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DOMINION, PERVERSION AND PRAGMATISM

(The Idea of Central Planning and America's Fuel Crisis, Part V)

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America's fuel crisis is but one manifestation of the suicidal destructiveness which is Humanism, and which accompanies, sooner or later, the implementation of humanistic theories, via governmental intervention into the business of individuals and institutions in society. In terms of his own religious presuppositions, his religious worldview, the humanist cannot know that he knows anything. He cannot truly know himself, the world around him or any objective standards of conduct. He deeply desires to plan the shape of the economy, society's institutions, and individuals' minds and lives. But he can, in his own terms, have **no objective standard for planning**.

Nor can Pragmatism alleviate his intellectual—and, sooner or later, his practical—hopelessness. For if all is flux, then there can be no objective standards for adapting oneself, one's economy or one's society to that flux. If all is flux, then the life of the hippie, the alcoholic, the drug addict, the hedonist, the pervert, the criminal or the suicide is equally as valid as that of the good citizen, the scholar, the statesman or the saint. **The nature of society is determined**, as is the life of the individual, **by what it (or he) honors**. If all is evolutionary flux, the ultimate workings of chance, then no one can really tell what should be honored, or in terms of what society should be adapted to the chaos of historical change.

And the more he teaches pragmatic philosophical doctrines to the young and others who are under his power the more the pragmatic planner produces the very disorder which his governmentally controlled educational system was supposed to eliminate. His education may produce a majority who look to government for salvation, but teaching folks to liberate their desires, and to gratify them through political action yields both antinomian, interest-group-struggle politics and antinomian individual conduct: the planner wants neither. The more he attempts to overthrow the Christian moral order (or the remnants of its influence) the more he sows the seeds of his own plans' destruction. Scripture, of course, speaks to that: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7; cf. also Gal. 6:5-9; Eccl. 12:13, 14; II Cor. 9:6; Gen. 11:1-9).

Dominion and Perversion

America's fuel crisis is soluble in terms of dominion. Dominion is central to the very nature of man. It was **created into man's nature** by God, and at the same time created, as a real possibility, into the nature of the earth and its creatures (Gen. 1:26-27, 29-31). Man was created to have dominion, rule, over the creatures, under God. Moreover, **man was commanded** to have dominion, and God attached His blessing to His commandment: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply,

and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:28; cf. also Gen. 1:28-31). Not only has God **not revoked** His Creation Mandate to man, but He also has **renewed** or reemphasized His Dominion Charter to those who are in the New Adam, Jesus Christ: "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13; cf. the context of this command, and OCCUPY!, Vol. I, No. 1, Oct., 1979, and Matt. 25:14:30).

Although our Lord's command obviously refers to our duty to evangelize for Him, **the duty to occupy for Christ applies to all areas of life**, not just to the (crucial and foundational) salvation of souls. Our Lord's parable is stated in **economic terms**; **He requires us to obey His law** (John 15:14; 14:15; Matt. 5:17-20). His infallible word, all of which "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16), speaks not only to the crucial, eternally decisive issue of salvation, but also to how men are to live in (**but not of**) this world. Because all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18), He commands us to go "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 . . ." (Matt. 28:19,20). He requires us to observe **all** things that he, the great I Am, the unchanging Creator and Sovereign Ruler of His Universe, has commanded. Our Lord makes no separation between the spiritual and the material here: **to be spiritual is to do—on the basis of saving faith in Him—whatsoever He has commanded** us to do.

The inherent desire of dominion is present in all men. The specific duty of dominion is commanded to Old and New Testament believers in Christ. We are to have dominion under God, to occupy for Christ, in terms of His word and law, until He comes to judge men.

Both the desire of dominion and the duty of dominion are reinforced by the fact that **God has created His law into man's heart** (Rom. 2:14,15). God's law reinforces the duty of dominion by requiring obedience to all of His commandments, but principally by forbidding theft, covetousness, murder, false witness and violations of family relationships. The fact that God has created these moral laws into the heart of man reinforces the desire of all men to have dominion.

All men naturally desire dominion but **all men do not desire the same kind of dominion**. Since the Fall, all men have naturally (in their fallen estate, in the fallen creation) been in **ethical rebellion** against God (Gen. 3:5). Their hearts—the very centers

of their being—have been and are in **rebellion** against God (Rom. 3:10-18; Rom. 5:12-19; Rom. 5:6; 8:7; Gen. 6:5); **They reject God's law**, though they know that it is righteous, seeking to substitute for it their own private determinations of good and evil (Gen. 3:5). There is **no neutrality** in man's nature. Man either wants to follow man's own subjective law or God's objective law: ultimately, there is no alternative. All men naturally want to follow their own law, not God's law. It is only by the operation of God's grace on a man's heart that he desires to obey God's law (Eph. 2: 8, 9; the best work on this biblical fact is Gordon H. Clark's **Biblical Predestination**, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1969).

