

# Christian Reconstruction

Isaiah 61:4

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## THE THREE LEGS OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION'S STOOL

by Gary North

One of the most fundamental principles of economics is the division of labor. Adam Smith's opening lines of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) describes the tremendous increase in productivity which is made possible by the division of labor. He gave his classic example of pin-making. A common laborer could scarcely produce a single pin with a day's labor if he had no specialized pin-making machinery. By breaking up the production of pins into specialized sub-routines, ten men in Smith's day were capable of producing 48,000 pins per day, or 4,800 per worker.

Who could afford to buy pins that took a man a day's labor to produce only one? Not many of us. Yet anyone in England could afford pins in Smith's day, and today they are even cheaper. The wonders of mass production, price competition, specialization of production, and capital equipment have opened a world of productivity and therefore per capita wealth that would have been unattainable by kings as little as two centuries ago—back when there were still kings. We have lost our kings and have gained a kingdom in which almost anyone in industrial nations has more tools and comforts than the kings of the eighteenth century—better medical care (with safe and effective anesthetics), warmer homes in the winter, cooler homes in the summer, and cheaper entertainment every night of the week. What common workman today, lying in a hospital, would voluntarily trade places with anyone on earth living a century ago who was suffering from the same malady?

From whence came the division of labor? From the curse of the ground by God (Gen. 3:17-19) and from the variations in the earth's material resources (including climates) and in human skills and tastes. The curse of the ground is also a blessing: an incentive for men to cooperate with each other in production in order to increase their own personal productivity and therefore their wealth. The productivity which stems from the division of labor places a high price on murder, mayhem, and antisocial behavior. To murder another person is to remove that person's productive contributions from the economy.

### Ecclesiastical Specialization

It is clear from church history that each Christian group has made uniquely valuable contributions to the development of the kingdom of God. Like individuals who specialize, churches also develop skills and resources that increase the productivity of other Christian groups, and society in general. Of course, each group has its own specific weaknesses and vulnerabilities. As conditions change, one or another of these church traditions becomes pre-eminent, while others fade into the historical shadows. The culture-transforming Catholicism of Augustine in the fifth century became the barren Augustinianism which burdened Luther and led to his challenge to the foundations of Catholic civilization. The dynamic Puritanism of Governor John Winthrop's Massa-

chusetts Bay Colony degenerated into the stodgy, rationalistic, and almost mechanical Calvinism of the early eighteenth century, when it was uprooted by a combination of forces: the Calvinist and pietistic sermons of Jonathan Edwards, the rise of the itinerant Arminian preachers, the liberal Protestantism of Charles Chauncy and other respectable Bostonians, and the mass meetings of Calvinist Anglican George Whitefield. In short, God allows no church tradition to dominate His kingdom after it has atrophied into disuse.

It has become increasingly obvious to serious Christians in our day that the churches are weak. They no longer are the primary sources of vision, education, philanthropy, and social cohesion. They no longer exercise a major leadership role nationally, and very little role locally. Fundamentalist churches went into cultural retreat after the Scopes' trial in 1925 and after the failure of Prohibition. The liberal denominations have lost their influence markedly since the 1960's. Roman Catholicism has been rent asunder by a series of extraordinary changes that began theologically in the early 1950's ("higher criticism") and institutionally with Pope John XXIII's call for church reform.

But another series of events have begun to rally Christians, luring them back into the arenas of cultural and political conflict. Thousands of fundamentalists have been intellectually encouraged by the publication of anti-evolutionary books and materials since the early 1960's. The legalization of abortion on demand by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) has given Christians of many denominational traditions a cause, and groups are cooperating on an ad hoc basis in order to bring an end to the slaughter of the innocents. The cause of human life has transcended theological disputes that once made cooperation improbable.

As Christians have begun to recognize the religious impulse of modern humanism, they have seen that there are battle lines drawn between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan—battle lines that affect every area of life. The reigning philosophy of neutrality has at last been challenged by Christian leaders (as Marxists challenged it a century ago and philosophical relativists challenged it two generations ago). The implications of this new-found, Bible-based presuppositionalism are becoming clearer to a growing minority of thinking Christians. The intellectual compromises with humanism that once were taken for granted are today being challenged. And as the real threat to Christian civilization is recognized, the former divisions with other Christian groups are being seen as matters of subsidiary importance at this stage of history.

### The New Cooperation

The rise of the "New Christian Right" in the U.S. since the late 1970's has yet to be fully understood, even by those within the movement. But this much is clear: the increasing

arrogance of the humanist elite which controls the West is creating an opposition movement which is itself increasingly confident in the foundations of its own power, namely, the God of the Bible and the power of biblical revelation. Christian leaders who a decade ago would have rejected both doctrines are today preaching about the sovereignty of God and the law of God. A new Puritanism is developing—a Puritanism which offers men the hope of God-honoring social transformation.

This new cooperation can be compared to a stool which rests on three legs. Each leg is important, yet as recently as 1959 these three legs either did not exist or were not being used outside of some narrow denominational tradition. The three legs are: 1) Presbyterian scholarship and six-day creationism; 2) Baptist day schools; and 3) the Pentecostals' various satellite communications systems.

