

The Christian Homeland Debate

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A Very, Very Modest Proposal: Is It Time For Christians to Consider a Separate "Christian Homeland"?

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The Jews have already done it. The Palestinians are in the process. Both Afrikaaners and Zulus in the “new South Africa” are agitating for it. Numerous ethnic/religious groups are likewise agitating. The Puritans did something like it long ago. What is “it”? It is the establishment of a political nation-state by and for very particular groups for very particular reasons—a “homeland” in modern terms. However, is this something Christians ought to be considering given the fact that the uniqueness of the political nation of Israel passed away with the establishment of the New Covenant and thus the Church is no longer specially tied to any one civil state?

I propose that it is at least time to think carefully about such a new nation and I am setting forth a number of elementary thoughts below—starting points for further discussion. Let me say at the outset that in general when I use the term “Christian” here I mean Calvinism. Thus the Christian “homeland” of which I speak would be a Calvinist “neo-Puritan” civil state.

First let us consider why we might even desire such a state. In doing so let us be clear about this: Whether *or not* a Christian chooses to participate in any Christian State “movement” should in no way be seen as any kind of test of orthodoxy. (For example, Oliver Cromwell very seriously considered leaving England for the new Puritan commonwealth in America; but he stayed and led the Puritans to a temporary victory in England. However the transitory nature of this victory and aftermath gives rise to a reason for such a homeland, which we will consider later.) So, then, why a Christian homeland?

1. A Christian homeland would be a sanctuary for Christians to seek temporary or permanent safety in, in the event of tyranny or persecution (in America, for instance). This in itself could be a great benefit even where many choose not to take advantage of it. When circumstances in England were “good”, only a trickle of Puritans (and other groups) came to America; during Anglo-Catholic persecutions the migration was more like a flood.

2. A Christian homeland could present us with our first modern opportunity (speaking from a postmillennial perspective, not the last) to “model” to the world a true Christian Commonwealth, “a shining city on a hill”. It could be the first—the prototype—of many to come in the future (though I suspect it could be the only one for some time). Thus I do not speak of such a state in the same way a Jew might (i.e., uniquely Israel and only Israel—the “promised land”); however I do hold that it could be an appropriate model or pattern as well as an appropriate (interim) protective measure.

3. Some Christians who believe in the morality and constitutionality of secession (as I do) also believe that secession of a state or group of states in America is viable short-term hope, thus effectively creating a Christian nation without totally “reinventing the wheel”. Humanly-speaking I am not so sure I hold this hope (since the “new South” has such an admixture of paganism and ostensible Christianity and the central government is much more powerful than ever before) and I am not at all sure that even if there were some “new Confederate States of America” that it would really be Christian (as opposed to vaguely more conservative and traditionalist—in other words not a self-consciously Calvinist “theocracy”). For secession and a Christian state to occur huge numbers of Christians would have to relocate to overwhelm the large urban liberal pockets. America is no longer so neatly geographically and culturally/religiously differentiated as it perhaps once was.

4. I also hold the hope that America (and indeed the other nations of the world) will someday be converted (as nations) to Christianity, through evangelism and gradual reform. However, rationally I do not believe we can honestly say that that will happen soon. For the time being the world (and increasingly America) is hostile to full-orbed Christianity. Why should we tolerate such a situation *if* we have an alternative. God does not command us to be persecuted. If we can escape (and choose to do so) to a new land where we can freely serve our God as He commands and from which we can send ministers and missionaries to the rest of the world, then why should we not allow ourselves this option (if of course it is available). Samuel Rutherford, well-aware of the Puritan migrations to America, spoke of this as one among several legitimate means of resisting tyrannical civil authority and even secular political theorists refer to this as 'voting with one's feet'. One might say it is a type of strategic retreat and regrouping to prepare for a much longer and larger conflict (from a safe haven).

Now of course there are some objections to the concept of a Christian homeland. Some of these objections are quite secularistic in that there are many (even within the Church) who have a problem with any Christian state or “theocracy”. These are the people whom we would call Pluralists and who would argue that a political entity where all manner of religions are mixed is intrinsically good. I have very serious disagreements with the Pluralists and I shall not deal with the pluralist arguments here. Rather I will discuss the more serious arguments which are sure to be raised by Calvinist neo-Puritans who hold a Biblical Law socio-political ethic.

1. We (i.e., using God's means and relying on His Sovereignty) can and will

“convert” America and all nations in time and so we do not need to concern ourselves with artificially creating a new Christian nation. I too believe that *someday* all nations will “kiss the Son”. However such an eschatological position does not morally or logically preclude efforts to create one such political entity now, for reasons already mentioned.

2. We can get part of the US to secede. Again, while I hold to secessionism, I honestly do not see it happening as the South and West have been “paganized” to a large extent and the national government would probably react more violently, tyrannically, and deceitfully (using the leverage of vast quantities of federal money) now than in 1861-65+.

3. There is no unoccupied, available place left in the world where a new Christian homeland/state could be established. This is a very important feasibility issue. It is at least factually debatable. There are some regions or nations today which are virtually uninhabited (or extremely sparsely settled and at least potentially 'available'. (See number 4 below.) I will leave a specific sampling of such areas to an appendix selectively available. (At this point the reader will have to forgive me for being somewhat melodramatic: but the truth is that if “talk” of a Christian homeland ever became serious, then widespread public discussion of specific area currently under the political sovereignty of other governments could be extremely sensitive. At this stage and at this level I will leave such issues mostly to the speculation of the reader. Just pull out a World Atlas and a World Almanac.)

4. If there are potentially available territories outside the US they would have to be seized by force (direct military action or a type of “guerilla warfare”). This is not only not true but is biblically illegitimate, being akin to an Old Testament “Holy War” (abolished with the new “dispensation” and the related passing away of the unique political place of Israel) or an Islamic *jihad* (anti-christian). In some places enough Christian settlers *could* easily *democratically* “absorb” an existing political entity. In other situations we might negotiate a special kind of *deal* with an existing nation to 'carve out' a portion of its territory. (E.g. the Balfour agreement setting the stage for the State of Israel, the long-term lease of Hong Kong from China, or the very possible creation of Zulu and/or Afrikaaner states out of South Africa.) Certainly we cannot say that any of this will be done; however I do not believe we are in a position to say absolutely this cannot be done.

5. Very few Christians would settle in a new land even if such a nation-state were established. History and human nature tell us that the vast majority of Christians (let us say in America) probably would not give up livelihoods, possessions, and perceived relative stability to start “from scratch” as it were in a new nation, unless statism and/or persecution reached unacceptable levels. Even then many will remain to “fight the good fight” and certainly they could not be faulted for that.

Nevertheless given the increasing secularization of America I believe that a fairly large group of Calvinist “pioneers” would settle in and defend a Christian homeland—for the

cause of Christ. Nor must we ignore the possibility of Calvinist settlers from other parts of the world (who might face far greater hardship than Americans)—e.g. Christian Afrikaaners (and not all Afrikaaners are Christians) from South Africa.

6. It is a waste of time and money with no “chance” of success. We do not know that. For that reason we should give serious consideration to exploring all options. Perhaps an organization needs to be created to 'represent' those who want a Christian homeland. If interest and numbers are sufficient this 'representation' would involve not only information and publications but also real negotiations with existing government(s), a political organization, “linkages” with other Calvinists and Calvinist groups around the world, and perhaps even a “shadow government” (a kind of “government-in-exile”, except without a previously existing state) which is prepared to rule, and which has already drawn up a law code and constitution (based on Biblical Law).

7. This “plan” is escapist and separatistic. Yes and no. Certainly it would involve 'escaping' from a corrupt and tyrannical state to a state founded on Biblical justice. However it is not an attempt to escape from the world in some literal sense. To the contrary it should be the intent of such a new state to be a beacon and model to the rest of the current world, to interact with other nations and peoples with the comprehensive Gospel, all from a protected “base”. Certainly it would involve separation from unrighteous government. Here again however the negative separation would be designed for a positive impact. It is most certainly not an escapist scheme in the 'rapturist' sense at all; if it were then why build a civil state?

We might finally address the issue of what such a new Christian Republic would look like, if indeed it ever did come into existence. We need not be detailed here, as there is a pretty broad consensus among Calvinists regarding civil government—at least among “neo-Puritan” Calvinists. Suffice to say that we are not talking about some utopia, but rather a Biblical “theocracy” (*not* ecclesiocracy) with a Bible-based legal code, a constitution very similar to the American one (except that the Christian one would explicitly recognize the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ, would have fairly detailed oaths and religious tests for public office, voting rights, citizenship, etc.), a separation of powers and a very limited government with provision for much local (but also limited) autonomy, a complete and true free enterprise economy (perhaps making this state economically similar to Hong Kong, which will be lost to the Communists in 1997), a strong voluntary well-trained defense militia (in some ways like Israel's, Switzerland's, and the old South Africa), and a basically “isolationist” (i.e. noninterventionist) foreign policy (with absolutely no relations or intercourse with any Communist or anti-Christian totalitarian states, such as China, Cuba, or Iran).

One last point. If a Christian homeland becomes a reality expect the “world community” to be extremely hostile. No doubt a Biblical Christian “theocracy” is more abhorrent and dangerous to the world intelligentsia today than an Islamic ecclesiocracy. This means that those who might participate in founding such a nation could face the same threats as those who founded modern-day Israel (except of course for a different cause). It would

become vitally important from the outset to be absolutely certain that the glory of God is the driving force and cause.

Is it time for Christians to consider a “homeland”? I think so and I welcome the opening of dialogue on what must seem to be unusual proposal. I suspect however that among many Calvinists this is a subject that has already been meditated upon, with no one daring to raise it publicly. Now is the time; who knows but that future generations of Calvinist Christians will look back to this day as “the founding era”. Only by the Grace of our Sovereign God. May we be used to advance His Kingdom here in this world by all Biblically appropriate means.

Reply to Clauson's “Very, Very Modest Proposal”

T.E. Wilder

Before we can consider the question of a Christian homeland, we must consider what a homeland is and what sort of group can have one. A homeland is for a nation. What is a nation?

Jean-Marc Berthoud has recently published a [series of articles](#) exploring this question.¹ He finds five essential aspects to nations:

Land: the geographical element.

Tongues: the linguistic element (this element came into play only after the construction of the tower of Babel).

Families: the racial, hereditary or atavistic element.. Nationality: the political element.

