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DOMINION FORUM: DOERS OF THE WORD

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"Stand for Something. . . or fall for anything," reads the headline on the first Dominion Forum, the newsletter of the newest Christian political action group, headquartered in Dallas, Texas. Those words reveal at once the cause of our national economic, social, educational, political and military crisis and its cure. Our nation's distress is precisely the product of a massive intellectual and popular pragmatism and radicalism, abroad in the land for many decades, enshrined in our various governmental Ministries of Truth—and their janissaries in the private sector—ensconced in the maze of executive bureaucracies of our governments, and fortified, even since the election, in the citadels of legislature, court, executive mansion, administrative office, and many a pulpit.

Pragmatism has been manifested in two forms the consciously radical variety, and the intellectually and morally lazy variety. The former self-consciously seeks the overthrow of our institutions and traditional practices and beliefs. The latter seeks immediate and short-run selfish advantage or gain, and consequently follows the philosophical and political lead of the former. The former seeks humanistic salvation by governmental planning and coercion. The latter seeks to do "what works"; maintaining that "to get along, you've got to go along," as former House Speaker Sam Rayburn said.

In essence, both forms of pragmatism concur in the imposition of a practical atheism of government planning, controls, intervention into all spheres of life, and interest group subsidies. Until just a few years ago, pragmatic leftist radicals, such as the heralded John Kenneth Galbraith, argued for government Interventionism and practical fascism or socialism upon the premise of the redistribution of free market affluence. Today, amid the economic dislocations, shortages, inflation and possible collapse engendered by several generations of interventionist policies, they argue for interventionism and practical fascism or socialism upon the basis of their long-neglected economic factor, scarcity. "Small is beautiful" is now the intellectual fashion and watchword, manifesting itself in environmentalist constraints on energy exploration and other business activities, anti-growthmanship, the current anti-nuclear power leftist crusade, and non-election rhetoric defense realities. Whether the pragmatic Humanists start from abundance or scarcity, their conclusion is the same: more government controls on the economy and the individual, less control by the individual over his own life, and less liberty.

The reason for this is easy to discern. The fundamental premise was salvation by government all along. The explicit arguments have changed 180 degrees, but the starting and controlling assumption has remained constant. As the French say, the more things change the more they remain the same. Truly, in Humanist social and political theory there is nothing new under the sun.

The Christian Perspective

Professing Christians have made four **fundamentally different** responses to this humanistic onslaught on biblical **principles: drifting, defeatism, defense, and dominion.**

Drifting with the humanistic intellectual and political current has been the reaction of theological liberals, social gospellers, and "neo-orthodox" devotees, together with the unthinking, for at least a century. Political involvement in radical causes and statist politics has been a byword and preoccupation of theological heterodox since the rise of Unitarianism and Transcendentalism in the early nineteenth century. Such practical Humanism has also been the fashion among our contemporary "Christian socialists" and "Neo-Evangelical," who endorse either socialist controls and wealth redistribution at home or the heretical "Christian"-Marxist "Liberation Theology" of socialist radicalism abroad. Such drifting is at best the sin of pseudo-neutrality and compromise with the enemies of Christ (see next month's **Occupy!**), and at worst hostility to the demands of the Church's true Lord. Compromising Christians in reality stand for nothing, and so fall for everything that comes down the leftwing legislative pike. Compromise is the broad way of surrender to what Gary North calls "Humanism's Chaplains."

Defeatism has been an eschatological and hence practical hallmark of much of Christendom for the past century. Amillennialists have tended to limit the Kingdom of God to the Kingdom of Heaven, a kingdom defeated on earth, limited to the earthly institutions of the family and the ecclesiastical organization, and finding its true victory only in the personal hope and eschatological fact of eternal salvation. Premillennialists, especially of the dispensational variety, have markedly tended to see the Church as defeated on earth, until either the Rapture or the Second Coming. For such men, the worse social, economic, and military conditions become the greater the cause for optimism, since the deterioration of world circumstances is seen as heralding the escape of the Church or the physical arrival of Christ to rescue victory from the jaws of earthly defeat. In neither case is there a doctrinal motivation to fulfill the Lord's mandate to occupy for Him till He returns, not only to teach and baptize all nations (Matt. 28:19), but also to teach them to do all things whatsoever He has commanded us to do (Matt. 28:20) (See also R.J. Rushdoony, *God's Plan for Victory*; \$1; Thoburn Press, 11121 Pope's Head Road, Fairfax, VA 22030). Nor has there historically been much occupying, dominion activity by such believers.

