

Roger Williams

Waiting
for the
Restoration
of the
True Church



free

We are disciples of Jesus Christ,* the Son of God. We are so very thankful that we have found forgiveness for our sins through His precious blood. We have come from every conceivable place in Christianity, and we write this paper as an appeal to you, our brothers and sisters, who are still looking for a place to belong.

Before we became disciples, most of us had a hard time making sense out of Christianity. The more we read the Bible, the more we saw the contradictions between what our Master promised and what we were experiencing. We saw clear commands in the New Testament that were ignored or explained away. This made us realize that we were not content, that deep down in our souls we had doubt about many things. But most of all, our consciences troubled us over the lack of love and unity in our local churches.

We were sincere. Deep in our hearts we wanted to serve God. Our Father in heaven knew our hearts and through many different circumstances led us to cross the path of a people who had a common life together. We fell in love with the Spirit they had, for He caused them to love one another with a sincerity and honesty that we had never seen. The life of the New Covenant that is promised in the Bible was being lived out in their midst, even though they were just ordinary people like us. They loved without pretense, and their whole motivation in life was to love like our Master loved, to obey Him in everything He commanded. Through them we began to receive faith that it was possible to live a life of love in unity with our brothers and sisters.

RESPONDING TO HIS LOVE

It all started to make sense when we saw a demonstration of it. We began to desire this life with all our heart. We began to understand for the first time why in all our Christian experience we had never been able to give everything to Him. When we saw faith like the first disciples had being restored to God's people, we realized that this was what we had always wanted. Although we knew we would have to forsake *everything* to follow Him, we were willing to pay the price. It was like the price our Master paid to ransom us. In response to His love for us, all we wanted to do was give our whole life to Him, unhindered by jobs, possessions, friends or family ties.

Because He made a place for us to belong, a home for us to dwell in, we are able to do this. Every day, all day, we live for Him and for each other. We have given up all our own possessions. We share with each other what we once owned as individuals — everything from our cars, furniture, and homes to our problems and sorrows. Families live together in households and several households make up a clan. Each clan dwells in a neighborhood where those who live around them can observe their lives. This is where many people see the hope that is within us, ask about it, and receive the good news. Our lives and our homes are always open for anyone who wants to visit.

In every place we live, our lives are totally consumed with enthusiasm and zeal to see this life grow and spread throughout all the earth. We are beginning to find restoration in every aspect of our lives — especially in our marriages and with our children. We realize now more than ever just how trapped we were, going on week after week, from one church to another, from one book to the next, never satisfied with our shallow experience. We had no confidence that we had eternal life because we could not love our brothers and sisters the way He commanded us. We had no way to lay down our lives for one another the way He laid down His life for us.

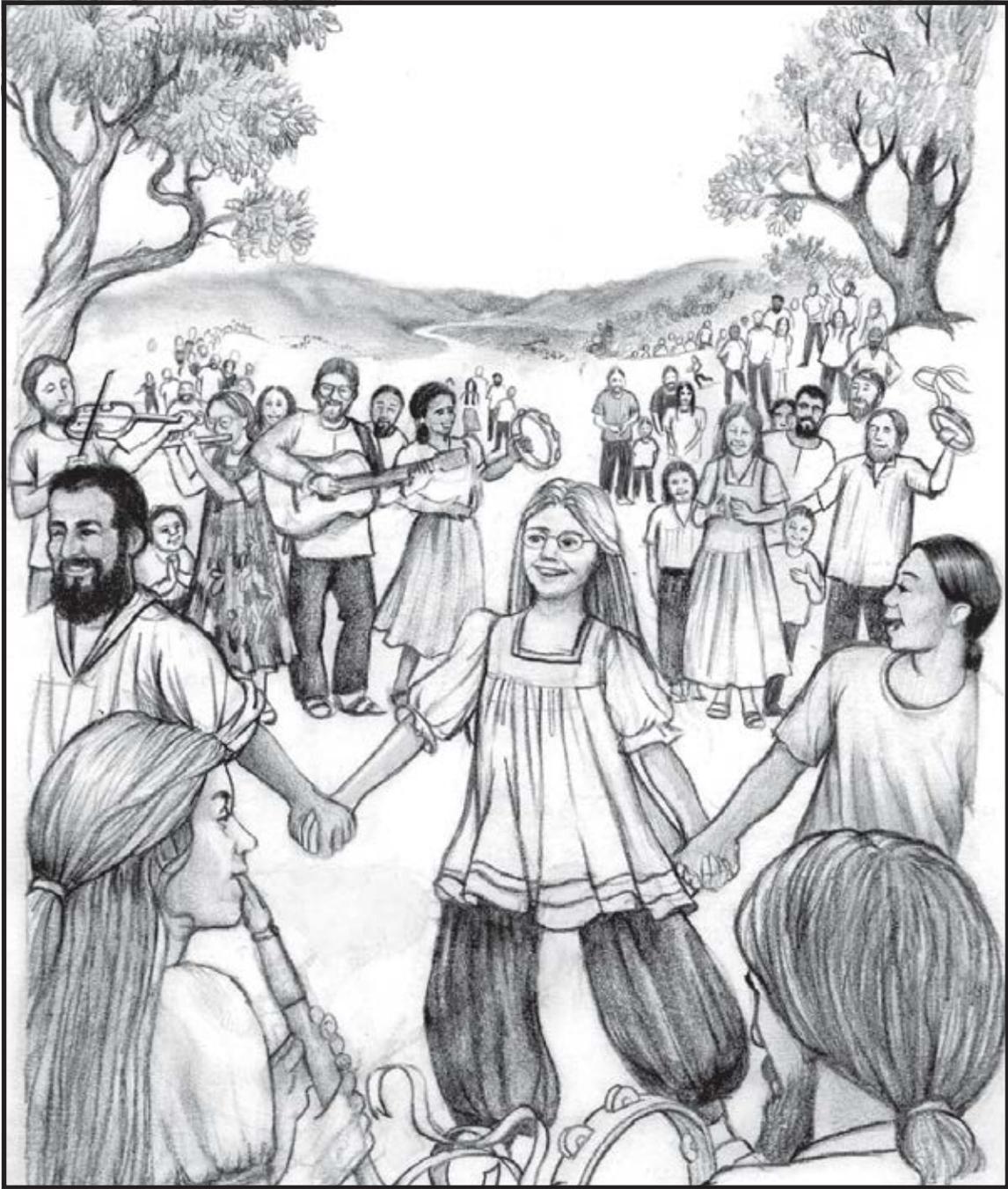
A HIGH CALLING

We are so thankful He led us to where His life was being lived out. There we found an environment where we could love as He loved and devote our whole life to seeing this love reach full maturity in His people. What a high calling it is to be made ready to be a Bride for Him! We are thankful for His precious Holy Spirit who has made us one with Him and with one another. We have come to see it is only in unity that His love can be perfected in us.

This is who we are — a people in love with the Son of God. He is our life and our hope. We have no other ambition or goal but Him. He is our everything, and by His faith and the grace that He gives to us every day, this love grows. It can't be contained; we are being consumed by it more and more. We welcome you, our brothers and sisters scattered throughout the confusing land of denominational Christianity, to come and stay with us for as long as you like. Our homes are open and our addresses are on the back of this paper. We believe you will see what we see, and if you do, you'll never go back. You'll never be content with anything else because His love will compel you to no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died for you and rose again on your behalf. ❖

* We call our Master by His Hebrew name, *Yahshua*. For more about His name, see "The Name Above All Names" on page 44.

Who we are



HOW A VERY

As the end of the twentieth century races toward us,

RELIGIOUS

it's hard to escape the feeling that

NATION

history is about to turn a very significant corner.

PRODUCED

One of the compelling questions that many

THE FIRST

people ask is, "Is this the end of the age?"

SECULAR

Several Christian writers ...

STATE

and radio preachers have recently announced the date of Christ's return, and many more will offer their opinions as the end of the millennium approaches. But one of the most overlooked mysteries of the end of the age is the reuniting of Christianity with a one-world government.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Three hundred years ago Roger Williams had remarkable insight into the relationship of the church and the state. More than anyone else in history, he was the one who took a stand and would not allow church and state to blend in some unholy alliance that would eventually turn and persecute anyone who could not, for conscience sake, capitulate to its demands. This had been the pattern over and over in European history, and Williams was determined that it would not happen where he governed in the infant state of Rhode Island.

We hope in this paper to begin to unfold the mystery of Williams's insight into why the separation of church and state must be upheld. Only then can the necessary forces¹ grow and develop which will culminate in the apocalypse that brings Christ back and that ushers in the Millennial Kingdom.

Since colonial times, prophecy about the "last days" has been the fertile ground from which hundreds of millennial sects have arisen, each freshly applying the patterns and prophesies of the apocalypse to the events of its day.² Inevitably, people's fears and expectations of what the Bible predicts have made their mark on American politics.

THE PROMISED LAND

The first of the American millennial sects was the Pilgrims. They came in hope of finding the "promised land," a place where the righteous could live in peace and bring in the "kingdom of God." The Pilgrims thought they were establishing a New Israel and almost voted in Hebrew as their national language. Many who settled here thought they were the descendants of Abraham. They had come to this land in faith, looking for "a city with foundations, whose architect and builder was God."³ The combination of a sense of prophetic destiny and the need for an ordered society brought about a unique relationship between church and state. In fact, it is because of the strength of this relationship between American politics and religion that the founding fathers formally *disestablished* religion to produce the first secular state in history.⁴

Author and political observer Garry Wills makes this very point:

In the middle of the seventeenth century, Rhode Island had given greater protection

of freedom of religion than any other government in what was then known as Christendom. Nor was this an aberration. The process by which those zealous for religion separated it from government presented in microcosm the process that would be worked out in America over the next centuries. The secular state came from the zeal of religion itself. It was the most religious community [Rhode Island] that produced the most religiously neutral state, just as — a century later — it would be a very religious nation that produced the first secular state. This [occurred] because they were following the logic of the position that Roger Williams, with his genius, had arrived at by way of Augustinian reflection on the world, the gospel, and government. Those reflections were not as distant from the later arguments of Jefferson and Madison as scholars have made them.⁵

THE STONE KINGDOM

The insight of Roger Williams is important in three very significant areas: First, he saw more clearly than anyone else of his time the significance of the *Stone Kingdom* that the prophet Daniel predicted would come about "in the days of those [ten] kings."⁶ Second, he saw that the restoration of the true church would come about when true apostles would once again raise up the foundation of the early church and bring to full maturity what had begun in the first century.⁷ Third, he saw that the end-time church could only flourish in a "pre-Constantine" political structure where the affairs of the civil government were completely separate from the affairs of the church.