Finally, that element which provided the indispensable social cement without which no nation can subsist, the *generations* mentioned in Genesis 10:32. The latter represents the rallying point, that common ancestor of every nation, that figure (real or mythical) with whom each family, clan or nation can identify itself and in whom they all find the historical foundation of their collective loyalty and unity.²

From a Biblical-covenantal point of view we need to begin our understanding of the concept of nation from the table of seventy nations in Genesis 10, “the generations of the sons of Noah”.³ In context we find this after the account of God's covenant with Noah and his seed “for perpetual generations”. (9:12) Here the origins of many of the major national groups are traced, seventy in all. For example, in verse 31: “These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.” Israel, a special and in some ways unique nation later created by God, was to be a nation of priests for the

1 Jean-Marc Berthoud, “The Bible and the Nations”, *Calvinism Today/Christianity & Society*, 1993-1994. This series needs to be published as a book.

2 Berthoud, Vol iv, 1, January 1994, p. 12.

3 *The New International Perversion*, with its Evangelical bias, obscures this point.

nations. Hence seventy people went up into Egypt, seventy bulls were used in sacrifice, etc. The rôle of nations as objects of God's dealing and concern is continued in the New Covenant. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes to the nations and they each hear in their own language. We are to look for the evangelization and conversion of the nations each in their own particular identity.

What I cannot find in the foregoing “Modest Proposal” is any such idea of nation. If Dr. Clauson were to speak of a homeland for the remnant of American Christians, then I could at least see some connection to the Biblical idea, but he only mentions Christians in some amorphous sense, as though that were enough to constitute a common culture and identity.

When God promises to prosper his Gospel, and bring the nations to obedience to Christ, he is making a promise for the conversion of nations, not Christians in some deracinated sense. I therefore could have no assurance of God's blessing upon such an enterprise as “The Modest Proposal” suggests.

There is another somewhat related matter in which Dr. Clauson misses the force of the Biblical material on nations. This occurs in point 4 where he says that seizing territory by force is “biblically illegitimate”. It may be so, but not for the reasons he states, i.e. that it is “akin to an Old Testament 'Holy War' (abolished with the new 'dispensation' and the related passing away of the unique political place of Israel)”.

It is frequently claimed that Israel's conquest of Palestine has no parallel among other nations, first because God only authorized (commanded) this in the one case of Israel and Palestine, and secondly because this conquest was related to Israel's unique redemptive mission. Further, because this redemptive mission is an Old Covenant one, the conquest of Palestine has no parallel today, unless it be in some spiritualized sense in which the nations are conquered by being converted. But let us see what the Bible says.

Chapters 2 and 3 of Deuteronomy record the conquest of the territories east of the Jordan. The first thing to notice is that this is *not* the conquest of Canaan. Moses is still in charge, though he was not to be permitted to enter the promised land. Further, when the conquest of Canaan was to begin the people had to undergo dedication and purification, including circumcision. That was not required here. We have in Deuteronomy a conquest and displacement of nations that was not part of Israel's priestly cleansing of the holy land of promise.

What is more, Deuteronomy repeatedly underlines the parallel between what Israel does here and what other nations do.

Give the people these orders: “You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your

foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own.” (2:2-6)

Then the Lord said to me, “Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.” (The Emmites used to live there—a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. Like the Anakites, they too were considered Rephaites, but the Moabites called them Emmites. Horites used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out. They destroyed the Horites from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the Lord gave them as their possession.) (2:9-12)

Now when the last of these fighting men among the people had died, the Lord said to me, “Today you are to pass by the region of Moab at Ar. When you come to the Ammonites, do not harass them or provoke them to war, for I will not give you possession of any land belonging to the Ammonites. I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot.” (That too was considered a land of the Rephaites, who used to live there; but the Ammonites called them Zamzummites. They were a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. The Lord destroyed them from before the Ammonites, who drove them out and settled in their place. The Lord had done the same for the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them. They drove them out and have lived in their place to this day. And as for the Avvites who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorites coming out from Caphtor destroyed them and settled in their place.) (2:16-23)

Thus a strong parallel is made, and underlined by repetition, between the conquest of the Rephaites east of the Jordan by Israel and by the other nations. The elimination of wicked, degenerate peoples through conquest and displacement by others is from the hand of God, and is a principle of history, not something uniquely tied to Israel or to Israel's priestly calling. Rather than Israel's conquest east of the Jordan being based on “the unique political place of Israel” it is related to Israel's character as a nation *like the others*.

Now, if this is no longer the case under the New Covenant it must be because of a radical discontinuity of dispensationalist proportions in God's administration of history. Such a discontinuity has to be proved.

That is not to say that we may simply go out to conquer nations and throw them off their land. But it does show that the basis Dr. Clauson offers for his position is not correct. Further there is a similarity between his mistake here and his overlooking of the national factor when discussing a Christian homeland. For he looking at Israel's rôle merely in terms of an Old Covenant church, and misses its status as a special nation (but still a nation) amid other nations, all of whom are encompassed within God program in history.

In passing, we should notice that aspects of Biblical law such as the execution of habitual

criminals would, if implemented right now, involve the execution of as many of a third of the males of some ethnic groups, so that in that sense the establishment of a Christian state, whether by reform, secession or a new homeland, in an area where such peoples reside, would have an impact not dissimilar to Israel's conquest of Canaan. Mostly pagan people would not live under Biblical law and would be "driven out" by it. In addition, banning of acts not currently criminalized would have even a more extensive effect. Imagine the impact of enforcing laws against adultery and blasphemy, for example! Since the liberals are now trying to enforce their mores through legal codes, and since they tax us and use our money to indoctrinate the youth in degeneracy, we don't owe them any consideration. Under modern conditions (easy travel, the majority of occupations not tied to the soil) they would not stay. They would move on to some place that indulged their proclivities. (And since liberals have no loyalties to place or nation, why feel sorry for them? What would they be losing beyond the moving expenses?)

One might also reflect on the providential development of national changes in the last three hundred years. It has not been so long since Livingston was searching for the source of the Nile. The headwaters of the Mississippi were explored a hundred years earlier. The main reason was that disease kept Europeans out of much of Africa, while disease destroyed most of the native population of the Americas.

While Dr. Clauson rates a new homeland as a more reachable goal than secession, I am inclined to view matters the other way around. Hostile as the powers in the world are to secession, they hate new sovereign entities even more. There have been attempts to create new states, as for example the Republic of Minerva. In this case some individuals appropriated and began to develop an unoccupied atoll. They were annexed, invaded and expropriated by a nation in the area, and the world court ruled that individuals cannot acquire sovereignty except by grant from an existing sovereign state.

The only way to achieve standing as a new state is to have people in place who occupy and defend it. (This probably requires mountains or some similar barrier to mechanized warfare.) Otherwise no claims to sovereignty will be recognized, even if contracted and paid for. No nation would be required to honor its contract to sell land and sovereignty to the would-be founders of a new nation.

The Positive Side

Much that would be preparation for a homeland scheme needs to be done anyway. It would be useful to identify these elements of a common program, which can be shared with those seeking either secession or reform, as far as possible.

First, the number of people committed to a Reformed civilizational perspective must be increased through reaching the Evangelicals. The Evangelical world is in bad and declining condition because the Evangelical leadership is married to the spirit of this age and refuses to oppose the growth of heresy in its midst. Because the Evangelical

movement originated in a break from modernist mainline churches, and because the people have in the meantime been reading their Bibles, there is a substantial element in Evangelicalism that senses that things in their churches are going the wrong way, and would consider alternatives if properly and effectively offered. Ways must be found to teach a full covenantal theology and attract people out of the Evangelical churches. This must be done over the heads of their leaders, who will try to block such evangelism. Whether we seek reform, secession or a homeland we need greater numbers of Reformed people, and the Evangelicals need to be rescued from sub-biblical, apostatizing leadership.

Second, people need to break their attachment to enervating, compromising organizations and programs. An example is the Republican party. Many Christians think it a great misfortune that Bush was not reelected, although Clinton is simply a Bush clone. Clinton pursues the same agenda, but is able to do so more openly and rapidly, in that most of the particular voting block he relied on to reach power does not have to be deceived as Republicans must deceive conservative voters. Whether we seek reform, secession or a homeland we need to learn not to give our support to our enemies by voting Republican. There may be hunks of the party that are sound enough to tear off and save, but in general it is in everyone's interest to destroy the party. (Nevertheless, we should monitor current upheavals in the Party for signs of change. The Democrats seem more ready than ever before to campaign as an openly anti-Christian party, and the success of some Republicans in standing for morality is pushing so-called moderate, closet Democrat, Republican politicians nearer the exit gate.)

A similar cultural institution from which Christians must separate themselves is the public schools. It is another false saviour and absorbs enormous funds and efforts, including wasted reform efforts. Moreover, both homeland and secession movements are furthered by the natural effects of Christian withdrawal and lengthening absence from public schools. As pagan Americans and the various new immigrant groups, who are hostile to the received American culture (which is why the liberals favor immigration both legal and, even more, illegal), stay together in the public schools and amalgamate, they will become a separate culture from the American culture of the past and from home educated Christians. The latter will be learning to read widely, reason cogently and express themselves lucidly. The better we can make home school education the greater the emerging differences.

This leads to another project: the creation of an excellent home school and Christian school curriculum which teaches all that needs to be taught from basic skills to theological or civic concepts. Anyone who can do something to improve the content, increase the effectiveness of methods, or lower the costs for Christian education is making one of the most important contributions possible for all our causes.

This assumes that we have something to say, and therefore teach, about the basic concepts in nationhood, government, and culture that would be foundational to projects of reform, secession, or creating a homeland. Frankly, I don't see much happening here.

There needs to be much more research, publishing and debate. This means getting basic works into print and interesting people in reading them. One such work is being published by others. Liberty Fund is bringing out Johannes Althusius's *Politics*, and we plan to feature it in *Contra Mundum*. But how many of you will buy and read it? Works such as Jean-Marc Berthoud's *The Bible and the Nations* need to be circulated in book form. If the interest and money for small projects such as these does not exist, than proposing anything further is a joke. But just try to publish such a work and see how much interest there is! It does not amount to much. Where is the intellectual community that receives, debates and develops these ideas?

Another area in which Christians would need to develop expertise is in the technology for data and communications. In promoting his Internet and electronic publishing conference Gary North has the right idea. One great barrier to our ideas is the current book distribution system which is slow, doubles the costs, and only retails at any outlet a small fraction of what is published. We need to develop a library of basic works in hypertext format for electronic delivery. (I notice that one of last year's trendy left-wing revisionist histories is now out as multimedia in the cd-rom stores for home educational use. The left understands the importance of these things.) Other technological issues are the privacy, security, access, and freedom of electronic communications.