The best our Bible-believing Christian brethren have been able to do is to finally mount a **defensive** campaign against the more manifest onslaughts of Humanist religion on the Church and its

remaining dominion fruits in Western, end particularly American, Civilization.

Since so many hold to these views, an inkling of how powerful this defensive movement can be is seen in our recent elections. Not only were the Evangelicals and Fundamentalists behind Reagan and conservative senators and congressmen throughout America, with massive success, but also many important victories were won at the state level, where the attack on the Christian school, church and family is often most active. That the Lord has richly blessed the efforts of our brethren is seen by their success in getting as many as four million previously inactive Christians, as Rev. Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority says, "out of the pews and into the polling places." The blessing of success is also seen by the Humanists and their heterodox chaplains, as evidenced by the deceitful commercials of "Americans for the American Way," a "Liberal" propaganda outfit headed by Norman Lear, of the insidious, anti-family and anti-conservative "All in the Family" TV series. And as evidenced by the howls of "Separation of Church (read: Christianity) and State!" and "The rise of Christian Fascism!" by theological liberals who have been mixing their religion and politics, seeking to involve the state in all areas of our lives—with the exception of anticommunist activity and national defense—and backing the true fascism of New Left ideology and practice and interventionist social and economic planning for decades. (See C. Gregg Singer's two fine works, *A Theological Interpretation of American History* and *The Unholy Alliance*.)

Though based on a quasi-covenantal awareness of the applicability of Deuteronomy 8, 28 and other biblical passages, that God does bless or curse nations, in accordance with faithfulness to, or rebellion against, Him and His law, the main thrust of Evangelical and Fundamentalist political involvement has the vice of being defensive. Thus, Rev. Falwell, who has been mightily used by the Lord for the defense of Christian institutions and morality, can affirm that the Moral Majority is not interested in establishing "a Christian America," but only in protecting our values and loved ones against Humanistic attack and God's judgment. Though offensive to Humanists and their allies, the movement to "Save America" is merely defensive, and hence not all that it should be for Christians, since it is at best a holding action, not a campaign for victory.

For A Christian America

Now, a holding action—especially a Christian holding action—may secure, temporarily, many important principles, and avoid many painful calamities. But why just save America (or the world)? Why just defend the Church against attacks, in order that it may remain only one among many social, cultural and political forces in a pluralistic America?

Why not also sanctify America (and, God willing, the world)? Why not again make Christianity the dominant cultural, moral and political force it was in the America of Tocqueville's day?

Christianity reigns without obstacles, by universal consent consequently. . . everything in the moral field is certain and fixed, although the world of politics seems given over to argument and experiment. So the human spirit never sees an unlimited field before itself; however bold it is, from time to time it feels that it must bait before insurmountable barriers. Before innovating, it is forced to accept certain primary assumptions and to submit its boldest conceptions to certain formalities which retard and check it. (Democracy in America, Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 9)

Our Founding Fathers wanted liberty and diversity, but not simple diversity for its own sake. Rather, they also wanted Americans to have a sense of national character, and designed institutions such as the Senate to foster this by embodying both protection for diversity and excellence, by fostering stability, a long-range view, and the

rule of law (see Federalist #62, 63). Fundamentally, they wanted the country to be united in terms of Christian-based principles of liberty, morality and justice, protected and promoted through a deliberately complex system of limited, constitutional, decentralized, federal and locally-oriented governments, with their countervailing separations of powers and checks and balances. As numerous federal documents show, not only were the presuppositions of early American statesmen fundamentally Christian, but also they did not separate Christianity from the national government (much less from the state governments!). Rather, their public statements and addresses repeatedly gave voice to explicitly Christian principles. While they wanted no rule by any one Christian ecclesiastical denomination, their speech and actions gave ample evidence that the sort of national character evidenced by America was to be that observed by Tocqueville: a Christian character.

The Founders and many of their successors were not mere defenders of Christian beliefs and institutions. Nor were they mere "standpatters:" for a number of congressional and presidential proclamations prayed that Christianity and its blessings would, by God's grace, "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Christianity was not to be merely one among many religions in America, it was to be the dominant religion, and was so recognized by many generations of Americans. To seek to preserve the current siege status of Christianity in America is to abandon the fundamental tradition and basis of American freedom and prosperity.