Fallen men still have God's law written on their hearts, but they pervert the direction, framework and content of that law, in their conscious activities, producing all manner of abominations. Their desire of dominion, however, is still very much present. The expression of the desire of dominion in rebellious men manifests itself in a multitude of ways. Fundamentally, however, the rebellious, would-be autonomous **man seeks a sphere of dominion** commensurate with his estimate of his abilities and ordered according to the nature of his ruling desires. As Niemeyer has said, in his study of modern total critiques of society (**From Nothingness to Paradise**, L.S.U. Press, 1971), man either attempts to impose his will on the world or seeks to shrink his world to a size which he calculates that he can control. Whether he seeks to be a totalitarian or a hippie, the rebellious man still desires dominion. The difference is, fundamentally, only a matter of degree.

The idea of central planning, of course, is a manifestation of the totalitarian desire for dominion, a desire which necessitates the elimination or suppression of other men's desires for their own dominion. Since the desire for dominion is created into man, the **elimination of the desire for dominion is an impossible dream**. This is a decisive reason why central economic and social planning must ultimately fail. This is why planners' economic controls produce shortages, poor quality and so-called black markets. The strength and religious centrality of the desire for dominion is also precisely the reason why planners persist in adhering to their planning notions despite the manifest, manifold failures of planning.

This fact is more easily understood if we remember the content of biblical law. Biblical law protects the family, the person and his property, precisely the closest objects of a man's love. What wonder is it that most men seek to protect and further their families and property, and that all men seek to further their desires (whatever those might be), even if that be at the expense of planners' "grand designs?" Central planning violates not only the law of God, but also the deepest desires of men, desires which only the grace of their Creator can remove (and that, according to His will, not perfectly, in this life).

Translated into economic terms, this means that central government planning and controls will necessarily—to the degree that they are implemented—**remove the incentives** to economic and social **dominion** which are necessary to the establishment and maintenance of a prosperous economy, as well as removing a crucial aspect of freedom. Remove the incentives to profit, reduce the liberty to innovate and be rewarded, to compete, to better oneself and one's own and you reduce the efficiency, productivity and justice of the economy. Tax and regulate away the oil companies' profit incentives—especially those of the smaller, less bureaucratically-adapted independent oil companies (who discover most of the oil)—and you'll produce energy crises. Astounding, isn't it? The greater the intervention the greater the violation of individual dominion and the greater the snafu. Its as easy as falling off a log.

Conversely, this is the very reason why free market economies work better than socialist or interventionist economies. Individual

freedom allows men to exercise their innate desire for dominion, and to be rewarded in accordance with their peers' evaluation of the quality and quantity of goods and services which each man produces. The individual in a free economy has a better opportunity to exercise dominion. That is why **the free economy will be the prosperous economy**.

But only to the degree that it is based on Biblical faith and principles. Biblical faith and obedience yield God's material blessings; Scripture is clear on this fact (Deut. 6, 7, 28, etc.). Apostasy from God's word and law, from Biblical faith, clearly brings God's judgment, but this judgment may also involve His sustenance of a materially abundant economy which is headed for destruction (Deut. 8). Rebellious, would-be autonomous man's desire for dominion, in all the diversity of its manifestation, is the broad way that leadeth to destruction, for the individual and for society. This is why Scripture requires that the more perverse manifestations of apostate man's desire for dominion be restrained by government. This is why we do not yet have Murder, Inc. in the Yellow Pages (though we do have the vastly, ghastly, more successful mass-murder abortion "clinics"). Vestigial cultural memory of this principle is the reason that American whore houses advertise themselves as "massage parlours" or "modeling studios." God providentially judges societies, as well as individuals. The absolute free market economy is ungodly, just as is the interventionist, planning state. The absolutely free economy—one free of God's law's ordained restraints—is headed for judgment and destruction, just like the ungodly planning economy: the only difference will be in the rate of applied judgment. Dominion is fundamental to man and society, but all desires for dominion are not equal, for all are not equally just.