(If you are a newsletter publisher, start considering an e-mail edition of your publication. Find out how many of your recipients have e-mail addresses and would prefer to get your newsletter that way. By becoming accustomed to this sort of publishing and working out the bugs now, you will be ready to make a conversion if an emergency, economics, or breakdown in overland distribution of mail, forces a change. Also, if you accustom yourself to new technology, you will be more likely to come up with innovations, enhancements and new services that will give you new income or a competitive advantage.)

Finally, a proposal of a Christian homeland can focus attention on basic questions and problems that need research and discussion. Instead of adjusting the status quo in some pragmatic fashion, the fundamental problems of government, economics, civil society and the nature of culture would come under careful and systematic scrutiny. This will be of help to all of us, regardless of what we think of the viability of the Christian homeland project.

Reply to T.E. Wilder

Keven L. Clauson

I welcome the opportunity to respond to [Mr. Wilder's response](#). At the outset let it be clear that what I “propose” will be considered radical even by most Christians (by Reformed Christians). Still I want this proposal to be preliminary. Neither I nor anyone else to my knowledge has crossed every “t” or dotted every “i” on this complex subject. Let me begin by responding to Mr. Wilder's discussion of the identity of a nation-state. I think it very clear I am referring to Calvinist neo-Puritan Christians forming/establishing a separate homeland and I say so in the 2nd paragraph of my paper, reaffirming that identity in the last three paragraphs. Now admittedly I suppose I could have been even plainer; however the readership of this journal understands perfectly well what kind of a “people” I am talking about. In line with a very old Reformed tradition, when I use the term “Christian” I mean Reformed, for Reformation Christianity and Calvinism *is* Christianity in its fullness. (See J. Gresham Machen for example).

Regarding Mr. Wilder's discussion of “holy wars”, I *do* maintain that there *is* a distinct discontinuity between Old Covenant and New Covenant when it comes to one national physically and without provocation going out “to conquer nations and throwing them off their land”. Of course Israel was a nation even while being a “special nation”. However it does not follow and cannot be shown biblically that this would allow a group of “Christians” (Calvinists/Reformed/neo-Puritan remember) to militarily take an existing nation's territory. It is true that the overthrow of wicked, degenerate nations (then and now) is from the hand of God. However the discontinuity we should see in scripture is that the means God uses have changed. When He does so today He may well use another nation (Christian or pagan) to accomplish it but He does not command in a “Positive” way Christendom to do it. Surely if this were *not* so biblically (and I believe it is) then “we” could begin gathering weapons and making battle plans now and in a relatively short time “take” (literally!) a small, sparsely populated nation (such as Belize in Central America e.g.).

Mr. Wilder is certainly correct about the application of biblical law. So as to avoid outright rebellion the idea would be to obtain territory as sparsely populated by the “pagan natives” as possible. Those remaining would indeed be either “driven out”, required to “conform” (at least outwardly), or executed (*if* a capital crime). I don't “feel sorry” for unrepentant pagans (though I would consider a “grace period” during which time the remaining natives would be clearly informed—in their language—of detailed law and gospel, after which time all biblical law would go into effect). My point is to avoid living with them when you first establish the Christian homeland; afterwards if the

civil state must deal with a relative few “modern Canaanites” who chose to remain, then so be it.

I agree that the world powers “hate new sovereign entities” (unless of course they are “politically correct”, which this state would most certainly not be). However whether secession in American or creation of a new entity is more “reachable goal” is not something I would feel comfortable speaking authoritatively on. I would be more than happy to see secession instead of a “new homeland”. As Mr. Wilder says, “the only way to achieve standing as a new state is to have people in place who occupy and defend it”. This is precisely what I propose; if such territory can be obtained or might we say “seized” in a local sense, since one way hypothetically to go about this is to locate a very unsettled area within an existing nation, move a fairly large group of Reformed “settlers” there over time, and then in time declare an independent enclave. Now there are indeed two potential “hitches” to this—1) the original state could “catch on” and “nip it in the bud” if it has the power to do so, or 2) after “independence” is declared the original state could attack, again if it has sufficient military might, which the “Christian state” would want to be prepared to meet. Hence the necessity of a very strong defense force.

On “The Positive Side” I could not agree more about the things that need to be done. As far as political parties are concerned, although it was not the direct subject of my article, I believe that it is time for an explicitly Reformed Christian political party. It may not win elections (at least right away). It may become a vehicle for secession or a homeland. While it is still acceptable to vote for some Republicans, I am fearful that the 'dirty little secret' of the Republican Party as a collective organization is that it does not wish to 'antagonize' the Christian community *nor* does it wish to follow a truly biblical policy agenda either. If this is not true then let the Republican Party say so: however there are indeed signs of reform in parts of the Republican Party (i.e., in some states such as Virginia and Arizona). We shall have to see where that goes.

Concluding Remarks

T.E. Wilder

In reading over Dr. Clauson's reply to my critique it was born in on me that I had not made myself sufficiently clear. He begins for example by stating that Calvinist Christians were the people for whom he was proposing a homeland. I had sought to make a point that Christians do not constitute a people in a national sense. Do they speak the Christian language? Do they eat Christian food prepared following traditional Christian recipes? Well, what will the people in Clauson's proposed homeland do? He does not talk about what people they are to be, just what religion they will follow. Take for example Franklin Sanders's Christian nation in his novel *Heiland*. There is no mistaking the Southern character of this nation.

Dr. Clauson contends that the precedent of Israel does not allow a group of Christians “to militarily take and existing nations territory”, but immediately concedes that a Christian nation may do it. Well this is my point: either there is some nation in view, or there isn't, and the legitimacy of a homeland hinges on it.

He seems, nevertheless to have some objection to the idea, though it is not clear what it is. What he seems to regard negatively at the end of paragraph two in his reply seems to be what he is advocating in paragraph three and four.

A is a covenantal entity. Like a family, it has a federal headship (in Israel the elders, and in a later era the king) who is responsible before God. Like a family, a nation also is a natural entity. Like a family, it leads a common life and shares a common destiny. How does this come

It is very difficult to know people and I don't think one can ever really know any but one's own countrymen. For men and women are not only themselves, they are also the region in which they were born, the city apartment or the farm in which they learnt to walk, the games they played as children, the old wives' tales they overheard, the food they ate, the schools they attended, the sports they followed, the poets they read, and the God they believed in. It is all these things that have made them what they are, and these are the things that you can't come to know by hearsay, you can only know them if you have lived them. You can only know them if you are them. And because you cannot know persons of a nation foreign to you except from observation, it is difficult to give them credibility in the pages of a book. Even so subtle and careful an observer as Henry James, though he lived in England for forty years, never managed to create an Englishman who was through and through English.

-- W. Somerset Maugham, *The Razor's Edge*.

about? How does the entity Dr. Clauson has in mind come into being? Is he thinking in terms of the characteristics of a real nation?

This again underlines the need for Christian political and social theory, and almost no one is writing or reading it.

Christian Culture and the New Homeland

A Response to some Issues Raised in Contra Mundum No. 13

Stephen C. Perks

I was surprised, but much more intrigued by the article in No. 13 (Fall 1994) on “A Very, Very Modest⁴ Proposal: [Is It Time for Christians to Consider a Separate ‘Christian Homeland’?](#)” I offer the following comments in the hope that they might stimulate the discussion and lead to further exchanges, which I think may be useful and instructive whether or not such an idea ever gets off the ground. I also offer some comments on Ruben's article, “[The Judicial Role of the Church,](#)” and David Rocket's article “[Power-Politics vs Ecclesiastical Cultures](#)” since these subjects also criss-cross with discussion of what would be involved in setting up a Christian state.

Unlike the USA Britain is a theocratic nation in covenant with the God of the Bible. True, it is largely apostate; but that condition argues reformation, not abandonment. The witness of Scripture is, where there is a covenant nation, reform (e.g. Josiah's reform).

What we need is Christians who will fight for the reform of the nation and the restoration of our constitutional theocracy. When I speak of fighting for our heritage I do not mean fighting physically, but fighting by means of all the constitutional and cultural and technological means available.

There are those already willing and able to do this here, and the process is on the threshold of action. The problem: our “Christians” are cowards who fear they will lose what little credibility and kudos they currently have in the eyes of the world if they nail their colours to our mast. What is that mast? A new Christian political party. This party is “ready to go” and is the result of nearly two years solid work on developing a Christian political philosophy, manifesto and constitution. Behind that two year task lies twelve years of deep thought, reading and study by myself and others, some of whom have devoted much longer periods of time to study.

The British constitution is not a written document (or rather it is written in so many varied and diverse documents that it is necessary to read our constitutional history in order to read the constitution). This is its strength, because the humanist victories of this

⁴ I think the author means “tentative”. His proposal is hardly modest in any sense.

century and the last can be reversed without having to overturn or reinterpret some out-dated constitution written down in a single document that must necessarily be reductionist and therefore cannot embrace the rich Christian history of the nation (warts and all). The last time this theocratic constitution was affirmed was in 1953 at the coronation of Elizabeth II. In that coronation service—which, incidentally, has remained essentially unchanged for over a thousand years and is based on the Bible—the Queen renewed the nation's covenant with God, promising to the utmost of her power to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel and the Protestant Reformed religion established by law, and acknowledging that the Bible is the most precious thing this world affords and is the rule for the whole life and government of Christian princes. “Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God” said the moderator of the Church of Scotland as he presented the Bible to the Queen. There then followed a communion service. This was followed by the anointing, which began with the singing of *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come Holy Ghost). Then the Archbishop anointed the Queen saying “. . . Be thy Head anointed with holy Oil: as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed: And as Solomon was anointed by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, so be thou anointed, blessed, and consecrated Queen over the Peoples, whom the Lord thy God hath given thee to rule and govern, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. . .”

This was in 1953, not 1653, 42 years ago. Yes, we have desperately departed from that covenant, we are apostate; but this is a Christian nation constitutionally and covenantally speaking. Those who want a Christian homeland can find one here in Britain. It is as constitutionally Christian as a nation is ever likely to be. We need to reform this nation now, since the Prince of Wales wants to become Defender of Faith (i.e. *all* faiths) when he is crowned not Defender of *the* Faith, the present title of the monarch, which has been used since the sixteenth century—God forbid that Charles should ever become Charles III since, judging by his present performance, his reign will be as miserably idolatrous as the last two incumbents of that name.

