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LEADERSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP

Part 5: Dominion Through Subordination

by Gary North

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory (Matt. 12:18-20).

Why does the text say that God's messianic servant will neither strive nor cry? Jesus did drive the moneychangers from the temple – a form of striving, surely. He did preach publicly; men did hear His voice in the streets. I think the passage refers to **judicial striving**: His refusal to defend Himself in His confrontation with the two courts that condemned Him – Jewish and Roman, ecclesiastical and civil. "And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly" (Matt. 27:12-14).

Jesus did answer Pilate in their second confrontation, after Pilate had released Barabbas. This time, He identified the mark of His judicial subordination: His disciples did not fight to defend Him. Why didn't they? Because His kingdom did not originate in this world. He did not say that His kingdom was not in this world; on the contrary, he had already said that it was: "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Luke 11:20). But this kingdom did not originate in history. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Jesus therefore did not shout in the streets for His followers to fight. He remained judicially silent before His accusers, refusing to present His counter-lawsuit: a covenant lawsuit against them for false witness. He allowed them to execute their false covenant lawsuit against Him. **He subordinated Himself to them judicially in order that He might suffer a judicially representative death.** His death on the cross was the only way to achieve the salvation of the gentiles and world dominion representatively through His covenant people. Without this, there could be no **judicially representative resurrection** in history. Men would perish in their sins.

Protestantism's Empty Cross

Jesus suffered the ultimate indignity in history: death at the hands of false witnesses. This was the ultimate act of

subordination for someone who possessed the cosmic power to escape the courts' sentence of death. But the exercise of such cosmic power would have dissolved the bounds of history: a breaking-in on the ultimate drama in history. Adam's fall took place inside the bounds of history; Jesus had to overcome its effects inside the bounds of history. **So does His Church.**

Amillennialists and premillennialists insist that this task cannot be achieved in history, or even approached as a limit. They see the Church's deliverance as being outside history: a cosmic breaking-in by Jesus. They insist that the Church must remain subordinate in history to covenant-breakers, who will continue to run this world until Jesus returns bodily, either to set up a theocratic-bureaucratic kingdom (premillennialism) or at the final judgment which ends history (amillennialism). They insist that subordination of covenant-keepers to covenant-breakers during "the Church Age" is inescapable. In short, they insist, **cultural subordination does not lead the Church to worldwide dominion; it is a permanent condition until Jesus comes again.**

Protestantism rejects the Catholic crucifix – Jesus nailed to the cross – and presents instead an empty cross. Its traditional theological defense of this imagery is that Jesus is no longer on the cross. But in terms of its vision of the future of the Church, Protestantism's empty cross has been **the cross of the tomb, not the cross of the resurrection**, let alone the cross of the ascension. The Protestant Church sees itself as buried alive culturally and judicially.

This outlook has inescapable implications for any theory of leadership. The Protestant leader is seen today as a person who dutifully sweeps the tomb on a regular basis and who does his best to keep out grave-robbers. The tomb is culture; the Christian's job is to keep it from getting too cluttered with filth. The grave-robbers are covenant-breakers who seek to use their power to loot the Christians of their lawful inheritance. The Christian leader's job is to defend what little cultural influence Christianity has somehow retained. But it is a losing effort, pessimillennialists insist. The sinner inherits the lion's share of the legacy in history in the pessimillennial worldview. In the view of the premillennialist and the amillennialist, the wealth of the just is laid up for the sinner.

All Power

When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He announced the New Order of the Ages: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20). **He did not call them out of history; He called them to exercise representatively His sovereign authority over history.** Immediately prior to His bodily ascension to the throne of God, He told them to expect power: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:7).

Jesus achieved **power over history** by His **judicial subordination in history**. He exercises His power over history through His Church, which represents Him in history. His disciples' subordination to the Holy Spirit was to be their means of authoritatively announcing His visible kingdom in history. They would cry in the streets. They would now strive judicially – not in a revolutionary sense, but in their public announcement of their unwillingness to obey the courts, either civil or ecclesiastical: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). They refused to remain silent, which was the essence of their judicial insubordination.

Subordination and Insubordination

Those who represent Jesus Christ judicially in history – members of His Church – are required by God to remain subordinate to God's heavenly court. Thus, they must become insubordinate to any human court which requires them to cease bringing God's covenant lawsuit against the nations. Their subordination to such a human court would constitute insubordination to God's court. There is no escape in history from subordination and insubordination.