According to Daniel 12:4, the prophecies concerning the Stone Kingdom were to be sealed up until the last days. This is why Roger Williams, in the seventeenth century, was unable to understand them completely. However, for us at the end of the twentieth century, the picture is coming into focus and we are able to interpret more clearly what Williams could only sense back then.

Even though Roger Williams didn't see everything clearly, he nevertheless was the one who had the greatest insight in how the relationship between church and state should be. He believed that no state government should ever interfere with an individual's private acts of belief. To him these acts were private matters between the individual and the Spirit of God. He believed that true belief grew out of an inner conviction that no man could force upon another. He believed that the Indians in New England could not and should not be coerced into European beliefs — "they must judge according to their Indian or

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American consciences, for other consciences it cannot be supposed they should have.”⁸ Thus, Williams understood that any establishment of religion by any government imposes the conscience of one person, or one set of persons — the ruler or his magistrates — on everybody else.

Williams knew that if religion and politics were not separate, the church would continue to be corrupt in the New World just as it had always been in Europe where the two had been combined since the days of Constantine. He saw that, according to the teachings of the Bible, the church was to be separate and distinct from the society around it. He knew this was the only way it could be a “light to the nations”. He also knew that what he saw around him in seventeenth century America was not the church of the New Testament. He believed that when the Roman emperor, Constantine, made Christianity the state religion, the church lost its illumination and *ceased to be the church*. To him, history proved through all the bloodshed and disunity expressed in the name of Christ, that Christendom is not the church and that it never can be.⁹

Prophetically, he saw that the day would come when the God of heaven would raise up the righteous root of the early church to demonstrate the life of the kingdom to the whole earth. He believed the day would come when the God of heaven would raise up apostles who would restore the pattern and purity of the early church.¹⁰ Roger Williams wanted to establish civil government that would separate the spheres of authority of the church and the state so that when that time of restoration would come, the true church would not be polluted by any establishment of religion nor would it be stamped out by the intolerance of government to something radically different than the mainstream culture or religion of the day.

PROPHETIC DESTINY

The separation of church and state, so clearly understood by Williams, Madison and Jefferson is what has allowed the idea of a “prophetic destiny” to flourish and develop to the present day in this country. Jefferson and Madison did not believe that separation would lessen the impact of Bible prophecy or religious expression on our nation. “Churches freed from the compromises of establishment would have greater moral force, they argued — and in this they proved prophets.”¹¹ Neither did they believe that separation would lessen civil governments’ ability to rule over the affairs of the state. They believed the ability to rule would be enhanced if the civil authorities would rule by natural law as dictated by each man’s conscience instead of being coerced into running the affairs of government

with legislated church doctrines. Therefore, it seemed necessary to them that the separation be maintained in order for civil government to keep order and maintain peace and for the “prophetic destiny” of America to be fully realized.

THE MYTH OF SEPARATION

There is a strong movement currently forming in America, primarily from the evangelical Christian Right, to expose what they call “the myth of separation” between church and state and to bring this country back to its roots as a “Christian nation” where politics and Christian principles go hand in hand. This movement is a reaction to the long-standing view from the left of strict separation,¹² a view which in many ways has robbed America of the fundamental moral foundation of civil government that this country had at its beginning. There are grave dangers to both positions and both represent important elements of the forces at work to bring about the climax of human history in this age.

In colonial times, the Christian religion was an integral part of the culture of the people who settled in America. Christian principles were voluntarily accepted by the dictates of individual consciences. It was in this cultural context that the people saw the danger of establishing any particular denomination as a state religion. But today, the culture increasingly rejects, *voluntarily*, the principles of Christianity because of the inconsistencies, confusion, division and hypocrisy in the church.

To quell this avalanche of moral breakdown, the “Reclaim America” element of the Christian right is subtly advocating establishing, not a particular denomination, but the Christian religion. This, in effect would be a return to the same type of establishment initially enacted by Constantine, which Williams, Jefferson and Madison agreed was the beginning of the fall of the Christian church from its purity.¹³ How this movement to re-establish a Constantinian Christianity fits into the prophesy of the end times is a primary subject of this paper. It makes the understanding of government proposed by Williams, Jefferson and Madison even more profound and even more urgent as we move into the next millennium. ❧

¹*The beast, the harlot, and the Stone Kingdom.*

²Garry Wills, *Under God, Religion and American Politics*, pp.20,24. ³Hebrews 11:10

⁴Wills, *op. cit.*, p.353. ⁵*Ibid*, pp.352,353.

⁶Daniel 2:44 ⁷Hughes, *American Quest for the Primitive Church*, pp.42,46 ⁸Wills, *op. cit.*, p.371. ⁹Hughes, *op cit*, p.41. ¹⁰*Ibid*, p.42.

¹¹Wills, *op. cit.*, p.25. ¹²David Barton, *The Myth of Separation*, p.32. ¹³Wills, *op. cit.*, p.368.

“Who made me a judge?”

The book of Acts records a clear example of how the state should function in a secular society. The separation of church and state is supported by the story of Paul before the Roman proconsul, Gallio, in Acts 18:12-17.¹ His religious enemies brought him to court because of the good news he was preaching. Paul wanted to rescue Jews from the deadness of their traditions and Gentiles from their idolatry. His gospel brought them both into the startlingly new and different life of Christ.²

To silence Paul the Jews used an accusation that has been heard many times since: “*This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.*” And in so many nations since then they have been right — the laws of their nations denied religious freedom. When that happens, the God-given function of government to protect each man’s search for God has been undermined.³ Such laws would have prevented the spread of the very gospel Paul was preaching.

Gallio, however, was a righteous ruler who understood the purpose of government. He would not allow that purpose to be perverted. He drove Paul’s accusers away from the courtroom with the wise words, “*If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge in these matters.*”

This was no different than the example the Son of God set when He refused to involve Himself with earthly matters. One time a man came asking Him to judge a dispute over an inheritance. He sent him away with the words, “*Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?*”⁴ Each ruler, Christ and the proconsul, had the same wisdom — to confine themselves to their proper sphere of authority. Christ would not be distracted from men’s eternal souls and the establishment of His Kingdom, and Gallio would not be distracted from dealing with their outward acts of injustice towards one another.

When Christ said His oft-quoted words, “*Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.*”⁵ He was merely reiterating the principle He had already established. He had not come to judge the world yet, not even those people who personally rejected Him.⁶ This is how all who claim Him as their Lord and Savior should have acted throughout history, but the sad story is far to the contrary. As renowned Lutheran theologian and Reformation historian Marc Edwards puts it:

With the beginning of the Christian empire under Constantine and his successors in the fourth century, Christian authorities gained the opportunity to persecute their Jewish rivals and every other non-Christian group. From the time of Constantine to our own twentieth century, Christians have made frequent use of this opportunity.⁷ ❧

¹Among the many examples that could be given in the Scriptures, there is the contention between God and the Egyptian empire. Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, was severely rebuked by God for not letting Israel, His people, go and worship Him as they desired (Exodus, chapters 1-15). Another evil ruler, Herod, killed the apostle James merely to please the religious leaders of his nation (Acts 12:1-3). ²The gift of faith through which saving grace comes always produces the commonwealth of Israel, or else the hearers are still without God and without hope in the world (Ephesians 2:6-12). ³Acts 17:26-27 ⁴Luke 12:14 ⁵Matthew 22:21 ⁶John 12:47,48 ⁷Marc Edwards, *Luther’s Last Battles, Politics and Polemics*, 1532-1546, page 117 (1983)

The Story
of
ROGER WILLIAMS



*Can you imagine life under
the rule of a civil government
controlled by the church?
A look at Roger Williams's
life can help us see what it
would be like.*



Roger Williams was born in England around the year 1603. He grew up at a time when religious issues and strong religious feelings rocked the country. In those days, it was costly, even dangerous, to hold opinions that were contrary to the creed of the established church.

*He thought it his
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its hands in the blood of the
Lord's people.*

It didn't matter how clearly those opinions could be supported by the word of God — if they were contrary to the creed, they were dangerous heresies. In fact, the more evidence found in the Word of God to prove them, the more dangerous they were.

Those were the days of the Anabaptists, the Mennonites, the Separatists, the Pilgrims, and the Puritans — groups which would not conform to the church in England and who were persecuted by it. Thus, Roger Williams grew up seeing the oppression that resulted when the church and state were combined. He came to believe that men should have the freedom to follow their conscience in religious matters. This opinion made him an undesirable citizen in the eyes of the establishment and he was forced to flee England. At that time another man, named Alexander Leighton, was punished for publishing a book written against the church. For that act he was committed to prison for life, fined ten thousand pounds, degraded from his ministry, whipped, pilloried, his ears cut off, his nose slit, and his face branded with a hot iron.

IN THE NEW WORLD

In 1631 Roger Williams landed in Boston. He had come to America to find freedom of belief and worship. Shockingly, he found the church here still connected to the church in England. Nor was this, as Williams was to find, merely a formal or sentimental connection. The Church of New England was just as oppressive as that in old England. Although Williams had been “unanimously chosen teacher at Boston” by the congregation there, he “conscientiously refused” to join the church in Boston because it still held communion with the Church of England, from which he had just fled. He thought it his duty to renounce all connection with any church that would stain its hands in the blood of the Lord's people. Obviously it greatly troubled Roger Williams to find in the New World the same oppressive conditions that had caused him to flee from the Old. Without delay or concern for his own life, he began to speak out boldly against the established church's persecution of those who dissented for the sake of conscience.

Williams was elected pastor of the congregation in Salem, but later left it to live in the Plymouth Colony where a greater degree of toleration existed. There he continued to preach and teach in the church. A few years later he was again invited to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to become the pastor of the Salem church. Such Separatist views as he held were held by the congregation in Salem. So he accepted the invitation, even though the magistrates and ministers of the Bay Colony strongly objected. At once his

opponents began to denounce his teachings. Summoned to appear before the Court to answer charges brought against his “heretical” opinions, they now had the power of the state behind them to make good on their threats.

Roger Williams was called to answer for his belief that no civil magistrate had the right to enforce religion or religious practices. Such a teaching, of course, was diametrically opposed to the principles on which the Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded. Sabbath breakers were severely punished there and everyone was forced to attend church and pay taxes to support it. Williams's views were regarded by the officials as a very serious matter.

