

Christian Reconstruction

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TENTH GENERATION, SEVENTH MILLENNIUM

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George Mendenhall's work in the 1950's on the structure of the Old Testament covenant greatly influenced Meredith G. Kline, and through Kline, Ray Sutton and me. Mendenhall's 1973 book, (Johns Hopkins University Press), is equally important, although neglected by Christian scholars. It confirms my suspicion that the world operates in terms of approximately 250-year historical segments: ten generations. Mendenhall traces Old Testament history and the histories of several civilizations contemporary with Israel. He finds a recurring pattern: a 250-year period of continuity and then a sharp discontinuity. While I would not place too much reliance on his specific beginning and ending dates, given the problems of pre-750 B.C. chronologies,¹ I think his basic insight is sound.

The idea of this historical segmentation makes sense, given the theme of the tenth generation in Israel and given the history of the West. Consider our own millennium. It began with two major events in the early eleventh century: the church's adoption of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the outbreak of witchcraft, which had disappeared as a cultural force in Western Europe five centuries earlier – what medieval history specialist Mark Wyndham has called a "mysterious gap."² Both worldviews are manifestations of what Van Til called metaphysical religion or "chain of being" religion. Transubstantiation teaches that Jesus Christ is present physically in the bread and wine; witchcraft teaches the principle, "as above, so below," and offers to men the hope of being able to manipulate supernatural forces by adherence to precise formulas. Voodoo is the obvious manifestation of this philosophy: stick a pin in a representative doll, and the victim will get sick or die.

In the mid-thirteenth century came Thomas Aquinas, the major philosopher of medieval Catholicism. Simultaneously, the revolutionary movement that grew out of the writings of the mystic and pseudo-prophet Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202) began its march through Europe, which did

not end until the early years of the Reformations

In the early sixteenth century came the Reformation. About three generations earlier, the invention of the printing press had made possible the rapid spread of new ideas to the tiny but influential urban middle class and even to the lower classes through literate pastors. The printing press increased the market value of literacy, thereby increasing the demand for it. Luther, master of the confrontational pamphlet, took advantage of this technology as no individual ever had done before or has done since.

The Two Wings of the Enlightenment: 1750

The mid-eighteenth century saw the development of the two wings of the Enlightenment: Scotland's and France's. The French Enlightenment was a reflection of, as well as a reaction against, the civilization created by Roman Catholicism. Many of the major figures of the French Enlightenment had been trained in Catholic schools; Rousseau and Robespierre are obvious examples. Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Bavarian Illuminati (May 1, 1776),⁴ had not only been trained by the Jesuits, he was a professor of canon law at the University of Ingolstadt. (That May 1 was the founding date of the Illuminate was not accidental; May 1 was Maypole Day, and today is International Labor Day and the Soviet Union's parade day.)

The Scottish Enlightenment was a reflection of, as well as a reaction against, the civilization created by Calvinistic Presbyterianism. Scottish Presbyterianism was a bottom-up hierarchy, an ecclesiastical reaction to the more bureaucratic and centralist Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. Some of the representatives of the Scottish Enlightenment had been ordained as ministers in the Scottish church, the best example being Adam Ferguson.

The Jesuits in 1750 were *a priori* rationalists, defenders of Thomism; the Scottish Presbyterians in 1750 were *a posteriori* empiricists, defenders of "experimental" or "experiential" religion. The Jesuits were top-down bureaucrats; the Presbyterians were bottom-up bureaucrats. The French Enlightenment was far more centralist and elitist in its view of social change; most of the philosopher believed that Europe's enlightened despots could best restructure society. The Scottish Enlightenment's tradition was far more empirical and decentralist, as reflected in the social philosophies of the two Adams, Ferguson and Smith. They wanted limited civil government and free market economics.

1. Gary North, Moses Religion Religion (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), Appendix A: "The Reconstruction of Egypt's Chronology,"

2. Mark Wyndham, "Gnostic Dualism and the Origins of the Medieval Definition of Witchcraft," Reconstruction, I (Winter 1974), p 107.

3. Norman Cohn, the Millennium (2nd ed.; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), ch 5

4. James H Billington, the of the Revolutionary York: Basic Books, 1980), p 94

The judicial manifestations of these two Enlightenment were the U.S. Constitution and the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man. We are celebrating the first event this year, and the French also celebrate the outbreak of their revolution this year. The fall of the Bastille in July of 1789 is the historian's traditional date for the launching of the French Revolution: France's version of the colonists' resistance to the British march into Concord (1775).

