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LEADERSHIP THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP

Part 1: Servants of the Lord, Masters of Culture

by Gary North

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:22-24).

Servitude is a manifestation of point two of the biblical covenant model: hierarchy/authority/representation. In this passage, the master is a representative of God to the servant. Like God, the master is in authority over the servant. But because the Christian servant also serves God, he becomes a representative of God to the master. It is this two-fold servitude that is characteristic of life: service to men and service to a supernatural being. The primary question is: Which supernatural being?

In His stay on earth, Christ served His Father by serving God's people. Christ was a suffering servant. But we tend to forget that this servitude was the foundation of Christ's authority to bring judgment against His enemies. God the Father announced: "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. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust" (Matt. 12:18-21). **Judgment unto victory:** this process of dominion in history begins with faithful service. This is why Jesus set forth the fundamental principle of leadership: "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27).

Leadership Begins With Followership

The teacher is the master; the student is the servant. Teaching can be highly personal, as when a mother teaches a child in the home. The tutorial is an extension of parental teaching: the parent hires a specialist to teach the child. For skilled trades, the apprenticeship system is adopted: a master of a trade teaches a young person the fundamentals of that trade.

Education in our day is increasingly bureaucratic and impersonal: a teacher instructs a group of students. This form of teaching relies on the formal lecture rather than "hands-on" instruction, the written examination rather than the production of a representative final product. It is an extension of the tutorial. The tutorial costs too much per student instructed, so parents or other buyers of instruction pool their funds in order to purchase the services of a single tutor: the division of labor. In doing this, the character of education moves from the personal to the impersonal, at least in the early phases. But as time goes on in a society that honors

at least God's external laws of success, capital accumulates and technology improves. Then the personal element reappears: the videodisc and the CD-ROM combine the cost-effectiveness of a large classroom with the personal structuring of education in a specialized tutorial.

In all forms of teaching, there must be hierarchy. Someone hands out grades or certifies performance: sanctions. The master who possesses a particular skill imparts this skill to the student. The student is told what to do. He must meet a standard imposed by the master. He must follow instructions. The teacher brings judgment on the student's work. The student is required to do exactly what the teacher tells him to do, given the limits of the student's abilities. Only through this subordination to the master and the master's standards can the student become a master himself. He must follow before he can lead.

A Question of Standards

When the student receives his certificate of graduation, he is no longer under the formal authority of his teacher. The hierarchical relationship ends. The student moves from follower to independent agent. If he then takes on students, he becomes a master. By what authority does he become a master? First, on the basis of his certificate of graduation: mastery over a specific set of skills appropriate to a master. Second, on the basis of market performance: those who seek a teacher hire him as a master. His certificate allows him to compete in the market of graduates. His superior performance in this market – or at least his superior advertising – allows him to become a master.

What about the standards of performance? His master imposed them originally. After his graduation, the market imposes them. No longer does the master bring sanctions in terms of a set of standards. Now a new master appears: the customer. The customer decides whether or not to buy his product or services. There is a shift of authority: from the standards of the master to the standards of the consumers.

When seeking a master, the buyer of teaching services presumes that the master will act as a representative of the future consumers who will impose their standards. The teacher is believed by the purchaser of teaching skills to be able to impose performance standards on his students so that they will be able to earn an income in the future when they are granted their final certificates of performance. The master gains his authority because he is believed to be an economic representative of a higher authority: future consumers. The performance standards that he imposes on his students are supposed to be the same as the standards that will be imposed by future consumers.

The goal of the purchaser of instruction is to have the

job's performance standards imparted to the student. The student is expected to internalize these standards. These standards are supposed to become almost instinctual for the student, so that he will be able to serve customers more effectively. He is not expected to think consciously about the application of these standards to routine tasks after he graduates. The fundamentals of his trade become so instinctual for him that he can then concentrate his attention on the fine points of the trade. He is always expected to be improving his performance, which means that more and more aspects of the trade must become instinctual to him. The mark of his mastery of the trade is the ever-widening circle of performance that becomes easy for him because everything within that circle has become almost automatic. He "feels" what is correct.

Understand, it is not that he is expected to abandon the standards that had been enforced by his former master. On the contrary, **he extends these standards into new areas of responsibility and performance.** As a student, these standards were placed over him: rules that guided him, pressured him, and judged him. As a performer, these standards are still over him in the sense that they must be honored if he pursues success, but they are not merely over him; they are also inside him and under him. Because they have become automatic in his behavior, they become his tools of dominion. Because he has moved from student to master, his relationship to these standards has changed. He is a master **in terms of** these standards. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote of God's law: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:23-25).