As the gospel spreads by means of the preaching of God's covenant lawsuit against individuals and institutions, covenant-breakers must resort to force to defend themselves. They must resist the extension of God's heavenly court in history if they are to defend their way of death. As the conflict between courts escalates in history, those on both sides become more insubordinate: covenant-breakers to God's heavenly court and covenant-keepers to self-consciously covenant-breaking human courts.

Christianity vs. Islam

Let me offer a modern example. It is illegal to preach the gospel publicly in several Islamic nations. (*Islam* means *submission to God*.) A former Muslim who begins to preach must be lawfully executed by Islamic law, and some Islamic nations enforce it. A non-Muslim resident who preaches the gospel will be expelled from the country. What is the Christian's proper response to such laws? To break them. Christians must do their best to smuggle in Bibles. They should beam radio broadcasts at Muslim societies. Above all, they must prepare now for the ultimate technological invasion of the closed world of Islam: **fiber optics**.

Information is the key to economic growth: "the word." In the 21st century, any nation that is not connected to the worldwide fiber optics network will fall behind economically. To prohibit the laying of fiber optic cable will be national economic suicide. But to lay such cable will be to open the society to thousands of channels of communication – high-speed communications that will enable an entire Bible to be transmitted electronically in seconds, for practically no money. There will be a Western and Christian invasion of the Islamic world through glass cables – an invasion that could dwarf the demographic invasion of the West by Muslims. The technology of the 21st century will undermine Islam just as it undermined Communism.

To achieve this invasion, people at both ends of the fiber optic transmissions will have to break Islamic law. Christians will do so joyously, taking advantage of an opportunity that we have awaited for fourteen centuries. But there is no doubt about the legal foundation of such a program of evangelism: we must obey God rather than men. Christian leaders today should be preparing an evangelism campaign to be delivered by way of the ultimate road to Damascus: fiber optics.

The problem is, the likely Islamic defense will be military: terrorism. Islam will have to attack the source of the West's technological superiority if it is to retain its leadership at home. The West will be challenged. Squads of dedicated terrorists will seek to bomb Western power stations and communications centers, or use biological weapons to kill hundreds of thousands of city dwellers. They will seek to create havoc in clandestine ways. Islamic nations cannot defeat the West on the conventional military battlefield, as Iraq learned in Kuwait in 1991. They will have to try to defeat the West on unconventional battlefields inside the West. To escape falling behind the West economically, the Islamic theocracies must bring down the West, even though the West has made them rich in the second half of the 20th century. The envy factor will combine with the Islamic theocracy factor: a highly destructive combination. A war is now in progress. It will almost surely escalate.

There will be **an escalation of insubordination** on both sides of this war. The gospel of Jesus Christ is unbeatable in a voluntary setting. God's word does not return to him void. Over time, it wins. God gives His Church sufficient time. The public square of every society will eventually become Christian. The less State coercion there is against Christians, the more rapidly this transformation will take place. Thus, covenant-breakers eventually resort to coercion: in the West, by the secular tax collector who uses Christians' money to finance anti-Christian institutions; in the Middle East, by the covenant-breaking civil judge and the international terrorist sent into the West.

Subordination and Mediation

Jesus made it clear that His earthly ministry is to serve as a permanent model for His covenantal agents in their efforts to extend His rule representatively in history:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:25-28).

The covenantal office of minister is mediatorial. Jesus Christ is the judicial model: a covenantal mediator between God and man. He represented God before man by declaring God's covenant lawsuit against man. He represented man before God in His role as sin-bearer. An ecclesiastical minister also covenantally represents God before man and man before God. This does not mean that he participates in a sacrifice, as Jesus did. That unique sacrifice was a one-time event (Heb. 9). It does mean that the minister declares covenantally binding sanctions in history.

The Civil Magistrate

Paul calls the civil magistrate of God a minister (Rom. 13:4). The ecclesiastical minister publicly announces blessings and cursings; the civil minister lawfully announces only

cursings. He is the State's wrath-bringer (Rom. 13:4).

When the Bible speaks of the civil magistrate as a minister, it has in mind both subordination and dominion. The minister is covenantally subordinate before God and therefore dominant over the evil-doer. His judicial subordination under God is the basis of his ordination under God to bring wrath against evil-doers.

