against a magistrate apart from being led by a lesser magistrate). The Colonists' use of force, therefore, was Biblically justified since such force was (1) exercised in self-defense after British troops invaded the Colonies, and (2) delegated to them by their lesser magistrate.

While members of O.R. seek recourse in patriotic rhetoric by appealing to the Declaration of Independence and the War of Independence, they bespeak a profound ignorance of both American history and Scripture.²⁵ Simply put, while the Declaration of Independence and ensuing War of Independence were Biblically justified, O.R. is not.

III. Consequential Arguments

A full-orbed Biblical ethic examines what Biblical principles have to say to us as ethical agents in light of our situation and in light of both the short and long-term consequences of a desired course of action. Accordingly, Scripture does not frown upon examining the consequences of a given course of conduct; rather, it requires that we do so. In the process, however, we must never focus exclusively on such consequences. O.R. proponents who appeal to consequentialist arguments, then, are not to be faulted for examining such consequences. They are to be faulted for the fallacious way in which they do so.

A. Saving Many Lives

Randall Terry, the former Executive Director of O.R., claims that O.R. has saved many lives:

We know that many babies' lives have been saved because women come up and tell us, 'I was going to have my child aborted and I've changed my mind because of you folks....' Beyond that, Planned Parenthood's own research shows that if women miss their abortion appointment for any reason, 20 percent will not reschedule. So we can rightly assume that if we do a rescue mission, one out of every five babies scheduled to die will end up living.²⁶

By claiming that one in five babies will be saved at each "rescue mission," Terry has jumped headlong to a conclusion which far outruns the "evidence" he offers in support of it. To see why this is the case, we must examine the two lines of "evidence" Terry offers in support of his conclusion: first, he generalizes from the

²⁵ Cf. the now familiar argument that the so called American Revolution was really a conservative counter-revolution, not a revolution. Thus the War of Independence is utterly distinct from the French Revolution (rightly so called). See, Peter F. Drucker, *The Future of Industrial Man*, (NY: John Day, 1942), pp. 219ff.

²⁶ Anonymous, "Randall Terry: I Couldn't Do Anything Else," *Action*, October 1988, p.3, quoting Terry.

anecdotal testimony of women; and second, he extrapolates from an alleged Planned Parenthood study. Neither of these lines of evidence stands up to the weight of scrutiny.

1. Anecdotal Testimony

Terry's anecdotal evidence warrants five objections. First, unless and until Terry or other O.R. proponents can prove that these women (however many of them there may be) are representative of all of the women who seek abortions where O.R. stages "rescue missions," he cannot leap to the conclusion that such is the case everywhere O.R. stages "rescue missions." By implying that what is true of these women is true of all women where O.R. stages "rescue missions," Terry has committed a hasty generalization and begged the question at issue.

Second, there is absolutely no statistical evidence to prove that some, many, or most of these women thereafter remained true to their espoused testimony (i.e., there is no proof that they did not thereafter abort their children). If that is true, then Terry cannot use the testimony of such women to bolster his claim that O.R. saves many lives.

Third, even granting that several hundred lives have been saved through O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics,²⁷ *there is no proof that these lives were saved due to O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics as opposed to the legal and non-coercive pro-life activities (e.g., sidewalk counseling) which occur concurrently with O.R.'s illegal and coercive tactics.* Though O.R. proponents boast that they have such evidence, no such evidence has been forthcoming.²⁸ Until O.R. advocates can demonstrate that it is specifically the illegal and coercive methods which saved those lives, they have not met the burden of proof that is incumbent upon them.

Fourth, even if the O.R. proponent can prove that several hundred lives have been saved specifically because of O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive methods, the proponent cannot prove that O.R. saves more lives more efficiently than any other legal means currently available to pro-lifers. Crisis pregnancy centers and sidewalk counselors, for example, have saved far more than a few hundred lives in the past three years — without perpetrating illegality and physical coercion, without galvanizing pro-abortion opposition, and without squandering limited resources (on fines, attorneys' fees, and court costs). If O.R. advocates want to justify their cause consequentially, then they better have the data to back it up. Otherwise, their claims are nothing more than self-flattering puffery.

Fifth, while Christians should do all that is in their power to save life, they must save life in the way that God has commanded them to do so in Scripture. Even O.R. proponents freely admit that the command to save life is not absolute (i.e., Scripture does not condone kidnapping mothers, bombing abortuaries, or killing

abortionists). The fundamental question, then, is whether Scripture condones O.R.'s illegal and physically coercive tactics. As articulated above, nowhere does Scripture condone such tactics, since members of O.R. are not commanded to sin and are not without legal means of saving life. Additionally, Scripture does not condone the use of private force or physical coercion to conform society to a Christian ethical standard. The end of saving life simply does not justify any and all means of saving life. Nor does the end of saving life justify the illegality and physical coercion O.R. perpetrates.

2. Planned Parenthood Study

Terry also claims that, since Planned Parenthood's own information reveals that one in five women who turn away from a clinic for any reason will never return, O.R. saves one in five children at every "rescue mission." Four criticisms are warranted at this juncture.

First, there is serious reason to doubt the veracity of Terry's data. Although Planned Parenthood itself does not gather the statistical data to which Terry refers, Planned Parenthood relies upon the Allen Guttmacher Institute. Were one to scrutinize information made available by the Allen Guttmacher Institute, the study which most closely resembles that to which Terry refers can be found in an article in the January 1987 issue of *Family Planning Perspective*. This article surveyed "abortion providers" about "harassment" at "clinics." Yet this article does not contain the information Terry cites. And it is doubtful whether such statistical information exists at all, since the statistic Terry cites would require abortuaries to follow-up on those who do not have their abortions. Yet clinics do not statistically track women who do not ultimately become "patients." Thus, Terry needs to clarify the source of his information as well as the methodology the study employs. Until he does so, there is no reason to trust the veracity of the study cited.

Second, even assuming the study were done, one should note that it most likely predates the onset of O.R. and as such, does not statistically account for O.R. as a variable. Why is this significant? *If the study were conducted before O.R., Terry cannot assume that what was the case prior to O.R. is necessarily the case after the appearance of O.R.* This is especially true in light of the backlash effect O.R. has had. At most abortuaries where "rescue missions" are staged, women are now often met in the parking lot by militant pro-death advocates (often volunteers) who shield the expectant mother from pro-life sidewalk counselors pleading for the child's life. Thus, the abortionist now begins his "sales job" to reinforce the woman's decision to kill her baby in the parking lot rather than (as was the case before O.R.) waiting until the troubled woman entered his waiting room. Undoubtedly, this situation dramatically reduces the number of women who turn away in the first place.

Furthermore, if the study predates O.R. and does not account for it as a variable, Terry conceptually confuses those who *voluntarily* turn away after being persuaded to do so (the situation before O.R.) with those who are *involuntarily and physically coerced* to turn away (the situation with O.R.). If nothing else, common sense

²⁷ As of May, 1989, Foreman claimed that O.R. had 250 "confirmed" saves; Foreman, debate with Hagopian.

²⁸ Although Foreman said that he could produce such evidence during the debate, he never did so.

dictates that those who voluntarily turn away are less likely to change their minds thereafter (and thus will be more likely not to abort their children), than those who are involuntarily coerced to turn away. Consequently, because of the physical coercion O.R. employs, it is safe to suggest that in the majority of cases, all O.R. does is delay the death of the child.

Third, even granting Terry's assumptions, Terry is simply wrong when he uses the alleged study to claim that one in five children are saved, since the study, if it proves anything at all, at best only proves that *of those women who turn away*, one in five do not thereafter abort. Put simply, Terry leaps to a conclusion which far outruns the "evidence" he marshals.

Fourth, once again, even if one in five who turn away do not thereafter abort, the ends do not justify the means. God does not call Christians as private citizens to coerce others in society physically to conform to a Christian ethical standard. We must learn to do God's work in God's way.

3. Some Concluding Observations

Having examined the anecdotal testimony and the "Planned Parenthood" evidence, we can see that Terry has not met the empirical burden that is incumbent upon him. His conclusion simply outruns the paucity of "evidence" he cites.

Make no mistake about it; life is precious. And while a life saved is priceless, still the point remains that Scripture does not endorse any and all means of saving life (e.g., kidnapping, bombing, killing). God does not bless disobedience. Ultimately, then, the lives which have been saved, have been saved *not because of O.R.'s illegality and physical coercion, but by the providence and sovereignty of God in spite of such illegality and physical coercion.*

While O.R. proponents hypothesize that more lives will be saved both in the short-term and in the long-term by O.R.'s tactics, it is equally possible that the illegality and coercion perpetrated by O.R. will continue to strengthen and mobilize pro-abortionists and lead to even more deaths in the long term. While members of O.R. deplete limited resources flying from state to state, posting bail, paying legal fees, and defending against trespass charges, important political battles are being fought in many states — battles which vie for the same limited resources and legal talent — battles which will determine the fate of millions upon millions of unborn children!

While members of O.R. myopically focus on the short term, clever pro-death leaders are now plotting and strategizing how to legalize and market RU-486 (the abortion pill). No wonder the pro-death camp doesn't protest against O.R. more vehemently. They probably see O.R. as a decoy — drawing limited resources and manpower away from where the true battles are being fought. At the same time, they see O.R. as a valuable bogeyman to stimulate contributions to and increase the membership rolls of pro-death organizations.

O.R.'s rhetoric to the contrary, isn't it possible or even probable that by attempting to rescue a few hundred lives today, O.R. may be sacrificing thousands or

even millions of lives tomorrow? Yes, we want to save all of the lives today and tomorrow! But that is not feasible today. So when the dust of O.R. rhetoric settles, the real issue is how we can best use the limited resources God has given us today to save as many lives as possible. O.R.'s wishful thinking doesn't save babies. In fact, it may very well kill them!

B. Producing Political and Legal Change

Terry writes that "rescue missions" heighten social tension over the issue of abortion, and hence, are the "only way we can produce the social tension necessary to bring about political change."²⁹ Elsewhere he and others (e.g., Jerry Falwell) are fond of saying that "politicians never see the light until they feel the heat."³⁰ In full, Terry articulates this argument as follows:

Even a brief overview of American history will prove that political change usually results from social tension. The birth of America, the end of slavery, women's voting rights, the labor movement, the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment (which outlawed alcohol), the civil rights movement, and the feminist movement all testify to one truth: Whether for good or bad, political change comes after a group of Americans bring [sic] enough tension in the nation and pressure on the politicians that the laws are changed.³¹

Even assuming for argument's sake that Terry's historical generalization is correct (i.e., that social tension usually ushers in legal and political change), Terry's argument reduces to nothing more than the end justifies the means type of logic. To assert that social tension has brought about change does not mean that Christians are Biblically justified in using social tension as a vehicle for change. And worse yet, Terry simply assumes that creating this kind of social tension is justifiable because in some instances it has apparently ushered in political and legal change. Sadly, the Bible does not condone illegally and coercively-created social tension. Thus, even granting Terry the truth of his historical generalization, this argument utterly fails to provide Biblical justification for O.R.'s illegality and physical coercion.

Having seen that Terry's argument fails even if we grant him the truth of his conclusion for argument's sake, we can also see that Terry's historical generalization itself is suspect. In other words, it simply is not true that social tension usually brings about such change. To begin with, Terry suppresses (knowingly) or omits (unknowingly) historical evidence to the contrary by failing to consider numerous historical examples of tension-creating movements which failed to bring about political or legal change in America (e.g., the Ku Klux Klan, the American Communist Party, the anti-nuclear/anti-war

²⁹ Terry, *Operation Rescue*, p.27.

³⁰ Falwell, Jerry, "Operation Rescue" (promotional video).

³¹ Terry, *Operation Rescue*, p. 195.

protests, the Animal Liberation Front — the list could outrun Terry's by far). Suffice it to say, it simply is not true that social tension usually ushers in political and legal change.

Furthermore, Terry argues by means of false analogies when he contends that O.R. — like the civil rights movement, etc. — will create the tension necessary to bring about change. O.R. is easily distinguishable from the movements Terry cites in at least four ways.

First, the movements Terry cites succeeded only when the values of the protestors resonated in the larger society and were brought to bear on those who didn't share those values. Unfortunately, because most of the despots of American public opinion are at war with God, pro-life values do not resonate in American society today.³²

Second, Terry fallaciously appeals to violent movements (e.g., the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the labor movement) while he elsewhere adamantly maintains that O.R. employs non-violent resistance a la Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. This puts Terry in a conspicuous position: he must either own up to the fact that violence is sometimes necessary to bring about change (in which case he is forced to abdicate his arbitrary commitment to allegedly non-violent action), or he must desist from analogizing to historical examples of violent movements to make out his consequentialist case for O.R. (in which case his argument loses much of its punch).

Third, Terry cites some movements whose members directly disobeyed the laws which were considered to be unjust (e.g., the civil rights movement), while O.R. engages in indirect disobedience (since there is no feasible way to challenge *Roe v. Wade* directly).

Fourth, Terry analogizes to some movements which rarely, if ever, disobeyed human law at all (e.g., the "feminist" movement). Once again, Terry finds himself in a logical bind: he must either admit that illegality is not always necessary to usher in change (in which case Terry would seriously undermine his case for O.R.'s illegal tactics), or admit that the analogy is false since O.R. perpetrates illegality while the feminist movement did not (in which case Terry is reasoning irrationally).

IV. Legal Arguments

While some O.R. proponents readily admit that O.R. does indeed violate human law,³³ still other proponents claim that O.R. does not violate human law at all and hence is Biblically justified. There are five variants of this argument, all of which are susceptible to a host of criticisms.

³² Leithart, Peter, "Operation Rescue: Pro and Con," *The Biblical Worldview*, September 1988, p. 8.

³³ Belz, *Suffer*, p. 36: "Of course, when people have done these things [blocked abortion clinic doors, forbade entry, etc.] they have broken laws." Also, on page 111, Belz admits that the "protestors are defying the law; there is no doubt about that."