Roger Williams was sentenced to banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony on October 9, 1635. Because no ships could sail for England at that season, his time was extended. During those months, Roger Williams made no attempt to preach or teach in public. Many people, however, who sympathized with him would gather at his house each Sunday to listen to him share his views in private. This, of course, meant they were not in their accustomed places of worship on that day, which didn't please the officials of the established church. It was also against the law.

FLIGHT TO RHODE ISLAND

For some time, Roger Williams had envisioned founding a state in which its inhabitants should enjoy the fullest liberty in matters of conscience. He also wanted to recognize the rights of the Indians, the original inhabitants of the land. Roger Williams's intention to establish a new state based upon the principles of freedom of conscience and the rights of the Indians greatly alarmed the Puritan leaders. Without further delay they made plans to banish him from their colony. A ship at anchor in Boston harbor was about to set sail, and they decided to send Williams to England on board. A warrant issued by the court at Boston summoned Williams to appear. He replied that he believed his life to be in danger and did not obey the summons. An officer was sent to bring him, but discovered that he had been gone three days. No one knew where he had fled.

Leaving his wife and three children, the youngest less than three months old, and having mortgaged his property at Salem to provide his needs, Roger Williams escaped into the wilderness to find refuge among the Indians. There he found the freedom which he could not find in Massachusetts. In later writings, Williams recalls how he was “*denied the common air to breathe in ... and almost without mercy and human compas-*



sion, exposed to winter miseries in a howling wilderness." For fourteen weeks he endured these miseries of the wilderness "not knowing what bread or bed did mean." During this time, whatever shelter he found was in the dingy, smoky lodges of the Indians. Their hospitality to him in his time of need was something he sought to repay with kindness all the rest of his life.

At Seekonk, on the east bank of the Pawtucket River, Williams broke ground for a habitation and began to plant and build; but before his crop had time to mature, the Plymouth officials learned of his whereabouts and warned him that he was a trespasser on their lands and must move on. With five companions he embarked in a frail canoe and traveled further down the river. At the mouth of the Moshassuck River they landed near a spring and founded a settlement which they called Providence. Williams intended it as a refuge for those distressed of conscience.

As soon as it was known that Roger Williams had started a settlement, men of various beliefs who had also been oppressed by the hierarchy of New England began to gather around him. Unlike the Boston settlement, Williams would have purchased the lands that became Providence — *if the Indians had let him*. Such was the mutual affection and trust between the two, Williams and the Narragansett Indians, that the great sachems, Cononicus and Miantonomi, gave him the land. Before leaving Salem, Williams already had arranged with Cononicus for a tract of land large enough to support a colony. Cononicus would not accept money

in payment for the land. "It was not price or money that could have purchased Rhode Island," Williams wrote later. "Rhode Island was purchased by love."

The Indians of New England were fully as capable, if not much more so, of keeping the golden rule — of treating others as you would want to be treated — than their new and largely unwanted English neighbors. Such human decency and fairness was exactly what his "Christian brethren" in Boston and Hartford refused to do.

These settlements were finally brought into one colony under the title of the Providence Plantations. But before these settlements had time to unify under a common government, news reached them that the Indians of New England were beginning to join together to exterminate all the English in New England. The powerful Pequots proposed to unite with the Mohegans and the Narragansetts to accomplish this purpose. It was a critical time for the small colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut. Rhode Island was in no immediate danger since the Rhode Islanders had paid for their lands and were on good terms with the neighboring Indians.

MAKING PEACE

At that time, the governor and council of Massachusetts wrote an urgent plea to Roger Williams. They recognized him as the only man in New England who could prevent the Indian conspiracy. With the memory of his persecution by Massachusetts still fresh in his mind, he did not hesitate to throw him-



self between “*his own persecutors and their relentless foes,*” though he knew that in doing so he was risking his own life.

Concerning this dangerous expedition Williams himself says:

The Lord helped me immediately to put my life into my hand, and scarce acquainting my wife, to ship myself alone, in a poor canoe, and to cut through a stormy wind, with great seas, every minute in hazard of life, to the sachem’s house. Three days and nights my business forced me to lodge and mix with the bloody Pequot ambassadors, whose hands and arms, methought, reeked with the blood of my countrymen, murdered and massacred by them on the Connecticut River, and from whom I could not but look for their bloody knives at my own throat also. God wondrously preserved me and helped me to break to pieces the Pequot’s negotiations and design; and to make and finish, by many travels and charges, the English league with the Narragansetts and Mohegans against the Pequots.

Thus New England was saved from probable extinction by the very one whom she would not permit to come within her borders.

Returning evil for good, a mere six years after Roger Williams’s great service against the Pequot conspiracy, the Massachusetts government tried to annex the small colony

of Rhode Island. They did so by sending emissaries to England to obtain a patent covering the very same territory. Roger Williams arrived in England just in time to prevent them and was granted the patent in 1643. This patent protected Rhode Island from being swallowed up by Massachusetts and insured a republican form of government. Strangely enough, it made no mention of anything to do with matters of faith and religion. Many have wondered at this omission and why it happened. But Roger Williams, who was instrumental in obtaining that patent, recognized that the faith and religion of Rhode Island’s inhabitants was something entirely outside the jurisdiction of the state. Therefore, he concluded, it was unnecessary to make any reference to it.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

Upon the basis of that patent, the code of laws for the Providence Plantations was framed (1647). The last sentence reads:

These are the laws that concern all men, and these are the penalties for the transgression thereof, which, by common consent, are ratified and established throughout the whole colony; and, otherwise than what is thus therein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation, in the name of Jehovah their God, forever and ever.



After the death of the Oliver Cromwell in England, the Rhode Islanders began to fear that their patent might not be honored by King Charles, or that the enemies of their colony might in some way rob them of the rights which they had obtained through so much toil and opposition. They had good reason to fear for their liberties. At that time Connecticut was applying for a charter which included all of Rhode Island in its territory. Through the help of friends in England, Roger Williams was successful and received a second charter in 1663. In his application, he had written:

Your petitioners have it much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a livelie experiment, [so] that a flourishing civil state may stand ... with a full liberty in religious concernments.

His language seems to have made a favorable impression upon the king, for the very wording of the above quotation is woven into the charter granted two years later. As it is written in the charter of 1663:

No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences in opinion in matters of religion ... but that all persons may ... enjoy their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concernments.

That "livelie experiment" in the separation of church and state has come down to

The Indians' hospitality to him in his time of need was something he sought to repay with kindness all the rest of his life.

us as the most precious gift from these early colonial days. Like every good thing that has come to this world, it came into being through great labor and pain.

FOUNDATION OF LIBERTY

What is most significant about the royal charter is that it acknowledges at the foundation of Rhode Island's government two important principles: republicanism (democratic governments made up of representatives elected by its citizens) and religious liberty. These principles characterize our American government and are later expressed in both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Neither republicanism nor religious liberty can be found in any of the charters of the other colonies where church and state were united. It is therefore easy to determine the original source of those principles which have protected our religious freedom and made America a refuge for the oppressed of every land. The nation's debt to Roger Williams is a debt that can never be canceled. ■



The Light and the Glory

Many believe that America was established by God as a Christian nation, to be a light to the world. Yet everywhere we see the decline of moral values and the breakdown of human relationships. Should America return to its Christian foundation? Should Christians move into the sphere of government to make it happen? Knowing what Roger Williams and the framers of the Constitution felt about church and state can help us understand the consequences if such a merger takes place.

If any man hears my words, and believes not, I judge him not.¹ Our Master's declaration almost two thousand years ago established for all time how those who believe in Him should treat those who don't believe. He made it clear that the judgment for unbelievers who rejected Him and His words would come "at the last day."² He also established a limit to the church's authority by confirming that belief in and obedience to the gospel were confined to individual choice. They were never to be imposed upon someone else by any means of force or coercion whatsoever.

When our Master taught and put into practice beliefs that were contrary to the traditions of the elders of Israel, He was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Israel. The chief priests and scribes charged Him with proclaiming allegiance to a king other than Caesar. When Pilate found no fault with Him, they demanded His crucifixion with venomous rage. This pattern of violence and bloodshed has been the result every time a religious establishment has sought the power of the state to enforce adherence to its beliefs and practices.

The merger of church and state was made official during the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine in 321 A.D. when he "established" Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. This set in motion an unholy alliance between the church and the state, an adulterous relationship which has continued on through history and marches prophetically toward the consummation of the age.³ Once Rome declared Christianity to

be its state religion, the Roman church was instantly clothed with civil power and began to wage war against all those who disagreed in matters of conscience and belief.

THE ERROR OF REFORM

For over a thousand years the corruption and atrocities of the Roman Catholic church continued uninterrupted. Many in the clergy were notoriously immoral, maintaining mistresses or young boys, lived in luxury, and delved into political intrigue and treachery; papal authority was used to coerce kings and princes; church positions were sold to the highest bidder; forgiveness of sins and release of relatives in purgatory were granted to those who contributed large sums to the church; supposed relics of the cross, Jesus' clothes, and beard were bought and sold; heretics were tortured and executed, including the mass slaughter of dissenting religious groups.

Even though Martin Luther and others like him eventually rose up in protest, their hoped-for reforms were unable to purify the church, much less disentangle her from the political machine. By compromise and accommodation to the state, Martin Luther deftly maintained his political influence for the sake of establishing his brand of Christianity. His example paved the way for other religious movements to become established state churches, continuing in the Constantinian pattern. Thus the Reformers all ironically committed the same error as the Catholics had before them. As history so tragically reveals, the leaders of the Reformation quickly joined

The establishment of Christianity as the religion of the empire set in motion an unholy alliance between the church and the state.

¹John 12:47 ²John 12:48 ³Revelation 17 & 18

*The Reformation
was drenched in blood,
a fact well attested to in
history, but curiously
unacknowledged by
Christians today.*

blood-stained hands with their Catholic opponents in persecuting anyone who differed with *their* doctrines.

INNOCENT BLOOD

The Reformation may have begun as a struggle of men's souls for the freedom to worship God as each saw fit (guided, in Martin Luther's words, by "the Bible, and the Bible only"), but the Reformers soon proved that they desired freedom for *their* way of thinking *only*, which is no freedom at all. In fact, they added new bonds and chains to mankind, instead of breaking asunder the ones that already existed.