Varieties of Pragmatic Perversion

Clearly, the root of the planned, or planning, economy, while fundamentally the same would-be autonomous ethical rebellion of fallen man as is manifested in anarchist libertinism, is the more unjust. For planning involves a radically greater degree of the desire to be as God, and a radically greater degree of violation of His law. While it is impossible to shrink the world to dimensions which the individual can control to his heart's desire, it is manifestly far more impossible for the individual, or even the group, to expand themselves to the sovereign dimensions necessary to transform his or their plans into reality, against the ordinances of God and the dominion of other men. Awareness of this fact is the reason that Plato defined the tyrant as the greatest of slaves: he seeks to make everyone serve his passions.

Though we may differentiate between Communists, Fascists, New Totalitarian "Liberals" and other varieties of Socialist-Interventionists, basically there are but two varieties of pragmatic planning advocates. For convenience' sake, we may call these "Principled Pragmatists" and (though it sounds impolite) "unprincipled pragmatists." Provided that we remember that **both** of these varieties **are pragmatists in their root assumptions**, and hence are a) in ethical rebellion against God, b) in a state of epistemological hopelessness—since they can have no objective standards in terms of which to guide their selfish actions—and c) under God's condemnation, curse and judgment, for their philosophy and their actions.

"Principled Pragmatists" are planners, by faith and conviction. Whatever the specific shape of their ideology—Communist, Fascist, Socialist, New Totalitarian "Liberal," or "Pragmatic" Interventionist—they fundamentally look to government as "savior" and intellectual technicians as its manipulators. They differ only on the precise degree, timing and techniques of intervention, not on the necessity of government intervention and controls to our economic and social-cultural "salvation." They seek to have ungodly dominion over the lives of others, to plan and predestine the lives of all people under their rule—and frequently, of all those not

yet under their suzerainty. Principled Pragmatists place their faith in planning. They are the enemies of all lovers of individual liberty and of a Biblical political and economic order.

"Unprincipled pragmatists" are Pragmatists, as it were, **without portfolio**. They fundamentally think as pragmatists and function as pragmatists without lugging around the intellectual-ideological baggage of their more philosophically self-conscious brothers. The unprincipled pragmatist is at best intellectually schizophrenic, in that he holds to two contradictory sets of ideas, each of which he alternately either exhibits or conceals, according to his circumstances. (Because he is not epistemologically self-conscious or philosophically consistent, because he seeks to serve two masters, we will not grant him the dubious honor of capital letters in his title.) At worst, the unprincipled pragmatist is the sort of man described by historian J. Evetts Haley: "Prudence, based on expediency, not principle, is his guiding star." (*A Texan Looks at Lyndon; A Study in Illegitimate Power*; Canyon, Texas, The Palo Duro Press, 1964, p. 162 emphasis added.)

Actually, as Haley playfully of L.B.J., it is quite ordinary for a Principled Pragmatist to play the role of the unprincipled pragmatist, concealing his true beliefs to achieve short-run compromises which serve his long-run aims (cf. Haley, pp. 157-184 and *passim*). As a matter of fact, this strategem has been one of the principal reasons for the political success—despite the continually increasing manifestation of its practical failures—of Principled Pragmatism in American politics. Here, of course, the Principled Pragmatist is simply exercising deceit, one of the fundamental principles of humanistic political thought since Plato (and Adam), and, with force, one of the foundational principles of modern political thought and practice. Modern politics may be defined as the principled adherence to unprincipled conduct, and the Principled Pragmatist is the chief practitioner of such perversion.

The whole planning "welfare state" is founded on the twin (or, if you prefer, tripartite) perversions of Principled Pragmatism and unprincipled pragmatism: without these it could not continue to exist. Principled Pragmatists want the planning state for utopian, totalitarian purposes; unprincipled pragmatists want the planning "welfare state" for purposes of expedient self-aggrandizement (and Principled Pragmatists must compromise with their unprincipled siblings in order to achieve bigger government and more controls).

Planners want power to manipulate people. But people want power to manipulate government, for their own ends. Planners, politicians, bureaucrats and those who receive income and other benefits through the legalized theft system gain economic and social status, at the expense of others, via the planning state. Interest groups, businesses large and small, and individual voters want both protection from the consequences of their individual and corporate sins and the freedom to indulge in further legalized sins. As the "welfare state" progresses in its legislative and educational impact, the condition described by Bastiat becomes ever more fully actualized: everyone attempts to live at the expense of everyone else. In the short-run, both Principled and unprincipled pragmatists, be they politicians or voters, gain from the influence-for-legalized-theft-system which is the "welfare state."