God's revealed law is not to be regarded as being strictly external over us; we are supposed to internalize its precepts. David wrote: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes" (Ps. 119:9-12). Like the adult who looks both ways before crossing a street without ever thinking about the painful sanctions that his parents long ago brought against him for failing to do this as a child, so is the mature Christian who has internalized the fundamental principles of God's Bible-revealed law.

God's law is always over us, for it is His standard of thought and action. He will judge all men in terms of its precepts. But the mark of spiritual maturity is the **internalization** of these precepts. As surely as a master craftsman has internalized the standards of his trade, so is the master Christian.

There is a reason why there are so few master Christians in our day: the hatred of God's law. Before the law becomes our tool of dominion it first serves as our schoolmaster. Before we are rewarded because of our mastery of God's law, we are first punished in terms of it. Because Christians hate God's law, they remain spiritually rebellious children. This rebellion cripples their performance in every area in which God's law applies to their jobs and callings, that is, in every area of life.

Subordination to Which Schoolmaster?

In the hands of a skilled craftsman, a sharp-edged tool is an instrument of service and productivity. The tool is what imparts power to the tool's master. If he uses it improperly, it will cut him. If he uses it properly, it will profit him. Likewise is God's law. It is a sharp tool, fit for cutting.

"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. 2:16). "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15). The question is: Who gets cut? Also, who does the cutting? Who are those people in history who lawfully wield God's sword?

Antinomians hate the idea of the continuing authority of God's Bible-revealed law. They rail against it. They see it as their mortal enemy, as indeed it is. They do not understand that God's law, like a sharp tool, is not merely capable of cutting the one who wields it; it is capable of cutting the raw material it was designed by God to cut.

In order to justify their rebellion against God's revealed law, covenant-breakers and Christian antinomians place artificial boundaries of their own making around God's law. They claim that God's law only applies to "spiritual" things, not to the "real world." They deny that biblical law governs education, economics, and above all, civil government. They do not want to suffer the pain of God's negative sanctions in the preliminary phase of their careers, so they forfeit the opportunity to receive the law's positive sanctions in the subsequent phases of their careers. In order to legitimize their refusal to submit to God's law in the apprenticeship phase, they deny the law's legitimacy in the hands of a master. Choosing not to suffer the trials of apprenticeship, they remain content as amateurs. They do not master their fields as Christians. Instead, they subordinate themselves early to other standards.

To the extent that covenant-breakers and antinomians gain mastery over anything, it is because they first submit to other punishments imposed in terms of rival standards. There is no mastery over the externals of life without the prior mastery over the "internals" of life. Ethical rebels announce that these other standards are the truly universal ones. These standards may be called "natural law," or perhaps they are called something else, but they are said to be authoritative over biblical law.

In our era, the triumph of humanism has come in the name of natural law or the law of some impersonal force other than the God of the Bible. Humanists have captured the institutions of education. They have become the schoolmasters over Christians, controlling Christian children by threatening their parents. Compulsory school attendance is one method. Requiring licensing of home schools and Christian day schools is another. But none of this would have been possible had the Christians who once controlled the West's institutions not forfeited their authority by agreeing with the humanists regarding the supreme authority of anti-biblical law. In the name of common values as opposed to Bible-revealed values, the humanists took control over the taxpayer-funded school systems. Then they raised taxes and built more schools. They compelled Christians to fund rival "schoolmasters": rival standards of performance. This allowed the pagans to gain near-monopoly control over licensing and certification. All of this was acceded to by Christians in the name of natural law and universal moral values of citizenship. Christians desired to escape subordination to God's law, so they are today servants in the household of foreign masters who cunningly stole the inheritance of the original family of God.

In short, God is not mocked. When His people worship at the shrines of other gods, the representatives of those gods will exercise dominion over God's people, as surely as the Philistines exercised intermittent dominion over Israel. The law of a society reveals the god of that society. If it is not God's law, it is man's law. Modern man asserts his divinity by imposing his law in defiance of God's law. Yet Christians cheer from the servants' quarters! This is

why they hate theonomy. **Christians prefer lifelong bondage to mastery in history because biblical apprenticeship must begin in the school of God's law.** They prefer bondage to responsibility. They prefer disinheritance to inheritance. God gives them the desires of their hearts.

Household Servants

Paul understood why Christians were slaves. There was one lawful way out of slavery: God's grace. Until then, Paul warned, Christian slaves were required to become the most productive and faithful servants in the households of covenant-breakers. He made this clear more than once:

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:5-6).

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God (Col. 3:22).

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining [stealing], but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2:9-10).