But is the civil magistrate subordinate to other men? Yes. According to Jesus, the supreme testimony of this subordination in Israel was the centurion's declaration of faith in Jesus' ability to heal his servant.

And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel (Matt. 8:7-10).

This declaration of faith was based on a concept of military hierarchy. The centurion recognized that he was a man under authority, just as Jesus was under the Father. He also recognized that his personal legal subordination was the basis of his authority to command his subordinates and expect that his commands would be carried out, just as Jesus could command physical healing. This understanding marked him as the greatest man of faith in Israel. He understood covenantal hierarchy, and he had correctly applied this model to Jesus' ministry.

The Meek

The same principle of subordination and dominion applies to every aspect of the kingdom of God. "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11). **Judicially meek before God** because of the grace of God in their lives, redeemed men are called by God to extend God's kingdom in history. This is the meaning of Jesus' beatitude, the meek shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5).

Regeneration renews the dominion covenant (Gen. 1:26-28). Man in history is always a mediator: between God and His creation. His subordinate position is the basis of his dominion office. This is the meaning of biblical meditation: **under God, over creation**. This same principle of subordination-mediation also applies to human relationships: husband-wife, parents-children, pastor-church member, magistrate-citizen.

The Christian Leader as Mediator

The ordained Christian leader – in Church, family, or State – is a judicial mediator between God and man. He invokes God's authorized sanctions in history.

The non-ordained leader also employs sanctions, but these sanctions are not covenantal. They are not invoked authoritatively. They are the traditional sanctions of carrot and stick, profit and loss. These sanctions can be imposed over an ever-widening area only when the resources appropriate to the granting of positive sanctions are growing. A good example is the corporate dividend. When consumers extend positive sanctions to the corporation (profits), thereby publicly confirming the entrepreneurial foresight of the managers – the hired representatives of the owners-stockholders – the managers are in a position to pay dividends to the stockholders. The influence of the firm increases. On the other hand, if

a corporation is suffering losses, it cannot extend its influence.

The Christian leader seeks to extend his influence by extending the influence of the organization he represents. If his organization succeeds under his management, he is a beneficiary. The organization's stature is reflected in his reputation, and vice versa. The strategy employed by a leader should be to make his subordinates and his superiors look good: a wise mediator. The old motivational desk sign is accurate: "You can achieve almost anything if you give the credit to the other guy."

The person who does not mediate is either a chief without a tribe or a hermit. In either case, his influence will be minimal. It is only through the division of labor that productivity increases (1 Cor. 12). But the division of labor must employ a hierarchical system of reporting and responsibility. Someone must be in charge. That is to say, someone must represent the organization to those who are in charge. In business, consumers are in charge. The manager represents the owners to the consumers, and represents the consumers to the owners. He is in the middle. **If you are not under anyone's authority, you cannot attain sufficient economic resources to be over anyone.** Leadership requires followership. The leader must be a mediator.

Subordination and Inheritance

When Adam rebelled, God disinherited him and his biological heirs. It was only on the basis of Jesus' future legal representation as a sin-bearer that God extended the grace of temporal life to Adam. Without this work of **sacrificial representation**, there would have been no possibility of any inheritance for the family of Adam. Adam had been insubordinate; he had thereby forfeited his inheritance. Only grace could restore it – grace based on the perfect subordination of an authorized representative.

Inheritance and disinheritance are sanctions in history: one positive, the other negative. These sanctions determine secession in history. The son who inherits is supposed to extend the legacy of his father. This legacy is, above all, religious: a spiritual worldview grounded in faith. **The son who betrays the faith of his father is not fit to inherit, unless his father publicly broke with God's covenant (excommunication).**

Among the patriarchs, the second-born son inherited the double portion: Isaac rather than Ishmael, Jacob rather than Esau, and (skipping Joseph) Ephraim rather than Manasseh. The Mosaic law specified that the first-born son should inherit the double portion (Deut. 21:15-17). Why not with the patriarchs? Because God intervened in order to demonstrate a fundamental principle of biblical inheritance: **righteousness counts for more than birth order**. This is because ethics has a superior claim compared to bloodline. Jesus Christ, the second-born Son, inherited what first-born Adam had forfeited. He is the model.