A. Trespass is Civil and Not Criminal

At least one O.R. advocate has argued that O.R. members do not disobey the civil magistrate by trespassing, since they are charged with civil and not criminal trespass. Therefore, according to this advocate, members of O.R. need not prove that their actions accord with the Biblical criteria for disobedience (i.e., commandment to sin and exhaustion of legal alternatives):

[The] long discussion of the Christian's obligation to obey the civil magistrate is simply not pertinent to the issue. Operation Rescue remains at most a breach of laws against trespass. Charges for this breach must be brought by the private citizen who owns the property, not by the civil magistrate. So those engaged in so-called "trespass" on the abortionists' property in an attempt to stop a murder in progress are not "disobeying" the direct order of a civil magistrate, they are "disobeying" private persons who are using their property in the commission of a murder.³⁴

Sadly, this advocate errs on two scores. First, members of O.R. are not just sued for civil trespass. While they are sometimes sued for civil trespass (a tort for which private damages are the remedy), they are more often arrested for, charged with, and tried for criminal trespass (a crime for which criminal sanctions are imposed). In most jurisdictions, trespass may be either a tort or a crime or it may be *both a tort and a crime*. Thus, this argument is built upon a mistaken premise.

Second, even if members of O.R. were only sued in tort for civil trespass, this argument does not account for the fact that tort law is created by legislatures and courts, both of which fall directly under the rubric of "civil magistrate" as that term is Biblically defined. Since civil trespass is tort law, since tort law is legislatively and judicially created, and since legislatures and courts are civil magistrates, civil trespass is regulated by the Biblical criteria for disobedience. The Biblical criteria for disobedience, properly understood, apply to all law — whether it be criminal or civil law, whether it be statutory or case law, whether it be created by the executive, legislative, or judicial branch, and whether it be enforced at the federal, state, or local levels.

Because Sanders builds his argument upon a mistaken factual premise, and because he seriously misunderstands the nature of tort law, this proffered rationale is without merit.

B. Acquittal

Some proponents argue that since some members of O.R. have been acquitted of criminal trespass charges, this means that members of O.R. have not violated Scripture, in which case what they did was

³⁴ Sanders, Franklin, "Operation Rescue: Reevaluating Mr. Gunn's Ethical Evaluation," *Herald of the Covenant*, February 15, 1989, Vol. 13, No. 1, p.1.

Biblically justified. This justification is weak for two reasons.

First, even O.R. proponents readily admit that acquittals are rare;³⁵ most of the time, members of O.R. who go to trial are convicted. Thus, the proponent who argues in this way is attempting to establish a general principle by arguing from exceptional circumstances (thus committing the fallacy of accident). Put simply, the acquittal of a few does not justify the illegalities of all.

Second, even if every O.R. member were acquitted,³⁶ this argument would still be unsound because it fails to grasp an important Biblical distinction between law and morality. While an activity may not be criminal (in terms of human law), it may still be immoral or sinful (in terms of divine law). This is just another way of saying that *not all crimes are sins*. Take the very evil of abortion itself as an example. Just because abortion is not criminal (in terms of human law) does not mean that Christians can abort their children and claim that abortion is therefore Biblical! Likewise, the O.R. advocate errs when he suggests that acquittal in terms of human law exonerates O.R. members in terms of divine law.

C. Private Necessity and Self-Defense

Many O.R. proponents appeal to the legal defenses of private necessity and defense of others to justify their conduct.³⁷ In law, affirmative defenses are arguments defendants raise at trial to justify otherwise criminal or tortious conduct. Take, for example, the doctrine of defense of others, which two legal commentators describe as follows:

One is justified in using reasonable force in defense of another person, even a stranger, when he reasonably believes that the other is in immediate danger of unlawful bodily harm from his adversary and that the use of such force is necessary to avoid the danger. Deadly force is reasonable force only when the attack of the adversary upon the other person reasonably appears to the defender to be a deadly attack.³⁸

Those who try to justify O.R. by appealing to this doctrine or the related doctrine of private necessity encounter at least two serious difficulties.

First, our law does not currently recognize the unborn child as a person for purposes of forbidding abortion. To retort that our law ought to do so is to equivocate between the *normative* (what ought to be the case pursuant to divine law) and the *descriptive* (what is

currently the case pursuant to human law). This defense, by its very nature, is rooted in the descriptive. Should human law one day recognize the unborn child as a person worthy of protection from abortion (for which many pray and labor), then this defense would be viable. At present, however, it does not serve to legally justify O.R.'s conduct.

Second, if this argument proves anything, it proves that O.R. advocates are inconsistent with their own rhetoric. All pro-lifers readily admit that abortion is just another name for murder. According to the doctrine of defense of others, the doctrine to which the O.R. proponent appeals, one who defends another against a deadly attack is entitled to respond in kind by using deadly force, provided such force is necessary to defend the other. Thus, if this doctrine justifies trespass to prevent murder, then it also — on the proponent's own logic — would justify killing an abortionist to prevent murder. This, of course, is not to suggest that members of O.R. would be acquitted at trial if they killed an abortionist and pleaded this defense. It is only to suggest that members of O.R. are inconsistent with their own rhetoric. Since members of O.R. reasonably perceive a deadly threat, and since they believe that the unborn child is human, and since such force is reasonably necessary to save "that" unborn baby about to enter the abortuary,³⁹ then the very standard to which they appeal to justify trespassing on the abortionist's private property would also — on their own logic — justify killing abortionists! The rhetoric of rescue simply does not accord with the reality of rescue. Paraphrasing the words of Terry: if members of O.R. really believe abortion is murder, then why don't they act like it is murder?⁴⁰

D. Test Case

Some O.R. proponents defend their actions by claiming that O.R. is attempting to establish a test case: an accepted and constitutional way to challenge an unjust law or an inconsistency in the law (e.g., laws which permit abortion and simultaneously forbid feticide). This test case rationale, however, is suspect for at least three reasons.

First, while history provides many examples of those who chose to violate the law in order to challenge it, we must remember that there may be ways to challenge an unjust law or an inconsistency in the law without violating it. The Christian must always seek to work within the bounds of the law before he seeks to violate the law — no matter how rich the humanistic/secular tradition to the contrary may be!

Second, the test case rationale is outcome-dependent. If the challenged law is upheld, the one who violated it finds no justification for his actions. If, by contrast, a court were to strike down the challenged law

³⁵ Belz, *Suffer*, p. 80.

³⁶ On those rare occasions when O.R. members are acquitted, they are not necessarily acquitted of all charges levied against them. Complete acquittal is very rare. Pressman, Steven, "Cyrus Zal, Missionary-at-Law," *California Lawyer*, March 1990, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 17-18, 104, 106.

³⁷ Belz, *Suffer*, p. 110. See also Pressman, p. 106

³⁸ LaFave, Wayne R., and Austin W. Scott, Jr., *Criminal Law*, (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 2d. edition, 1986), §5.8, p. 463.

³⁹ Some O.R. proponents claim that such force is unnecessary since O.R. saves lives apart from using such force. For an evaluation of this claim, see section II, A, 1, d of the previous article at pp. 33-34. For an evaluation of the "that" baby argument, see section II, B of the previous article at pp. 38-39.

⁴⁰ Terry, *Operation Rescue*, p. 22.

so as to exonerate the particular appellants before it,⁴¹ those members who have already been tried and convicted would not necessarily be exonerated, since the reversal would not necessarily be retroactive. Also, we must remember that even if O.R. members were adjudicated to be innocent of all criminal charges (in terms of human law), they would not necessarily be able to argue that what they did was therefore justified (in terms of divine law). Why? Because *not all sins are crimes*. Prostitution, for example, may be legal in the state of Nevada, but no Christian true to Scripture would claim that prostitution is therefore Biblical. The fact is that legal justification does not necessarily entail Biblical justification.

Third, this rationale does not justify O.R.'s en masse tactics since a single individual can violate a law and thereby may gain standing to establish a test case.

E. Unjust Ruler/Unjust Law

Some O.R. proponents maintain that an unjust ruler who promulgates a law which permits evil has abdicated his rule; hence, neither the evil ruler nor his evil law need be obeyed, since he would no longer be the ruler and since his "law" would no longer be the law. Nowhere in Scripture will one find any such notion. Those who believe that an unjust ruler is not a ruler (or that an unjust law is not a law) are operating pursuant to Thomistic categories rather than those of Scripture.

In essence, this rationale reduces to the view that state-permitted evil justifies disobedience to the state. For a detailed refutation of this view and a presentation of the competing view (i.e. that only state-commanded evil justifies disobedience), see the previous article.⁴² At this juncture, we will only note that O.R. proponents who claim that an unjust law is not a law and, at the same time, appeal to the affirmative defenses of private necessity and defense of others embrace logically inconsistent propositions. Affirmative defenses, by definition, presuppose the validity of the underlying legal structure. The defendant who pleads defense of others basically says, "I broke a valid law, but I am justified in so doing and should therefore not be found guilty." The proponent can't have it both ways: to be consistent, he must either cling to his unjust law theory and abdicate his affirmative defense theories (in which

⁴¹ Of course, this argument assumes that members of O.R. will gain standing to bring a lawsuit on behalf of the unborn, and that they will succeed on appeal. Even assuming that members of O.R. could gain standing to levy a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*, the thrust of this rationale would lead the proponent and the court down the infamous slippery slope. If the court were to grant standing and reverse earlier convictions on the rationale that the unborn child is a person for purposes of protection under the law, then the court would also have to accept the conclusion that killing an abortionist would also be justified. Don't expect to find the court at the bottom of this slope. Since O.R. would not likely be able to challenge *Roe v. Wade* directly, O.R. appears, at best, to be able to gain standing on an obscure issue of civil rights — which is a far cry from saving the unborn.

⁴² See section I, pp. 914, 33.

case he must surmount the refutation of the unjust law theory articulated in the previous article), or he must abdicate his unjust law theory and cling to the affirmative defense theories (in which case he must surmount the refutations of these affirmative defense theories articulated in section IV.C above).

Conclusion

No matter what kind of subsidiary arguments O.R. apologists wish to proffer to justify their actions — be they theological, historical, consequential, or legal — they all, in one way or another, depend for their strength upon the mainstay argument in O.R.'s arsenal: O.R. attempts to save life. Saving life, after all, is the highest road anyone can trod. In fact, there is no better way to justify O.R.'s illegality and physical coercion. That's why one advocate passionately pleads:

We ask our fellow Christians to consider in their heart a question which has tormented us, night and day....How many must die before our voices are heard? How many must be tormented, dislocated...or murdered? How long must the world's resources be raped in the service of legalized murder?

And still another advocate, when questioned by an interviewer on *Nightline*, continues in the same vein:

Interviewer: Did you break a law?

[Advocate]: Yes....

Interviewer: How in the world do you expect a jury to find you innocent?

[Advocate]: Well, we hope to show in this trial that the reason I broke the law was more important than the reason the law was made.

Interviewer: And the reason you broke the law?

[Advocate]: The reason I broke the law was to save lives.

Some rather stirring words to be sure. But who uttered them? Not Randall Terry. Not Joseph Foreman. And not any other O.R. advocate. The passionate words above, while echoing the rhetoric of O.R., were uttered by Father Berrigan of the Catonsville Nine who protested the Vietnam War and James Walker, who distributed sterilized needles to drug addicts to prevent the spread of AIDS!⁴³

Coincidence? Not really, since no better justification exists for violating the law. But the rhetoric of O.R. is more steeped in Scripture than the rhetoric of Berrigan and Parker, right? After all, Berrigan and Parker were not out to save lives in the way that O.R. is out to save lives, right? And they didn't self-sacrificially

⁴³ The Berrigan quote was uttered on October 12, 1968 and is taken from Cohen, Carl, *Civil Disobedience: Conscience, Tactics, & The Law*, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971). The Parker interview is taken from "John Parker Case: Clean Needles to Prevent AIDS," *Nightline* — Air date: January 5, 1990, Show 2250

intervene to save lives as does O.R., right? And the blood of soldiers and addicts doesn't cry out from the ground like the blood of babies, right? And their disobedience certainly isn't the same type of dramatic witness and doesn't accord with the covenantal model, right? And what they did isn't anything like what Corrie Ten Boom, the Abolitionists, or the American Colonists did, right? And they didn't save as many lives as O.R. and didn't create as much social tension as O.R., right? And they certainly didn't violate the law since they only committed torts, could be acquitted, could appeal to the doctrines of private necessity and defense of others, sought to establish a test case, and simply ignored an unjust law, right?

Perhaps. But then again, perhaps not. Perhaps O.R. protestors, the Vietnam War opponents, and needle distributors really share more in common than anyone realizes. What bands them together is the distance between their rhetoric and reality. Their passionate but misleading rhetoric, in fact, only serves to demonstrate that they have a zeal — a zeal which is not in accord with knowledge. Indeed, one O.R. advocate put it so well when he said that God "is not pleased by our good intentions, as noble as they may seem; He is pleased by our obedience."⁴⁴ Isn't it time members of O.R. really learned to obey God rather than man? Δ

⁴⁴ Terry, *Operation Rescue*, p. 36.

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Apologetics and the Heart

A moral problem, the refusal to glorify God as God, is the cause of an intellectual problem. It is not the other way around.

Douglas Wilson

I must perhaps begin by explaining that I do understand that an (abusive) *ad hominem* argument is a logical fallacy. There is no reason to think we have refuted someone's arguments simply because we have vigorously attacked their person. There is also another fallacy, closely related to the *ad hominem*, dubbed "Bulverism" by C.S. Lewis.¹ He pointed out the modern tendency to dismiss an argument on no stronger grounds than the fact that you had explained *how* your opponent came to believe it.

But it does not follow from this that there is no connection between lifestyle and truth. It is inadequate to argue that the atheism of Jones cannot be true because he kicks his dog. If he offers arguments, then the arguments should be addressed. A thorough apologetic method will address arguments, while at the same time understanding and taking into account their source.

As Christians, our intellectual object is to think God's thoughts after Him. Our aim must not be a false humanistic "originality," but rather, in one sense, submission to *the way things are*. This is because we believe that the world is the way it is because of the Creator and Sustainer of all things. But if truth is to be found through submission to God's truth, then does it not become a matter of concern if someone claims to have found truth, but is living in open defiance of God's law?

For example, Karl Marx engaged in a prolonged, shrill, and bitter argument with reality.² The poet, Shelly, was a "lifelong absconder and cheat."³ The existentialist, philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, was a notorious exploiter of women. Most notably was his mistress, Simone de Beauvoir. "In all essentials, Sartre treated her no better than Rousseau

did his Therese; worse, because he was notoriously unfaithful. In the annals of literature, there are few worse cases of a man exploiting a woman. This was all the more extraordinary because de Beauvoir was a lifelong feminist."⁴ It would not be at all difficult to fill a volume with names of men and women who shook their fists at heaven with less than altruistic motives.⁵

Now, it is quite true that the ethical standards of a man do not have a direct bearing on his opinion that $2 + 2 = 4$, or that the sun rises in the east. But suppose the subject of debate is existence of a *Judge*? The debate is whether there is One who will weigh and evaluate the thoughts and deeds of the sons of men, and cast those who hate Him into the outer darkness. Is the lifestyle of the participants really irrelevant? In other words, are the *accused* qualified to give judgments about the existence of the Judge?