Few Reformers, however, realized that they were imitating the behavior of the Roman Catholic Church in their bloody persecution of religious dissidents. John Calvin, for example, showed that his roots were sunk deep in Roman Catholic soil by employing the same means as they had to persuade the reluctant: torture and death. By having Michael Servetus burned at the stake for his beliefs, Calvin indelibly etched on history his contempt for the conscience of others. In support of his practices, he wrote, "*Godly princes may lawfully issue edicts for compelling obstinate*

and rebellious persons to worship the true God and to maintain the unity of the faith."⁴

Martin Luther, in his younger days, urged that the Christian law of love be applied to the Jews in an effort to win them (see *The Legacy of Martin Luther*, page 30). He also scorned the use of force to change anyone's beliefs. His own words stated clearly why persecution should be repugnant to any man of good conscience, no matter how sure he was of the rightness of his beliefs:

*The mass is a bad thing; God is opposed to it; it ought to be abolished; ... But let no one be torn from it by force. We must leave the matter in God's hands ... And why so? Because I do not hold men's hearts in my hand as the potter holds the clay. We have the right to speak; but have not the right to act ... Were I to employ force, what should I gain? — Grimace, formality, aping, human ordinances, and hypocrisy ... But there would be no sincerity of heart, nor faith, nor charity. Where these three are wanting, all is wanting, and I would not give a straw for such a result.*⁵

Turning radically from this gracious "soul liberty" he once championed, Luther wrote of

⁴John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. ⁵D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, book 9, p. 334

Separation of Church and State

Many Scriptures support the separation of church and state,¹ and men of conscience like Roger Williams have seen the evil that results when they are not separate.

There are profound spiritual reasons why the state must not tell the church how to conduct her affairs in any way.² For the church to allow the state to rule over her in spiritual matters is nothing less than changing gods.³ It would be an irreparable breach of loyalty between the church and her Savior. Williams articulated the limits of civil authority as follows:

*Magistrates [officials of the civil government] have no power of setting up the form of Church Government, electing Church officers, punishing with Church censures, but to see that the Church does her duty herein.*⁴

Nor was the Church to get involved in the civil government, or meddle with the hearts of the people to turn them away

from their rulers:

*And on the other side, the Churches as Churches, (though as members of the Commonwealth they may have power⁵) have no power of erecting or altering forms of civil government, electing of civil officers, inflicting Civil punishments (no not [even] on persons excommunicated) as by deposing Magistrates from their Civil Authority, or withdrawing the hearts of the people against them, to their laws, no more than to discharge wives, or children, or servants, from due obedience to their husbands, parents, or masters; or by taking up arms against their Magistrates, though he persecute them for conscience.*⁶

The whole concept of wedding the church and the state, or even of the church functioning as the conscience of the state, was utterly repugnant to Williams. Doing so has invariably led to the church imposing its dogma on others, in the righteous

the Anabaptists in 1530, just as He would later write of the Jews, “*Since they are not only blasphemous, but also seditious men, let the sword exercise its rights over them, for this is the will of God.*”⁶ Other great Reformers like Zwingli in Switzerland and Melancthon in Germany also supported this view in their words and writings, calling for the death sentence for Anabaptists. The Reformation was drenched in blood, a fact well attested to in history, but curiously unacknowledged by Christians today.

In England, in the days of the Pilgrims and Puritans, such persecution was so commonplace that men who desired freedom were compelled to risk everything, even life itself, to come to America in the hopes of finding liberty.⁷ Although many fled from persecution, few renounced their ties with the churches of Europe and their vision of a church-dominated society. Believing themselves to be God’s government on earth, they assumed the right to tell men how, and even when, to seek God. Fines, whippings, banishment, and even death awaited those who would not bow to their oppressive rule. Unknowingly, they were

guilty of fastening the same chains on men’s souls as they had escaped from.

ROGER WILLIAMS

But the God of Heaven did have men and women of conscience on the earth, and foremost among them in the early days of the colonies was Roger Williams, a man to whom the whole world is indebted.⁷ His uncompromising stand against the oppressive Puritan government in Massachusetts, and his later work in establishing Rhode Island,⁸ laid the foundation for the kind of government we have in America — one that protects the freedoms which are so necessary in order for God to establish what He desires in these last days.

Williams saw that there must be a restoration of apostolic authority and the life of the early church apart from the control of the state (see box, p. 14) in order for God to have a people for whom His Son could return.⁹ He knew he was not the man to bring it about, and that it would be left to another generation in the future.¹⁰ Still, he devoted his life to establishing in Rhode Island a form of govern-

Williams saw that there must be a restoration of the apostolic authority and life of the early church, outside the realm of state control.

⁶Henry M. King, *Religious Liberty*, p. 26. ⁷See “The Story of Roger Williams,” p. 8. ⁸Williams’s Patent of 1644, the Assembly’s Civil Code of 1647, and John Clarke’s Charter of 1663. ⁹“Baptists,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1979), v. 2, p. 714. ¹⁰Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, Vol. 1, p. 222.

certainty that it could force “the truth” on the unenlightened. But Williams understood more than this, he understood the fatal consequences to the church of her meddling with the affairs of the world:

When they (the Church) have opened a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world, God hath ever broke down the wall itself, removed the Candlestick, etc., and made His Garden a wilderness as it is this day.

“And that therefore if He will ever please to restore His garden and Paradise again, it must of necessity be walled in peculiarly unto Himself from the world, and all that be saved out of the world are to be transplanted out of the wilderness of the World.”⁷

The church was never intended to interfere with the lesser concerns of worldly government, but instead be consumed with the higher concerns of God’s Kingdom. This life of love was to be a light in which men could walk if they chose to.⁸ History bears out this wisdom — a history written in the blood shed by those who were con-

vinced their doctrines were right, but who undermined and compromised the God-given functioning of civil government.⁹ This history is still being written today in the same ink. It was with the fervent desire to close this awful chapter of human history that the framers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States sought to erect the wall of separation of church and state. ☩

¹Acts 18:12-17 is the prime text, and Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 is another. Acts 12:1-4 is a negative example, as is the Jews before Pilate, John 18, 19. ²See *Roger Williams and the Stone Kingdom*, page 18. ³2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ⁴Roger Williams, *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), page 248. ⁵That is, as private citizens like any other citizen. ⁶*Bloudy Tenent*, pages 248,249 ⁷“Mr. Cotton’s Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered,” *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, Volume 1, page 108 (1644) This is similar to Thomas Jefferson’s famous phrase, the wall of separation between church and state. ⁸Isaiah 49:6; John 3:19-21 — Righteous men’s good deeds come from their obedience to the knowledge of good God gave them, and for which they will be rewarded. John 5:28,29. ⁹Acts 17:26,27

ment which would protect religious freedom. Little did he know that the principles which he gave his whole life for would emerge in the hearts of men like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison a century later, thereby finding their way into the Declaration of Independence and the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Williams saw that the religious persecution in Massachusetts differed little from what he had witnessed growing up in England, and he spoke out against it.⁹ The pattern was clear. In many colonies one denomination would gain recognition, obtaining a charter through the civil government, and begin to persecute other denominations that were not the recognized religion of the day.

Thomas Jefferson, like Williams, used the term "wall of separation"¹¹ to make his very famous declaration in 1802, acknowledging that, through the First Amendment,

... the whole American people ... declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.¹²

Historian C. Leonard Allen helps us understand the position that Roger Williams held concerning the separation of church and state. It came from his sense of the New Testament as the pattern for the church and the overwhelming data of history and experience of the union of church and state since Constantine.

For Roger Williams, the corrupting forces unleashed by Constantine [the merger of church and state] had a much more disastrous and permanent effect [on the church]. They did not just extinguish the gospel, but also the apostolic messengers who alone possess the authority to preach and to gather churches. When the line of apostolic authority was broken in the fourth century, Christians had been left with no means of forming themselves into legitimate congregations. Any attempt to do so would result simply in "great mistakes and wonderings from the first Patterns and Institutions of Christ Jesus."¹³

Roger Williams believed that the day would come when Christ would once again

¹¹John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution* (MI: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 243; David Barton, *The Myth of Separation* (Wall Builder Press, 1992), p. 42. ¹²Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson Writings*, Merrill D. Patterson, ed., p.510, Jan. 1, 1802. ¹³Hughes, *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*, p. 41.

Roger Williams and the Stone Kingdom

The Christian Church or Kingdom of the Saints, that Stone cut out of the mountain without human hands, (Daniel 2) now made all one with the mountain or Civil State, the Roman Empire, from whence it is cut or taken: Christ's lilies, garden and love, all one with the thorns, the daughters and wilderness of the World.¹

ROGER WILLIAMS' VIEW of the Stone Kingdom was remarkably accurate.² He understood from reading church history that Christianity could not be the Stone kingdom of Daniel 2 because it had fallen away long ago. In his *Bloudy Tenent*, he wrote, "Christianity fell asleep in the bosom of Constantine, and the laps and bosoms of those Emperors who professed the name of Christ."³

Continuing on in the same passage Roger Williams describes the effect that pagan and Christian rulers had upon the Church.

The unknowing zeal of Constantine and other Emperors, did more hurt to Christ Jesus, His Crown and King-

Roger Williams, Bloudy Tenent (1644)

dom, than the raging fury of the most bloody Neros. In the persecutions of the latter, Christians were sweet and fragrant, like spice pounded and beaten in mortars: But those good Emperors ... maintaining their religion by the material sword, I say by this means Christianity was eclipsed, and the professors of it fell asleep. Babel or confusion was ushered in, and by degrees the Gardens of the Churches of the Saints were turned into the Wilderness of whole nations, until the whole world became Christian or Christendom, Revelations 12 and 13.⁴

Roger Williams saw that Christian-

commission new apostolic messengers to proclaim the gospel with power and to gather churches according to the original pattern of the early church. One of the most profound things Roger Williams saw was that the newly-formed colonies needed a form of government that would secure and protect the rights of this pure church (or *Stone Kingdom*) whenever it might be raised up, so it would be able to exist and grow and mature, completely free from the civil government's control and free from the imposition of any denomination as a state church. Those who talk about "the light and the glory" and angelic intervention in the establishment of this country must understand this: Roger Williams had the true angelic light. He alone in his day understood that God's holy people would be raised up in another generation and that their future security needed to be ensured.