There is no need to set up a new Christian homeland. We already have one; only the Christians have let it go to the Devil. What makes anyone think that they won't do the same in a new Christian homeland? Any new homeland will soon enough have to fight the same battles we are already fighting in the old homelands. It certainly will not be plain sailing, and it will not be free from apostasy, as history so clearly teaches (e.g. Israel, Britain, the USA). The answer is not to keep running away but to stay and fight. This is our only hope. There is still time if Christians will stop being cowards. Alas! that is precisely what the church has been guilty of. Notice I say *church*, not society. It is *Christians* who are guilty of cowardice in the face of the enemy, who have abandoned this nation to the Devil. They must accept the lion's share of the responsibility. Their cowardice and unwillingness to influence the nation and preserve a full-orbed Christian culture is what has led to the present state of apostasy. It's no good running away from apostate societies when those who are running away are responsible for the apostasy. They simply take their problems with them to the new homeland. This may not have been the case with Puritans emigrating to America. But it is today by and large. Unless

Christians are willing to influence their culture, to fight for it, there is simply no point in their setting up a new homeland, and I fear they are not prepared to influence their culture. At least this is the case here in Britain—I should not speak for America.

Britain is a good place to do the fighting because constitutionally it is a Christian country. It is not just that there is a nominal acknowledgement of Christianity in our constitution. The nation is constitutionally theocratic, and *very* Christian. The doctrines of Calvinism are part of English law. Someone arguing for the abolition of parents' rights to smack their children said on the radio here recently that the doctrine of original sin was now only held by a few cults. How wrong she was! It is English law because the canon law of the Church of England is part of English law and the doctrine of original sin is part of canon law. It is part of the Protestant Reformed religion established by law that the Queen swore to uphold.

Of course, the people of this nation are now not Christian in the main. Though the Queen acknowledged God as the ultimate lawgiver in this nation, the nation no longer believes it, and Parliament no longer acts in accordance with that common law maxim that previously governed our lawmaking: “Any law is or of right ought to be according to the law of God.” But we do have a constitution to fight for, and a history of fighting for it, at least in former centuries. In fact, resistance to a tyrannical ruler is built into our constitution. The English are duty-bound to revolt against tyranny if they did but know it. The British principle of St Edward's sword, which was carried before some of our monarchs, means that the same sword of justice will fall on the ruler if he deserves it. This has happened. The British constitution gives the people not only the right but the duty to rise up against their rulers if they act the tyrant. But evangelical Christians over here are the worst cowards imaginable. They will do nothing. Bleating on endlessly about the local church and “heaven” (rather than the *resurrection*—that biblical doctrine that most Christians seem to have forgotten about since they have become so entranced by the Elysian fields) they see no duty to society, only to themselves. But we have a duty and we can do something if we put our hands to the plough. Instead, Christians bury their heads in the sand pit of an apostate “church”.

The need here is especially urgent now because of the European Union, our Babylon. We need to fight Babylon and those who are so entranced by Babylon in our own nation, especially the politicians. We can pull out of Europe and revive our Christian heritage. The giants are not too big. It is our faith that is lacking. This cowardice and apathy problem here in Britain is a real blight. Even “Reconstructionists” often do not want to get involved in the cultural and political arena. I have personally been subject to pressure from “Reconstructionists” both in the USA and here in Britain to “forget about the other things and just concentrate on the local church.” Church-empire building, not the wider concerns of the kingdom of God, is what occupies most Christians' minds most of the time, so that they never think about the broader issues, and if they do they have no time to do anything about them because all their energies are absorbed in the local church. Everything is geared to getting the world into the church instead of the church into the world, a crazy priority that can only end in the ghetto, as it has done, because it is so

unbiblical. I'm talking of "Recons" now not just evangelicals, who are just the same and even worse of course.

This leads me to the conclusion that really "the penny has not dropped" for many who claim to be "Recons". They restrict the kingdom of God to the institutional church, which, as a result, gets bloated out of all proportion in the lives of the saints, who are as a consequence hamstrung in terms of any broader cultural and political ministry. In fact, I think that in spite of the fact that it has been the subject of controversy and argument for so long, a proper biblical view of the church institutional evades many Christians, Reconstructionist or otherwise. This does need to be dealt with because so often the church institutional becomes our household idol.

While this attitude prevails there will be no reconstruction of the nation on Christian lines, just Christians engaged in an irrelevant argument about which denomination has a divine right to exist, and spending most of the rest of the time trying to show by implication that other denominations do not have a divine right to exist. Ecclesiocentrism is a great danger here, and I detect it in Ruben's article "[The Judicial Role of the Church.](#)" Ruben tells us: "Her jurisdiction extends only to those who submit to her authority. By the same token, the blessings of the Kingdom extend only so far as her jurisdiction. For those who do not submit to her authority, the curse of Adam remains. For those who are expelled from her midst, there remains only weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (p. 11*b*).

Now what does this really mean? First, is this really true that the blessings of the kingdom extend only so far as the institutional church's authority? That must give the church a *total* jurisdiction over those who are members. If the church does not have total jurisdiction over those who are members, then the blessings of the kingdom extend beyond the church's jurisdiction. The church does not have authority over my family life except in so far as it will discipline me if I apostatise from the faith or live an immoral lifestyle. My family may be blessed by God in areas where the church has no authority. For example, does the church have authority to determine how many children I have? If not then I may receive the blessings of the kingdom of God where the church has no jurisdiction by having or not having another child. What has it to do with the church and its jurisdiction? Yet if what Ruben said were true, but the church does not have jurisdiction over how many children I have, then the birth of another child cannot be construed as a blessing of the kingdom of God. But clearly it is such a blessing (Gen. 33:5; 48:4; Josh. 24:34; Dt. 28:4; Ps. 127:3), so either Ruben is wrong or the jurisdiction of the church extends to how many children I have. This is not good theology and not good ecclesiology.

Secondly, it is evidently not the case that "For those who are expelled from her midst, there remains only weeping and the gnashing of teeth." And, I suspect, even Ruben himself does not really believe this. He has been led to this statement by a doctrinaire commitment to a view of the institutional church as virtually coterminous not only with the visible catholic church but with the invisible catholic church as well. This is a Roman Catholic doctrine. Please, I'm not calling Ruben a crypto-Romanist or even suggesting

any such thing; I'm simply pointing out that this is the Roman doctrine, and I don't think Ruben really believes it. If Ruben did believe this doctrine he could not be a Protestant and would, along with the Pope, denounce Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Huss, Latimer, Ridley et al. because they were expelled from the midst of the church. Yet here we are again. The argument is very subtle. It starts with talk of the church's limited authority and so subtly it slides into ecclesiastical megalomania. None of us would be here doing what we are, and be assured *Contra Mundum* would not exist (except on the Index) if Ruben's statement were the biblical position—and countless martyrs would not have gone to their graves to disprove it. This view is a betrayal of the Reformed heritage that *Contra Mundum*, I assume,—and I hope not incorrectly—desires to preserve and promote.

It is those who refuse to submit to *God's* authority, not the church's, for whom the curse of Adam remains; and those who are expelled from covenant fellowship with *God* for whom there remains weeping and the gnashing of teeth. The church ministers *God's* law, true, but that only proves that the church is a *ministry* not a magistracy, unlike the state, which is a magistracy because it actually executes on men *God's* judgement in the temporal realm. The church only pronounces *God's* judgement against sinners when it excommunicates them (and Mt. 16:19 does not alter this since only binding and loosing that is in accordance with *God's* word will be ratified in heaven. Even then it is still *God*, not the church, that executes the judgement), whereas the state pronounces *and* executes *God's* judgement on evildoers (or at least it should do so). Of course, ideally the two communities—i.e. the visible and invisible church—should be the same, but as history teaches, they are not, nor will they ever be this side of Judgement, and for the church to slide from ministry to magistracy, from ministering *God's* word to punishing those who do not submit to “her” authority, as the church has so often done, is a great error and an intolerable abridgement of our *God-given* liberty. Americans may not be so aware of the problems associated with this confusion and abuse of power since it has not featured in their history, but England suffered from it greatly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (and of course before that too), and even from some of its consequences in the eighteenth century. Some of those who live in the land of the free would do well to understand that they can lose their freedom to a tyrannical church no less than to a tyrannical state. And the pain you feel when your nose is split, your ears chopped off and the flesh whipped off your back will be no less severe because it is done at the behest of the church rather than at the behest of a humanistic state. The blood will be just as red, the ignominy just as great, the injustice just as much an affront to Almighty *God*.

Now, what happens in the new Christian homeland, when the new regime tries to set up this kind of church authority, or even in the sphere of the state when someone attempts to legislate a Calvinist law code? (I say “Calvinist” since this was the word mentioned in the essay on the homeland. I distinguish it from *God's* law for reasons that will become apparent shortly.) Don't think this cannot happen again. Some Christians will, judging from current debate, oppose other Christians' views of the role of the state (I am referring to differences among those who are Calvinists and Reconstructionist—i.e. a family argument). Culture is far more determinative of a nation's everyday way of life than its

criminal law code, though of course the criminal law code is determinative in matters of public justice. Our culture matters and, for example, American and English Christians differ greatly in cultural matters even where they share a common theonomic and Calvinist world-view. Let me explain.

God's law should be the basis of our civil (i.e. criminal) law code. But that is a very limited matter (at least in terms of a biblical view of the state). God's law addressed far more than the state; it governs culture too, but not necessarily as a result of state-enforced laws. For example, there are no biblical laws that can be cited to justify a society's making pornography, prostitution and drug abuse (except in certain limited circumstances) criminal offences. I have thought about this at length, and all attempts to base such laws on the Bible (i.e. state-enforceable laws) must fail. That is not to say that there are no laws governing these things in God's word. God's law certainly forbids these things. But it does not put them within the orbit of the state (only prostitution by a *priest's* daughter was a crime in Israel). The laws governing these areas operate through the individual's government of himself according to God's word, and as R. J. Rushdoony has so long strived to point out, this is the basic form of government; without it there can be no godly government in church, family or state. All biblical law is not state law. In fact only a small proportion of it is. Most biblical law operates on the personal, familial and cultural levels.

Culture, then, becomes the determinative factor in remedying so many of society's ills—and this is why I agree with [T. E. Wilder and J. M. Berthoud](#). A mere conglomeration of Christians is not a realistic basis for a Christian state—not even, dare I say it, a conglomeration of Reconstructionist Christians—nor even for a society in the broadest sense. The way communities (perhaps unconsciously) understand and work out their basic faith presuppositions vary and many factors contribute to the end product. Christian cultures can be very different and yet still be Christian. People expect, tolerate and prize different things in different ways without any disapprobation being implied for those cultures that do things differently. We cannot expect, and it would be wrong, even unbiblical, to expect the state to enforce uniformity in such areas by passing laws. And yet such common assumptions, a culture's understanding of its own way of life, is what makes society. Without these common assumptions and understanding of culture society breaks up. Society cannot be maintained merely on the basis of a limited criminal code enforceable by the state. Indeed, the word society comes from the Latin, *societas*, which is cognate with the verb *socio*, which means *to do or hold in common, to share*. A mere Christian state cannot create a Christian society.