Moreover, all law is an expression of morality, of some sort or another, and thus of some underlying theology, of which the morality is a logical consequence and expression. Law is inescapably moral and theological, in that it contains moral commandments, of one sort or another, and derives from a fundamental view of God, man and the universe. Different theologies produce different moralities and consequently different laws. Non-Christian religions produce anti-Christian laws: there's no escaping it.

Now, we live in an age in which the fundamental and prevailing fact is the erosion and abandonment of the biblical world-and-life-view, in favor of more or less anything but biblical requirements for thought and action. If a thousand years of Christian-pagan syncretism had not done enough, four hundred-odd years of Humanistic thought and action have produced the crisis of Western and American Civilization. Add to that at least a century of Christian defeatism and drifting-with mighty little defense-and You have a mighty unstable mixture.

It is just because Christian defeatism and drifting have been major factors—if not dominant factors—in creating our current crisis that the Church dare not limit itself to fighting a mere holding action. Nor should it limit itself to merely gaining a status of one among many American religions. To settle for a status of one among many religions is to presuppose a false neutrality of law in regard to religion and morality. And to presuppose a nonexistent neutrality of law in regard to religion and morality is to settle for pagan polytheism. But just because polytheism is a belief in many gods, it cannot be friendly to Christian morality and law, for Christ the Lord and Lawgiver bids His believers to teach all nations, including the United States of America, to eschew the pseudo-laws of false gods, and to do all things He has commanded us to do (Matt. 28:18-20; 517-19). Polytheistic "neutrality" is hostility to the law of the Lord; it can brook no laws but laws which subordinate the word of God to the words of man and his idols. And public opinion in an age of Christian defeatism, retreatism, defensiveness and drifting will countenance no more. Praise the Lord for Rev. Falwell and the Moral Majority, but to work for anything less than a Christian America is to abandon the tradition we would defend, and to but postpone the cultural battle to a time when Christians may be less aware of both the battle and our obligations.

More than that, it is to depart from the fullness of our Lord's commands to us, from His command to have dominion over the earth

(Gen. 9:1-7), to occupy for Him till He returns (Luke 19:13), to teach the nations to do all things whatsoever He has commanded (Matt. 28:20). Jesus Christ commands His disciples to be not only on the defensive (putting on the whole armor of God), but also on the offensive, in the best sense of the word, seeking to bring all our thoughts and actions into captivity to Christ, and striving against His enemies, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and of His infallibly inspired word, to subdue all areas of life and thought to Him. God's promise that Christ's foes shall be made His footstool, before He returns (Heb. 1:13; Ps. 110:1), and that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church (Matt. 16:18), clearly tell us that Christians should work for nothing less than a Christian America.

This will not and cannot be accomplished simply by means of legislation and law. We are not, after all, Humanistic reformers! Rather, the basis for biblical law and lawful obedience must be laid in the work of evangelism, edification of the body of Christ, and Christian obedience to biblical mandates in all areas of life. This requires a much fuller expression of the faith that we see in contemporary America. It requires churches that preach and teach the word, administer the sacrament, and exercise discipline upon their members. It requires a much more motivated, instructed, and active body of believers. It requires a return to a biblical dominion worldview, and the use by millions of believers of their vast treasure of God-given talents, thinking in all areas of life according to biblical precepts and acting to fulfill the long-neglected second half of the Great Commission, as well as the first.

Christians in America have too often and too long been hearers of the word and not fully doers. We have much to do, but we have many soldiers and mountains of talents. And, let's face it: God is on our side. We have the schools, the churches and the Book, and we are going strong in the media, the printed word, and the use of new technology. The last election showed what can be done by aroused Christians seeking to defend right. But you don't win games by seeking merely a tie. If there much can be done by Christians seeking merely to tie the game, to defend our goal, imagine what can be done by Christian soldiers when they find out that their Commander's purpose is to win!