ANGELIC GUIDANCE

Angelic intervention is clearly evident in the way the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution came to be written, in the midst of great struggle and turmoil. One of the main controversies concerned the degree of control the state should exercise over the practice of

religion and the degree to which any particular denomination could be established as a state religion. These conflicts were fierce, and revealed to Madison that the real issue was greater than mere "toleration of religion" espoused by John Locke. He saw the issue as "free exercise" of religion, or "full and equal rights of conscience" for the individual.¹⁴ He understood that government should protect every man's freedom of conscience; this was the limit of the government's role in religious matters. What James Madison, one of the framers of the Constitution, saw from the perspective of civil government, Williams understood spiritually, 100 years before him.¹⁵

Miraculously, the spirit of religious liberty established in Rhode Island's charter, drafted and engineered by Roger Williams, was incorporated into the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution.¹⁶ The First Amendment protects the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience, unhindered by the state or any religious group.

THE STONE KINGDOM

For more than two hundred years men have debated how to maintain a proper sepa-

***The God of
heaven must have
civil governments on
the earth that will
allow the Stone
Kingdom to
develop.***

¹⁴Hunt, *James Madison and Religious Liberty*, 1 *Ann. Rep. Am. Hist. A.*, p. 163, 166. ¹⁵Michael McConnell, "Origins of Free Exercise," *Harv. Law Rev. (May 1990)*, Vol. 103, p. 1426. ¹⁶"Origins of Free Exercise," p. 1449.

ity fell asleep (died spiritually) when it had grown comfortable and compromised with the state. "Good" Christian emperors had seduced the church and she could never regain her lost purity.

This Stone, according to Williams, had been cut of the mountain of the world in the time of the early church. Something radical had happened when it merged with the Roman civil power, however. The change was so radical it ceased to have the nature of the Stone that would judge the whole world. Instead it became one with the world from which it had been cut, *undoing* the work of Messiah and *doing* the work of the evil one.⁵

Williams' imagery is from the Song of Songs. He speaks of Christ's beloved, His Bride, the Church⁶ as being one with the thorns and the wilderness. This refers to a tasteless and saltless church that is good for nothing anymore, and which will one day be trampled under foot by men.⁷ Equally so, he knew the day would come when

the Stone would be cut out of the mountain of the world, and all the holy prophets had said would be fulfilled.⁸

Until that time, Roger Williams would only call himself a "waiter," or a "seeker." His was a costly honesty, for his greatest desire was to serve the God he loved so much, and to do so in sweet communion with all other sincere believers. Yet he knew that until true restoration came through the re-establishment of apostolic authority, Christianity was merely an outward form in which, he could not in good conscience take part. ❖

¹Roger Williams, *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience (1644)*, page 174. ²*The Stone*, page 22 ³*Bloudy Tenent*, page 184. ⁴*ibid*, page 184. ⁵1 John 3:8 ⁶Eph 5:25-30 ⁷Mt 5:13 (The true Church is described in Mt 5:10-16, the one which has not lost its salt. It is offensive enough to the world to be ill-spoken of.) ⁸Acts 3:21

ration between the state's sphere of authority and that of the church. Whenever these spheres of authority collide, conflicts arise. Moral and social issues today, like abortion, homosexuality, and children's rights, cause violent reactions and counter-reactions from both sides. This continuing climate of tension between church and state will trigger the events necessary to bring about the end of the age.

The evil prince of this world¹⁷ would like nothing better than to destroy the protections of religious freedom, especially in this country, in order to eliminate the possibility of the Stone Kingdom being raised up in these days — the beginning of “the days of the ten

kings.”¹⁸ Before the end of this age can come, and before the harlot can have the political ties she needs to ride in on the beast,¹⁹ the God of heaven must have civil governments on the earth that will allow the Stone Kingdom to develop.

NATURAL LAW

Such civil governments must consist of rulers who are guided by *natural law*,²⁰ the law that is in their conscience. If these rulers have religious beliefs, be they Christians, Jews, or Muslims, then wherever their religious principles agree with natural law, it will help them rule according to their conscience.²¹ In addition to this natural law, rulers ought to

¹⁷ 1 John 5:19 ¹⁸The “Stone Kingdom” is described in Daniel 2:44-45 as the final kingdom which will put an end to all earthly kingdoms. It will be formed at the same time as the kingdom represented by the feet of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The mixture of iron and clay represents the mingling of church and state in the final days of this age. For more about the Stone Kingdom, read *The Stone* paper, which is available free from any of the communities listed inside the back cover of this paper. ¹⁹Revelation 17:1-6 ²⁰According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, natural law is a moral standard in the human conscience which all men know instinctively, independent of church or Scripture. If men are to live at peace with one another, there are certain rules which must be observed: the keeping of promises, the recognition of human equality, the principles of equity and justice, of parental responsibility, and of marital fidelity. ²¹“Williams, Jefferson and Madison all agreed that the civil competence of the state did not reach to any person’s private acts of belief. Since each person’s belief is private, all the establishment of religion does is impose the conscience of one person, or of one set of persons — the ruler or his magistrates — on everybody else. Jefferson, in particular, noted that the individual, whether ruler or ruled, can answer only for his own belief,

Apostolic Authority, Baptism and the Indians

ROGER WILLIAMS AND ELEVEN FRIENDS formed the first Baptist Church in America in Providence, Rhode Island. Ezekiel Holliman was one of them. He baptized Williams by immersion in March of 1639. He had followed Williams from the Salem, Massachusetts church where Williams had briefly taught several years before. Williams then proceeded to baptize Holliman and ten friends. Shortly after this, however, he came to a most remarkable conclusion. Let’s hear an eyewitness account of what happened:

I (Richard Scott) walked with him in the Baptists’ way about three or four months, in which time he brake from the society, and declared at large the ground and reasons of it; that their baptism could not be right because it was not administered by an apostle. After that he set upon a way of seeking (with two or three other men that had dissented with him) by way of preaching and

praying; and there he continued a year or two, till two of the three had left him.¹

Roger Williams’ actions declared what his later words would make abundantly clear: all Christian baptisms were and are invalid, unless apostles, like those of the Jerusalem Church, administered them. Roger Williams understood this in his radical statement regarding the conversion of the Indians of New England:

How readily I could have brought the whole Country to have observed one day in seven; ... to have received a Baptism ... to have come to a stated Church meeting, maintained priests and forms of prayer, and a whole form of Antichristian worship in life and death ... Why have I not brought them to such a conversion as I speak of?² I answer, woe be to me, if I call light darkness, and darkness light ... woe be to me if I call that conversion unto God, which is

be guided *not* by legislated Christian principles, but by the “light to the nations.”²² This light is a *life* of love and unity that demonstrates the kingdom of God, a foretaste of life in the age to come.²³ This life is to be *separate* from the nations, but at the same time a light *to* them. It is clear that there can be no light demonstrated to the nations apart from a life of love that is being perfected in unity.²⁴ This life *must* be raised up free of any compromise or connection with the government if it is going to be the Stone Kingdom.²⁵

In sharp contrast to this life of love, Christianity today has no light to offer the rulers of the nations except Biblical principles. Using Christian principles to bring moral stability to the governments of the nations is not the same thing as *the holy nation* that brings light and glory to the world.²⁶ The polity of the Kingdom of God in this age is the twelve-tribed nation of spiritual Israel, a body of believers who live by the highest standard of love²⁷ and not merely the standard of natural law or Christian principles. Christians’ lives are integrally tied up in the world system, in all its political, social and economic aspects.

They want to make the world a better place to live, for they are not a *people set apart* and cannot be a demonstration to the world that they are one with. Since they have no authority from God, they try to gain power in the same way as political parties. They actively campaign to elect Christians to political office, lobby for certain legislation like any other interest group, and make deals in order to gain power for their own survival.

This is precisely why governments are skeptical of religion. They have maintained the wall of separation to prevent any group from imposing its religious principles on the nation.

Christianity poses a certain kind of threat to government. That’s why there is tension between the two. Many Christians believe that this “tension” comes from the conflict of two spiritual kingdoms at war with one another — Christianity (light) versus the world (darkness). In reality, the tension comes from Christianity trying to usurp the authority of the state. When the beast eventually destroys the harlot, it will be because she has gained too much power and influence in the government.²⁸

Christians want to make the world a better place to live, for they are not a people set apart.

‘founded on the evidence offered to his mind,’ since ‘his own understanding, whether more or less judicious, [is the] only faculty [given by] God.’ ” (Wills, Under God — Religion and American Politics, p. 371) ²²Is 49:6; Mt 5:14-16 ²³John 1:4 ²⁴John 17:21-23 ²⁵Dan 2:44; also see Roger Williams, Bloudy Tenent (1644), p. 174, 175. ²⁶1 Pet 2:9-10 ²⁷John 13:34-35 ²⁸Rev 17:16-18

*indeed subversion of the souls of millions in Christendom, from one false worship to another, and the profanation of the holy name of God.*³

What then would be the hallmarks of the apostolic authority Roger Williams waited for? Paul put it this way, “*through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name’s sake.*”⁴ Apostles communicate saving faith which enables a man to obey the Son of God. Such preaching reveals the worth of the Savior to the heart of those who are willing to do the will of God.⁵ It comes from those who have no deceit or hidden sin⁶, and even pierces the heart of the most religious people who still have a heart for God.⁷

Not many in Roger Williams’ day, or since, have had the courage to face what history’s testimony plainly tells, that Christianity is totally condemned by the words of the Scriptures. The Christian Church has lost its authority because of the blood she has shed, the corruptions she has allowed in her own midst, and the fornication she has committed with

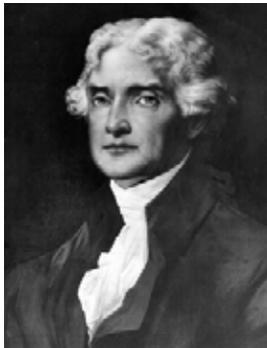
the kings of this earth in exchange for worldly favor and power. Nothing that comes from or acknowledges the legitimacy of the historic Christian Church, begun in compromise with the Roman Empire,⁸ can be free from the guilt of the blood she has shed, or escape the corruptions that have so often ensnared her. This is the unambiguous *essence* of Roger Williams’ thinking about Christianity, and it is valid. ❖

¹Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, volume 1, page 222.