It is a nation's understanding of its way of life that determines its character as a society. Granted, among Christians we can expect these shared assumptions to be so much closer; and on basics, among those who want a Reconstructionist homeland, I suppose they would be pretty close in many things. But we might be surprised. They might not be as close as one would think. I'm not thinking of the big issues but the lesser issues that actually determine more of the everyday character of our lives. These lesser issues are actually very important to people. Even when a Christian emigrates to another Christian

country there has to be an adjustment. Only those who want to make that adjustment will integrate fully. And often people become ex-pats, i.e. people of one culture living in another culture, but never fully integrating on the cultural level (though they most likely will on the bigger issues, where perhaps there were not the same differences). My point is that the little things are important for culture. Even in Somerset there is a Yorkshire association, and the two counties are not far apart in terms of distance as the Americans perceive it.

Take an example of a potentially contentious political issue among Christians that would most likely surface in the new homeland. Sunday trading laws were until recently still enforceable in England (Calvinist Scotland did not have them!). Yet no biblical warrant can be found for this, except of course if we revert to the law as it existed under the Mosaic dispensation as a ceremonial ordinance, a shadow of the things to come. To deny the observation of the sabbath, as a ceremonial ordinance typifying rest and salvation in Christ, was to claim salvation by a means other than God's provision of his son and therefore idolatrous. It thus attracted the death sentence. This sentence, which guarded and enforced the typology, has now gone (Col. 2:16-17). Such typological laws are no longer observed. Of course, the necessity of observing a sabbath still remains, though there is no longer the ceremonial component to it. That is to say, sabbath observation is still part of God's law, but no longer within the orbit of the state's jurisdiction because the death sentence related to the ceremonial ordinance and there is no other biblical penalty that can be invoked to punish sabbath breakers.

Notice that Paul says in Colossians that we are not to let anyone judge us in the matter of the sabbath, not that we are not to keep a sabbath. Similarly, in Rom. 14:1-6 Paul makes it clear that we are not to judge others in this and certain other matters (v. 4). Sabbath observation is still required by God (fourth commandment, cf. Rom. 13:8-9), but it is no longer a matter upon which men can legitimately bring each other into judgement, and this includes judgement in state and church courts.⁵ Of course sabbath observation is a doctrine that the church should teach. This is interesting because it is an instance of an area that is outside the jurisdiction of church courts but not outside the church's didactic role. In fact, compared with the church's didactic role the jurisdiction of its courts is extremely limited. This, again, shows up the problems with Ruben's statement, cited above, that the blessings of the kingdom extend only as far as the church's jurisdiction. This limits the kingdom of God even more narrowly than identification merely with the institutional church since proclamation of the word of God is a function of the church institutional and is much wider than the church's jurisdiction. The sabbath breaker is not outside the jurisdiction of God's word though, and he will face judgement for

5 I deny that the word "sabbaths" in Col. 2:16 refers exclusively to rest days and feast days other than the weekly seventh-day rest, i.e. the equivalent of holidays. Of course it includes these but the burden of proof falls on the holiday-exclusivists to prove their argument, and this cannot be done without twisting the plain meaning of Paul's words. Had he meant simply holidays it is inconceivable that he would have used a word that fails utterly to indicate such a distinction and instead must necessarily lead to misunderstanding of his doctrine. If it is inconceivable that Paul should have written in such a confused and misleading way how much more so the Holy Spirit who inspired his very words. Such an attempt to explain away the clear teaching of Paul's and the Holy Spirit's words is eisegesis.

disobedience to God's law; and the church should teach God's sabbath law. But although he is not outside the influence of the church's teaching in this matter, he is outside its jurisdiction.

The necessity of worshipping together remains also. But although the sabbath is not to be enforced by the state, it should be culturally enforced, that is to say it should be a practice that is observed voluntarily because the influence of Christianity in society leads the whole culture, including even non-believers, to see life and the meaning of life in terms of a Christian world-view. This is the tragedy of the situation we are now in. Whereas once even non-believers used to think and act like believers, today even Christians think and act like non-Christians. Where the faith is strong in its influence on culture Sunday will be a day of rest.

But what has happened in Britain is that Christians have abandoned the notion that they should influence the culture in which they live. They have let culture and society go to the Devil, quite literally. But when the Devil then starts banging on the church doors and threatening their precious Sunday they are up in arms wanting the state to do something about it. But the horse has bolted and they were not too concerned about shutting the door beforehand. They want the *state* to do what they could not be bothered to do: affect society for good through living out the faith. But that was *their* job, not the state's job. The state is there to punish criminals as defined by God's law and that is the only way it can affect society for good. This is a negative function not a positive function; it is about stopping evil not promoting good. It is *Christians* who should have been light and salt in their culture by promoting good. But they were not. They stuck their heads in the sand and waited for the rapture: and sure enough the judgement came, but not the way they thought. Down the u-bend went society, and they are still here having to deal with Sunday disruption, when all the time they thought they would have been raptured by now. They deserve what they've got. Christians now want the state to save them from having to work on Sundays. But it's only the Sunday trading issue they are really bothered about in the main—one commandment Christians!

I believe that Sunday trading laws have been overturned as an act of God's judgement. I believe that God has brought this about to teach Christians that if they want a Christian society they will have to go out into the culture and fight all those battles that they refused to fight in the twentieth century. When they have done that, there will be no need to pass Sunday trading laws because in a Christian culture people will observe the Christian sabbath. But will Christians learn the lesson? Unless God empowers the state to enforce a law it has no right to enforce it. If God's law does not mandate the state to take action the observance of that law must become a reality in society through the church's influence and through its building up of a Christian culture in which it is natural and normal for people to observe that law. Then the state can do something about the few who break those of God's laws that do have a civil penalty attached to them. Such people will be a minority, not the majority, which is what we have today as a result of Christians abandoning their cultural role in society.

The most that the state can do is to punish the *few* who are criminals in terms of God's law. If it performed this duty obediently to God's law the situation would be created in which Christians could live out their faith and claim the culture for Christ. But simply limiting the state to its God-ordained role will not create a Christian society. It will only create the conditions in which a Christian society can flourish. This hypothetical situation does not exist today, but it would under K. L. Clauson's Christian homeland. Whether or not a Christian society *would* flourish, however, would depend on the attitudes of the Christians in that society. Unfortunately, judging by current performance, this would not be a foregone conclusion - at least this is my assessment from looking at Christians in Britain, where pietistic don't-get-involved "Christianity" prevails.

The point is this: the setting up of a new Christian state will only be a limited thing. It would not constitute a Christian society. For that Christians must live out their faith and put it into practice in the cultural dimension across the whole spectrum of life, and this Christians are not used to doing. They are terrified of it; perhaps because when they try, and admittedly sometimes fail, as we all do, they get jumped on by the ultra pious, who certainly would not be caught dead trying to influence their culture and who think they should have been in church for some meeting instead of trying to influence culture. And even if Christians were to build a culture in our hypothetical homeland, it might be very different from the church cultures that we are used to, perhaps very different from the culture that Dr Clauson imagines. There is not one homogeneous Christian culture that would automatically flourish where there was a Christian state.

However, a society that already exists and has at least some of these shared assumptions, or groups within that society, can work to roll back the state to its biblical size. That, if Christians would but realise it, is one of the more straightforward areas of reform (though I do not imagine it will be easy). We could achieve it if Christians would put their backs into it. But it would still leave the necessity of Christians becoming involved in culture and acting across the whole spectrum of life, not just in their church life, in a way that would transform society into a Christian society. This is where Christians seem to fail. Unfortunately, Christian "culture" so often seems to be little more than church meetings and chorus singing - nice songs without chords that are too dissonant. Christians' culture has become as sickly as their theology, not surprisingly. Sometimes when I go into Christian bookshops I feel like throwing up, the atmosphere is so sickly. It's suffocating. I can't stand it; goodness knows what the non-believers think about it. It's no wonder they avoid church like the plague.

Humour is another good example of an area where Christians from different cultures see things in very different ways. When I was in the USA some years ago I told an American friend about a humanist journal over here that attacks Christianity often. It is full of rubbish usually. But sometimes it comes up with some interesting points. In one issue, there was a rather amusing caption for a title to an article that read "Christians! There's one born again every minute" (and after all, this is only a reflection of a biblical truth: Lk. 16:8.) Having related this to my friend I expected him at least to smile, but instead he said, "Well praise the Lord for that!" Christians in one culture may disapprove of the

humour shared by even Christians in another culture. They might, in turn, be thought to have no sense of humour at all or only a childish sense of humour. The German and English senses of humour pass each other like ships in the dark (see how magnanimous I've been by even acknowledging that the Germans have a sense of humour). Indeed, a survey carried out after the end of World War II claimed that one of the reasons (among many of course) that the Germans lost the war was that their officers lacked a sense of humour (I think this study was carried out by Germans too).

Now, in the new homeland, whose sense of humour is going to dominate? Will all varieties be accepted? Judging by the way Christians act presently I should be surprised if such liberalism were tolerated. The British traditionally have a crude sense of humour. Will this be acceptable in the new homeland? Censorship of humour is no laughing matter. Some freedom of humour is essential for man's sanity—no joke! Will there be a humour watch? And humour police? You may think this is a ridiculous point, but humour is actually a very serious matter. It is a significant component of our culture and plays a large part in social intercourse, the way we interact with each other, the way we understand each other, and the way we perceive life and the meaning of life on the mundane and ultramundane levels. But humour differs vastly from culture to culture and can cause problems for the way people from different cultures relate to each other. On the one hand, someone from culture A might find the humour of someone from culture B offensive and insulting. On the other hand the person from culture B may find the person from culture A stuffy and prudish. They may totally misunderstand each other and accuse each other of saying things and having motives that are uncharitable when nothing could be further from the truth, simply because they don't communicate in the same way, and often humour is a large part of the problem.

Christians, even within their own cultures, often have this problem anyway, because they are often people who are denuded of much of their own society's cultural identity. This is especially the case with humour. Many Christians do not share the shared assumptions that characterise their culture even when these are legitimate, i.e. non-sinful, assumptions, indeed even when they are assumptions generated by a long Christian history, as is the case in Britain. And this is why they are often thought of as peculiar, weird, repressed individuals—i.e. because they often are peculiar, weird, repressed individuals.