Freemasonry is the key in understanding the political and institutional "transmission belt" of both of these rationalist and humanist reactions to Christian civilizations. The American Enlightenment, in contrast to the French, was less a product of French Grand Orient masonry than Scottish Rite masonry, less Jesuit than Presbyterian in structure, less Thomistic in its epistemology than Newtonian, less **a prioristic** than empiricist, less ideological than pragmatic. But the leaders of both revolutions were self-conscious Enlightenment figures. The American leaders were **proto-Unitarians**; the French were deists and pantheists; but they were all united theologically in their hostility to trinitarianism. (The major exception, of course, was Patrick Henry, whose comment on the Constitutional Convention was straightforward: "I smell a rat in Philadelphia.")⁶

If this **250-year** historical unit really exists, then we should be preparing for another shift in the West's foundational paradigm during the next 50 years. The weakness of the existing paradigm is obvious. The Enlightenment's left wing and its right wing have struggled against each other for 250 years; their judicial (**covenantal**) manifestations are now 200 years old. Each branch is now in its death throes: the left wing (Communism) is mired in debt and economic stagnation, and the right wing (corporate capitalism) is mired in debt and endless inflation. Philosophically, they are both trapped by the triumph of Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy.

There is little doubt about it: Communism as a social ideal is dying, except in a handful of university classrooms in the West. Socialism has failed visibly as an economic system, and has been publicly buried in the 1980's by the rhetoric of Reagan and Thatcher. (Like Dracula, however, **socialism's** vampire economy may rise from the dead temporarily after an international debt crisis.)

Darwinism is today under external assault from a small group of academic creationists – which has been more important for its positive psychological effect on fundamentalist Christians than for its scientific results – even while it is facing internal disintegration. Government-funded education, at least with respect to its products, is also under constant attack. There are no sacrosanct institutions today on either side of the Iron and Bamboo curtains – the classic sign of the end of an historical era.

One Enlightenment ideal still remains officially sacrosanct in the West: **pluralism**. This last bastion will also fall in our day, undermined internally by the rise of relativism and facing an ancient external threat: Islam. Islam is on the march once again.

5 Bernard Fay, *Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935)

(Boston: Little, Brown, 1935)

6. I devote a lengthy chapter to the American Constitution as an Enlightenment document in my forthcoming book, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism*. The key to understanding the Constitution is its section on oaths: Article 6, Section 3

The Resurgence of the Theocratic Ideal

Islam is less military but no' less militant this time. It is winning the war for European sovereignty in the bedrooms of Turkey, Germany, France, and England, having been stalemated 1,250 years ago and then 450 years ago on the battlefield. Moslems are expected to compose at least 20% of the world's population" in 2020. They will compose at least one-third of the Soviet Union's population by the turn of the century.⁷

If European nations open their borders as expected in 1992 to residents of all the NATO countries, this means an open border with Turkey. (If they refuse, it could drive Turkey out of NATO.) What the Turks could not do in the sixteenth century because of Hungary's army – capture Vienna – they may be able to do through reproduction and emigration. None of the **non-Iberian** Western European nations has a birth rate high enough to sustain its existing racial make-up. Only immigration sustains them, and these immigrants are neither Christians nor humanists.

Thus, that most theocratic of religions, Islam, is going to bring Europe under the crescent flag unless a barrier – a self-consciously theological barrier – is established to block this demographic transformation. This looming demographic conquest will take time – perhaps two to three centuries – but the Islamic time perspective is very long. They are patient people. The Enlightenment's self-imposed myth of religious neutrality is in the process of being swamped by the other myth: the supposedly unquestionable legitimacy of majority rule. The armies that will wage future electoral battles for the control of Europe are being recruited in the bedrooms of Turkey.

The western region of Turkey is geographically in Europe, but the bridge over the Bosphorus is Asia's gateway to Europe. When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, the Turks did for Islam what the Arab army and navy of 1,800 ships had failed to achieve in 717-18: **establish** a beachhead in central Europe. Greek fire (napalm?) stopped them at Constantinople.⁸ What the Pyrenees and the knights of Charles Martel did in the Western front in 732 – block the northern expansion of Islam from Spain into northern Europe – the 1992 accord will reverse. The great irony is that this will come exactly 500 years after the armies of Queen Isabella drove the Moors from Spanish soil, after almost 800 years of conflict (711-1492).

The inescapable reality of theocracy is becoming institutionally apparent to the tenth generation of the Enlightenment's humanistic theocracy: it is never a **question** of theocracy vs. no theocracy; it is only a question of which theocracy. It should therefore also be clear what the primary task of Christian Reconstruction is today: to lay the theological foundation of a new paradigm. A new millennium requires a new paradigm. It is our God-assigned task to provide it.

7. Paul Johnson, *World in the Twenties to the* York: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 712

8. A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, vols (2nd ed.: Madison University of Wisconsin Press, [1952] 1964), 1, p 236.