²*The trust the Indians accorded him because of his friendship, fair dealing, and the effort he put in to learn their language, made him uniquely qualified to do this.*

³“Christenings Make Not Christians,” *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, volume 7, pages 36-37. ⁴Rom 1:5 Paul reiterates this thought three more times in Romans: 10:16; 15:18; and 16:26. ⁵John 7:17 ⁶2 Cor 4:4 ⁷Acts 2:36-40 ⁸*From this compromise have sprung the three main divisions of Christianity: Roman, Eastern, and the Protestant branch, with its multitude of denominations.*

**Conflict occurs
when religious
and state leaders
intermeddle in
each other's
affairs.**



ON THE BACK OF THE BEAST

The current movement to “Reclaim America for Christ” is the latest, most sophisticated attempt to rewrite American history in order to unite Christianity with the government of this nation. Religious leaders Dr. James Kennedy and Dr. James Dobson, Christian activists Gary Bauer and Beverley LaHaye, and politicians Dan Quayle and Pat Robertson are but a few of a growing number on the bandwagon. Using all the glitter of slick advertising and media attention, such influential men and women are launching a broad-based campaign to make the world a better place to live by cleaning up Hollywood, TV, magazines, and through moral reforms in schools, colleges, sports, businesses and government. This new “Reformation” movement will some day place Christianity on the back of the Beast, a government that will one day enslave the whole world.²⁹

THE “MYTH” OF SEPARATION

The spokesmen of this movement claim that America was established as a Christian nation and that therefore the “separation of church and state” is a myth. They intend to make America the theocracy³⁰ which they claim the early colonists were seeking. These Christians go to great lengths to prove the “myth of separation:”

That “wall” was originally introduced [by Jefferson]³¹ as, and understood to be, a one-directional wall protecting the church from the government. This was also Jefferson’s understanding ...³²

They credit Roger Williams as the source from which Jefferson got this concept of a one-way wall. Williams, in his treatise of 1644, *Mr. Cotton’s Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered*, made it clear that the wall of separation must go both ways:

The faithful labors of many witnesses of Jesus Christ, extant to the world, abundantly prove that the church of the Jews under the Old Testament in the type, and the church of the Christians in the New Testament in the antitype, were both separate from the world, and that when they have opened a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world, God has ever removed the candlestick, et cetera, and made his garden a wilderness, as at this day [italics added].³³

By calling for a return to no separation, these Christian activists cite numerous examples of leaders in the colonial era “never

separating the struggle for freedom from Biblical principles ... For Samuel Adams there was no separation between political service and spiritual activities.”³⁴ But what these Christian activists fail to see is that, if virtue and knowledge are the chief protection against loss of liberties, these principles must be diffused among the people by individuals choosing to extol them in their personal lives, and in teaching them to their children. Individuals can, in the words of Adams, “lead [their children] in the study and practice of the exalted virtues of the Christian system,”³⁵ but must never force the virtues of the Christian system on anyone through the authority of civil government. It is the current application of “the doctrine of separation” that is at issue, but taking away the wall of separation that does exist in the spirit and application of the First Amendment can never be seen as a solution to the breakdown of moral standards in society. The church must be a light, and not a political entity that legislates or forces compliance to Biblical principles.

The Declaration of Independence establishes “the laws of nature and of nature’s God” as the standard by which civil government should function. Natural law is instinctive in every man’s conscience regardless of his religious beliefs. The language of the First Amendment is clearly written from the perspective of natural law and *not from any particular religious belief.*

Though many of the framers of the Constitution adhered to the Christian religion in their personal lives, and believed Christian principles to be the correct way in which to lead future generations, they in no way intended to “establish Christianity.” They never intended any religious principle to be forced on any individual’s conscience, much less on an entire nation as was done by the Emperor Constantine. To illustrate this, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were worlds apart in their religious beliefs, but in terms of understanding the principles of American government, they were of the same general mind.

Conflict occurs when the church tries to get the government to cross the line and begin to legislate Christian doctrine to all the people. This principle is embodied in John Locke’s view that religious strife stems from the tendency of both religious and governmental leaders to overstep their bounds and intermeddle in the others’ affairs:

I esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the business of civil gov-

²⁹Rev 17:3; 18:1-24 ³⁰theocracy — a type of government which recognizes God as the supreme ruler and which gives temporal authority to the church to interpret and enforce His laws.

³¹Patterson, *op.cit.*, p. 510. ³²Barton, *The Myth of Separation*, p.42. ³³Williams, *Complete Writings*, vol. 1, p. 108. ³⁴Barton, *The Myth of Separation*, p.94. ³⁵Barton, *op.cit.*, p. 116-117.

*ernment from that of religion, and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other.*³⁶

GRAPPLING WITH THE WALL

The last two hundred years of American history illustrates this tension as those on both sides of the wall grapple with where to draw the line between the legitimate sphere of authority of the state and the legitimate sphere of authority of the church. Where would we be as a nation without the foundation of the First Amendment that gives civil government the freedom to rule according to conscience (whether based on Christian principle or natural law apart from any religion) for the good of all its citizens and gives individuals the freedom to believe and practice whatever their conscience dictates to them? Although the tension will continue until the end of the age, the wall is established in the foundation of the Constitution, as an example for other nations, so that what the Bible predicts concerning the end times can happen.

In view of what the Scriptures prophesy about the last days, we can see the movement to “Reclaim America for Christ” is misguided and that Roger Williams was right after all. He had the “angelic light and glory” to see the need for civil government patterned after the Rhode Island Charter of 1663. A hundred years later, James Madison, out of his deep respect for religious liberty, spoke for the need for separation between church and state. His sentiments, as well as those of the other Founding Fathers, emerged in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and in state constitutions as well.³⁷ That Madison’s views prevailed further establishes the value of Roger Williams’ understanding and example. The real reason this country was established on the broad foundation of religious freedom, not just mere toleration by the state, was for the sake of the Stone Kingdom. Williams foresaw that it would emerge outside the institutions of Christianity and would need the protection of the civil government in order to be established and grow.

WHEN THE WALL COMES TUMBLING DOWN

Since the days of Constantine, the state and the Christian religion have been together, thereby disqualifying Christianity from being the people who will represent the kingdom of God in the last days.³⁸ To this day she contin-

ues to assert herself in the affairs of government, even into this latest venture — “Reclaiming America for Christ.” Christians are involved in every level of American life, in the guise of combating the liberal tendencies in society that try to remove from government any moral standards whatsoever. But by doing so, these Christians are seeking not merely to bring this country’s rulers back to a standard of conscience, but to establish a broad-based and intimate merger of the interests of the state and the doctrines of Christianity in general. They are attempting to do this through legislating the doctrines and principles of the Bible. It is a subtle introduction of a long-standing theology called *Reconstructionism* or *Dominion Theology*.³⁹

This is not the “light of the world” influencing the nations with the salt of the earth, because it has no life — only principles from the Bible. It is deadly. The establishment of Christianity will root out all possibilities of un-Christian leadership in government. They will eventually define “Christian” in a way that eliminates *all* who are on the fringes, classifying them as “cults.” It is the breakdown of morality in society at large that is *forcing* Christians with seemingly good motivations, to actively seek the establishment of Christianity to bring this nation back to the moral standards of days gone by. This is the danger. It poses the greatest threat to religious liberty for us in this day.

The stage is set for the final drama of human history. As civil governments slip further from the restraints of conscience and natural law, and begin to evidence a beastly nature, the fragmented segments of Christian religion are evolving into a kind of superficial unity. This unity will be just strong enough to allow Christianity to mount the state once more and ride into secular power.

True to her nature, she will once again seek to suppress or exterminate all threats to her supposedly eternal security. But in these last days the age-old story of religious oppression will have a new twist. For in the ranks of the ostracized and persecuted will be a people, a kingdom which the God of heaven will set up. Despite all obstacles, it will never be destroyed. It will instead maintain a righteous standard which will allow God to execute judgment, bringing to an end both the political and ecclesiastical powers of wickedness, and ushering in a new age of freedom with Messiah, Yahshua’s return. 🕊

***Although
the tension
will continue
until the end of
the age, the wall
is established in
the foundation of
the Constitution.***

³⁶J. Locke, “A Letter Concerning Toleration”, in *6 Works of Locke*, (London 1823 and 1963 photo reprint), p.9. ³⁷Michael McConnell, “Origins of Free Exercise,” *Harv. Law Rev.* (May 1990), Vol. 103, p. 1455 ³⁸“Christianity — whether Catholic, Protestant, or ecumenical — cannot be the Stone because it has been in existence for so long, for centuries ... Daniel 2:44 makes it very clear that the Stone Kingdom cannot even begin to be cut out from the mountain until the ten toes, or ten kings, are alive on the earth.” *The Stone*, p. 27 ³⁹See the next article, “Dominion Theology,” p. 24.

*Calvinist uprisings
in sixteenth-century
Holland and Belgium.
Churches were
ransacked and
“idols” smashed.*



DOMINION THEOLOGY

M

ore than two hundred years have gone by and Christianity is still the religion of America. Through wars, panics, depressions, and unprecedented technological advances, Americans have not left their beliefs behind. Nine Americans in ten say they have never doubted the existence of God. Eight Americans in ten say they believe they will be called before God on Judgment Day to answer for their sins. Eight Americans in ten believe God still works miracles. Seven Americans in ten believe in life after death.¹

But over the last twenty-five years Christian beliefs and morality have been swept away by a widespread abandonment of the conscience. Increased sexual immorality, premarital sex, adultery, sodomy, widespread divorce, and drug abuse — all these have had devastating consequences on the lives of Americans.

In response to the frightening prospect of life in a society whose moral base has been seemingly lost forever, Christians today are voting, joining political movements, and running for office to uphold Biblical morality, in a last-ditch effort to stem the rising tide.

This is not the first time Christians have sought to reform society according to the principles of the Word of God. It was just such thinking that guided the Puritans of early New England. They drew inspiration from the work of earlier reformers in England, Scotland and France, especially from the teachings of John Calvin. He believed that the church, as a morally upright and spiritually fervent minority (the *elect*), could rule over a relatively complacent majority outside of the church. Thus the *elect* are able to create a society that is at least outwardly moral. For example, Calvin's church in Geneva, Switzerland, greatly influenced the ruling council and the policies of that city for almost thirty years.

Men came from all over Europe to Geneva to listen and learn from John Calvin. Yet it was in

a church and society were, in their minds, a necessary prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ.

The seeds that John Calvin planted never died, although many have lain dormant for a long time. Right now Christians are considering many of the beliefs John Calvin first introduced. This way of thinking has often been called *Dominion Theology* (because it teaches that Christianity should *dominate* every sphere of society). It has also been called *Christian Reconstructionism* (because it advocates the total *reconstruction* of society according to Biblical principles), or *Theonomy* (because it seeks to impose God's law on all of society).