Accumulation: Dominion Through Compound Growth

The goal of inheritance is accumulation. Specifically, the goal is for Christians to amass sufficient wealth to buy back the earth through their productivity. Legal title to the earth was delivered to Jesus Christ by God's grace at the time of His resurrection. All power in history was formally given to Him. His resurrection from the dead was visible proof of this inheritance. This was to have been Adam's inheritance: eating from the tree of life. Jesus' inheritance was more than eternal life; it was legal title to the whole earth.

His heirs' legal title is established by covenant, but **God's covenants with men are always conditional upon obedience** – Christ's perfect obedience, but then also redeemed

man's, as he manifests in history the grace that is his (Eph. 2:8-10). This is why point four of the biblical covenant model – sanctions – cannot be separated from point five: inheritance. **This is why theonomy cannot be separated from postmillennialism.** The inheritance is not unconditional.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth (Psalm 37:9).

For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off (Psalm 37:22).

The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever (Psalm 37:29).

The adopted sons of God (John 1:12) are not to use violence to reclaim their lawful inheritance. They are to reclaim it by purchase, generation by generation, by means of their own productivity. While ownership of the whole earth was **definitively** transferred to Jesus Christ at the resurrection, it is transferred **progressively** to His adopted sons through history. It will be transferred **finally** at the last judgment.

This process of inheritance forces each generation to work hard to increase its legacy for the next generation. Some generations squander a considerable percentage of this legacy. From the late seventeenth century until today, Christians have been squandering this inheritance. Their eschatologies of shipwreck – ghetto eschatologies – have produced a short-term outlook, what economist Ludwig von Mises called **high time-preference**. In his classic book, *The Unheavenly City* (1970), Harvard University political scientist Edward Banfield identified this shortened time perspective as **lower class**. So it is. Without the concept of inheritance over generations, there can be no permanent leadership. This is why God promised His people that their inheritance would last for a thousand generations, if they remained obedient to His law:

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee (Deut. 7:9-13).

Covenant Theology and Leadership

Because Christians have abandoned the doctrine of the covenant – indeed, have failed even to understand it – they

have become lower class. First, the modern Church rejects the doctrine of predestination – the absolute sovereignty of God (Rom. 9; Eph. 1) – as taught by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. It sees God as transcendent, but He shares His glory with man, who has the power to thwart God's plan of salvation. That is, He who enforces the covenant often can be vetoed by man. God supposedly will not back up His prophets in history by imposing His corporate sanctions.

Second, Christians reject His covenantal hierarchy. Protestants especially do not fear excommunication. Protestant churches do not honor other churches' excommunication. The State has become the feared agency today, since the Church is not feared even by Christians. The Christian leaders who arise – often self-anointed – from such a setting are frequently either tyrants or clowns.

Third, Christians reject the continuing authority of God's revealed law. They go running to Aristotle by way of Thomas Aquinas in search of binding civil statutes. "We're under grace, not law" they shout. No; they are under humanist lawyers. They prefer it this way until the day of the tyrant arrives, as surely as the Philistines invaded when Israel was faithless. As always, the men in chains profess shock when this happens. "How did this happen to us?"

Fourth, they deny that God brings predictable corporate sanctions in history, either positive or negative. The civil magistrate is not seen as a mediator standing between God and men, whose Bible-defined negative sanctions have been authorized by God so that God will not have to bring His comprehensive negative sanctions more directly. Sanctions are to be Aristotelian or Madisonian, not biblical, we have been assured by generations of Christian leaders. For example, they implicitly deny that the success of the gospel in the West has had anything to do with the history of economic growth.

Fifth, they deny that the meek will inherit the earth in history.

Having denied the five points of the biblical covenant, Christians find themselves unable to articulate a distinctly biblical theory of leadership. Christian leaders find themselves laughed at derisively as buffoons by covenant-breakers and reviled by covenant-keepers as power-seeking tyrants. They find themselves confronted by fearful compromisers whose implicit models are those Israelites who reviled Moses and Aaron:

And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us (Ex. 5:20-21).

Conclusion

The Bible sets forth a program for the worldwide dominion: the kingdom (civilization) of God. Dominion is achieved by Christians' **subordination through law**, leading to **inheritance**. This is no longer widely believed by Christians. Because of this, they have been squandering their inheritance. They are not in a position to exercise leadership. They prefer to live on the scraps that fall from the table of humanism rather than subordinate themselves to ministers who come in the name of an absolutely sovereign God and His authoritative law. God has granted them their wish.

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