Sadly, the classic example of unprincipled pragmatism is the businessman, who characteristically is for "free enterprise" in the abstract, so long as he enjoys primacy over his competitors, or a comfortable position, but who immediately whines for government intervention when his own interest is hurt by the competitive functioning of the free market.

Have you ever wondered why the big oil companies have not fought government energy controls tooth and nail? Aside from media and academic hostility to free enterprise in general and large corporations in particular—manifested in distortion of the energy issue and censorship of free market and pro-industry viewpoints—there are other reasons. Many oil company execs are pa-

thetic illustrations of Joseph Schumpeter's observation that businessmen are incapable of defending freedom because they do not understand the principles of the market—practically all are ignorant of the biblical requirements for economics. Like many other corporate executives, especially those nurtured under the "welfare state", they are **willing to live with strictures which their corporate size and power can handle**: that is one of the chief reasons why we have government regulation today.

Corporations are unwilling, generally, to fight for economic freedom because they helped to create the regulatory system, or have adapted themselves to it. They believe that they can manipulate the existing bureaucratic structure in such a way as to retain or improve their comparative advantage over actual and potential competitors. It is common practice for large corporations to contribute heavily to left-leaning foundations, politicians and media propaganda, thereby financing the destruction of free enterprise. The giants are unwilling to battle for principle because to do so would both alienate them from their bureaucratic compeers and increase the competitive opportunities of smaller firms. This is not only **theft**, but also, in its violation of biblical law, **idolatry**.

Among the worst offenders are pragmatic politicians, who place constituent influence above **godly principles**. **Pragmatic politicians** obey the dictates of pragmatic voters and supporters, compromising the law of God in favor of the retention of office or the accumulation of personal status and power. Maynard Dixon, Jr., in a telling analysis of "Why Federal Regulations Seem to Have Eternal Life" (*Human Events*, Feb. 2, 1980), traces both the effect of government regulations on corporate executives and the failures of conservative politicians in combatting federal regulations. The effect of decades-long regulation is to attract executives who do not feel hampered by a regulatory atmosphere. Regulation enables management to pass the blame for its mistakes (reflected in low profits or losses) on to the regulators. Mistake officials become willing to accept management's argument that deregulation will necessarily hurt each firm—and protective of the cozy union-industry relationship which allows pay increases negotiated by unions to be passed on to unwitting consumers.

But perhaps the worst effect of a regulatory atmosphere is on our legislators. Conservative intellectuals and politicians attack government regulations in the abstract: regulations which do not adversely affect their own constituents, be they labor or business, especially big business. It was not the conservatives or the Republicans who pushed for deregulation of air carriers, and it is not they who are leading the fight for trucking deregulation.

Banking policy is a case in point. It is **bad enough to have controls** on the rates of interest that banks may pay to depositors. It is manifestly absurd to have such regulations in an inflationary economy (i.e., a 5% passbook rate in a 13+% inflation economy). Repeal of such restrictions is necessary and biblical. The Carter Administration, surprisingly, has been a proponent of a gradual phase-out of these interest controls. Conservatives, spurred by bankers' pressure, have opposed deregulation here, too.

The theory and practice of politics is laden with subtleties which challenge the minds of thoughtful men. But the ungodly nature of the planning, regulating "welfare state" should be evident to all intelligent men and obvious to Bible-believing Christians. **Pragmatic conservative politicians** are even worse than the pragmatic constituents to whose pressures they yield. Such men **betray a dual constitutional trust**. First, they sanction violations of the Constitution's intentions and fail to educate their constituents as to the Constitution's moral principles and to ideas and activities which threaten our constitutional structure and liberties. Second, they fail to promote the just interest of their constituents and of society.

On a more fundamental level, conservative pragmatists who act to maintain the regulatory apparatus make themselves parties to

theft and violate the law of God. A careful reading of Romans 13 makes it clear that those placed in positions of authority by God are to enforce His standards of good, and to combat what He declares to be evil. As Rus Walton has said,

"the Christian must not compromise. PERIOD. Certainly he cannot compromise God's institutes; surely he should not compromise his witness. And remember, its those 'little' compromises that are the most insidious; the big ones are more obvious and easier to resist... the politician who will do anything to get in office, or to get his candidate in office, will do anything to stay in office, or to keep his man in office.