Proponents of *Dominion Theology* or *Reconstructionism* believe that Christ will return to earth in His Second Coming *after* the Millennium. They believe that we are currently in the Millennial age and that it is during this age that the Kingdom of God must be established on the earth. The following is a summary of the Reconstructionist understanding of the church's role in these days, according to Professor Renald Showers of the Institute of Biblical Studies:

This reconstructed society will regard dissenters and heretics

England that his teachings probably had their most far-reaching effects, even leading a tiny band of farmers and their ministers to endure a difficult ocean voyage and brave the harsh New England winter in order to put those beliefs into practice.

In Plymouth and in the Commonwealth of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Calvin's teachings found their freest expression. Church members elected their own officials, who framed laws, elected justices, waged war, and negotiated treaties, all for the glory of God and the benefit of their fellow citizens.

However, as other persecuted sects settled in the New World, the Puritans grew intolerant of them, regarding them as a threat to their well-ordered society. Quakers and other dissidents whose beliefs didn't agree with those of the official church were fined, driven out, whipped, or hanged. The Puritans saw themselves as purifying their society and bringing it under God's dominion. They felt that a pure society would follow the superior moral leadership of a true church with the help of a godly government. In fact, such

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is the marching orders for the Church. It is the New Covenant update or recapitulation of the cultural or dominion mandate given at creation... In order for the dominion mandate, or Great Commission, to be fulfilled, three things must happen:

First, the vast majority of people must experience true Christian conversion through the worldwide proclamation of the Christian message of redemption and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. For the reconstructed society to work, the great majority of people must be capable of governing themselves. Only regenerated people have that ability; non-Christians do not.

Second, Christians must take over the rule of every sphere of society, including the rule of individuals, institutions, and nations. This means that Christians must be political and social activists. They cannot fulfill Christ's commission to disciple the world if they are not ruling it.

Third, as Christians take over the rule of the world, they must subject every sphere of society to the Biblical law found in the Old Testament, especially all the moral and civil aspects of the Mosaic Law that God gave to Israel at Mount Sinai. This is necessary to save the world from destruction. God intends the Mosaic Law to be the rule of life for all people, in every culture, in every age of history. In fact, the unchangeableness of God requires that the Mosaic code be enforced in all cultures at all times. Obedience to it is guaranteed to bring peace and prosperity, but disobedience will inevitably bring cursing. Only as the Mosaic Law is enforced worldwide will the dominion mandate given at creation be fulfilled.

This enforcement of the Mosaic Law will involve the application of the death penalty for such capital crimes as murder, rape, kidnapping, bestiality, incest, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, idolatry, witchcraft, the offering of human sacrifice, unchangeable rebellion in adolescent children, flagrant negligence resulting

as treasonous criminals at war with the law and society.

in the death of another person, blasphemy, apostasy, the spreading of false doctrines, and perhaps Sabbath breaking.

The reconstructed society will regard dissenters and heretics as treasonous criminals at war with the law and society. It will turn such people over to the civil authorities for judgment. Some will be imprisoned, lose citizenship and many rights, and perhaps suffer greater penalties.²

The fundamental flaw of Dominion Theology is that it fails to acknowledge the essential difference between the nations of the world and the holy nation. What it describes as taking place in the world at large (living by the Mosaic Laws) is really meant to happen in the holy nation (where love fulfills the Law as we lay down our lives for each other). The nations of the world, on the other hand, are accountable to live according to the *instinctive law* in their conscience, which is the everlasting covenant of Genesis 3:16-19. They should not be expected to live by the higher law of love that only disciples can attain to by the power of

the Holy Spirit in the community of believers (Acts 2:44), which is the church.

The Apostle Peter described the church as “*a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.*”³ It is a spiritual nation, distinct from and yet dwelling in the midst of the nations of the world. Its sphere of authority is in spiritual and not civil matters. The church exercises her authority over those who are in the New Covenant, not over the unregenerate people of the nations (over whom she has no authority).

Our Master’s words in Matthew 21:43 undercut the claim of Dominion Theology that the nations of this world can become the kingdom of God in this age. He said:

Therefore I say to you [the Jews], the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruit of it.

That nation to whom the Kingdom is given is the holy nation of 1 Peter 2:9, which must be a light to the nations of the earth, a demonstration of righteousness, not a coercion or a religious regime.

While the initial steps today’s Christian political activists are taking may not seem very threatening when compared to the agenda of Reconstructionism, they are firmly on that path. The thinkers and visionaries of the Christian Right have the long view in mind, but are patiently advising, inspiring, and encouraging Christians with political potential to run for office. Probably most of those who get involved in the affairs of state have little grasp of the scope of Dominion Theology, but are merely seeking to do their part in stemming the tide of moral decline. Nonetheless, the movement is gathering momentum, taking on a life of its own, set on a dangerous course toward the wedding of the church and the state. As in the time of Constantine, Luther, John Calvin, and the Puritans, the fruit of such a marriage has always been bitter. ❧

¹*The People’s Religion: American Faith in the ’90s* (Macmillan, 1989), page 4. ²Renald E. Showers, *Christian Reconstructionism, Israel My Glory*, December 1990/January 1991. ³1 Peter 2:9

AUTH

We are naturally secure when boundaries of authority are clearly defined and immovable. When people try to cross or move boundaries of authority, chaos results. It is the same for the church and the state — both have legitimate spheres of authority. When they stay within those boundaries, peace is the result.

Few Americans today understand authority. Hardly anyone can distinguish between the legitimate authority of the state and the legitimate authority of the church, and there is no agreement on where to draw the line between the two. According to Romans 13:1-4, God has given a certain sphere of authority to the governments of the nations, wherein elected officials are expected to rule according to the instinctive knowledge in their conscience, that is, natural law.

When governments make laws according to natural law, these laws will be just and right for everyone in society. They will apply to everyone and create order and peace as well as afford protection to citizens against harm from others. When individual rulers abide by natural law, they will find themselves praising those who do good and punishing those who do evil. And when citizens obey these laws, they will not need to fear the authority of the state. This occurs when government functions properly.

Whenever we engage in activities that bring our lives into a sphere of authority that is rightfully the state's, we should expect to obey that authority. For example, if we drive a car on roads that are built and maintained by the state, we should obey all the state's motor vehicle laws. If we want to participate in anything that falls within the sphere of the state's authority, we should expect to obey the state in that sphere no matter what our religious beliefs are. Valid religious beliefs should not conflict with good laws in the nations.

Conflict occurs when the spheres of authority of the church and the state overlap. For example, a student in public school may want to practice a religious belief by praying in school. Is this a right protected by the First Amendment? Such a demand shows little understanding or respect for the authority of the state. To ask the state for the right to pray to Jesus or Jehovah or Allah in public school mixes the church's sphere of authority with the state's. A religious person who demands the right to pray in the public school is trying to usurp the legitimate authority of the state. For the courts to bow to such a demand is to give away the authority that has been rightfully given to them by God.

When religious people demand the right to practice their religion in public institutions, they provoke a reaction among those who resent religion's intrusion into the state's realm. A recent case before the Supreme Court, *Lee v. Weisman*, addressed this very issue. Weisman, a Jew, was at her middle-school graduation, where a Jewish rabbi prayed a very bland and neutral prayer acknowledging God, thanking Him for the "legacy of America where diversity is celebrated and the rights of minorities are protected." Weisman protested the mention of God, and the case was brought all the way to the Supreme Court.

The courts, in continuing to keep religion out of the schools, have gone so far as having the word "God" disallowed in the classroom, on the football

O R I T Y

Render to Caesar **THE THINGS THAT ARE** Caesar's
and to God **God's**

field, and at graduation ceremonies. But, it is fitting that men everywhere should acknowledge God. Those who choose not to acknowledge Him should not be offended by those who do. However, men must not try to impose their beliefs about God on other people. There is a difference between the *acknowledgment* of an instinctive knowledge of God and the *establishment* or promotion of a particular religious belief by men in government.

The separation between church and state was *not* meant to prevent the state or rulers in the state from belief in or acknowledgment of God in their governmental decision-making, but to deny the state the authority to establish any particular religion or religious denomination as the standard for its citizens.

If Christians could recognize the simple truth that the church and the state have separate and legitimate spheres of authority, they would clearly see that they should educate their children within the church and not within the institutions of the state. Then they would be able to pray to their heart's content without the state interfering with them. The church should not expect to enter the state's sphere of authority and be exempt from its laws. In other words, the church has no right to *usurp* authority from the state.

Because they do not understand or appreciate the necessary separation between the domain of the church and that of the world, Christians continually

encroach upon the authority of the state and demand special privileges. Their identity with and participation in the affairs of the world blinds them so that they cannot even see what should be a clearly drawn line of separation.

The church was always meant to be *separate* from the state. While Christians may claim Christ as their sovereign, His authority is not expressed in a government that rules over them in any practical way. However, there is a government of God in the true church which allows us to do things under heavenly authority. That's why we don't expect things like child support in custody cases or welfare or unemployment benefits from the state. *There is a clear sphere of authority that our Father has established in His word under which we live and have our needs met.*

If we're really the church, we should be able to live *within* the bounds of the rule of the Master and thus not put a burden on the state by our presence in a town, state, or country. True servants in government will praise such behavior. Because of a life of obedience to the Father's commands, the church will have authority to remind the state where the line of separation must be, and true civil servants will listen.

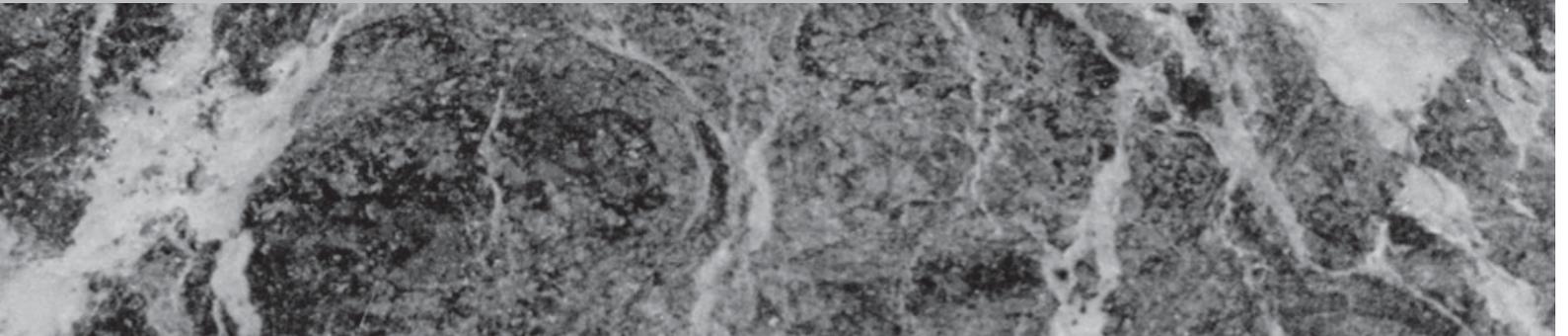
The church's confidence to speak comes from living a life that demonstrates the reality of God's authority on earth — a life of love and unity in communities that are plainly visible to the nations and their governments. 🍷

The Legacy of Martin Luther



Martin Luther

Destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, World War II





ONE OF THE CENTRAL FACTS of historic Christianity is her persecution of the Jews. This has dominated the history of the Jews in the western world since the beginning of the Christian Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine in the early fourth century A.D. To the Jews, the cross has been as much a symbol of persecution and terror as the swastika, only provoking

dread. The reality of this is seen even in America when the little Jewish children in the synagogues cry in fear at the vandalism and curse words spray painted on their buildings. The Jews know the history of Christianity.