Dominion Forum: To Do the Word and Win

The activities of Dominion Forum provide an excellent example of what Bible-believing Christians can do when they put their minds to following the word of God. Dominion Forum is a non-profit, non-partisan, general purpose Christian political action committee, organized by Dave Haigler, a young Presbyterian ruling elder. A Dallas area lawyer, concerned about the destruction of Humanism and the assaults of Humanists on Christian schools and the family, as well as our general deterioration, Haigler simply got tired of "having the briars and brambles ruling over us" (cf. Isa. 27:4). He joined with Christian economist Tom Rose, of Grove City College, petroleum geologist and independent oil operator Win Howard, and graduate student Kevin Reed to launch the organization. The enthusiastic support of a number of Reformed pastors and laymen in Texas, together with some important contacts with sympathetic Christian leaders—and no little prayer—has encouraged the effort.

The Dominion Forum stands for:

- recognition of one God, and the sanctity of His name and all His attributes
- full (private) employment of all who are able to work, and expanded protection of the sabbath day of rest
- strengthening parental ties by the restoration of parental authority and responsibility for the care and education of their children, by making adoption more readily available, and by encouraging children to care for their aged parents

- tougher homicide laws, to protect human life at every stage of its biological development
- strengthening the marriage covenant and restoring the financial and social penalties for marital unfaithfulness
- "the fostering of contentment in a person's chosen calling, by economic and legal systems that enable one to meet one's responsibilities within one's income, and by the imposition of sanctions for the unlawful taking of things belonging to another."

it opposes

- the deification of government and other forms of idolatry
- theft in any form, "including governmental devaluation of our currency," and
- perjury, as a defamation of character.

Not a program calculated to win friends among your local college faculty! Nor, given our current climate of opinion, will many non-Christians flock to join the Dominion Forum. But there are many Christian folk in this land who still adhere to biblical principles of law and morality, and more who are daily coming to understand and claim such adherence.

And if the members of the Dominion Forum have their way—and if their labors are blessed by God—Christian political involvement will dramatically increase, and so will our efficiency. Haigler has been especially active, firing off letters to editors and others on pertinent political issues and principles, defending private schools, affirming the connection between morals and politics, awarding Russell Baker the first monthly "Spurious Logic" Award for arguing that "unwanted children should be aborted." He is also working on a booklet on "How to Organize Your Precinct," which, when coupled with additional manpower and the imaginative use of modern technology, will enable the organization to have a great and concentrated impact upon local and state and even national politics.

Dominion Forum's "1980 Election Packet," focusing, in good biblical fashion, upon the area close to home (in this case, Dallas-Ft. Worth and North Central Texas), would be an interesting acquisition for anyone interested in getting involved in politics. It contains names, addresses (both Washington, D.C., or state capitol, and local), and phone numbers of federal, state, and local officials, together with maps of their districts. Better yet, it has a compilation of their voting records (as ranked by "Liberal," Conservative and Christian organizations). Whatever your location in America, such information would be a valuable starting point and model for increasing your own group's impact upon campaigns and issues.

Eventually, Dominion Forum plans to distribute over a million copies of various Christian books on politics and economics, as well as to organize and activate Bible-believing people for maximum issue and electoral impact. It seeks nationwide dominion for a Christian America, utilizing the talents of Christian activists, at all levels. Already, plans are under way for cooperation with like organizations, which have sprung up in recent years throughout the U.S.

All of this, of course, will not be done without the blessing of God and the support of Christians throughout America. We need to put our money where our mouths are. Annual memberships are \$15; sustaining memberships are \$50—join before the end of March and become a charter member! I'm a sustaining charter member, and I live in Pennsylvania; what's more, I'm no tycoon. Dominion Forum folks aren't drifters, defeatists, or mere defenders. They're committed to godly dominion and victory. You can help the cause by sending your support and ideas, and committing your action. Write Dave Haigler, ad., Dominion Forum, 4827 North Central Expressway, Dallas, Texas 75205.

PARLIAMENT OF FOOLS

W M ou W

Richardson. Ottawa, Illinois: Caroline House Books/Green Hill Publishers, 1978. 138 pp. \$7.95 (HB). Reviewed by Archie P. Jones.

Nothing discomfits a leftist so much as to laugh at his recipes for our political salvation. It is quite permissible, even mandatory, for interventionist ideologues to laugh at the real or imagined foibles of Christians and conservatives. Intellectual etiquette demands it. But when the shoe is on the other foot: Look out! They can dish it out, but they can't take it.