"Where is the victory if we achieve it by compromising our faith? What kind of witness is that? Where is the dominion? Better to be reviled for His name's sake than to compromise on His commandments and precepts." (from Orrin G. Briggs,

Political Handbook for Christians, Christian Viewpoint, 1979; P.O. Box 12026, Columbia, S.C. 29211; \$1)

It is a biblical principle that we are required to occupy for Christ in terms of His law, and that those who occupy will be greatly rewarded. It is also a biblical principle that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). **How terrible will be the judgment of God on politicians who perpetuate the injustices of pragmatic planning! How great the reward of those good and faithful servants who do not compromise God's law-word!** (Luke 19: 16, 17).

The biblical necessity is clear:

NEEDED: PRINCIPLED CHRISTIAN STATESMEN

NEEDED: PRINCIPLED, DISCERNING CHRISTIAN CONSTITUENTS TO ELECT, INFORM AND SUPPORT THEM,

LIBERALS, LANGUAGE AND LAW

Archie P. Jones

The war between Christ and Satan takes place on many battle-grounds, but in each one the tactics of Satan are fundamentally the same: deceit and denial of the authority, truth and clarity of the word of God. Satan led Adam and Eve into sin by first changing the meaning of the word and law of God in such a way that it allowed man to do all things, to work his way to godhood. (Gen. 3:2-5).

The Devil has not changed his tactics, nor has fallen man changed his goal in life. This is especially true in regard to language, for the Devil's project with our first parents involved a use of language to deceive man and to enable man to realize the impossible dream of becoming his own source of meaning, knowledge and law.

Language was given to man by God to enable man to have dominion over the earth. Language is a gift from God to be used under God and His law-word. Rebellion inevitably involves man's attempt to deny the authority of God's word by redefining the nature and meaning of God's law, creation and providential ordering of things.

This perversion of language is especially manifest where man's desire for autonomy is most pronounced. In theology, the Liberals denied that all of Scripture is fully inspired of God. Hence, man's autonomous word for ethics and politics, rather than God's law and word, became the standard. The result has been moral decay and license, political collectivism and social engineering, and an increasingly manifest cultural and political crisis of Western and American civilization.

The more open apostasy of the humanist Liberals has resulted in more obvious examples of the perversion of language. Confronted with a Constitution based on belief in unchanging moral absolutes and designed to establish justice in terms of those absolutes, in terms of the rule of law and of limitations on governmental power, Liberals have joined to redefine the Constitution, to pave the way for salvation of individual and society via the planning of the humanistic state. Such pseudo-salvation involves deceit, for the purposes of the Framers and ratifiers stand in diametrical opposition to those of contemporary "Liberals."

Along the way, traditional and biblical concepts had to be redefined, for language had to be made to serve the ends of planning while seeming to speak the rhetoric of American and biblical traditions. Freedom was a key concept that had to be subverted.

Liberals redefined freedom as security. Rather than being freedom of the individual from unjust coercion by individuals, groups and governments, a definition consistent with biblical law, freedom now became "positive" freedom, freedom to safely do what one wills, freedom from want and fear. Freedom secured by the power, intervention, taxation, inflation, regulations, plans and coercion of the unlimited humanistic state.

Such a redefined freedom of course, is diametrically opposed to biblical teaching. It is therefore both immoral and foolishly unrealistic. Unrealistic because it denies that God rewards those who have faith in Him and adhere to His law (cf. Deuteronomy), and the certainty of God's judgment on societies that depart from his law. Because God and His law-word are everything Liberals of all varieties desire them not to be—sovereign, true, authoritative in all areas of life, unchanging, commanding, providentially controlling, and surely judging—Liberal redefinitions have succeeded in duping many men but not in altering the constitution of reality. They have changed our Constitution and threatened our society with destruction. They have promised freedom from want and fear but produced the liberation of the desires and the multiplication of fears.

Liberal manipulation of language is a manipulation of ideas and an attempted manipulation of reality. It is part of the wider war between Christ and Satan, in which the struggle is for the hearts, minds and souls of men, with words the weapons of conflict. The issue is: Which word is authoritative?

Ideas are not something to be left to philosophers or intellectual specialists. Knowledge of ideas and their consequences is of crucial importance to **every** Christian (Rom. 1:18-32; Gen. 3&11; Rev. 22: 18-20). "All scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16). It is just for that reason that we are to think and act in terms of the word of God revealed in all of Scripture. It is just for that reason that the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates upon it day and night, is blessed. Realism, truth, justice and blessing demand that man and society follow not "philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men," but the unchanging counsel of our Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, Savior and Judge.

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