In the twentieth century, Christians have remained servants in the judicial and cultural households of their enemies. This century has been a century of bondage for God's people. I am aware of no other century since the fall of Rome in which God's people have been more universally in bondage. In North Africa in the seventh century Islam swept over Christian culture, replacing it with a rival civilization. Something very similar has happened to all Christians in the twentieth century. This should tell us that we have been unfaithful servants in God's household, implicitly serving other gods, faithlessly taking rival oaths, shamelessly proclaiming other legal orders — **any** other legal order — in preference to God's legal order. In the name of religious and political pluralism, Christians have affirmed that they can live under any political order, or any economic order, except one: the one revealed in the Bible. That legal order, Christians proclaim to themselves, their children, and their enemies, is off limits. That legal order is annulled. "Anything else is valid, but we will not live under biblical law, which is anathema!" That is to say, "We have no king but Caesar!"

Seizer

In our day, Caesar has become seizer. In the United States, as in almost every Western industrial nation, taxes at all levels consume something in the range of 40% of men's productivity. Egypt under Pharaoh extracted a mere 20% (Gen. 47:24). Yet voters today are barely aware of what has taken place since World War I. In 1914, no Western government extracted anything close to 10%. How many Christians have ever thought about the fact that if they were granted a 50% tax cut, they would be the economic equivalent of Pharaoh's bondservants? How many of them understand that the tax rate that Samuel identified as the judgment of God (1 Sam. 8:15, 17) was one-quarter of what most Christians pay today? Today's Christians are so completely under bondage that they are no longer aware of what freedom means. Samuel warned: "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day" (1 Sam. 8:18). But today's Christians are barely into the murmuring stage, let alone the crying out stage.

As in Moses' day, the Pharaoh has assigned taskmasters to rule over God's people. Similarly, the taskmasters

have hired leaders in the camp of the faithful to exercise judgment over the slaves. These hired leaders deeply resent anyone who comes to inform God's people that they are in bondage. Critics who speak such things in public threaten the positions of the hired leaders. Their response today is similar to their spiritual and functional predecessors' response to 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).

Most Christians send their children into public (taxpayer-financed) schools. From age five or six until age seventeen or eighteen, Christian students are under the authority of either pagan taskmasters or paid hirelings from the camp of the faithful. Then Christians attend college. There are very few evangelical Christian colleges, and to receive accreditation, these colleges must be staffed by professors who have received either the M.A. or Ph.D. from an accredited university. There is no accredited Protestant university committed to biblical infallibility that has been authorized by the State to grant the Ph.D. Only Bob Jones University grants a Ph.D., but it is not accredited. As surely as the taskmasters of Egypt screened and trained Israelite "trustees," so do today's taskmasters screen and train today's Christian "trustees." There is not a single college on earth that requires its faculty members to restructure the content of their teaching in terms of the Bible. Christian colleges instead baptize contemporary humanism: right-wing Enlightenment thought or left-wing Enlightenment thought.

Those hierarchical denominations that are marked by their commitment to an educated ministry require seminary degrees of most candidates to the ministry. The seminaries in turn almost always require that applicants hold the B.A. degree from a State-accredited college or university. From the bottom to the top, the modern Protestant, evangelical churches place every candidate for leadership under the authority of the churches' mortal enemies. They do this in the name of respectability. This respectability is granted to those institutions that adopt and enforce the academic standards that are established by covenant-breakers. Only Bob Jones University has opted out of this system, and it has done so not in the name of a higher standard of academic performance, a standard that will eventually replace all rival standards, but rather in the name of permanent separation from the existing culture. Bob Jones University has opted out of modern culture, and on this basis has opted out of the accreditation system. This is ghetto education that is a reflection of what Rushdoony calls the permanent remnant mentality.

Machen on Dominion

In the fall of 1912, J. Gresham [GRESSum] Machen [MAYchen] delivered an address to the incoming students of Princeton Theological Seminary: "Christianity and Culture." It was reprinted in the January 1913 issue of the *Princeton Theological Review*. He warned the students of the transition they were about to make:

Our whole system of school and college education is so contained as to keep religion and culture as far apart as possible and ignore the question of the relationship between them. On five or six days in the week, we were engaged in the acquisition of knowledge. From this the study of religion was banished. . . . Religion seemed to be something that had to do only with the emotions and the will, leaving the intellect to secular studies.

Now, however, this was about to change for the incoming students. "Upon entering the Seminary, we are suddenly introduced to an entirely different procedure. Religion is suddenly removed from its seclusion; . . . The scientific spirit seems to be replacing simple faith, the mere apprehension of dead facts to be replacing the practice of principles." This leads to an intellectual crisis. "In short, almost entirely unprepared, we are brought face to face with the problem of the relationship between knowledge and piety, or, otherwise expressed, between culture and Christianity."