Why should we be surprised at this characteristic symptom of the collectivism syndrome? Theirs is literally a religion of salvation by politics—salvation by the coercion of the interventionist, planning state. . . in the hands, of course, of a leftist elite! To question the competence of the elite or the goodness of the design is to question the sanctity of Humanistic Messianism itself.

In contemporary "democratic welfare states" (a misnomer, if there ever was one!), this planning elite must be located in that repository of democratic faith, the popularly elected legislature, and, subordinatedly, in its appendages and creations, the legislative staffs and bureaucratic "civil servants" (another gross misnomer!). Say what we will about judicial and bureaucratic legislation, the fact remains that these things have been permitted, or even endorsed, by American legislatures, which have the power to cease or reverse them, given the commitment. Humanistic collectivism, ancient or modern, is supremely a religion of politics, of salvation via politics, and thus via the politicization of all things, and this requires the legislation of all things. In the modern "democratic" world, this means the subordination of all things to the legislature, or to branches permitted by the legislature to exercise legislative powers. The modern Humanist's faith is a faith in legislatively supervised planning—that legislative planning and controls, informed by the findings of "socialist" scientists, freed from the influence of "special interest groups," or opened to the participation of all interest groups, will usher civilization, sooner or later, out of our benighted past and present and into some golden (civilizational, not monetary!) future.

Faith, remember, is defined by Paul as "the substance of things hoped for and the proof of things unseen" (Heb. 11:1).

It has been the service of California state Senator H.R. "Bill" Richardson, in his humorously serious look at the actual functioning of "democratic" legislatures in contemporary America, to point out just how true—in a different sense—this definition is, in regard to the Humanist faith.

Few areas of legislative functioning, from people's simultaneous public derogation and private veneration of politicians to private and bureaucratic lobbying, from the functioning of majoritarian democracy to (of course) the sexual behavior of American legislators, escape Richardson's perceptive and humorous eye. His description of the governmental employees' lobbyist is classic:

Now, how do you visualize a lobbyist who represents governmental employees? A radical with a beard? An erudite intellec-

from one of the local breweries.

Given the performance of legislators and bureaucrats, we are justified in wondering whether the lobbyist is also a successful beer salesman.

Richardson's years of experience in politics; at the local, state and national levels, have provided him with a little treasure of experiences which illustrate the malfunctioning of the leftist legislative dream. His basically Christian and conservative philosophy and wit have equipped him with a bedrock upon which to stand amid the flux of affable interventionist immorality, as well as with a delightful sense of humor with which to prick the heady bubbles of the planning-interventionist faith. Governments, as our Founding Fathers knew and our collectivists do not, are by men and over men, not by angels over men. Richardson is fully aware of this truth, and provides a Plethora of anecdotes to abundantly illustrate the folly of supposing otherwise.

The error of interventionists runs deeper than a mere ignorance of the pervasiveness of human weakness, however, for they assign to government a task possible only to God: the creation of perfection in men and society. The consequent power which must be given to rulers, Richardson points out, is both god-like and thoroughly ungodly, and it ennobles neither the rulers nor the ruled. Rather, just because such power is placed in the hands of the weak, fallible men, the tremendous, centralized power of interventionism magnifies the impact of the intellectual and moral sins and foibles of legislators, multiplying the evil and injury which is the acrid fruit of their actions.

Richardson reminds us that the fundamental issues of government are philosophical and moral issues. The governmental race, in the long-run, is to the philosophically and morally self-conscious, not to the pragmatic compromisers, who are swayed by the arguments of the best organized of the principled antagonists in the political struggle. The decisions of government are inescapably moral decisions, for such is the essence of legislation. The defender of justice, liberty and property rights must recognize that the political problem is not only interventionist "do-goodera," but also the "others." The solution is action: grounded in sound moral and philosophical principles.

Richardson's moral-political philosophy is essentially a Christian libertarianism, influenced by Frederick Bastiat. Would that he had expounded a biblical philosophy of politics more fully. That would make his book have less appeal to the conservative and libertarian reading public, but then it would also be more instructive. Had he expounded a biblical philosophy more fully, he would certainly have pointed out that God laughs at the futile foolishness of rebellious men who believe such ungodly notions as those he has skewered.

Read Richardson's book. It will make you see the need for an organized Christian impact on American politics. If you value individual liberty, you'll laugh, too. Even collectivists will derive some valuable amusement and instruction from it. As my friend Jay Parker is fond of saying, there is always the possibility of redemption!

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