The heart of the problem is the heart. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who suppress the truth in unrighteousness*, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools..." (Rom. 1:18-22).⁶

A moral problem (refusal to glorify God as God, and refusal to thank God) is the *cause* of an intellectual problem. It is not the other way around. Our ethical condition cannot be preserved and protected through the intellect. The two are connected, but not in the way Christians have frequently assumed. We are to protect our intellect through our ethical standing before God.⁷ The reason unbelievers do not believe has nothing to do with a lack of arguments. Rather, their lack of desire to hear the arguments for the truth of Christianity is the result of unbelief.

We sometimes approach evangelistic apologetics as though unregenerate men did not love their sin. We speak and act as though an intellectual defense of the faith will somehow impart to the rebellious a desire for holiness. It does not. We argue with them, assuming that they would want to submit to this truth, if only they knew it to be truth. But they *do* know it is true, and they *don't* want to submit to it (Rom. 1:28). At this point, many evangelists and apologists may be tempted to walk away in despair. Like Ezekiel, they are uncertain about the efficacy of prophesying to bones. But more on this shortly.

⁴*Ibid.* p. 235.

⁵ It would also not be hard to fill *another* volume with names of professing Christians whose lives were less than admirable. But the problem of hypocrisy is an entirely different one. The immoral atheist is unwilling to live with the logical tension between his premises and his lifestyle; he wants them to be consistent. The immoral "Christian" is willing to be inconsistent.

⁶ Gordon Clark sees this same process in II Timothy 3:8. The false teachers had "deteriorated intellectually." Clark, G., *The Pastoral Epistles* (Jefferson: The Trinity Foundation, 1983), p. 173.

⁷ Some have sought to protect themselves from sin by looking at the final consequences of it. This is quite Biblical (Prov. 5:1-23), but there are other places to look besides the divorce courts and skid row. I have encouraged myself to godly and moral behavior by considering the intellectual folly I have seen at a nearby state university. There, the wreckage is intellectual.

¹ Lewis, C.S., *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 271-277.

² I believe Marx was a good living example of the two fundamental tenets of atheists: (1) There is no God, and (2) I hate Him.

³ Johnson, P., *Intellectuals* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p.46.

The intellect is insufficient protection for morality. But obedience does protect the intellect. *Credo ut intelligam*. If I refuse to believe, then ultimately I am refusing to understand. The testimony of Scripture is that ethical rebellion produces intellectual darkness. It is false to say that we can protect our lives with arguments; rather, we protect the integrity and reliability of argument by how we live our lives. The disobedient will eventually search out arguments by how we live our lives. In short, the disobedient will eventually search out arguments that will justify them in their disobedience. Because no such argument can be both true and valid, it will not be long before the rebellious begin to attack *argument* itself, i.e. "false Aristotelian categories, etc."⁸ Christianity is initially rejected in the name of reason, but apart from Christianity, reason collapses into an irrationalism of despair.

This is why a revival of godliness will always produce a revival of learning. It does not flow the other way; learning does not produce godliness. Knowledge puffs up. But love builds up, and one of the things it builds up is knowledge. This is also why an abandonment of godliness will eventually destroy learning. The process begins with folly disguised as scholarship and learning, i.e. the folly is festooned with footnotes.⁹ Eventually, when the bankruptcy becomes evident to all, then scholarship itself will be denounced.

Manner

Given this relationship between godliness and the intellect, the manner we display in our presentation of truth is important. In II Timothy 2:23-26, we are instructed to correct "in humility" those who oppose us, with the hope that God will grant repentance. The sovereign God uses *means* in the salvation of the rebellious, and one of the means is humble instruction from the godly. In particular, the apologist should cultivate two things in his demeanor as he talks with those who are in the Romans 1 mold. His demeanor should address the two areas identified in that passage as being the heart of the problem, i.e. the refusal to honor God *as God*, and the refusal to give thanks.

First, the apologist must be filled with an understanding of the majesty of God. If the rebellion of the one before you comes from a willful blindness of this majesty, then how can he be helped by an evangelist with the same problem? The triviality, triteness, and silliness which characterizes much of evangelical Christianity will not be successfully covered with the whitewash of some *argument*. Why is it that our modern declarations of evangelical truth lack the triumphant and majestic tone of the prophet Isaiah? "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is not searching of His understanding" (Is. 40:28). It is this writer's conviction that this sense of God's grandeur has been lost from the church at large because of the widespread rejection of the Biblical understanding of who God really is. Nothing empties a man of himself quite so much as the realization

⁸ Of course, the attack on argument is itself an argument.

⁹ The two best examples of folly defended by scholars are Marxism and evolutionism. Here we have two patently ridiculous theologies, and the priests of these religions are teaching at our best universities. As often noted, the last bastion of Marxism in the world appears to be American universities.

that God is God in everything, and cannot be replaced by a creature in anything, including the creature's salvation.¹⁰

Second, the apologist must be filled with thanksgiving and gratitude. Again, because the rebellion of man is rooted in a refusal to thank God, the more he is exposed to *thankful* Christians, the better. The mystery of thanklessness begins early. Who among us has not seen some puffy-faced, rebellious child refusing to thank some adult for something or other? There is something in the sinful nature of man which does not want *indebtedness*, and saying "thank you" to God is an intolerable indication of indebtedness.¹¹

If these two attitudes are evident, then they will be used by God to convict the hearer of his basic problem. This is not to say that words are unimportant. The words of truth are the nail which must be driven into the heart. The submission of the evangelist to God as God, along with his gratitude, is the hammer. The One who wields the hammer is the Holy Spirit; He is the One who gives repentance.

Content

It is crucial to remember that evangelism, and consequently faithful apologetics as well, may be divided into two aspects: law and gospel (not to be confused with the dispensational or Lutheran distinction). Much modern evangelism does not bear fruit simply because both these elements are neglected, or they are twisted.

When law comes to an unregenerate man, he always does two things; he acknowledges it as true, and he hates it as true. It is not our position to seek to persuade him that he has an obligation to honor God as God, and to thank Him. *He already knows this*. It is a truth which he is suppressing in unrighteous. Consequently, the individual hears the law everywhere; in the Creation, in his own wicked heart, and from the evangelist.¹²

In other words, we should *not* seek to get the person to whom we are witnessing to verbally agree to the Biblical view of man. He is the way God has made him whether he agrees to it or not. So we must assume the Biblical view of man. We speak on this basis. As we speak, we know that the one who hears knows, at some level, that we speak the truth. This is true however much he has suppressed it. It is on the basis of this that God judges men who reject the gospel. They rejected it, knowing it to be true.

The content of our communication should revolve around two things; again, these are the two points at which men are rebelling. First, we must not be hesitant to speak of God *as God*. He is the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things. We must not speak of a Higher Power, however man conceives him or her to be. We are Christians who serve the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, not devotees of some Fuzzy Benevolence in the Sky. But as we speak of God, it

¹⁰ Biblical theology, properly understood, is a joyous, victorious, militant, conquering faith. It has this effect because of the proper understanding of *who God is*, and what *He has done* in the cross and resurrection of Christ.

¹¹ Have you noticed how our ungrateful culture doesn't know what to do with Thanksgiving? They want it to be Turkey Day.

¹² The doctrine of man's total inability does not refer to his inability to recognize the law of God. It refers to his inability to recognize and love it *at the same time*. He can love it, provided he misunderstands it (zeal without knowledge), or he can understand it while hating it (the sinful mind is hostile to God). But he cannot, without the intervention of the Spirit, both understand the law and love it.

must be clear that these words have very clear definitions, and that the definitions are not man-flatterers. God knows everything; He oversees everything; He brought everything into existence; He is holy, righteous and good; He is a severe Judge and a loving Savior; He is present everywhere; the whole earth is full of His glory; from Him, through Him, and to Him are all things. The twenty-four elders need to spend more time on their faces (Rev. 4:10-11).

Second, we must emphasize, overtly, the obligations of all creatures to render thanks to God. Everything that has breath is to praise the Lord (Ps. 150:6). Too often, Christians assert that God is the Creator, without going on to apply the obvious ethical response — thanksgiving. Suppose, for a moment, that we gave all the engineers and scientists in the world a titanic budget and the following task: to come up with a functional human hand, with all the options. A hand that would grow callouses when used, repair itself when cut, move with the dexterity of an accomplished pianist, and so forth. They could not do it with all the resources in the world. And yet, here I sit at my word processor, typing away with *two* of these things. And they were given to me. *Free*.

We, as creatures, have an obligation to thank God. Those in rebellion who do not thank God need to be reminded of the obligation. God is God; He is not like we are. God is good; He daily gives to each of us, Christians and non-Christians alike, far more gifts than we can even keep track of (Matt. 5:45).

As we testify to these things, the testimony has the force of law. It does what the law is supposed to do, which is to increase and reveal transgression (Rom. 3:20; 5:20). It condemns. It is no wonder these truths are suppressed. For non-Christians, there is no good news at all yet.

After the law comes the gospel. The message of the cross and resurrection reconciles sinners to God, and part of this reconciliation is the dispelling of intellectual darkness. The futility of thinking is gone because the hardness of heart which produced it is gone. Hard hearts makes for soft heads. Because the Spirit of God has taken away the heart of stone, the way the man thinks is altered forever. Everything is not done at once, but the process has begun. Because the rebellion is over, the process of renewing the *mind* is established (Rom. 12:1-2).

Cold Intellectualism?

I Peter 3:15 instructs, “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.” Good reasons, good defenses come from *good hearts*. If I am only prepared intellectually, I am not prepared *intellectually*,¹³ The representative of Christianity must have “sanctified” the Lord in his heart, he must have a good conscience, and then he must give his defense, and his reason for hope. The one to whom he speaks has not sanctified the Lord in his heart, and does not have a good conscience. This is *why* he is in intellectual darkness.

¹³This point is often misunderstood by “pietistic” evangelists. They establish a false dichotomy between the heart and the head, assert that only the heart is important, and then take a stand for Jesus. But good hearts will produce intellectual fruit. To object, as they do, to “intellectualism” on behalf of heart

As mentioned above, the popular dichotomy between the head and heart is a false one. But to use the terms assumed by it for a moment, if someone concerned for heart religion rejects the importance of “doctrine,” the problem is not in his head. The problem is in his heart; it is not bearing the proper fruit. This is because if a man sanctifies the Lord in his heart, the result will be *defenses* and *reasons*.

And if a Christian apologist, who is “into sound doctrine,” lives a life that is an ethical stretch case, then the problem in his heart will eventually show up in his thinking.¹⁴ We cannot seal off one part of us from another. When people get out of a Biblical balance, they lose the very thing they deem most important. Pharisees worshipped the law, but in effect, destroyed it. Pietists say we must concentrate on the heart, but the result is a heart which does not produce the fruit it should. In the name of clean hearts, they produce rotten ones. Our more intellectual brethren neglect the heart, and consequently are really neglecting the head. In the name of sound minds, they destroy the basis and foundation of all clear thinking, *which is practical obedience*.¹⁵

Conclusion

The Bible teaches that intellectual darkness is the result of rebellion, not the cause of it. Those who have been brought out of darkness have a responsibility to speak to those who are still in it. As they speak it is crucial to realize the source of intellectual darkness, and to address it through the demeanor of the speaker, and the content of what is said.

If the apologist displays God’s character and demonstrates thankfulness to Him, then it is far more likely that God’s mercy will be demonstrated. These same two truths should spill over into the content of what is said. Until this happens, we will not see what has been absent from evangelical Christianity for hundreds of years: apologetics on fire. △

religion is like a farmer objecting to apples on behalf of apple trees. True piety will *always* produce true learning.

¹⁴I once wrote a letter to a pastor, making a point very similar to this one. He and his church were into what they called sound doctrine. Rather than pointing out the deficiency of love, which was a charge they were no doubt used to, I pointed out a doctrinal deficiency — the low view of Scripture indicated through their disobedience. I received a copy of my letter back from him with a term of eschatological significance stamped all over it.

¹⁵If a man won’t obey God in how he treats his wife, then why would he obey God in how he thinks? Rebellion tolerated anywhere will spread everywhere.

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For the Record

This regular feature is an attempt to provide an elementary Biblical analysis of various topics in Christian theology and practice. We anticipate that this and future contributions will be helpful in explaining fundamental theological issues to those who may be relatively unfamiliar with them.

Unlimited Atonement

G.I. Williamson

For whom did Christ die? Was it for the elect only? Or was it for the whole world? That is the question. And strange as it may seem to us, the answer is that Jesus died for both. It is all a matter of proper understanding. And the central thing that we need to understand is the doctrine of union with Christ.

Those Jews—who rejected Jesus—did not object to a certain kind of doctrine of election. It was quite to their liking to think that God had elected Abraham and that they were his children. “We are Abraham’s offspring” they boasted “and have never yet been enslaved to any one.” (John 8:33). Reformed people, too, have made this mistake. They have made it when, for example, they have taken

God’s covenant promise (Acts 2:39) as a kind of automatic thing. ‘If you are born to covenant parents,’ they say, ‘and are baptized, and outwardly conform to the Church, then the clear presumption is that you are a regenerate person.’ The doctrine of election, then, becomes a kind of natural possession. It is a kind of birth-right that you have because you are covenant-born.

The whole teaching of the Word of God is diametrically opposed to this concept. That is why the words of Jesus were so offensive to the Jews.¹ For over against the common Jewish conception of the covenant, our Lord set the true conception. And the heart of this true conception is the doctrine of union with Christ.

We can illustrate this (the way Paul does in Romans 5) by comparing Jesus with Adam. As a matter of fact, we *all* have union with Adam by nature. Because we were, in some sense, one with Adam when he sinned, we also sinned in him and fell with him (Rom. 5:12). A person may not *know* this (such as one who has never heard the teaching of the Bible), or, a person may not *like* it (such as an unbelieving American who has). But it is true just the same. We are what we are by nature because we have (or, if we are believers: *had*) union with Adam. And it is so with the second Adam, the Lord Jesus. For just as all who were in Adam sinned and fell in him, so all who are in Jesus Christ were dead and are risen (Rom. 6:1-6).