Machen really did mean "we." He did not mean just the students. In 1912 he had still not submitted to ordination as a minister. He was still an instructor at Princeton; to be a professor, he had to be ordained. From 1906 until 1915, he refused to take this step. He was still unsure of his calling. He was still groping for a reconciliation between the rational techniques of scholarship and the truth of the Bible.

He accurately identified the three proposed solutions to the dilemma of faith. The first solution is the subordination of Christianity to secular culture. This is the way of modernism. "Christianity becomes a human product, a mere part of human culture." But modernism is not Christianity, he insisted; it is a rival religion. He made this even more clear a decade later in his book, *Christianity and Liberalism*.

There is another proposed solution. "The second solution goes to the opposite extreme. In its effort to give religion a clear field, it seeks to destroy culture." This is pietism. Machen regarded this solution as superior to the humanist solution. But it surrenders the world to God's enemies:

The world is so evil that it cannot possibly produce the means for its own salvation. Salvation must be the gift of an entirely new life, coming directly from God. Therefore, it is argued, the culture of the world must be a matter at least of indifference to the Christian.

Machen understood the mentality of the pietist. "Such men can never engage in the arts and sciences with anything like enthusiasm—such enthusiasm they would regard as disloyalty to the gospel." Machen did not hesitate to condemn this view: "Such a position is really both illogical and unbiblical. God has given us certain powers of mind, and has implanted within us the ineradicable conviction that these powers were intended to be exercised." So, we cannot remain content with this approach to culture.

The third approach was Machen's. He called it the **consecration of culture**.

Instead of destroying the arts and sciences or being indifferent to them, let us cultivate them with all the enthusiasm of the veriest humanist, but at the same time consecrate them to the service of our God. Instead of stifling the pleasures afforded by the acquisition of knowledge or by the appreciation of what is beautiful, let us accept these pleasures as the gifts of a heavenly Father. Instead of obliterating the distinction between the Kingdom and the world, or on the other hand withdrawing from the world into a sort of modernized intellectual monasticism, let us go forth joyfully, enthusiastically to make the world subject to God.

This is clearly the dominion religion: the extension of the

kingdom of God in history. Christians are called to overcome the humanistic culture of our day, not retreat from it. The problem is, he insisted, that the church of his day was not ready to organize such a task. It was completely unprepared.

The real difficulty amounts to this—that the thought of the day, as it makes itself most strongly felt in the universities, but from them spreads inevitably to the masses of the people, is profoundly opposed to Christianity, or at least—what is nearly as bad—it is out of all connection with Christianity. The Church is unable either to combat it or to assimilate it, because the Church simply does not understand it. Under such circumstances, what more pressing duty than for those who have received the mighty experience of regeneration, who, therefore, do not, like the world, neglect that whole series of vitally relevant facts which is embraced in Christian experience—what more pressing duty than for these men to make themselves masters of the thought of the world in order to make it an instrument of truth instead of error? The Church has no right to be so absorbed in helping the individual that she forgets the world.

Machen delivered his lecture a few weeks before Woodrow Wilson, the former president of Princeton University, was elected President of the United States. The essay was published in the year that the United States experienced a legal revolution: the direct election of Senators, the establishment of a federal income tax, and the creation of the Federal Reserve System, the nation's privately owned central bank. Yet in the "good old days" of 1912, he announced: "The situation is desperate. It might discourage us. But not if we are truly Christians. Not if we are living in vital communion with the risen Lord." The difficulty of our task can become an inspiration, and "we can even rejoice that God did not place us in an easy age, but in a time of doubt and perplexity and battle." He went so far as to proclaim this seemingly impossible dream: "Instead of making our theological seminaries merely centres of religious emotion, we shall make them battle-grounds of the faith. . . ."

Sadly, this has yet to happen.

Conclusion

The Christian's servitude to God is the judicial basis of his dominion over creation. Biblical law serves first as our schoolmaster and then as our tool of dominion. The pietist rejects both ideas. He rejects biblical law as a schoolmaster in the New Covenant era; he also rejects dominion as an ideal. He shares this faith with the humanist, with whom he has an implicit alliance. So, he remains content to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water in the household of the humanists.

Not so the defender of the dominion religion. He cannot rest in history until there is the consecration of the entire culture of mankind. He is content to be a servant in the household of God. He therefore cannot be content to be a servant in the household of God's enemies. He submits himself to the law of God in order to take dominion in terms of the law of God. For this he is doubly despised: by the Pharaoh's taskmasters and by their faithful "trustees" who act as their agents in the household of faith.

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