When we get together in the new homeland these issues are going to lead to clashes. How will such cultural clashes be resolved? These are the kinds of things that will occupy us and lead to all kinds of differences, not the role of the state—I assume we shall all be agreed about that, at least in theory, though in practice agreement on even these basics might be more problematic than one would think. Will those who differ on these minor issues (which are actually so important) be ostracised or disapproved of? Will they be disciplined by the church? David Rockett tells us in “[Power-Politics vs Ecclesiastical Cultures](#)” that “A 'whole Church' corporate identity calls for a holistic congregational culture and self-image. We are not modernists. We do not fit their world. We do not love their vulgar humor, partake of their lewd dress, imitate their rude manners, animalistic violence, or enjoy their crude music. We are a distinct counterculture—people of a Book

—people of the Covenant” (p. 51c).

But this is rather too simplistic. We, that is the visible catholic church, are not a uniform culture; we do not share the same tastes in music, humour, dress. We do not have the same self-image. One man's idea of dress appals another, and someone else finds it lewd while another does not. I'm talking here about Christians. Obviously, there would, and does, come a point where all Christians would find certain types of dress—or rather undress—lewd. But the line of demarcation is not so easy to determine. Some think it is unacceptable to go to church in shorts etc. Others do not. I used to preach in shorts regularly and was accused of being a rebel by someone who knew nothing of the situation and had never been to the church. The only decent form of dress for this person was a suit and tie. Take music: will rock music, even Christian rock music, be disapproved of as “worldly”. And what will be the criteria for determining what music is worldly and what is not?

There is no single homogeneous Christian counterculture. Some of us are obviously more modernistic in our tastes than others. Or perhaps it is the others who are narrow-minded restrictive prudes and who want to limit other people's God-given freedom in such matters. David Rockett also says that “The Mediaeval era from A.D. 700-1,700 [*sic*] knew the primacy of the Church. It is exceedingly telling that it gave us majestic, awesome cathedral-houses of worship, classical music and beautiful art” (p. 51b-c). Are we to understand from this that Rockett thinks that classical music was the result of the primacy of the church in Mediaeval society? In fact, the Mediaeval church was hostile to many of the developments in music that we now recognise as leading to classical music, and this was to some extent true of the Lutheran church's attitude to Bach. Of course it was true to a much greater extent of the Roman church's attitude to musical developments in the Renaissance. I am not denying that classical music would not have developed without a Christian culture to underpin it. I am affirming that fact, but also drawing attention to the fact that Mediaeval *ecclesiastical* culture opposed developments in music during the Renaissance that were precursors to classical music in a later period. The Mediaeval church saw these contemporary developments in music as modernistic and vulgar, and worse. This fact is the key to understanding the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, who reflected the Mediaeval church's hostile attitude and therefore portrayed instruments such as the oboe as instruments of the Devil. Look at some of his paintings and you will see all the little devils carrying these diabolical instruments of modernity! I am therefore positing a dichotomy between Mediaeval *ecclesiastical* culture and a consistent (nay, even half consistent) *Christian* culture, which began to characterise Northern Europe after the Reformation.

Anyway, I doubt Rockett's views on a holistic church culture's rejecting modernistic music could be squared with the notion that Mediaeval *ecclesiastical* culture gave us classical music even if the latter were true. Much of classical music was not composed for the glory of God, even among works that used words extolling the glory of God (though I do not think that because of that it does not glorify God—I believe in common grace). I think if we were to accept Rockett's version of a holistic congregational culture we should have to reject much of classical music that would be quite wrongly attributed to the

influence of Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture, and I for one would not be ready to do this. I believe his analysis is flawed however, and flawed because it is too simplistic. Alas! such simplistic pontification on cultural issues tends to characterise Christian thought in such areas, and these are areas that would be vital to a full-blown Christian society. I think even pro-homeland Reconstructionists as a conglomerate would be far from being in sufficient agreement to construct a new Christian society with a truly Christian culture. If they tried I suspect it would be minimalist (oh no! that's definitely the wrong word, I mean minimal).

Of course Rockett is right to point out that the dominating influence of politics, which is the bedrock of modern humanist culture, is not biblical. I heartily concur in this. But his suggested alternative, the dominating influence of an *ecclesiastical* culture, is equally misguided. We do not need or want (at least I don't) an ecclesiastical culture any more than we need a state-dominated culture. What we desperately need and should want is a *Christian* culture, and that must necessarily be wider and more comprehensive than an ecclesiastical culture, unless again we are back to the church having total jurisdiction and dominating the whole of life. There is a difference between an ecclesiastical culture and a Christian culture. Though America has never experienced an ecclesiastical culture, Europe has: the Holy Roman Empire. Does David Rockett think that the vicious spirit that animates modern power-politics did not exist in the ecclesiastical culture of Mediaeval Europe or that it could not exist again in an ecclesiastical culture? Such naïvety is not only misguided, it is dangerous.

Rockett has a romantic view of Mediaeval ecclesiastical society. Great cathedral-houses it certainly gave us. It did not give us advanced medicine, motorcars and central heating; but more importantly, it did not give the Bible in the vernacular, which was thus a closed book to most people. But it did give us the Inquisition, purgatory, indulgences, Maryolatry, the Borgias, the cult of the saints and the persecution and burning of believers such as John Huss, William Tyndale et al. I think I, and probably most people who actually lived under this ecclesiastical regime, would probably have rather done without the cathedral-houses and beautiful art (and possibly without classical music had they had it) and had their Bible and their freedom instead (remember, in Mediaeval England one had to have royal permission to leave the country—though the statute enforcing this denial of freedom contravened Magna Carta). Perhaps some may think that advanced medicine, motorcars and central heating are forms of materialism that should be rebuked in “a set-apart ecclesiastical culture” (p. 52a); but the Bible is a non-negotiable commodity, “the most valuable thing this world affords”, as the modern (i.e. Protestant) British constitution recognises. Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture had a fair crack of the whip. Thank God it's gone! I suspect that even David Rockett is more of a modernist than he imagines.

Protestantism fared much better, though it certainly has not been perfect and is now almost totally apostate. But the Reformation meant a break with the ecclesiastical society of the Mediaeval era, and necessarily so, and an emphasis more on Christian society. Life in Mediaeval Europe was “nasty, brutish and short”, especially if one fell foul of the

Inquisition. Personally I am appalled by the prospect of returning to an ecclesiastical society. Christ bought my freedom with his blood, and I'm not about to give it up that easily. Is the church going to dominate the new homeland like the Mediaeval church dominated Europe? Is it going to be an ecclesiastical culture or a Christian culture? We are not all agreed about this and I need to know before I sell up and buy my ticket to the promised land. Will I have to sell my birthright for a mess of Mediaeval ecclesiastical pottage?

The track record of Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture is little better than that of modern humanism's political culture. Both have failed to put *Christ* on the throne and faith at the centre of life and have idolised some aspect of the created order. The Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture idolised the institutional church, its jurisdiction and the power of its priests and popes—which is just to say that it idolised an ecclesiastical form of power politics, just as modern humanistic culture idolises a secularised form of power politics. But a divinised church is no better than a divinised state. *Christ* is central to life. He is our *logos*, that which gives meaning and purpose to life. It is as sinful to make the church our *logos* as it is to make the state our *logos*. Christ, the incarnate word of God, is to be central to our life and culture, not the state, church or anything else, though of course these institutions have vitally important God-ordained functions within society. Our culture, if it is to be obedient to God's word, must be Christ-centred not church-centred.

And what happens in the new homeland when Christians have different denominational convictions? Whose ecclesiology is going to be the orthodoxy and dominate the ecclesiastical culture? Will it be Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational or what? Are we going to fight like cat and dog over this issue again or shall we have a Calvinistic ecumenicalism? Shall we have a state church or a state denomination? And make no mistake, if it is to be and remain a Christian state Christianity will have to be established in some form or other; the question is whether that form will be denominational and credal. It might be assumed by most that it would be the latter (at least I hope this assumption prevails). But my own experience of talking to Recons about this issue leads me to be cautious of their predilections. Narrow-minded denominationalism still exists among many Reconstructionists, and such does not forebode well for the creation of a Christian state with a Christian culture. It is ideal for the creation of an *ecclesiastical* culture however, which of course means ultimately an ecclesiastical *state* as well. Those who deny this must show how they could possibly avoid it if they are to preserve their ecclesiastical culture from the corrupting influences of denominational freedom. Such problems need not beset a Christian culture; they are inescapable in an ecclesiastical culture.

The distinction I make between an ecclesiastical culture—especially in the context of discussion with someone who sings the praises of Mediaevalism—and a Christian culture is no false dichotomy. If it were false there would have been no need for the Reformation. The ecclesiastical authorities of Mediaeval Europe did not even desire the ordinary people, those who made up the bulk of society, to read the Bible. If they had wanted this they would not have murdered Tyndale for giving the English a Bible they could read in

English.⁶ This refusal to give the Bible to the people hardly squares with the notion of a *Christian* culture by any Protestant standard, though it was a deeply ingrained feature of the Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture. The Mediaeval church knew that if once the people possessed the word of God it would set them free and it would all be over for the ecclesiastical megalomaniacs who then ruled Europe. They knew it would mean the destruction of the ecclesiastical culture and the creation of Christian culture. They were entirely correct. It led to the transformation of the whole of life in those nations that embraced the Reformation and were able to resist the force of Roman tyranny. The Christian life was no longer confined to cloisters. “Christian asceticism” wrote Max Weber, “at first fleeing from the world into solitude, had already ruled the world which it had renounced from the monastery and through the Church. But it had, on the whole, left the naturally spontaneous character of daily life in the world untouched. Now [i.e. at the Reformation—SCP] it strode into the market-place of life, slammed the door of the monastery behind it, and undertook to penetrate just that daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world, but neither of nor for this world.”⁷

It seems clear to me that the Reconstruction movement (at least in America) has now split into two halves: those who want to revive and reconstruct society as an ecclesiastical culture (i.e. revive the Mediaeval church), and those who want to revive and reconstruct society as a Christian culture. The former prizes the Mediaeval church and the kind of culture it created more than the Reformation and Reformed culture—and remember, Protestantism was a remarkably anti-clerical movement. I propose that we henceforth call the former Ecclesiastical Reconstructionists and the latter Christian Reconstructionists. Then we shall know where we are.

We need to think clearly and in detail about these things, not in order to set up a homeland, but in order to have a better means of influencing our culture for good wherever we are. The narrow-minded persecuting attitude of the church in the Mediaeval era, and even today, especially among evangelical and modern "Reformed" believers, has had disastrous effects both for our cultures themselves and for the church's witness to the cultures in which it lives. I think this is a serious problem facing us today. Christians generally seem to be intolerant people. I'm not talking here about tolerating sin but tolerating other peoples' way of life when it does not come up to our personal scruples. But tolerance is a Christian virtue that the New Testament requires of us (Rom. 14). Such issues as these will be far more problematic for the new homeland than we might think. And some at least will want to bring in the church and the state to persecute other people for having different scruples even when no biblical warrant can be found for it. History teaches us this. It was so among the Puritans as well. Agreeing about the legitimate role

6 Tyndale's translation of the New Testament is still a superior translation even to the Authorised Version, which was never spoken English anyway; and it sounds much more modern to read than one might imagine. I've been using this translation in my daily Bible reading now for some time with much profit.