The amazing thing about this union with Christ is that there is a sense in which it was already there even before we came into existence. For Paul says, “He chose us *in Him* before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). It was for this reason that Jesus prayed (on the night in which He was betrayed) for all those whom the Father had given Him (Jn. 17:9). He did not pray for all men, but

only for these. And yet, at the same time, it is also true that we do not enjoy the fruits of this union with Christ unless—and *until*—we receive Him as He is freely offered to us in the gospel. It is only when we repent of our sins, and put our trust in Him, that we actually possess the saving benefits of union with Christ.

It follows, then, that all who do embrace Jesus as He is offered in the gospel are persons for whom Christ died. And this takes us, at once, outside the confines of Jewish exclusivism. For the truth is that Jesus did not die for the Jews only (just as he did not die for *all* who are by nature, Jewish). No, as Jesus clearly said, He came down to give His flesh for the life of the world (Jn. 6:51) and not just the Jewish nation. And on both of these counts the teaching of Christ was offensive to them. They wanted a covenant that guaranteed salvation to all Jews, and to them only (although they were willing to include others who would, in effect, become Jews!). But they did not want a covenant which included Gentiles on an equal footing, and which required that whether Jew or Gentile they must, to be saved, be in union with Jesus.

Now it has been a long-standing custom to call this the doctrine of ‘the limited atonement.’ But if ever there was a bad choice of terms, it is found in this traditional designation. It is the writer’s contention, to the contrary, that it is in the Reformed conception, and the Reformed conception alone, that justice is done to the teaching of Scripture. And that teaching could better be described as the doctrine of the *unlimited atonement*. This is true because the atonement is one of two things: it is either (1) that Jesus died to make salvation *possible* for all men, or (2) that He died to make salvation *certain* for some.²

¹e.g. John 6:50-58

²There is, of course, a third possibility which has been suggested,

The first of these two propositions can be made to sound very appealing, and is certainly more popular, today, than the second. But is it true? It is to this that we now direct your attention as we ask one simple question.

If Jesus died only to make salvation *possible* for all, then it would not be the death of Christ alone that made the salvation of some (out of the 'all') an actual reality. And we would have to ask: 'what is it, then, that makes a *possible* salvation become an *actual* salvation?' Well, the answer which has been given, again and again in the history of the Church, is that *it is something man himself does*. One man, of his own natural strength and ability, decides to reject Christ. Another, of the same strength and ability, decides to accept Christ. And it is this act—this decision—added to what Christ has done, that turns a possible salvation into an actual salvation. And this, as you can see, *limits* the

atonement because it clearly says the atonement of Christ is limited to providing only a part of what man needs for salvation.

The Reformed doctrine, on the other hand, really ought to be called the doctrine of the *unlimited* atonement. By this, we mean that in the Reformed view, it is Christ's death—with nothing added to it at all—which is seen as the sole cause of man's salvation. It is *unlimited* because it saves to the uttermost all those for whom Christ made His atonement. The difference, be it observed, is *not* that Christ's atonement (on the one view) saves everyone, or (on the other view) only some. All Bible believing

namely, that Christ died to actually effect the salvation of all men without exception. This is so clearly contrary to the Scripture that we leave it entirely out of the picture.

Christians know from the infallible Word of God that only some men will be saved. The whole difference is simply concerned with whether the death of Christ is, or is not, limited in its power and effectiveness. Is it an atonement of *limited* power, which saves some men when they add their part to Christ's part? Or is it an atonement of *unlimited* power which saves some men because that is precisely the effect that Christ intended?³

Jesus expressed the essential thing in this doctrine in precisely the way the Jews needed to hear it. He warned them that unless they had union with Him, in His sacrifice on the cross, they

Is it an atonement of *limited* power, which save some men when they add their part to Christ's part? Or is it an atonement of *unlimited* power which saves some men because that is precisely the effect that Christ intended?

could have no part whatever in God's salvation (Jn. 6:53). If they were not willing to eat His flesh and drink His blood (which is equivalent to union with Christ), there could be no life in them. If they did have their pride obliterated and came to see Christ as their only hope, on the other hand, they would live forever.

The atonement of Christ is *particular* (or *definite*)—it was designed to effect the eternal salvation of God's elect people. But it is right here that we need to make one further observation. It is precisely because it is *particular* that it is also *universal*. It is, in a word,

³ Jesus said: "I pray for them: I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them" (John 17:9,10).

because it makes salvation certain for many, that it also has worldwide dimensions. For, astounding as it may seem, it is the world that will be saved. No, not every man in the world. But it will be the world as a whole—some (as John tells us) out of every tongue and tribe and nation, until there is at last a multitude that no man can number (Rev.7:9). And remember: this is not a mere possibility; it is a certainty. For just as "through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous...that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:19, 21).

As Professor B. B. Warfield once put it: "There is no antinomy...in saying that Christ died for His people and that Christ died for the world. His people may be few today: the

world will be His people tomorrow." And again, "it is only the Calvinist that has warrant to believe in the salvation whether of the individual or of the world. Both alike rest utterly on the sovereign grace of God. All other ground is shifting sand." Δ

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ISSUE AND INTERCHANGE

The goal of this regular feature is to provide our readers with opposing arguments on topics pertinent to the Christian life. Due to the power of party spirit, personal credibility, credentials, etc., we have asked all the authors writing for this fea-

ture to publish their brief statements anonymously. By doing this, we hope to encourage the reader, in some small way, to focus on the arguments involved in each position rather than on personal factors.

The authors selected for the re-

spective sides in the debate are outspoken supporters of their viewpoints.

The burden of proof in the interchange is placed on Advocate One. For that reason, Advocate One opens and closes the debate.

ISSUE: Is Birth Control Morally Permissible?

ADVOCATE 1: Some Forms of Contraception Are Morally Permissible

Contraception has become a volatile issue among many Christian groups because it involves the issues of life, such as sexuality, and child rearing which our culture often distorts in ugly ways. Many Christians simply offer blanket condemnations of almost any practice which is even incidentally related to these distortions. We must realize, however, that emotions which arise from such concerns may often cloud our ability to think through an issue clearly. As Christians, we want to be sure to decide any issue by the standard of God's Word alone.

Contraception, in short, is the practice of preventing a conception from taking place. A proper Biblical evaluation of contraception requires us to understand some foundational ethical issues (1-2 below). After this foundation is set, we can then deal with the more particular concerns and objections raised in regard to contraception itself (3-4 below). The conclusion will be that certain forms of contraception, when used under proper conditions, are morally permissible options for the Christian married couple.

1. Freedom of Conscience and A Biblical Affirmation of Creation

The first foundational issue concerns the standards by which the Christian is to order his or her behavior. A Biblical understanding of this point will alleviate many of the confusions that enter into the discussion of contraception.

Legalism has often distorted the Christian ethic. From earliest times, many deceived persons have attempted to use God's law as means of salvation, though God obviously never intended the law for such a purpose. Other

forms of legalism characteristically add to and/or subtract from God's Word, though God condemns this as well (Deut. 4:2). Yet such additions and deletions are central to Legalists from the Pharisees to modern fundamentalism. The Christian must sternly reject any such practice. Christ Himself condemned those who "set aside the commandment of God in order to keep [their] tradition...thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition" (Mark 7:9,13). Any humanly contrived commandment (such as the familiar fundamentalist prohibitions against drinking, dancing, and other social activities) added to the Scripture is sinful in God's sight. Paul also condemned legalism in the most stringent terms. Those who taught these things were proclaiming another gospel — they were under a divine curse (Gal. 1:6-10) and were teaching "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1-3). No one is to tamper with the word of the sovereign God.

The Christian view of freedom of conscience is to be understood in light of the above context. The Christian is free to do anything that is not contrary to the word of God. Scripture alone is the ultimate standard of ethical activity. God alone is the Lord of the conscience. Human commandments which are contrary or additional to God's word have no authority over the Christian conscience. Moreover, the Christian is free to do anything (not contrary to the word of God) because he or she knows that God's creation is good (1 Tim. 4:4). Paul declares that "I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom. 14:14). Scripture rejects all pagan notions which describe the human body or the physical world in

general as evil or inferior to spirit. The Christian ought to rejoice in God's creation to God's glory. As this norm is applied to the question of contraception, then, the Christian is free to use contraception, unless it is forbidden by Scripture.

2. Cultural Mandate: Stewards of God's Creation

A second foundational concern in this discussion regards Christian stewardship. At the creation, God laid certain responsibilities upon the human race (Gen. 1:28). Two aspects of this cultural mandate bear directly on our discussion.

a) *Man is to act as a ruler (controller) over creation.* We are commanded to subdue creation as God's stewards. This means that we are to act as organizers and controllers of creation under God in every area of life — we possess a Biblically limited stewardship over creation. We may not serve as passive creatures who blindly allow creation to "order" itself or assume that God will carry out the responsibilities He has given to us. Many Christians claim to "trust the Lord" for events that God has given humans authority over. To live this way is to live irresponsibly; it is to act contrary to the cultural mandate. This mandate is given to men and women as *image-bearers of God* (Gen. 1:27). God exercises absolute sovereignty over all things, and we, as those made in His image, are to exercise faithful stewardship over the world. If we add this foundational issue for Christian practice to the Christian understanding of freedom discussed above, we see that we are to exercise authority over creation in obedience to God, not man. We are forbidden to exercise control

over our families, businesses, nations, or churches, in a way that is contrary to the word of God. Stated positively, we are directed to actively and responsibly order our families, etc., as faithful stewards in accord with Scripture.

b) *We are commanded to "be fruitful and multiply."* Part of the cultural mandate is to raise children. This is one form of subduing the earth. We are to train our children faithfully in God's ways and thus extend the covenant generation by generation. Much of our culture views children as inconvenient objects (the most heinous expression of this is, of course, abortion). The Bible views children as a gift of God that we ought to desire. "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are children of one's youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them" (Ps. 127:3-5). We read in Psalm 128:3,4 that "Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house; Your children like olive plants around your table. Behold thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD." God promises to bless those who keep His covenant and "turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you" (Lev. 26:9). The Christian ought to desire and actively seek this blessing from God.

3. Constraints on the Cultural Mandate—I Corinthians 7

The command to subdue the earth is the norm for the believer. However, we see in the New Testament, that there are limited circumstances in which this norm does not apply. In I Corinthians 7, Paul is writing to those who are facing persecution (Acts 18:1-18). He counsels them "that it is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is....If you should marry you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such *will have trouble in this life*, and I am trying to spare you" (I Cor. 7:26-28).

Paul advises the Corinthian believers to avoid taking on the responsibilities of family life due to the present (or impending) tribulation.[†]

[†]Though Paul refers only to marriage in this passage, we should not limit the reference of his remarks to be the concerns of a married couple alone as we might given contemporary usage. Paul, in accord with the overall understanding of marriage in Scripture, would have a wider

Our Lord Himself gave a similar warning to those believers inhabiting Jerusalem at the time of its judgment: "Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people." (Luke 21:23; cf. 2 Thess. 2:2). The concerns of family life are obviously compounded in a time of crisis, and Paul wanted to spare the Corinthians this kind of "tribulation" (v. 28; — cf. Matt. 13:21; I Thess. 1:4). The Lord calls His people to suffer for righteousness sake (I Pet. 2:21), but we are not to compound our tribulations irresponsibly.

The Lord is merciful and concerned about our possible distress. Paul does not counsel the Corinthians in these circumstances to idly "trust in the Lord." They are to use Godly wisdom in ordering their lives; wisdom in this case is to avoid normal cultural responsibilities of family life, if possible. The principle, then, expressed in this constraint on the cultural mandate can be stated as: *There are circumstances in which it is contrary to Godly wisdom to take on familial responsibilities.*

Is persecution the only time we may forego normal cultural responsibilities? — evidently not, according to Paul's reasoning. The necessary element in Paul's counsel is that we be spared the *type* of added familial distress found in times of persecution. For example, in a time of persecution: a parent would fear to leave the family alone at any time for security reasons; a parent's financial, sustenance, and shelter concerns must include several people instead of one; a family's ability to move or hide is more difficult than a single person's. The list could go on. These are the *types* of distresses that Paul wants believers to avoid. Since Paul is concerned with types of distress, the principle stated above will apply to *all* those circumstances in which such familial distress occurs—i.e. persecution is *not* the only situation in which we may temporarily forego taking on familial responsibilities. We can imagine numerous situations in which there is no persecution such as that found in the first century, yet the

range of responsibilities in mind. Marriage would *naturally* include child raising. This is evident from Paul's instructions to widows in I Tim. 5:14: "I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach."

mentioned kinds of distresses may occur (e.g. wartime, plague, famine). Nevertheless, Scripture presents yet further less catastrophic circumstances in which it is contrary to Godly wisdom to take on added familial responsibilities. We find the principle for such circumstances in I Tim. 5:8.

4. Providing for One's Own -- I Timothy 5:8

In the course of various directives regarding living above reproach, Paul instructs us that "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." Work is a natural and necessary aspect of the Christian life. Anyone who does not support or provide for his family is worse than one who hates God. This principle not only requires us to have a job (or some means of income), but it also forbids us to place ourselves in situations in which we cannot support our family even though we may have some form of employment; the outcome is the same. There are obvious examples: we may not gamble away our paycheck or spend it on relative luxuries when our children have no food. Furthermore, we are forbidden to *take on* obligations, no matter how well intentioned, which would lead us to fail to provide for our families. Hence, I Tim. 5:8 provides us with further circumstances in which our previous principle (3) would apply.

One common application of principle 3 to the circumstances of I Tim. 5:8 would be in initiating a marriage itself. We ought normally to marry in accord with the cultural mandate, but if the potential husband has no means of providing for his potential wife, then they ought not to marry in light of I Tim 5:8 (inability to provide might form the basis of her father's refusal of the marriage—Ex. 21:17;18). If we can see how these principles work together in these circumstances, then we should have no difficulty in seeing how they would provide a similar basis for temporarily delaying childbearing. The case envisioned is one in which the married couple desires a family (rejecting all humanistic rationalizations about convenience, career, etc.) yet under the immediate circumstances would not be able to provide for a child or another child (in violation of I Tim. 5:8). We can imagine other scenarios as well. However, every case is circum-

scribed by all of the principles above.

We should note that although the above Biblical principles demonstrate the permissibility of contraception in general, they also unquestionably rule out some forms of contraception. For example, abortifacient methods such as the Intrauterine Device would be strictly forbidden by principle (1) above. Similarly, a couple rebelling against the Cultural Mandate are using contraceptives in a sinful manner.

Though no attempt is made to answer all questions regarding contraception in this discussion, this account would be greatly lacking if we did not respond to some common objections made against contraception. We will consider only three.

A. Contraception is unnatural

Many object to contraception on the basis of its "artificiality." The general principle embedded in this objection is that we ought not attempt to hinder any natural course of events such as conception — "Contraception is contrary to natural law."

Two points can be made in response. First, there are many things we do which go contrary to the "natural order" and yet are not immoral: e.g., shaving, airplane travelling, landscaping, driving, satellite transmitting, etc. Second, if we were consistent in following this prescription, then we would be forced to violate other commandments. For example, if we could not go contrary to the "natural order" of events, then we could not offer any medical assistance to those who are sick or injured, and we would be forbidden from aiding those who are starving. By omitting to do these things, we violate clear and constant Scriptural injunctions to care for the sick.

Furthermore, those who raise the above objection usually substitute some form of supposedly "natural" birth control such as abstinence or the rhythm method. However, it is absurd to refer to these practices as natural! Abstinence runs counter our natural sexual drives, and the intricate charting and scheduling involved in rhythm methods demonstrates that this form of birth control is far from "natural."

B. God condemned birth control in the case of Onan (Gen. 38:7-10)

Judah, son of Jacob had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. The Lord took Er's life because of his wickedness and "Judah said to Onan, 'Go in to your

brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.' And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so it came about that when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground, in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord; so He took his life also." Many take this passage to be a clear Biblical rejection of any form of birth control.

One must ignore the clear statements in this passage in order to draw the conclusion that God forbids birth control. First of all, one must read such a prohibition into the text, since Scripture nowhere forbids such an act. Second, we do clearly see that Onan refused to carry out the Levirate institution of raising children to his brother as prescribed in Deut. 25:5-10. Though failure necessitated no civil penalty apart from humiliation, the Lord may bring His own death sentence at His holy discretion apart from any such civil restraints (cf. Acts 5). Thirdly, even rejecting the immediately prior argument, Onan not only failed to fulfill his Levirate obligation, but he also committed adultery. A brother-in-law could not choose to have intercourse with his widowed sister-in-law at their discretion, for this is simply adultery, which has a civil and final death penalty. Onan was guilty of this and deserved his death sentence on both counts. Hence, this interpretation offers at least two objective and concrete sins committed by Onan and does not require one to read a tenuous claim into the text (as opponents must do).

A clear disproof of the anti-contraception view is that if that view is correct in its analysis of actions, then we would be obligated to condemn other non-sinful actions. For example, a parallel misinterpretation can be read into Achan's sin. If we wanted to demonstrate that gold was wicked or that burying things was contrary to God's commands, we could point to God's judgment on Achan for seeking gold and burying it. But such a conclusion misses the sin at issue as much as those who use Onan to prove their point. Achan was judged for violating God's ban against taking any plunder from Jericho (Josh. 6:17; 7). Hence, the anti-contraception interpretation seriously confuses the sins of Onan.

C. Contraception shows a lack of trust in God

Opponents of contraception often claim that those who use it are simply acting out of a lack of faith. If they truly trusted God, they would allow Him to control this aspect of their lives.

Though this claim would apply in some cases, it would suggest a form of irresponsibility in others. When someone tells us that they are simply "trusting in God" in these circumstances, they often evidently mean "I am not taking any responsibility for my actions." But it is absurd for a Christian to claim that he or she is not responsible for his or her actions; such an unbiblical attitude clearly shows the error in this objection. We are commanded to live our whole lives in obedience to and trust in God, and yet the Lord has given us certain responsibilities to carry out. When we trust in God for sustenance praying, "Give us this day our daily bread," we do not sit at home passively waiting for food to be dropped on our doorstep. Rather, we go out and work. If we were to ignore our God given responsibilities and carry the above objection (C) to its logical conclusion we ought not ever work, use locks on our homes and cars, save money for emergencies, use brakes in our automobiles, wear safety goggles or sun screen, support the police or national defense, etc., but failing to do these things would be irresponsible. Such actions are Biblical, and so they cannot be contrary to trusting in God. The principles laid out in the main body of this discussion are an attempt to show that in some circumstances contraception can at times be another one of these areas of responsibility.

None of the above objections stands up to simple scrutiny. All of them fail to demonstrate that contraception is forbidden by the word of God. Many in our culture do abuse contraceptive measures (even some Christians), but, analogously, we need not refuse to print books just because the enemies of God use books also. Abuses of contraception need to be properly distinguished from a Biblical understanding of the issues so that we may make a proper evaluation of the practice. The principles outlined above give us a start on this question, and so in light of the above Biblical principles, we can indeed conclude that certain forms of contraception under certain circumstances are morally permissible.

ADVOCATE 2: All Forms of Contraception Within the Bounds of Marriage are Forbidden

Due to space limitations, we will adopt the following method of defeating our opponent's position: Advocate One affirms, along with us, that the "Cultural Mandate" of Genesis 1:28 commands believers to have children, and that children are a great blessing from God, as Psalm 127, 128, and Leviticus 26:9 assert. He then asserts that, though having children is the normative duty of Christian couples, Scripture lists exceptions to the norm. To further bolster his thesis that birth control is therefore not forbidden, he offers rebuttals of three common anti-birth control arguments.

Since, "where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden" (*Westminster Larger Catechism* Q. 99:4; Matt. 15:4-6; 4:9-10; Deut. 6:13; 5:11; Jonah 1:1-3, 12; Eph. 4:28), we regard the command to "be fruitful and multiply" as forbidding the deliberate hindrance of conception.

If we can demonstrate that Advocate One's exceptions to Genesis 1:28 are no exceptions at all, and follow this by refuting his rebuttals, it will be observed that our view will hold the field: Contraception is forbidden by the Word of God.

Legalism and Freedom of Conscience

Advocate One starts off accusing Christians who are anti-birth control of being "legalists" guilty of "adding to or subtracting from God's Word." This, he feels, is because opposition to birth control is a "humanly contrived commandment." He then says that because of this, the Anti-Birth Control position is seen to be an evil restriction upon Christian freedom.

However, let it be clear that our being judged guilty concerning these two charges depends entirely upon whether we can demonstrate our thesis to be correct and his to be false. If we are correct, then we are automatically cleared (*WCF* XX, Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16). By including at the very beginning of his paper such a strong and unsubstantiated condemnation of our position, Advocate One is in violation of John 7:50-51. He should have waited for the end of the debate to describe us as teaching "doctrines of demons," or being "under the curse of God."

Romans 14:14

We are most happy to affirm the truth of this Bible passage, but would like to point out Advocate One's incorrect use of it. Scriptural opposition to birth control is not based upon some view that the human body or the material world in general is evil or inferior. On the contrary, we feel that the sexual function has been created and blessed by God (Gen. 1:28; 2:24, 25), but the misuse of this wonderful gift is indeed possible (1 Cor. 6:13), and that deliberate destruction of the reproductive nature of intercourse is one of these misuses. Surely our opponent realizes that affirmation of the goodness of creation (1 Tim. 4:4) does not validate sexual practices which are clearly forbidden (e.g. Lev. 18).

The Cultural Mandate

We are pleased that Advocate One does in fact recognize that the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 does indeed command Christian couples to be fruitful and multiply. In addition, Advocate One also quotes some of our favorite verses (Ps. 127: 3-5; 128: 3,4; Lev. 26:9), affirming that "The Christian ought to desire and actively seek this blessing from God." We most heartily agree.

An Internal Contradiction

In the next two sections, our opponent attempts to expound two Scripture passages as providing justification (in some circumstances) for the use of contraception within marriage. Note that though his main thesis (stated several times in his paper) is that birth control is a "morally permissible option," his interpretation of I Corinthians 7 and I Timothy 5:8 makes the practice of birth control mandatory, which is a very different assertion. Let us point out that though he accuses us of being legalistic for forbidding birth control, he is not afraid to make the practice of birth control a command of God (!) for Christians, something totally unheard of for the first nineteen centuries of the Church, which always insisted on the exact opposite!

I Corinthians 7

Advocate One interprets Paul (who wished Christians to "avoid distress"), as allowing contraception. This

is untrue, for several reasons. First, if Paul is really recommending that the Corinthians not have children during the distress of I Corinthians 7:25-28, then what is the *only* method of contraception he advises? Abstinence, for we read in verse 29: "From now on those who have wives should live as if they have none." But as a matter of fact, Paul cannot be interpreted as recommending abstinence as a means of birth control, because Paul previously mentioned abstinence as a temporary option (I Cor. 7:5-6) *only* for special prayer, which agrees with related Old Testament passages such as Exodus 19:15 and I Samuel 21:4-5. Paul viewed having children in marriage as command by God, as one may see from I Timothy 5:14-15.

Since I Corinthians 7 does not then advocate birth control for a married couple, it would be advantageous to examine the only passage in the Bible where God commanded someone *not* to have children, due to an extreme case of tribulation: Jeremiah 16:1-13. (This command was temporary — cf. Jer. 29:1-29.) Please notice the divinely appointed *means* to accomplish this command: "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place." Since God's stated goal was that Jeremiah not have children who would die in the terrible siege of Jerusalem, why didn't God allow Jeremiah to marry, and then observe any number of absolutely sterile methods of sexual relations? Our answer is this: because deliberately non-procreative sex is a most heinous crime: that is why God told Jeremiah *not* to get married.

By turning to a specific historical case in the Old Testament, we can prove that Advocate One's interpretation of I Corinthians is absolutely wrong. Turn to Exodus 1:6-22 and notice the sequence of events. The Israelites had moved to Egypt, where they "were fruitful and multiplied greatly and exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them" (v.7). Pharaoh didn't like so many Israelites in Egypt, so he commanded a primitive method of contraception in order to prevent their population from growing any larger (vv. 9-14). The Israelites were then made slaves and treated horribly. Now, according to

Advocate One's exegesis of I Corinthians 7, this would have been an ideal time for the Israelites, whose families were undergoing intense persecution, to practice non-procreative sexual relations. After all, "what's not forbidden is allowed, and God wants us to avoid unnecessary trials." Besides, fewer children was the decree of the King of Egypt, and we should obey the king in all matters not conflicting with the Bible (Matt. 22:21; I Pet. 2:13). But what does the Bible say subsequently happened? "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread" (Ex. 1:12). And when Pharaoh got worse, the Israelites had even *more* children (Ex. 1:20)! And we have the express declaration of Scripture that the Israelites acted according to the will of God (Ps. 105:24). Therefore, one may see that Advocate One's interpretation of I Corinthians 7 is not in accord with Scripture.

Please note that Advocate One says several other things in this section which are in error: He applies Luke 21:23 to believers, when in reality it applied to non-Christians. The tribulation prophesied in Luke 21 was to overcome the unrepentant Jews of the land of Israel, not the Christians, who were commanded to *escape* (Lk. 21:20-22; Deut. 28:53-57; Lam. 2:20; II Kings 6:23-31; Jer. 19:8-9; Ez. 5:10). Further, Advocate One evidently says that Matthew 13:21 and II Thessalonians 1:4 show that Paul wanted to spare Christians family tribulation. These passages say nothing of the sort, but refer to anti-Christian persecution, which is inevitable (Lk. 6:22, 26; Acts 14:22; II Tim. 3:12).

I Timothy 5:8

Advocate One interprets the above passage to make birth control mandatory for poor Christians who are "not able to provide for a child or another child." Any couple which has children in such a situation violates I Timothy 5:8, which would make them, according to Advocate One "deniers of the faith, worse than unbelievers," and "worse than those who hate God"!

We can prove that this view is wrong. First of all, the Scripture says positively that we Christians are promised what we need to survive (Matt. 6:24-34; Phil. 4:19). Second, these promises of care are applied by God Himself to the children of believers (Ps. 17:14; 37:25-26; 72:4; 103:13, 17-18; 112:1-2; 115:12-14; Prov. 14:26; 20:7).

This is not surprising, since the covenant applies to believers and their children (Acts 2:39; Matt. 26:28). Third, when an individual Christian reaches the point where he no longer has what is needed to survive, it is the command of God for other Christians to help him (Deut. 15:4-15; Acts 4:34-35; Lev. 25:35-39; Deut. 24:12-15; I Tim. 6:17-19). Further, this giving to a poor Christian is to be sacrificial if necessary (II Cor. 8:1-4, 13-15; Lk. 3:11). So, when a poor brother with many children and insufficient income needs the help of the Church, the Church is to provide him with food, clothing, money, and jobs. *Never* does Scripture command anyone to practice deliberately non-procreative sex, although, as we have pointed out, such methods of sexual relations are available and easily practiced. (And yes, many of these methods were known in ancient times!)

Let us point out the real boundaries of need and greed: "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (I Tim. 6:7-10). This contentment spoken of by Paul is mandatory, not optional, and those who violate this show lack of trust in God, as the Scripture plainly teaches (Heb. 13:5-6). Now, how can lack of food, clothes, etc. be a valid reason for birth control, if we are promised by God never to run out of them, and if fellow Christians are commanded to help out whenever these things run low? In truth, those who limit the number of their children when they have food and clothes are guilty of violating the command of Genesis 1:28 for the sake of greed.

Let us now logically proceed to examine the ramifications of Advocate One's view of I Timothy 5:8 and compare these ramifications to another passage in the Bible. First, if his interpretation of the verse is correct, then we should view the poor hungry man who impregnates his wife as "worse than one who hates God" (to use Advocate One's phrase). And what does the Scripture say about a person who hates God? He is an object of God's fierce anger (Deut. 7:10), a being sentenced to Hell (Rom. 1:28-32), and

should be excommunicated from the Church of Christ (Acts 3:22-23; I Cor. 5:1-2). Now let us compare these easily deduced logical ramifications with a story from the Bible.