#### Scholarship

Biblical scholarship, outside of the six-day creationism issue and Wycliffe-based linguistic scholarship, has overwhelmingly been Presbyterian in this century. The Lutherans are in second place. This has been true since the 1500's. J. Gresham Machen was fundamentalism's spokesman from 1923 until his death in early 1937, defending biblical inerrancy and attacking theological liberalism, yet Machen was not a fundamentalist. He was a Presbyterian. Even the eloquent William Jennings Bryan was a Presbyterian, although more of a fundamentalist than Machen was. Presbyterian Oswald T. Allis's defense of inerrancy in *God Spoke By Moses* was as respected by fundamentalist educators as his critique of dispensationalism was rejected (*Prophecy and the Church*). Francis Schaeffer's influence is obvious—another Calvinistic Presbyterian. R. J. Rushdoony's defense of Christian education (*Intellectual Schizophrenia*) and his critique of humanist education (*The Messianic Character of American Education*) have become "testaments" of the independent Christian education movement in the U.S. His testimony in court trial after court trial as the expert witness for the defense of Christian schools has made him prominent within Baptist and fundamentalist circles. Some Arminian Baptists have even complained publicly about his prominence, but they cannot find anyone with his education and eloquence to fill the gap. They have to put up with him because they have no alternative. In a war, you need to be concerned about how well your partner shoots, not what he believes about the cosmic source of guidance for his bullets.

In short, Presbyterians supply the ammo. They shoot, too, but there just aren't enough of them to make much difference.

The confidence provided to modern fundamentalism since 1960 by the various creationist research groups has been crucial. The "shame" of the Scopes' debacle has been cleansed away. The evolutionists are on the run intellectually today, not the creationists. The psychology has shifted from retreat to victory.

#### Baptist Day Schools

The advent of the Accelerated Christian Education (A.C.E.) program and the Beka Books of the Pensacola Christian School have produced thousands of new independent Christian day schools and church schools since 1965. These schools are molding the minds of the next generation of Christian leaders. They are the knife at the throat of the monopolistic humanist schools, and the humanists know it. The one established church in the U.S., the public school system, is facing the defection of millions of

students. When a parent pulls his child out of a public school, he has broken institutionally and psychologically with the statist order. The church that sets up such a school has broadened its commitment to social change. It has also gained an institution which is worth defending, and the humanists are increasingly ready to attack. Thus, the psychology of conformism and capitulation is frequently changed. Pastors who were previously unwilling to make a stand against humanism's myth of neutrality now must make a break. Their schools need a reason to exist. The war against humanism is that reason. Their schools give formerly pietistic pastors the motivation to fight. The pressure from the state boards of education and local truancy officers provide the fight.

#### Pentecostal Satellites

The holy rollers are rolling less and broadcasting more than anyone could have guessed a decade ago. A technological miracle is with us, and the Pentecostals are alone making good use of it.

On any given day, 15 commercial broadcasting satellites hang suspended in stationary orbits 23,000 miles above the earth. Each satellite offers 24 separate T.V. broadcast channels. The majority of these channels have no regularly scheduled programming. Thus, they are cheap to rent, and more than other churches, Pentecostal churches are renting them.

The best example is Dr. Gene Scott of the Faith Center in Glendale. He had his UHF broadcasting license revoked by the FCC last year. Scott was not deterred. He now broadcasts from the Westar Satellite #5 on transponder 1X. He is now selling satellite reception dishes that are tuned only to his channel for the incredible price of \$777.77. (The average dish sells for over \$3,000.) He is making a "technological end run" around the establishment broadcasting media. If Gene Scott can do it, others will do it. (For information about this satellite sales program, write: University Network, 1615 S. Glendale Blvd., Glendale, CA 91205.)

The potential for education is stupendous. I've outlined my proposal to revolutionize Christian higher education in my essay, "Levers, Fulcrums, and Hornets" in *Christianity and Civilization*, a symposium on "Tactics of Christian Resistance," available from I.C.E. for \$14.95.

Pastor Robert Tilton of the Word of Faith Church in Dallas has over 1,000 churches hooked up by satellite to his ministry. He is about to enter the field of Christian educational programming in a big way. This is going on unnoticed right under the noses of the humanist elite. He is in a position to reach hundreds of thousands of Christians with a message or even a mobilization effort within a matter of days. (Address for information: 2300 Valley View Ln., Dallas, TX 75381.)

Thus, the technology is now available for nationwide mobilization for Christian reconstruction. It is cheap enough to be within the grasp of many groups. If Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, the people at *New Wine* magazine, and Maranatha campus ministries ever get their own scheduled satellite broadcasts, the technological foundation of a comprehensive revival will be established.

#### Conclusion

We are now in a position to fuse together in a working activist movement the three major legs of the Reconstructionist movement: the Presbyterian-oriented educators, the Baptist school headmasters and pastors, and the charismatic telecommunications system. When this takes place, the whole shape of American religious life will be transformed.

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