7 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930), p. 80. See my article "Max Weber and the Protestant Doctrine of the Calling," in *Calvinism Today*, Vol. III, No. 3 (The Foundation for Christian Reconstruction, P. O. Box 2, Taunton, Somerset, England TA1 2WZ, July 1993), pp. 27-30.

and limitations of the state is not the half of it, and even then we may not agree as much as we think.

Setting up a Christian state will not create a Christian society. The state cannot create a virtuous society, though it can stop one being created. Many Christians, at least here in Britain, expect the state to legislate to create the kind of society it is *their* duty to create. Unless they are prepared to create such a society there is no point in setting up a Christian state. If they are prepared to do it, the fact that the state is presently not Christian will not stop them, and as they do their success will lead to reform of the state also, so that they will have a Christian state too.

So, the greater amount of the reform can be undertaken now in the societies in which we live as Christians become culturally active, while at the same time trying to roll back the state so that it conforms to biblical principles of statecraft. If we cannot do the former, doing the latter will not be of any avail; the vacuum will simply be filled by some other religious group as it has been in our present societies when Christians have abandoned them. We can start creating Christian societies within our societies. Subversion is the method. Undermine unrighteousness with righteousness. Create new schools, colleges, businesses, art, churches, music. We need to create a real Christian culture, not the intolerant, narrow-minded bigotry that so often passes for a Christian culture. We should draw a distinction here between a Christian culture and an evangelical pietistic culture, which is merely one species of Christian culture—and a deformed one at that. We can draw on our Christian heritage and we can use it to fight the cultural battle rather than run away from it. The pagans possess the land illegitimately. We need to evict them, not run away from them.

We *can* achieve a great deal in our present societies if we will only put our hands to the plough. But, I find that Christians will not do this. That is why we don't get anywhere. Everyone wants someone else to make the sacrifices. What chance is there of setting up a homeland?

A group of us over here have just spent nearly two years planning and working out a detailed policy document and manifesto for a Christian political party for Britain. This project was originally supported by a wide range of Christian lobbying and activist groups. But as our work developed and grew, and the radical nature of our programme became apparent (radical against the backdrop of the humanism that currently infects the church, that is), people started abandoning ship and hedging their bets. They started getting worried about the content, and worried about having to do something rather than just talk about it. They do not want to stick their necks out. But the real problem is that so many Christians do not want a Christian society at all, except in a very cosmetic sense. What they really want is to clean up humanism. But that is no answer, because when all the explicit depiction of gratuitous sex and violence has gone from our television screens the perverted philosophy of humanism will remain to contaminate our whole culture, only we shall not be able to detect it so easily now that it has been dressed up to look Christian. I would rather humanism wore its dirty little secrets on its sleeves. But that is

what many Christians want, a humanist society that looks Christian in terms of sex and morals, but not in terms of education and economics etc.

Most of those who initially supported and encouraged us in the political party project have how abandoned ship. One person said to me: “What I really want is not another compromise but a party that will clearly set forth biblical principles.” When he saw our draft document he showed “concern” about our harsh attitude to homosexuals because we proposed re-criminalising the acts they engage in. Language seems to break down sometimes with these people. These people are Christian activists. Christian speak with forked tongue. People fear they will look fools, lose respect, and the positions they have in the world and among the “worthies” of the world. So, now we are all dressed up and ready to go, but the Joshuahs and Calebs have run off. The giants are too big for them. Yet we could be astounded by our victories if we trusted God and joined battle. The time is right. Alas! there's no army left.

We need funds and workers. There is a ready-made homeland here for Dr Clauson. Of course, the incumbent Canaanites will have to be kicked out first. But that was so for Israel also. We cannot expect not to have to work for it. I appeal to Dr Clauson if he is really serious therefore. Help us. We need all the help you can give. We have a homeland waiting for those with a pioneering spirit. But it's not for the faint-hearted. It will take blood, sweat and tears. I fear for most Christians the battle will seem too hard, the giants too big.

I expect I shall be excoriated by everybody for this piece. Do you think there will be a place for me in the new homeland? Will irreverence, anti-clericalism and people who like a good argument be welcome? Perhaps you'll need a points system like some governments presently have for immigrants. Of course the criteria will be different—or perhaps not as different as we might think. I do hope I have not muckied my ticket.

A Response to Stephen Perks

Ruben Alvarado

I would argue that the judicial role of the church begins with Abraham. God clearly makes Abraham the source of blessing for the rest of the world. Mankind, and the world with mankind, lay under God's curse since the fall. That curse was compounded by the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel, resulting in the formation of the nations. The call of Abraham in Genesis 12: 1-3 is God's response to this cursed situation. Abraham is made the source of blessing to all the families and nations (cf. Gen. 18: 18): "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (vv. 2-3). This covenant promise would extend through Abraham's seed: first Isaac, then Jacob, then the nation formed through the sons of Jacob, Israel. Blessing and curse would come to the surrounding nations through the nation Israel; Israel was priest to the nations, God's instrument to reverse the curse. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exodus 19: 6).

The subsequent history of Israel made clear that this nation was no better than any other, and unworthy of the covenant burden God had placed upon it. As the nation deteriorated, the theme takes shape of a chosen remnant, a spiritual Israel, which would fulfill the covenant as national Israel never could. At the same time the house of David became the focus of covenant hopes: the son of David, the Messiah, becomes the expected One through whom Israel will fulfill its mission.

Jesus Christ fulfilled these prophecies. He is the Son of David who redeemed a people for Himself. And he is the true heir of the Abrahamic promises. According to Paul, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3: 16). Jesus Christ Himself is the true seed of Abraham; not even Isaac and Jacob were, but only through Him.

Paul remarks that the Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations therefore extends through Jesus. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.... The blessing of Abraham [comes] on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3: 8, 14). The nations, not national Israel, received the gospel: (Acts 13: 46-47; 28: 28). Believing Jews combined with believing Gentiles to form a "new man" (Ephesians 2: 15), an entirely new entity, "the household of God... built upon the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2: 19-22).

This new entity, this household and temple of God, is of course the church. The church, then, is the heir of the Abrahamic promises and therefore of the mission of Israel to bring blessing to the world. “The Church is Israel Now”, to quote the title of one of Chalcedon’s own publications. The church is Mount Zion, to whom the nations will come in the last days, God’s throne from which He rules, from which His law issues (cf. Isaiah 2: 1-5). If not the church, then what? Literal Mount Zion? Perhaps in the eyes of a Zionist or a premillennialist, but not a Reformed Christian, I hope. Besides, the letter to the Hebrews speaks clearly to the point: “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (12: 22-24).

The question now is, exactly what form does the church take. As I have argued elsewhere,⁸ it would seem that the very name Jesus gave to the church—*ekklesia*—argues for a public, organized body. *Ekklesia* is the Greek word for citizens’ assembly, a public gathering to conduct public business. It would thus seem that an essential mark of the church is its outward organization and its functioning as an authoritative body, as an *ekklesia*, otherwise why would Jesus have picked this “loaded” word?

Of course, the primary location of this body is in heaven, as is argued in various places in the New Testament. Paul states that our citizenship [*politeuma*] is in heaven. Now *politeuma* is another loaded word; it means “citizen body”. It is a direct correlate of *ekklesia*: the *politeuma* gathered together is the *ekklesia*. Thus the church is composed of citizens who are citizens of heaven. This obviously corresponds with the “Jerusalem which is above” of which Paul speaks in Galatians 4: 26. The church is the citizen assembly of the new Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven (cf. Revelation 21). The letter to the Hebrews speaks of an assembly [*panegyrei*] and church [*ekklesia*] of the first-born enrolled in heaven (12: 23).

Therefore the church as citizen assembly is primarily a heavenly body. But that does not rule out an earthly dimension as well. Else the commission Jesus gave the church, as recorded in Matthew 16: 18-19 and further up in 18: 15-20, would be senseless. For here the church is given the keys of the kingdom; here it is promised that what it binds on earth will be bound in heaven, and what it looses on earth will be loosed in heaven. This commission thus argues a direct link between the invisible and visible church, between the church in heaven and the church on earth. And the link is this: that what the church *in*

8 In my article "[Church, Kingdom, Liturgy: The Political Language of the New Testament](#)," *Contra Mundum*, No. 12, Summer 1994.

conformity with God's Word ordains on earth will be ratified in the heavenly Jerusalem where God Himself sits, as king among his citizen-subjects. In other words, God moves when the church asks Him to move *in accordance with His revealed will*—not, of course, when the church acts out of line with His will.

Stephen argues that I would unwarrantedly extend the jurisdiction of the church to cover the entire kingdom, or, conversely, I restrict the kingdom to the jurisdiction of the church. So I do,⁹ but it is not unwarranted, because that is what is explicitly stated in Matthew 16: 19. I would certainly like to know how he interprets this text. To be given the keys to the kingdom is to be made the doorkeeper of the kingdom, to control access to the kingdom. What else could it mean? This text must be interpreted in the light of the Abrahamic commission of Genesis 12. The seed of Abraham, which is the church, is to bring blessings to the nations of the world; depending on how the nations relate to the church, they are blessed or they are cursed. This is what it means to exercise the keys of the kingdom. It is the opening or closing of the kingdom to the world, bringing the blessings of that kingdom or withholding them, lifting the curse or allowing it to remain in place.

What are the keys to the kingdom? The Calvinistic Reformers argued the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. If you don't believe me, check Calvin's *Institutes*,¹⁰ the Heidelberg Catechism,¹¹ Ursinus's commentary thereon,¹² the Westminster Confession of Faith,¹³ and Matthew Henry,¹⁴ for starters. Church discipline is no game; it is a deadly serious responsibility, a covenant duty, the exercise of covenant sanctions.

For this reason the Reformers maintained the Cyprianic doctrine *extra ecclesia nulla sallus*, “outside the church no one can be saved.” They meant outside the institutional church. What does Calvin say?