Most people are familiar with the persecution of the Jews by the Roman Catholic Church. The Spanish Inquisition from 1481 to 1808 is the most notorious example. There were countless others, as the Roman Catholic historian, Malcolm Hays, writes:

The machinery of propaganda was entirely in the hands of the church officials. Preaching, chronicles, mystery plays, and even ecclesiastical ceremonies were the principle agencies available for the dissemination of hate. Preachers dwelt with morbid and sometimes sadistic realism upon the sufferings of Christ, for which they blamed all Jews of the time and all their descendants. For many centuries the bishops of Beziers preached a series of sermons during Holy Week, urging their congregations to take vengeance on the Jews who lived in the district. Stoning them became a regular part of the Holy Week ceremonial.¹

Yet what the Jews suffered at the hands of the Protestants is largely forgotten. Under the banner of the cross and in the name of Christ, the Jews have been cast out of nations, confined to ghettos, lost their possessions and frequently their lives. They have been forced to convert to a Christianity which compelled them to break the Sabbath, to not circumcise their children, and to eat unclean meat. They had to disobey the Bible to become Christians.

What is frightening is that this hatred of the Jews is only cultured over in Christianity today. Neither the Roman Catholic Church nor any of the Protestant denominations have

repented of it. Today, everyone blames the Nazis for the Holocaust and not Christianity, yet it is willful, historic blindness to not see that all the Nazis did was rooted in the Christianity which shaped the German nation. Even though later generations may not have seen the connection with Christianity, you can be sure the Germans did, *and the Jews still do.*

It has to be remembered that the Nazi Holocaust was nurtured in the land of the Protestant Reformation. In fact the seed of all that Adolf Hitler would do was carefully transplanted from Catholicism into Protestantism by none other than Martin Luther, the greatest spokesman of the Reformation and indisputably one of the most influential men in all of history.

This is a shocking revelation! What could such a hero of the faith have to do with the nightmare of the Third Reich and the demonic figure of Adolf Hitler? Surely, the man who liberated the Gospel from the grasp of meaningless tradition and restored the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone would not be guilty of such things, would he? Yet Martin Luther's violent, venomous views and bitter treatment of the Jews was not something he sought to hide. Far from it. By every means at his disposal — the pen, the pulpit, and persuasion — he sought to gain not merely acceptance of his views but concrete, violent action against the Jews.

THE THREE TREATISES OF MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther was certainly not ashamed of his words. He wanted them to be remembered and obeyed. It is only his followers who would like to have his words forgotten, since they seemingly invalidate all that he stood for. And so the chances are almost certain that you have never heard of the three treatises



**To the Jews,
the cross has been
as much a symbol of
persecution and terror
as the swastika.**



¹Gary E. McCuen, *Religion and Politics, Issues in Religious Liberty*, pages 37-38 (1989)

Martin Luther wrote against the Jews in 1543: *On the Jews and Their Lies*, *On the Ineffable Name*, and *On the Last Words of David*.

These treatises represented a lifetime of thought on his part concerning the Jews. His first attempt to win them was by persuasion. He wrote these words when he was a younger man,

If we wish to help them, we must practice on them not the papal law but rather the Christian law of love, and accept them in friendly fashion, allowing them to work and make a living, so that they gain the reason and opportunity to be with and among us and to see and to hear our Christian teaching and life.²

It was only when such preaching and persuasion failed ("soft mercy" in Luther's theology) that more forceful measures were taken. For over the course of Luther's life it became apparent to him that the prejudices against the Jews he had sought to combat in his earlier writing were in fact true. In his mind they were accursed blasphemers whose Lord was the devil. He now saw it was nearly impossible to convert them, and any suffering inflicted upon them would remind them that they were God's rejected people. Only the keen awareness of that would soften a few of their hearts.

LUTHER'S LEGACY

The following measures are in a sense Martin Luther's last will and testament, his legacy to the world. The legacy of a man is what his descendants derive from him, a living memorial, long after he is dead, to who he was. In one of these formal, systematic presentations of his mature convictions he summarized the wisdom his 32 years of Bible study had gained for him into seven recommendations. They are found in the treatise, *On the Jews and Their Lies*.³

What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing, and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Jews. With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames. We dare not

avenge ourselves ... I shall give you my sincere advice:

- *Set fire to their synagogues and schools, burying and covering with dirt what won't burn, so no man will see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and Christendom.*
- *Second, I advise that their houses be seized and destroyed.*
- *Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings be taken from them.*
- *Fourth, I advise that the rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of life and limb.*
- *Fifth, I advise that safe conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews, for they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, or tradesmen. Let them stay at home.*
- *Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and all cash and treasures be taken and kept for safekeeping.*
- *Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an axe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses, letting them earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam (Gen 3:19).*

For it is not fitting that they should let us accursed Goyim toil in the sweat of our faces while they, the holy people, idle away their time behind the stove, feasting and farting, and on top of all, boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat ... For, as we have heard, God's anger with them is so intense that gentle mercy will only tend to make them worse and worse, while sharp mercy will reform them but little. Therefore, in any case, away with them!

To Martin Luther, this "sharp mercy" was needed to bring them to repentance, since they were not being converted by the pure gospel he was preaching. This was not a passing mood on his part; once he came to these conclusions he never wavered from them. Martin Luther's last sermon, preached just days before his death, was brimming over with biting condemnation and harsh words for the Jews. He planted the seed of hate in fertile soil, and it grew over the centuries.



²That *Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*, published 1523. ³*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Volume 11, pages 314-315, and the whole tract may be found in English in *Luther's Works*, Volume 45, pages 199-229. A number of English books have translations of these directives. Among them is *The Christian in Society*, ed. Franklin Sherman (1971), pages 268-272. The "Ideas in Conflict" book, *Religion and Politics — Issues in Religious Liberties*, by Gary E. McCuen, also quotes them on pages 16-23.

YOU SHALL KNOW THEM
BY THEIR FRUITS⁴

**“Good” hard-working
German Christians filled
up Hitler’s armies, police
forces, death squads,
and pulpits.**



Those with even a modest knowledge of the brutal history of the Third Reich know that the Nazis put into practice all of Martin Luther’s recommendations against the Jews, and more. They burned their synagogues in honor of the “positive Christianity” Adolf Hitler claimed to stand for; they seized and burned their houses; they took public delight in destroying the sacred and precious Torahs and Talmuds of the Jews; they separated life and limb from the rabbis; they certainly abolished safe travel for the Jews — the only travel they had was a one-way trip on cattle cars; they took every bit of their wealth away from them — even the fillings in their teeth and the hair on their heads; and the ones the Nazis didn’t kill immediately they put to demeaning and destroying slave labor. All this they were justified in doing, according to Martin Luther, with prayer and the fear of God.

If subsequent generations of Christians (who have lionized Martin Luther as a man of God) have chosen not to see the direct connection between Protestant anti-Semitism and Martin Luther, the Nazis certainly did. Julius Striecher, one of the most notorious anti-Semites even in the perverse world of the Third Reich, used Martin Luther’s seven recommendations in his defense at the Nuremberg Trials. He even took as the motto for his newspaper, *Der Stürmer* (the Nazi hate paper) a direct quote of Martin Luther, *Die Juden sind unser Unglück*, or, “The Jews are our misfortune.”⁵

IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT?⁶

Make no mistake about it: In spite of being a devoutly Christian nation, the Germans were under no illusions as to what Adolf Hitler’s intentions towards the Jews were. He had told them a thousand times. Many of the tens of thousands Protestant and Catholic clergy supported Hitler openly. The rest stayed in the passive state they had always been in. William L. Shirer, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, understood how they came to be in this condition:

in his [Martin Luther’s] utterances about the Jews, Luther employed a coarseness, brutality, and language unequalled in German history until the Nazi time. The influence of this towering figure extended down through the generations in Germany, especially among the Protestants ... In no country with the exception of Czarist Russia did the clergy become by tradition so completely

*servile to the political authority of the State.*⁷

When they all were given the choice of joining Hitler’s state church or going to prison, the overwhelming majority quietly became part of the Reich Church. Becoming the religious arm of the Third Reich, the pastors, both the enthusiastic and the reluctant, *had* to support it, since they looked to it to define what was right and wrong. It was far too *personally* dangerous to let God do this through the Holy Scriptures. To do so was to say there was a greater authority in men’s lives than the Third Reich. This was treason to Hitler.

So, they righteously stood by praising their Jesus, adorning their churches with swastikas, closing their eyes, and saying they didn’t know what was going on. It is much easier to think about the heroic few like Martin Niemöller who chose the concentration camp rather than be silent in the face of such monstrous evil than the legions of “good”, hard-working, German Christians who filled up Hitler’s armies, police forces, death squads, and pulpits. They did not prove able to be in the world but not of it.

What each pastor *did do* could not be better illustrated than by these words about Martin Luther, Professor of Theology at the University of Wittenburg:

*Elector Johann Friedrich [one of the princes Martin Luther served who supported the Reformation] was prone to solicit advice from Luther and Luther’s colleagues only after policy had been set: The original function of the Wittenburg opinion, to advise conscience, was increasingly transformed by Johann Friedrich into the function of relieving consciences, as a religious sanction and assurance.*⁸

How well they relieved consciences! How well they provided the assurance of God’s favor in this life and welcome in the next! So well, in fact, that the men running the death camps could be heard singing carols at Christmas time. