

# Christian Reconstruction

Isaiah 61:4

Vol. X, No. 4

© Gary North, 1986

July/Aug., 1986

## TIME TO UNSHRIVEL

by Gary North

If a mass revival at last hits this nation, and if millions of people are regenerated by God's grace through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ at Calvary, will this change be visible in the way the new converts run their lives? Will their politics change, their business dealings change, their families change, their family budgets change, and their church membership change? If not, why not?

Does conversion to Christ make a visible difference?

Second, two or three years later, will Congress be voting for a different kind of defense policy, foreign relations policy, environmental policy, immigration policy, monetary policy, and so forth? Will the Federal budget change? If not, why not?

Does conversion to Christ make a visible difference?

### The Great Commission

The task of American Christians today is essentially the same as the Puritans' self-appointed task when they came to North America in the 1630's: **to establish a city on a hill** (Matthew 5:14). We are to promote a Bible-based Christian reconstruction of the United States, so that it can serve as an example to be followed all over the world. The law of God is a tool of evangelism, to bring the nations to Christ. The law of God produces good fruit that the whole world will marvel at (Deuteronomy 4:5-8). What is required is **comprehensive revival**—a revival that will transform everything on earth.

In short, it is time to take seriously the Great Commission: to **disciple** (discipline) all the nations of the earth (Matthew 28:19).

There are God-required principles (laws) of thought and practice in areas that today are generally believed to be outside the area of "religion." What we need to proclaim to all who will listen (and even to those who won't) is that **nothing** lies outside religion, that God is judging all of our thoughts and acts, judging our institutions, and working through human history to bring this world to a final judgment.

God offers **comprehensive salvation**—regeneration, healing, restoration, and the obligation of total social reconstruction—because the world is in **comprehensive sin**.

To judge the world, God applies standards. If there were no absolute standards, there could be no earthly judgment, and no final judgment. Men could not be held accountable. Thus, to argue that God's standards don't apply to everything is to argue that sin hasn't affected and infected everything. To argue that God's Word doesn't give us a revelation of God's requirements is to argue that we are flying blind as Christians. It is to argue that there are **zones of moral neutrality** that God will not judge, on earth or at the day of judgment, because these zones are **outside His jurisdiction**. In short, "no law-no jurisdiction."

But if God does have jurisdiction over the whole uni-

verse, which is what every Christian believes, then there must be universal standards by which God executes judgment. Christians must argue for God's **comprehensive judgment**, and declare His **comprehensive salvation**.

### Shriving Up God's Kingdom

When, in a court of law, the witness puts his hand on the Bible and swears to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help him God, he thereby swears on the Word of God—the **whole** Word of God, and **nothing but** the Word of God. The Bible is a unit. It's a "package deal." The New Testament doesn't overturn the Old Testament; it's a **commentary** on the Old Testament. It tells us how to use the Old Testament properly in the period after the death and resurrection of Israel's messiah, God's Son.

Jesus said: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men to do so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19, New King James Version). The Old Testament isn't "God's Word (emeritus)." It isn't a discarded first draft.

The Old Testament was written by the same God who wrote the New Testament. There were not two Gods in history. That ancient two-god heresy was first promoted in the church about a century after Christ's crucifixion, and the church has always regarded it as just that, a heresy. It was proposed by a man named Marcion. You would be surprised how many Christians still believe something dangerously close to Marcionism: not a two-God view, exactly, but a God-who-changed-all-His-rules sort of view.

Another ancient heresy that is still with us is gnosticism. It is a form of dualism: evil matter vs. good spirit. The gnostics believed that matter is evil, but spirit is good. Thus, their goal was to escape this world through other-worldly exercises that punish the body. They believed in retreat from the world of human conflicts and responsibility. Some of these ideas got into the church, and people started doing ridiculous things. One of them sat on a platform on top of a pole for several decades. This was considered very spiritual. (Who fed him? Who cleaned up after him?)

Thus, Christians came to view "the world" as something outside the kingdom of God. They believed that this hostile, forever-evil world cannot be redeemed, reformed, and reconstructed. Jesus didn't really die for it, and it can't be healed. They defined away the earthly manifestation of God's kingdom. First, they redefined the institutional church as God's narrowly spiritual kingdom. Second, they argued that the

church is the **only** institutional manifestation of God's kingdom. Finally, they sought refuge from the evil world of matter by fleeing to hide inside "the spiritual kingdom," now narrowly defined.

Sure enough, when God's people think and act this way, the visible influence of the comprehensive kingdom of God shrivels up, until there is hardly anything left that speaks openly of Christ outside the walls of the churches.