9 Stephen says that I say that anything which does not fall under the jurisdiction of the church cannot receive the blessings of the kingdom. He is confusing things. In my article I argue for a restricted church jurisdiction, but that does not restrict the extent of the kingdom. The jurisdiction of the church, I argue, *touches* everything, but does not *control* everything. The church deals with the ethical dimension of life; she has jurisdiction over morals. For those who submit to *this* jurisdiction, the blessings of the kingdom extend to their entire lives, their work, even their surroundings, even to culture at large. They are conduits of kingdom blessings. My argument is that though the church serves to channel the blessings of the kingdom, those blessings are not restricted to her.

10 Calvin sees the keys composed of the ministry of the Word and excommunication (*Institutes*, Book IV, ch. IX, 1-2), thus preaching and “fencing the table”, allowing or disbaring participation in the Lord's Supper.

11 Questions 83-85, where the focus likewise is on preaching and excommunication.

12 Who expands excommunication to cover the sacraments in general, and indeed fellowship altogether: “This is not merely an exclusion from the sacraments, but from the whole communion of the faithful, with which the obstinate and disobedient have no connection.” *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. Rev. G.R. Williard (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., nd [1852]), p. 442. The whole section on the keys (pp. 440-463) should be consulted.

13 Chapter XXX, “Of Church Censures”.

14 His commentary on the above-mentioned texts in the book of Matthew.

But because it is now our intention to discuss the visible church, let us learn even from the simple title "mother" how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breasts, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels [Matt. 22:30]. . . . Furthermore, away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation, as Isaiah [Isa. 37:32] and Joel [Joel 2:32] testify.¹⁵

Other Reformers concur fully. Take Ursinus:

Is there any salvation out of the Church? No one can be saved out of the Church: 1. Because out of the church there is no Saviour, and hence no salvation. "Without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) 2. Because those whom God has chosen to the end, which is eternal life, them he has also chosen to the means, which consist in the inward and outward call. Hence although the elect are not always members of the visible church, yet they all become such before they die. Obj. Therefore the election of God is not free. Ans. It is free, because God chooses freely both to the end and the means, all those whom he has determined to save. He never changes his decree however, after he has chosen, and ordained to the end and the means.¹⁶

What does the Belgic Confession say? Take chapter XXX, "Every One is Bound to Join Himself to the True Church":

We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the same body, serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them.

What about the Westminster Confession of Faith? Likewise:

The visible Church, which is also catholic, or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the

¹⁵ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), Book IV, ch. I, 4 (vol. II, p. 1016).

¹⁶ Ursinus, *Commentary*, p. 292.

gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.¹⁷

Stephen takes offense at my statement, “For those who are expelled from her [the church's] midst, there remains only weeping and the gnashing of teeth.” And he goes on:

And, I suspect, even Ruben himself does not really believe this. He has been led to this statement by a doctrinaire commitment to a view of the institutional church as virtually coterminous not only with the visible catholic church but with the invisible catholic church as well. This is a Roman Catholic doctrine.... If Ruben did believe this doctrine he could not be a Protestant and would, along with the Pope, denounce Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Huss, Latimer, Ridley et al. because they were expelled from the midst of the church.... None of us would be here doing what we are, and be assured *Contra Mundum* would not exist (except on the Index) if Ruben's statement were the biblical position—and countless martyrs would not have gone to their graves to disprove it. This view is a betrayal of the Reformed heritage that *Contra Mundum*, I assume,—and I hope not incorrectly—desires to preserve and promote.

But it is clear from the above quotations as well as from their teaching about the marks of the church¹⁸ that the Reformers also made the visible catholic church “virtually coterminous” with the institutional church. Furthermore, and conclusively, they most certainly made membership in the institutional church a prerequisite for salvation. In fact, I do not go as far as they did—I believe that the Holy Spirit has reached down to save individuals never reached by the church (which what the Westminster Confession is driving at when it says there is no “ordinary” hope of salvation outside the institutional church). I guess that makes them even more Roman Catholic than me! I wonder what they would think if this teaching of theirs would one day be castigated as “a betrayal of the Reformed heritage”, for they *are* the Reformed heritage!

The problem with Stephen's reasoning in this as in so many other places is that he thinks that what he believes is Reformed, therefore anything with which he disagrees is not Reformed. The problem is, I see little in what he says which I would label Reformed. Nearly every position I see him take differs or contradicts that of the Reformers. I do see historical precedent for his views. If I be not deceived, it is warmed-over, microwaved Whiggery he is dishing up. If you, dear reader, do not know what a Whig is, then go dig up a dictionary or encyclopedia of English history.

Stephen's sturdy Whiggish prose rivals that of Thomas Paine as he conjures up of the

17 Chapter XXV, II-III.

18 The doctrine of the marks of the church says that the true church is where the Word is preached, the sacraments are rightly administered, and church discipline is exercised. Cf. e.g. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV. I. 9; Belgic Confession, Article XXIX.

evils of “Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture”. What then of the Old Testament law which he claims should be the standard for civil government today? I guess in World War II the Allies should have killed every male German and Japanese citizen, as commanded in Deuteronomy 20, since they would not surrender. Perhaps they should have sawn them in half like David did. Of course the Inquisition would immediately have to be reestablished, because that is precisely what is commanded in Deuteronomy 13: 14 and 17: 4. In fact, the Inquisition never went as far as Moses, because it never put to the sword and burned to the ground entire cities (cf. Deut. 13: 12-17). I guess Stephen would like it better in Old Testament Israel, where if he did not hearken to the voice of the priest he would be put to death (cf. Deut. 17: 13). Is he ready to put to death those who commit adultery, incest, or bestiality? Would Stephen reintroduce polygamy? If not, why not? Monogamy became the rule only in Greco-Roman culture, and by that route entered Christianity (and Judaism for that matter). And Stephen would lift all restrictions on prostitution and pornography because he cannot find any such restrictions in Old Testament law. Perhaps he should come over here to Holland and be daily assaulted by the pornography in the newspapers, on the television, on the advertising billboards. Perhaps he might then think again.

This last is an illustration of the dead end Stephen has allowed himself to be led to. Since he does not believe in church discipline, especially on the public level, he has no means to police societal mores. His position approaches libertarianism in its restriction of government to the individual and to “culture”. I guess this is Reformed? I imagine he can cite Calvin, Luther, et al. on the evils of church and state government and the need to leave it all up to “culture”? This is, of course, Whiggery, not Reformed teaching. Calvin's Geneva was accused of a lot of things, but not for laxity in policing morals.

“Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture” was a great step forward and laid the foundation for all the institutions we as the heirs of Western civilization hold dear. There is no need to belabor the point. Perhaps a few reference from a recently-published work on the subject will serve to make it for me.

Our legal system was formed and developed over centuries under the dominating influence of the Christian religion. The ideals and standards of justice that informed our law were derived largely either from the Bible directly or from ancient pre-Christian institutions that have been so completely transformed under the influence of the church that the original pre-Christian practices from which they originate are no longer discernible in the Christianised forms in which we know them. Our very concepts of justice, due process and the rule of law are Christian ideals which we should never have known had the Christian faith not taken root in this land and transformed the nation from a pagan into a civilised society.*** Our justice system, and Western justice generally, is distinguishable from the inhumane and barbaric regimes that have existed and continue to exist in the world today outside the influence of Christian culture *only* because it is, or at least was in origin, a *Christian* vision of justice.

Shades of the Catholic apologist for Christian culture Christopher Dawson? Wrong. The author of the above quote (and it could be multiplied many times over) is none other than Stephen Perks.¹⁹ And did anyone notice the discrepancy between Stephen's rejection of Medieval ecclesiastical culture and his favorable comments about the English constitution in the introduction of his piece? That constitution is the direct offspring of Medieval ecclesiastical culture! The entire ceremony of anointing the king/queen is derived from medieval practice. *Veni Creator Spiritus* was probably written by Rabanus Maurus, ninth-century archbishop of Mainz.²⁰ Magna Carta, a cornerstone of the English constitution, was written by archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton, advocate of the claims of the papacy over against the king. And whence cometh the title Defender of the Faith? It was bestowed on Henry VIII by Pope Leo X in 1521, in gratitude for Henry's book defending the seven sacraments against Luther's *Babylonish Captivity*.²¹

Hence I detect a degree of schizophrenia in Stephen's position. He claims, just as the *philosophes* once did, to have risen above the pretensions, abuses, and injustices of "Mediaeval ecclesiastical culture." But he also is capable of writing paeans in praise of it. At any rate he claims to defend a constitution stemming directly from that culture, unless of course he believes in the myth of Anglo-Saxon liberties. Perhaps it depends on what side of the bed he wakes up on on any particular day. But if he really disagrees so strongly with my views, he needs to do so in a more systematic manner than this. And if he wants to show himself Reformed-ier than thou, he better be able to back it up with references to the Reformers. Otherwise he remains a bag of Whiggish hot air.

For the rest, Stephen seems to be promoting the same kind of neo-Calvinist Kuyperianism (Christian political party plus Christian social action in a pluralistic society) I criticized in [my review](#) in these august pages of Peter Leithart's book, *The Kingdom and the Power*. Why doesn't he interact with that article? He needs to recognize that he is sliding away from a commitment to theocracy toward a principled acceptance of pluralism. Which is precisely what happened to Abraham Kuyper and his heirs. Talk about slippery slopes! Stephen is never going to get anywhere putting his eggs in the basket of party politics and "Christian" organizations alongside non-Christian equivalents! Just look at the political and cultural landscape in Holland. Littered with the refuse of the Kuyperian alternative. It is no alternative. Stephen, and those who think like him, must come to accept that the church really is his mother, that, as Cyprian said (and Calvin repeated) he who will not have the church as his mother cannot have God as his father. If article XXX of the Belgic Confession is any guide, he is on the verge of open rebellion. The approach he champions is impotent because neither Stephen nor anyone else who believes like him have even the slightest influence in our "culture". And they never will, because they have cast off the keys of the kingdom as the means to influence culture, with the result that culture—this culture—will remain their master.

19 *Christianity and Law: an Enquiry into the Influence of Christianity on the Development of English Common Law* (Whitby, England: Avant Books, 1993), p. 54.

20 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987 [1910]), vol. IV, p. 424.

21 Schaff, *History*, vol. VII, p. 396.

Reply to Clauson

James B. Jordan

To the Editor:

A brief reply to Kevin Clauson's essay advocating the desirability of a Christian homeland: That Homeland already exists. It is the Church.

The Church has her own laws, finances, governors, territories, citizens, and historical culture. She has in a microcosm every single element to be found in a nation. The Church is planted in the midst of the nations to transform the nations.

Thus, there is no need to found a Christian homeland. Rather, the need is to repair the one that already exists, so that the Church can be the “city set on a hill”, providing light to the wider cultures into which she has been inserted.

Cordially,

James B. Jordan
Biblical Horizons