It "just so happens" that Nehemiah 5:1-16, contains just the scenario envisioned by Advocate One's exegesis of I Timothy 5:8. Notice that in the fifth century B.C., the people of God, who were living in Palestine, had been suffering grinding oppression, which was so bad that they had been selling their children as slaves to pagans, to raise money to even buy food to eat (vv. 2,5)! This oppression had been going on for years prior to Nehemiah's arrival (v. 15). And the people of God had plenty of children (v. 2). Now let us apply Advocate One's interpretation of I Timothy 5:8 to the situation in Nehemiah. First, Nehemiah should have condemned these poor Israelites for being so wicked as to procreate children in such awful conditions, which were so bad that individual families didn't have food to eat! (After all, Advocate One says, speaking of covenant children, that "we are forbidden to take on obligations, no matter how well-intentioned, which would lead us to fail to provide for our families.")

Second, Nehemiah should have excommunicated them for hating God, and third, these evil procreating, starving people (newly deprived of Israelite status) could then be sold as slaves to the Gentiles to pay off the debts owed to the righteous (and richer) Israelites who were left. Of course, this was not the course of action followed by Nehemiah. When he heard that the rich Israelites had been greedy and hadn't shared with their poor brothers, he immediately was angry with the rich, and commanded them to "give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses, and also the usury you are charging them—the hundredth part of the money, grain, new wines and oil" (v. 11). Then he made them take an oath to cancel the debts of the poor, pronouncing a curse upon all those who would not do so! Note that this is the exact *opposite* of the course Nehemiah should have followed if Advocate One's exegesis of I Timothy 5:8 is correct.

On Unnaturalness

A very good anti-birth control argument is that birth control is unnatural; hence Advocate One's attempt to escape from this objection. He tac-

itly agrees that contraception is unnatural, but proceeds to say that: (1) lots of "unnatural" activities (such as shaving) are actually morally neutral; and (2) that if we completely follow "nature" in some areas, we would be violating Scriptural commands such as feeding the sick.

We agree with both of Advocate One's propositions — nature is an imperfect teacher, as is stated by Scripture. Nature proclaims the existence and characteristics of God, but the Gospel is needed to enlighten men unto salvation (Ps. 19:1-3; Rom. 10:14-15; WCF I:1). Further, habits which occur naturally in the animal world have been forbidden to human beings (Gen. 9:4; Deut. 4:21; Lev. 7:22-25). As regards the sexual activities of animals, we find some natural occurrences which are forbidden to men. For example, dogs are known for mating with any available female (I Corinthians 6:15), and lions are known for monopolizing a large number of lionesses and excluding other lions from any activity (I Cor. 7:2).

But we rest our case upon the united and irrefutable testimony of nature that the sex act in all animal groups occurs in such a manner as to facilitate (and *never* obstruct) the production of offspring. No male animal uses condoms; no female or male deliberately avoids sex during ovulation, etc. This is as we should expect things, since animals are commanded by God to be fruitful and multiply. Scripture itself testifies to the undoubted testimony of nature in this regard, by pointing to the foul example of male and female homosexuals (Rom. 1:26-27). What is unnatural about these people? Not physical closeness between those of the same sex (John 12:23; I Thess. 5:26). Not non-sexual love between those of the same sex (II Sam. 1:26). What marks the most degraded sinners in Romans 1 is this: they avoid the natural function of women: procreation. And *that* is exactly what those who practice birth control do also.

For completeness' sake, let us make it clear that our definition of contraception means that we do not endorse *any* method of child limitation within the bounds of marriage. So Advocate One's slam on variations of the Rhythm method does not affect our position at all.

The Case of Onan — Gen. 38:8-10

Advocate One says that opponents of birth control must "read into the text" in order to get the anti-birth control viewpoint. This is patently untrue. The passage is very short: Onan does only one physical act, and it is specifically stated that Onan was killed for what he did. The fact of the matter is that the anti-contraceptive view is the first one which suggests itself.

Anyone who does research into the Onan incident will soon realize that the only other passage in the Old Testament which speaks about the unusual custom of Levirate marriage is Deuteronomy 25:5-10, and *that* passage says that anyone who refuses to raise up seed to his brother is to be humiliated *only*. It is therefore logical to conclude that Onan was not killed merely for violating the Levirate, but was killed for something much worse. And what is it that differentiates Onan's case from the Deuteronomy case? Onan wasted (literally "destroyed, killed") his seed on the ground.

So step two in examining the Onan story by comparison with pertinent Scripture (the only way to study Scripture: WCF I:9; Matt. 4:5-7) again yields an anti-contraceptive view of Genesis 38.

Advocate One attempts to sidestep this logical comparison by bringing up the example of how God killed Ananias and his wife in Acts 5; he says God killed them "apart from civil restraints." This is not true: their New Testament death agrees entirely with Old Testament civil law. Ananias and Sapphira were not held guilty until they promised the whole amount to God (Acts 5:3-4, 8), in accordance with Deuteronomy 23:21-23; they were killed by the direct intervention of God in accordance with Old Testament law (Acts 5:2-3; Josh. 7:1, 11; I Kings 8:31-32; Eccl. 5:4-6). Not only does Advocate One's dodge not prove his point, it further illustrates the amazing inter-relatedness of Scripture.

Let us now examine some further assertions of our opponent: he asserts that he has uncovered two death penalty offenses which made Onan worthy of execution: adultery and sexual relations with a sister-in-law. Both of these assertions are untrue.

First, the death penalty crime of adultery is possible only for relations with *another man's wife* (Lev.

20:10); Tamar's husband Er was already dead (Gen. 38:7; Rom. 7:1-4). Further, Onan, by the assumption of Levirate duty, had thereby *married* Tamar (Deut. 25:5; Matt. 22:24), and how exactly do you commit adultery with your wife? (Even if he didn't marry her by this, his offense is fornication, the penalty for which is that he must marry Tamar, not death — Deut. 22:28-29).

Second, Onan was not killed for having relations with his sister-in-law either, because the penalty for this crime is not death, but childlessness (Lev. 18:16; 20:21).

We will make one more observation. Advocate One continually attacks the anti-contraceptive interpreters of Genesis 38:8-10 with charges that we ignore the clear teaching of the passage; we read into the text; we adopt a tenuous view; we are confused; then he tops off his description of us by saying that our method of exegesis could result in monstrosities like condemning burying things by reference to Achan's story! We have this to say in reply: the anti-contraceptive view of the Onan passage is the *universal* view of orthodox Christianity of the first nineteen centuries; the greatest minds of the Christian faith have interpreted it this way: Augustine, Calvin, Luther, the Bible commentary put out by the Synod of Dort, the Westminster Annotations, and a host of others (Prov. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6).

It should be apparent which view of Genesis 38:8-10 *really* involves confusion and reading into the text.

Trusting in God

I would not say that those who practice birth control do so simply because of lack of faith — surveys indicate that upwards of 80% of those who use contraception do so for monetary reasons, so I would say that greed has a lot to do with it. Lack of Scriptural watchmen (Ez. 33 & 34) to warn the flock of God is another important reason; many people who speak authoritatively on sexual matters are actually familiar with nothing more than their own desires and have never studied Scripture in depth.

Our opponent in this section makes a comparison which illustrates the fact that his views have been influenced by the ungodly culture in which we live. He says that, just as we are permitted to do things to prevent starvation, thievery, diseases, car

wrecks, eye injury, sunburn, and anarchy, so we are permitted to prevent the conception of covenant children and/or the horrible troubles they will bring! Is it proper to say such things and call it a Christian view? We think not.

Advocate One attempts to flip the "lack of faith" argument back upon us by accusing us of advocating irresponsible production of children by unilaterally condemning birth control. Our simple refutation is this: if God forbids us to practice birth control, then we are obligated to have as many children as God sends us. Obeying God's command is wise, no matter what happens (Matt. 7:24-26), and it is better to be righteous and poor, rather than rich and ungodly (Prov. 28:6). We

know that, contrasted with the mere teachings of men, the commandments of God result in true liberation (Matt. 11:29-30; 23:4), and we are sure that such will be the case in the area of children (Ps. 127 & 128). We are ignoring the wisdom of the world — Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." God has given us the equipment, the desire, and the command to be fruitful and multiply; it is He, according to the Scripture, who is involved in the entire process of childmaking (Job 10:10-12; Ps. 139:13; Gen. 4:1). Yes, we can trust the Lord. We can trust that he who commands us will not let us or His children starve (Matt. 7:9-11). Those who believe in the sovereignty of God

emphatically believe in the vengeance of God even when it is unpopular to do so; should we not also believe that God is compassionate to believers and their children, since it, too, is affirmed in Scripture (Deut. 7:9; 13:17; Ex. 20:5; 22:26; Ps. 111:4; Lk. 1:50).

Conclusion

Advocate One has stated in his paper that the cultural mandate does indeed command Christian couples to have children. Our opponent has provided no Scriptural exceptions to Genesis 1:28, and his three additional arguments are invalid.

Thus it may be seen that contraception is not morally permissible.

ADVOCATE 1 Response

Someone may be able to offer cogent Biblical reasons to refute my position, but Advocate Two has yet to do so. I sincerely expected to have to faithfully grapple with solid argumentation on this important topic, but instead Advocate Two has simply given us simplistic dilemmas, fallacious inferences, and hasty generalizations.

I also find it disheartening that even when one is loyally attempting to apply God's Word, Advocate Two sees need to fallaciously psychologize sinful motivations on the part of those who share my position ("lack of faith," "greed," "lack of Scriptural watchmen," shallow knowledge of Scripture, etc.). At one point, he even simplistically misreads my statements and rules me out of the Christian faith. This move may be a simple way to win a debate, but faithful, even passionate, Christian scholarship ought to rise above such antics.

Simple Misreadings

Much of Advocate Two's opening hostility results from a hasty interpretation of my discussion of foundational principles. He mistakenly reads my discussions of legalism, freedom of conscience, and Romans 14 as if they were somehow critiques or premature accusations of his view, when in fact they are foundational concerns which we share, in joint contrast to common Fundamentalist abuses.

As applied to the question of birth control, all these concerns simply demonstrate the point on which we agree: "the Christian is free to use contraception, unless it is forbidden by

Scripture." We then obviously part ways on the latter clause, but my opening essay does not prejudge the matter as Advocate Two hastily contends.

Faulty Negative Arguments

An Internal Contradiction? — Advocate Two thinks he has found a contradiction in my essay between a mandate and a permissible option. First, even if there were such a conflict, it is not a contradiction for one concept does not negate the other (i.e. a contradiction of "permissible" is "non-" or "im-permissible.") Nevertheless, I never argue that birth control is mandatory, and Advocate Two does not provide evidence for the alleged conflict — his fallacious appeal to tradition notwithstanding. Hence, this negative argument fails.

I Corinthians 7 — Advocate Two offers three arguments against my case from I Corinthians 7. First, he counters Paul's exhortation not to take on familial responsibilities by ignoring my argument and invoking a straw man concerning abstinence.

Second, Advocate Two cites the Lord's commandment that Jeremiah not marry or have children in light of the impending tribulation (Jer. 16:1-13) and then fallaciously infers that the reason for this commandment is not the impending tribulation but "because deliberately non-procreative sex is a most heinous crime." One looks in vain for the text and premises which entail this conclusion! If this is not a gross false inference, then Advocate Two is begging-the-question.

Third, Advocate Two claims to

show that my interpretation of I Corinthians 7 is "absolutely wrong" by citing the allegedly parallel case of Exodus 1. Simply put, however, serving under Egyptian slavery and fleeing Roman persecution are quite different animals. Moreover, the former case calls for Biblical civil disobedience since Pharaoh commanded what was forbidden, and the latter case calls for fleeing, hiding, or self-sacrifice. Finally, Advocate Two encounters a difficult problem by arguing from Exodus 1. He wants to use this passage to prove that we are to be fruitful and multiply even during tribulation, but he has already conceded that this is not always the case by citing Jeremiah 16. He also chooses not to exegete Paul's similar directive in I Corinthians 7 itself. Hence, Advocate Two's case against my use of I Corinthians 7 falls apart, and my argument stands.

I Timothy 5:8 — Advocate Two wants to stress the language — "worse than unbelievers" — found in my essay, regarding those who fail to provide for their families. The reader should be clear, as Advocate Two is not, that the statements are the Apostle Paul's, not mine. I gladly emphasize them.

Advocate Two offers six arguments against my case from I Timothy 5:8. His first three arguments regarding God's care and the obligation of Christian charity all beg-the-question by assuming that the people are acting responsibly. Surely Advocate Two would not endorse Christian charity to someone who irresponsibly refuses to work (cf. II Thess. 3:10)?

He fallaciously argues, fourthly, that "never does Scripture command anyone to practice deliberately non-procreative sex." This is fallacious because he forgets (what I assumed we agreed on) that we are permitted to do whatever is not forbidden, not vice-versa as Fundamentalists are prone to contend.

His fifth argument simply repeats his third. Advocate Two argues, sixthly, that Nehemiah 5 refutes my interpretation of I Timothy 5:8. First, Nehemiah 5 does not provide us enough information to make a sound analogy. Does Advocate Two really want to endorse selling his covenant children into slavery? Second, the oppression and ensuing poverty were easily rectified since the oppressors were God's people and not the Roman legions. (Advocate Two attacks a silly straw man regarding excommunication). Hence, Advocate Two's arguments against using I Timothy 5:8 either beg-the-question, invoke poor ethical foundations, generalize hastily, attack straw men, or reason from silence.

Faulty Positive Arguments

Unnaturalness—Advocate Two first concedes the fallacious nature of reasoning from "nature" and then goes onto reason in this way himself. He contends that "the united and irrefutable testimony of nature" supports the conclusion that it is unnatural to ever obstruct conception. But the same testimony also demonstrates that Advocate Two's typing is immoral.

Onan — Advocate Two complains that I claim he reads his conclusions into the text, but then he does not

argue from the text, leaving us only with the assertion that his view is the "first one which suggests itself." This is not good enough. The basis for his claim is that there is "only one physical act." This is simplistic. Is the act intercourse? Failure to impregnate? Adultery? Disgracing his sister-in-law? Acts just aren't as clear cut as Advocate Two's interpretation requires. He either ignores or begs these considerations.

Advocate Two fallaciously concludes that God did not punish Onan for violating the Levirate institution because such a violation did not deserve civil punishment. This claim is refuted by God's actions in Acts 5, and Advocate Two's claim that Ananias and Sapphira committed *civil crimes* is false; his own Biblical citations support my contention. Hence, his interpretation of the Onan incident fails.

My unnecessary but additional argument regarding adultery (I do not make a separate argument concerning a sister-in-law) rests on the covenantal nature of the marriage union as necessarily inclusive of sexual relations. My opponent does not engage this point.

Finally, Advocate Two attempts to prove that he does not read his interpretation into Genesis 38 by citing "the universal view of orthodox Christianity." The appeal to tradition is utterly irrelevant to his claim and therefore fallacious. Even granting universal agreement, Protestants are supposed to rely on the objective constraints of the Word of God alone — "Let God be true though every man be found a liar" (Rom. 3:4)—even the so-called universal testimony of theologians. Genesis 38 simply cannot be used to buttress Advocate Two's case.

Cultural Mandate — Another positive argument Advocate Two uses to make his case is that the cultural mandate allows no exceptions, and without exceptions "our view will hold the field; contraception is forbidden by the Word of God." Advocate Two himself supplies us with the refutation of this claim. All we need is one exception to reject this argument. Advocate Two gives us two: (1) Paul prescribed abstinence as a "temporary option," and (2) God commanded Jeremiah not to marry or have children temporarily. Christ and Paul's later life also stand as exceptions. Hence, this argument also fails.

Trusting in God — Advocate Two largely begs-the-question under this heading. Both of us heartily trust in the care of God. Both of us trust that God will provide for us and our children. But Scripture forbids us to be so arrogant as to maintain that the Lord will provide for us if we refuse to act responsibly. If Advocate Two genuinely wants to adopt the implications of his claim, then he should be willing to quit his work, for on his premises God will provide even when he acts irresponsibly. I don't believe Advocate Two truly holds this, and so we agree that we are obligated to trust in God and act as faithful, active stewards. Advocate Two unbelievably distorts this simple claim to perniciously assert that I oppose children for "the horrible troubles they will bring!" One will search in vain for such an ugly assertion in my essay or my practice with my own children. Advocate Two should rather focus on providing faithful and cogent Biblical reasons for his case, which he has yet to do.

ADVOCATE 2 Response

Rules of Interpretation

Our position on birth control is this: since the way God sets things up in the beginning is the pattern for righteous behavior (Ex. 20:8-11; Matt. 19:4-6), and since it is most obvious that God Himself ordained the sex act at the beginning for the purpose of procreation (Gen. 2:24; 1:28; Mal. 2:15; Job 10:10; *Westminster Confession of Faith* XXIV:2), it therefore follows that contraception (which is an intentional thwarting of being fruitful) is forbidden by God unless one can produce *Scriptural justification for it*; i.e. approved example, explicit command, or good and necessary consequences (*WCF* I:6, *Larger Catechism* Q.99:4). This is the

clear teaching of Leviticus 10:1-4, which tells us the story of the sad deaths of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron who were killed by God because they "offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them."

Birth Control is Mandatory in Advocate One's System

In advocating birth control, Advocate One uses these words: "circumstances in which it is *contrary to Godly wisdom to take on familial responsibilities*" and "the types of distresses that *Paul wants believers to avoid*," following them with "the principle stated above will apply to all those circumstances in which such familial

distress occurs — i.e. persecution is not the only situation in which we may temporarily *forego taking on familial responsibilities*." Interpreting I Timothy 5:8, he says, "This principle...*forbids us to place ourselves in situations in which we cannot support our family...*" Even in his new response, he says things like "Scripture forbids us," and "we are obligated to...*act as faithful, active stewards*" (my emphasis). Our opponent makes birth control out to be God's will (and therefore *mandatory*) in certain (very broad) circumstances.

Pharaoh and the Corinthian Distress

Our opponent scrambles about to find some big difference between the

two persecutions mentioned, to justify his assertion that God allowed contraception to the Corinthians, while opposing it for the Israelites! The fact is that the Pharaoh assault was *worse*. The distress of I Corinthians (not even mentioned in II Corinthians, to my knowledge) was of short duration, whereas Pharaoh's campaign soon escalated to encompass the destruction of the entire seed of Israel. If God was opposed to the Israelites in Egypt practicing contraception, He obviously would be opposed during lesser persecutions, which destroys I Corinthians 7 as a "contraceptive proof text." Further, Paul told the Corinthians that the lessons of Old Testament Israel's conduct are binding on Christians (I Cor. 10:1-22; II Cor. 8:13-15).

On I Timothy 5:18

Advocate One asserted that poor Christians who do not practice contraception are guilty of violating this passage. Nehemiah dealt with an even worse case than envisaged by Advocate One, and he did *not* condemn the procreating poor, *even when they are forced to sell some of their children*. Advocate One now asserts that "Nehemiah 5 does not provide us with enough information," with no proof.

On "Endorsing Slavery"

Being in slavery to pagans is not good, but it is better to be a slave and trust God for the consequences, than to never be alive at all. Slavery is bearable and can be rectified (Gen. 50:20; Ex. 6:6; Lev. 25:47-48; Neh. 5:8; I Cor. 7:21), while not conceiving a child is a horrible and much worse catastrophe: a curse — Hosea 9:11; a disgrace — Luke 1:25; a sickness — Genesis 20:17-18; and a source of great bitterness and misery — Genesis 30:1 and I Samuel 1:10-11. (In addition, who thinks that Christians who oppose abortion "endorse" birth defects?)

Excommunication

Advocate One says that not practicing birth control in certain circumstances makes one an enemy of God. Scripture says that enemies of God should be excommunicated. The logical implication is just what we said.

On Nature

We apologize for not stating our position more clearly last time. The paragraph below should help clarify matters.

Although nature is in some circumstances an imperfect teacher, in

others it is a perfectly valid indicator. Nature proves the evil of homosexuality in Romans 1:24-28, and God Himself uses the example of nature ("the land") in Leviticus 18:25, 28; 20:22, when he mentions the putridness of menstrual sex, bestiality, and male homosexuality. All species in nature perform the sexual act in such a manner as to further the cause of procreation, not to hinder it. Note that Advocate One does not dispute this *known fact*, and when he tosses out nature entirely, his quarrel is with the Bible, not me. If nature proves homosexuality wrong, then it also proves contraception wrong.

Is All Past Christian Interpretation "Utterly Irrelevant"?

Reformed theology has always had great respect for the views of the godly of the past, in obedience to Scripture: "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). To quote a well-known Reformed theologian: "Although tradition does not rule out interpretation, it does guide it. If, upon reading a particular passage, you have come up with an interpretation that has escaped the notice of every other Christian for two thousand years, or that has been championed universally recognized heretics, chances are pretty good that you had better abandon your interpretation" (R.C. Sproul, *The Agony of Deceit*, p. 35).

It is a matter of historical fact that all branches of Christianity (and especially the Reformed) strenuously opposed contraception up until well into the corrupt century in which we find ourselves. Before then, it was advocated only by acknowledged heretics (various agnostics) and open enemies of the Christian faith (see, for example, Peter Fryer, *The Birth Controllers*). This is the tree from which "Christian" contraception has sprung, and to which we say, "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18).

Onan Again

The pertinent part of Genesis 38:8-10 says this: "...when he went in unto his brother's wife, that *he spilled it on the ground*, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And *the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him also*." The anti-contraception view is the most obvious: God killed Onan for destroying his seed. Since God Himself says that non-performance of the Levirate duty (regardless of *motive*) is *not* worthy of death (Deut. 25:9), but that Onan's act *was* worthy of death,

this greatly reinforces our interpretation. To get out of this conclusion, it is necessary for Advocate One to come up with more than "this is simplistic;" he must *prove* that Onan *cannot* have been killed for contraception, since he admits that Genesis 1:28 commands Christians to have children. Thus far, all he *has* come up with are historically non-existent interpretations of only two New Testament passages.

Who is Bound by the Procreation Command?

God gave the command after He had *married* Adam and Eve; hence the command applies only to married folks. We may here again observe that for Advocate One to prove that birth control is permissible, he must locate a clear and provable Scripture mandate *for* contraception. He is thus far able to locate only abstention for prayer and related subjects, and this does not prove the justness of contraception any more than my abstaining from sexual relations while I am at work or church proves that I am in favor of birth control. Likewise, his citation of Jeremiah (which we brought up in the first place) proves nothing because abstinence for the unmarried is the Biblical norm.

"Acting Responsibly"

Married Christians, rich or poor, who eschew birth control *are* acting in a very responsible manner: God told us to *have* children, God *made* the children, and *God says He will take care of them for us*.

"An Ugly Assertion"

Advocate One accuses me of distorting his view of children, but it was he who compared having children to the horrible things I mentioned; in fact, I merely lifted them right out of his paper. Please compare my "Trusting in God," paragraph two, with his "Section C," paragraph two.

Concluding Statement

God has ordained sexual relations as the channel through which He sends children (a great reward) to believers (Gen. 2:24; 1:28, Job 10:10; Ps. 127). Many people don't want the children they fear God might send them, and do all in their power to thwart God in this matter. Thus, contraception is fighting against God, and those who practice it are guilty of despising God's gifts (Gen. 25:34; Heb. 12:16).

ADVOCATE 1 Concluding Remarks

I genuinely believe that Advocate Two is very sincere and committed to his position, but if we are faithfully attempting to understand God's Word, then no amount of italicized words, irrelevant citations, or heated denunciations will strengthen our arguments.

Summary of My Initial Case

To summarize where the debate stands at this point, I began the discussion by offering the "foundational argument" of the entire discussion: Whatever activity Scripture does not prohibit is permissible. This is a tremendous liberty to be jealously guarded against all forms of Fundamentalist legalism.

This "foundational argument" implies that the burden of proof lies on those who wish to prohibit some activity. If, for example, a Fundamentalist wants to prohibit drinking, dancing, or dealing, then he bears the burden of demonstrating that prohibition from Scripture. If he fails, then the action is permissible.

In addition to this "foundational argument," I offered as a background consideration that the Cultural Mandate requires us (a) to generally seek the blessings of family life and (b) to behave as active stewards in all of our activities, including family life.

Finally, I argued that I Corinthians 7 demonstrates one of several exceptions to the Cultural Mandate. Paul explicitly advises the Corinthians not to take on familial obligations temporarily, given the tribulations they would face.

Similarly, in I Timothy 5:8, Paul instructs us that we sin greatly by failing to provide for our household. In order to heed this serious injunction, we may find need to temporarily postpone taking on familial obligations, which may, not must, include temporarily delaying having children (given the success of the opening argument).

I concluded my case by rebutting three common objections to birth control: unnaturalness, the Onan incident, and trusting in God.

Summary of Advocate Two's Response

Advocate Two responded by arguing that the prohibition my "foundational argument" needs is supplied by the Cultural Mandate itself, since this norm, he contends, prohibits any form of birth control.

Apart from the rest of his discussion and accusations, the only positive arguments he uses to meet the demand of the "foundational argument" (i.e. his burden to demonstrate that Scripture

prohibits all forms of birth control) is to invoke: unnaturalness, Onan, and trust in God. In all, then, Advocate Two uses four arguments to make his case.

Summary of My Second Response

I responded to these claims by arguing that Advocate Two's use of (1) the Cultural Mandate fails since he requires absolutely no exceptions, but he himself provides us with at least two, apart from my own.

(2) Advocate Two's initial use of unnaturalness fell prey to the reductio that his typing would also be immoral by his argument.

(3) His use of the Onan incident assumed either a terribly simplistic view of actions or begged-the-question.

(4) His particular attempt to use trust in God to make his case is so broad that it falls to the reductio that God approves of actions which we both agree are irresponsible, i.e. refusing to work.

Summary of Advocate Two's Latest Response

In his latest response, Advocate Two claims regarding my response to (1) above that the Cultural Mandate "applies only to married folks." But this is false since the command is also given to animals (1:22) and would imply that God does not require unmarried persons to subdue the earth to God's glory! Moreover, if Advocate Two is correct, then he has supplied us with millions of other exceptions to the Cultural Mandate, namely all those who are not married. Hence, whichever path he takes he abandons his initial argument.

(2) Regarding my response to unnaturalness, he attempts to clarify his position by reasserting it. I gladly bow before any divine interpretation of nature in special revelation, but apart from such a revelation, arguments from nature are arrogant and fallacious. Advocate Two does not provide a divine interpretation for his understanding of nature, but only offers a non-sequitur.

(3) On Onan, Advocate Two refuses to answer my previous questions which I used to demonstrate the simplistic view of actions he holds. Moreover, his entire exegesis becomes grossly suspect when he claims that Deuteronomy 25:9 "says that non-performance of the Levirate duty is *not* worthy of death." This passage says no such thing! Advocate Two is now making up Scriptural declarations.

(4) Advocate Two also refuses to deal with my rebuttals to his view of trust

in God. Hence, my initial reductio still stands.

Since Advocate Two bears the burden of demonstrating that Scripture forbids birth control, and he has only supplied us with these four fallacious arguments, we may safely conclude that he has not made his case.

Side Issues

The Pleasures of Roman Persecution: Advocate Two now contends that slavery (his initial appeal) is worse than the lengthy Roman persecution and, nevertheless, still fails to account for Paul's admonition to the Corinthians.

I Timothy 5:18: Advocate Two falsely forces his "mandatory" interpretation of my argument and then demands proof of a negative assertion. He has not removed his previous fallacies in his use of Nehemiah.

The Authority of Tradition: An appeal to tradition is fallacious when irrelevantly used. Tradition is irrelevant to buttress Advocate Two's initial claim that he does not read his interpretation into the text. Hence, his appeal is fallacious. Moreover, no one, not even Sproul has more authority than Scripture.

The Most Serious Error

Finally, Advocate Two's most serious error in his latest response essentially disqualifies him from a debate on Christian ethics. Advocate Two opens his response by rejecting the primary foundational issue in our discussion. In short, Advocate Two has seriously confused the regulative principles for life and worship. By appealing to Leviticus 10 in this non-worship context and later claiming that I "must locate a clear and provable Scriptural mandate for contraception," he has abandoned the constraints of Biblical ethics. Outside of worship, no believer is required to provide a mandate before he or she may act! As a simple reductio, on Advocate Two's standards we all sin wickedly by watching a baseball game, washing our cars, and using computers, since God does not give us a mandate to do these things. Yet this is absurd and unbiblical. In the end, Advocate Two has failed to provide either a sound or valid argument to prove his prohibition.

I will close by stressing what I began with. We ought to revel in children. Christians ought to have large, glorious families. We ought to oppose humanistic or selfish rationalizations for avoiding family life. But we follow where Scripture leads, and it simply does not forbid us to temporarily postpone family responsibilities in the manner circumscribed earlier. Δ

Book Review

Sham Pearls for Real Swine by Franky Schaeffer

Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1990, 292 pages, \$14.95

Reviewed by Doug Jones

The American church has seen some fascinating changes, good and bad, over the past decade — dispensationalism has waned, the Pro-Life movement has matured, televangelists have scurried, and more. Conjoined to these trends, we witnessed an increased attack on the pietistic sacred/secular distinction that has plagued evangelicalism (and fundamentalism) for much of this century.

Though the Biblical critique of pietism began decades earlier, we saw the fruit of this battle become much more widespread in the early eighties. Anecdotal, consider the average Christian book store in the early eighties. If one could find a text attempting to apply Scripture to social issues, for example, it would be cowering on the bottom of the "Cult & Apologetics" shelf. Now, we commonly find entire aisles dedicated to such discussions.

Franky Schaeffer's award winning *Addicted to Mediocrity* (1980) was instrumental in taking this battle to the streets. That work offered a simple but cogent attack on the dichotomized thinking which had continued to stifle Biblical thought. Though Schaeffer focused on attacking the sacred/secular distinction as it affected the arts, his premises were obviously much broader.

After several years of silence and rumors (such as the false claim that he had become Roman Catholic), Schaeffer is back in print. In *Sham Pearls for Real Swine* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990), Schaeffer continues the battle against pietism, now after a decade of reflection. This latest offering expands on many of the ideas presented in *Addicted to Mediocrity*. He not only continues to press a core of Reformational ideas against contemporary attitudes, he also comments on recent controversies — censorship, Deconstructionism, the National Endowment for the Arts, the attack on Western culture — and also describes, in often painfully honest ways, his numerous personal failures relating to Hollywood and his early film attempts.

Sham Pearls is a breath of fresh air. Schaeffer adeptly vents just

the right amount of Biblical passion and criticism against his objects. He refuses to address issues in typically muffled, abnormally self-sensitive, evangelical tones, though he is not sinfully belligerent. Consider some of the following examples of the familiar poignant Franky Schaeffer style:

On Scripture: "The Bible is not 'nice.' The Bible's tone is closer to that of the late Lenny Bruce than to that of the hushed piety of some ministers."

On Art: "The Arts ask hard questions. Art incinerates polyester/velvet dreams of inner healing and cheap grace."

On Values: "genuine Biblical values have been replaced with lazy middle-American niceties by many Christians."

On Family Life: "You have to beg, borrow, and steal family time from a world bent on distracting you from the most important things in life."

On Children: "...children that rebel against [pietistic Christianity] ... are not rejecting the truth of Christianity, but the silliness, harshness, and finally the lies of pietistic Christianity."

On Cheap Grace: "In much of the church today, Christ is presented as simply a superfriend to help us with our psychological problems."

On Pietistic Selfishness: "'hurting' becomes a badge of self-centered honor."

On Liturgical Escapes: "an overindulgent sacramentalism in which the sacraments begin to take on the magical aura of a talisman — the last being the final refuge of ex-fundamentalist Episcopalian rascals..."

On Anti-intellectualism: "Once, to be a Christian was not to automatically be irrational."

On Rootlessness: "Polyester pietism has not been the norm in Christendom."

On True Piety: "I am free to lie in the arms of my beloved wife and revel in all the senses of sexual intimacy and arousal without any guilty sense that there are activities that are more Christian than making love to her."

On the most important things: "In the end, things boil down to rather simple issues — issues of plain obedience to Christ, simple questions of fi-

delity to one's spouse and children, of remembering that life goes on in spite of our disappointments."

As is evident in the above passages, Schaeffer continues to press several central Reformational themes: All of reality is God's, all of life is religious, all of creation is good, anti-historical Christianity is destructive, Christian culture ought not to be a ghetto-like sub-culture, Christians ought to demonstrate excellence, true piety removes holy facades, etc.

One also finds interesting tidbits surrounding his discussions of these themes. For example, "Dad [Francis Schaeffer] had an early interest in and appreciation of acid rock, and often listened to it and discussed it and other contemporary music with his students...." And the fact that dad also loved "the Beatles 'Sergeant Pepper's,' which he listened to endlessly and discussed avidly and sang along with in his terrible off-key voice."

In contrast to *Addicted to Mediocrity*, Schaeffer has more space to at least begin discussions on several central topics: art and propaganda, the virtue of the "uselessness" of art, nudity and context, censorship, television, and serious family life.

Schaeffer contends that art, in contrast to craft, is "pure expression." Persons produce art to respond to "the deep calling" of their Creator, but involve themselves in crafts "to serve some literal function, for instance, as furniture or pottery." He argues that "useful art," as demanded by much of contemporary evangelicalism, is a contradiction in terms. Art and propaganda, whether Christian or anti-Christian, do not mix. Art, for Schaeffer, "is the expression of the divine *uselessness* of beauty, truth, and reality."

Art used as propaganda soon "ceases to be art and is a less honest than forthright proselytizing." For example:

Oliver Stone's movies will be forgotten as soon as the political climate changes, thus rendering them unintelligible and obsolete. When his movies are forgotten, a film like *Moonstruck* will always have an audience...the human race will always understand a love story.

Though art is "divinely useless," it is far from meaningless. Artists express eternal meanings in their work. They respond to God's own extravagant creativity.

As a corollary of "God's commitment to beauty," Schaeffer contends that "beauty exists independently of the personal taste of the observer. In this sense aesthetics are as absolute as physics."

Schaeffer has not aimed to offer a systematic discussion of any such issues but only to suggest some initial questions for the uninitiated. In fact this lack of systematic treatment is characteristic of the organization of the book. The chapters do not follow any clear progression but instead offer a running commentary on various topics.

One of the more fascinating discussions in a book reflecting on basic questions in aesthetics is his chapter on family life — "Our Children and Ourselves." Schaeffer describes a picture of family life so contrary to our current culture. He attacks trivialized schooling, religion, entertainment, etc. He encourages parents to read aloud to their children, "by the hour," and to create a family environment which glories in the richness of depth of creation.

In this chapter, Schaeffer often captures telling observations in succinct, powerful form. Consider the following:

While many normal young adults do tend to act rather imbecilic at some point in their development (as I certainly did), nevertheless, the concept of out-of-control "teenagerhood," as we know it today, is an invention of our failed, middle class, television saturated society. It is a concept used as an excuse, as if it were a force of nature beyond our control, to explain parents' and educators' failures to discipline children and to introduce them to the world of ideas. "Teenagerhood" is a handy excuse to use when explaining the resulting chaos caused by these "children" as they are let loose on society by parents who have failed to be good stewards of this most precious gift, their children.

Despite the positive affirmations in *Sham Pearls*, Schaeffer also leaves the reader seeking clarification on many points. In his attempt to speak to many diverse parts of the Christian community, Schaeffer appears to be reveal some underlying tensions in his own thinking. For example, he fights all forms of anti-Western ideologies — feminists, racists, Decon-

structionists, pietists, etc. — but he does not appear to want to draw any distinctions within the "glories" of "Greek-Roman-Christian" culture. Surely we can appreciate the expressions of common grace in our heritage and yet still strongly reject Greek-Roman opposition to Christian culture. Does Schaeffer's call for "creating a cultural rebirth of the West" run into any conflict with a call for a Spirit led transformation of an anti-Christian culture by a rich and comprehensive, yet exclusive gospel of Christ?

The reader will find other tensions as well. For example in opposing pietism, Schaeffer, to his credit, will often make statements such as: "God's law as expressed in the Scriptures. His instruction, is not a series of moral or pious sayings; it is a set of practical

**The Bible is not 'nice.'
The Bible's tone is closer
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rules by which our biological, mechanical bodies and our non-biological spirits can function and prosper."

Yet, in an unqualified manner, he will also argue that: "If Western democratic capitalism, for instance, produces prosperity and freedom, the follower of Truth does not need to scavenge the Bible for support of his thesis in favor of free markets." Which is it? Do we gain genuine wisdom from Biblical standards or do we argue by some natural scheme of creation?

Apart from such apparent tensions, *Sham Pearls* is a fresh challenge in the current evangelical desert. The book is a joy to read, assuming one can ignore Schaeffer's annoying tendency to overplay his discussions by unnecessarily quoting just about everyone in Western culture.

Apart from quoting everyone, Schaeffer will also probably offend everyone as well. This is a virtue; there is a rebuke for everyone. Try to escape from the following paragraphs under "Garbage of the Soul":

The little Bible verse stuck on refrigerators, the bad Sunday school illustrations, the feeble and bland Sunday school texts of the "be nice to everybody" variety that Christian publishers specialize in, the many church programs, the lack of interest in the arts or their propagandistic misuse, the many little rules that have been added to God's few and sensible instructions, the "niceness" of so many Christians when toughness of mind is called for, the lack of courage, the laws of God that have been abandoned, the strange tangents churches go off on, the obnoxious bad taste, the contents of the average evangelical bookstore, the pre-dominance of hair-sprayed charlatans who lead much of the church, the cultic overtones of the evangelical-fundamentalist school movement, the lesbian-feminist inroads into the liberal denominations, the feminized wimps who pass for men in the evangelical world, the insular closed minds, the easily shocked sensibilities of the middle class and their taboos, the harsh rules of the fundamentalist churches, the increased New Age emphasis on inner healing and so called counseling, the "Liberation" theology — these things and the list could go on, are related in one way or another, to the unnatural, pietistic division of life into religious versus secular, sacred versus rational.

Schaeffer begins his work by conceding that he is not an expert on the issues he raises. He seeks only to "generate a robust discussion of the problems and ideas" presented in *Sham Pearls*. If the reader remembers that then he will not fall into the errors of a reviewer like Doug LeBlanc (*World*, June 16, 1990) who gets so heated over *Sham Pearls* that he mistakes the book for some definitive and grandiose arrogant statement. Confidence in the Christian worldview should not be confused with arrogance.

This confidence, so evident in *Sham Pearls*, is the most refreshing aspect of the book. The evangelical community needs to understand this Biblical boldness, a faith not on the defensive, a faith unafraid of truth. Δ

Novelty, Nonsense, and Non-Sequiturs

Idolatry of Gender-Obsession

Consider the following flagellation as evidence of a gender-obsessed culture choking on gnats:

"We got edgy, some of us, increasingly restive. Every week, three times in one hour, the word would come soaring out from the Bible on the lectern...and with frustrating frequency, clobber some of us...with the jarring intrusion of this-is-not-meant-for-me.

We'd hear the Pauline grandeur of "brothers in Christ" and hear our inner voices whisper, "I'll never be a brother."...The inner whispering, the outrage, the mental editing — it got to be too much. It was getting in the way of our worship.

...There were people who needed inclusive language, there were people who wanted to work on it; and from Advent 1981 on, the successive design teams agreed to do just that.

...We have indeed been changed. The dire warnings from the tents of orthodoxy are right: It's a slippery slope we set our feet upon....We thought we were setting out to deal with language about God's people, and we found ourselves confronted with language about God's own self. We set out to clarify, and we ended up changing some as well. We began by struggling with pronouns, and we ended up struggling with the patriarchy in which all of scripture seems to be set."

Laura Mol, "Wrestling With the Living Word"
Sojourners May 1990

Defining Big Business

"The environmental movement has found its necessary enemy in the form of that ubiquitous evil...Big Business.

Now you might think Big Business would be hard to define in this day of leveraged finances and interlocking technologies. Not so. Big Business is every kind of business except the kind from which the person who's complaining draws his pay.

Thus the Rock-Around-the-Rain-Forest crowd imagines record companies are a cottage industry. The Sheen family considers movie conglomerates to be a part of the arts and crafts movement. And Ralph Nader thinks the wholesale lobbying of Congress by huge tax-exempt, public-interest advocacy groups is akin to working the family farm."

P.J. O'Rourke
The Rolling Stone June 1990

Convince Bart Simpson

Senator Edward Kennedy recently argued on the Senate floor that:

"There is no better way to inspire a child's interest in science than by analyzing and cleaning up a polluted stream."

Pastors Who Play With Matches...

Times...they are a changin'. In the good old days the only fire associated with ministers was the kind preached about. But these days the fire has moved into the pews...literally.

On Sunday, June 10, Paul Bray, Jr., a Seventh-day Adventist minister doused part of his church building with gasoline and then proceeded to set it on fire.

Apparently motivated by a desire to collect on an insurance policy to help remodel his church, Bray eluded police at first but later fessed up, claiming that he didn't intend to burn the entire building.

Victimized by Protestantism

Glenwood Davis, Jr., is a former Baptist and Presbyterian minister who is now a convert to Roman Catholicism. In a recent issue of *This Rock* (May 1990), Davis clearly demonstrates his gross misunderstanding of Biblical theology by describing one of his steps to conversion in this way:

My heart was deeply touched to learn of the Virgin's concern over the centuries for Christ's people, of her well-documented visitations to Earth, and of the noble and true friends called saints who were praying for me and who would teach me by holy example to love God wholeheartedly.

The Federal Reserve Confesses

The *Free Market* offered the following observations regarding recent Federal Reserve advice to the Soviet Union.

The man from Gosbank was astounded to hear Mr. Angell [a governor of the Federal Reserve Bank] strongly recommend an immediate return of the Soviet Union to the gold standard....As Angell stated, "the first thing your government should do is define your monetary unit of account, the ruble, in terms of a fixed weight of gold and make it convertible at that weight to Soviet citizens, as well as to the rest of the world."

"...It is my belief," Angell continued, "that without an honest money, Soviet citizens cannot be expected to respond to the reforms," whereas a "gold backed ruble would be seen as an honest money at home and would immediately trade as a convertible currency internationally."

...What, then, is Mr. Angell really saying? What is he really telling the Soviet central banker? He is saying that the United States and other Western governments have been able to get away with imposing what he concedes to be *dishonest* money.

△

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The "real world" -- an idea no longer of any use, not even a duty any longer -- an idea grown useless... a refined idea: let us abolish it!

Richard M. Black

...they became futile in their understanding, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools..

Romans 1:21-22

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ANTITHESIS

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I was in the process of covering up my crime when suddenly God saw me. I felt His gaze inside my head and on my hands. I whirled about in the bathroom, horribly visible, a live target...

...He doesn't exist, I said with polite surprise; never have I had the temptation to bring Him back to life. But the Other One remained, the Holy Ghost, the one who guaranteed my morality...

...I called the Holy Ghost in the collar and threw him out; atheism is a cruel affair... I've given up the office but not the brick: I still write. What else can I do?

John Paul Stevens

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them...they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God.

Romans 1:18, 19, 21

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