The last ancient pagan idea that still lives on is also a variant of dualism: matter vs. spirit. It teaches that God and Satan, good and evil, are forever locked in combat, and that good never triumphs over evil. The Persian religion of Zoroastrianism has held such a view for over 2,500 years. There are Christians who have adopted a similar view, at least concerning the period right up to the day of judgment. Things aren't going to get better. In fact, things are going to get a lot worse externally. Evil will visibly push good into the shadows. The church is like a band of soldiers who are surrounded by a huge army of Indians. "We can't win boys, so hold the fort until Jesus comes to rescue us!"

That doesn't sound like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and David, does it? Christians read to their children the children's favorite story, David and Goliath, yet in their own lives, millions of Christian parents really think that the Goliaths of this world are the unbeatable earthly winners. Christians haven't even picked up a stone.

Until very recently.

#### **An Agenda for Victory**

The change has come since 1980. Many Christians' theology has shifted. Dualism, gnosticism, and "God changed His program midstream" theologies have begun to be challenged. The politicians have already begun to reckon with the consequences. Politicians are the people we pay to raise their wet index fingers in the wind to sense a shift, and they have sensed it. It scares them, too. It should.

A new vision has captured the imaginations of a growing army of registered voters. This new vision is simple: it's the old vision of Genesis 1:27-28. It's called dominion.

Four distinct ideas must be present in any ideology that expects to overturn the existing view of the world and the existing social order:

- A doctrine of ultimate truth (permanence)
- A doctrine of providence (confidence)
- Optimism toward the future (motivation)
- Binding comprehensive law (reconstruction)

The Marxists have had such a vision, or at least those Marxists who don't live inside the bureaucratic giants called the Soviet Union and Red China. The radical (please, not "fundamentalist") Muslims of Iran also have such a view.

Now, for the first time in over 300 years, Bible-believing Christians have rediscovered these four points in the theology of Christianity. For the first time in over 300 years, a growing number of Christians are starting to view them-

selves as an army on the move. This army will grow. And grow tougher.

If I'm correct about the God-required nature of this agenda, it will attract a dedicated following. It will produce a social transformation that will dwarf the Reformation. This time, we're not limiting our call for reformation to the institutional church. This time, we mean business.

A specter is haunting humanism and Christian retreatism — the specter of Christian reconstruction and dominion.

#### **Warning: Never Be Embarrassed By the Bible**

One thing every Christian reader should be willing to affirm: **nothing in the Bible should be an embarrassment to any Christian.** We may not know how something should be properly applied in our day, but every law, announcement, prophecy, judgment, and warning in the Bible is the very Word of God, and is not to be flinched at by anyone who calls himself by Christ's name.

We are dealing with a God who has already condemned hundreds of millions of people to hell, and now threatens to condemn at least four billion more: to exist in eternal agony, without hope, without peace, and without escape, forever and ever, amen. Any earthly judgment that He brings, or that He wants His people to bring as His lawful, ordained agents of both mercy and judgment, is just nickel-and-dime stuff compared to hell.

The doctrine of hell doesn't embarrass any Bible-believing Christian; neither should anything else the Bible says that God did, does, or will do.

#### **Majority Rule**

Just for the record, Christian reconstructionists aren't in favor of imposing some sort of top-down bureaucratic tyranny in the name of Christ. The kingdom of God requires a bottom-up society: **self-government** under God. It's the humanist view of society that promotes top-down bureaucratic power. Reconstructionists are in favor of evangelism and missions leading to a widespread Christian revival, so that the great mass of earth's inhabitants will place themselves under Christ's protection, and voluntarily use His covenantal laws for self-government. Christian reconstruction begins with personal conversion to Christ and self-government under God's law, then spreads to others through revival, and only later brings comprehensive changes in civil law, when the vast majority of voters voluntarily agree to live under God's revealed laws.

Let's get this straight: Christian reconstruction depends on majority rule. Of course, the leaders of the Christian reconstructionist movement expect a majority eventually to accept Christ as savior. If this doesn't happen, then Christians must be content with only partial reconstruction, and only partial blessings from God. It isn't possible to ramrod God's blessings from the top down, unless you're God. Only humanists think that man is God. All we're trying to do is get the ramrod away from them, and melted down. The melted ramrod could then be used to make a great grave marker for humanism: "The God That Failed."

**Christian Reconstruction** is published six times a year, alternating with **Biblical Economics Today**. It is published by the Institute for Christian Economics, a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization. A free six-month subscription is sent to those who ask to be put on the mailing list. **Subscriptions:** P.O. Box 8000, Tyler, TX 75711. Donations are fully tax deductible. Checks should be made out to **Institute for Christian Economics**.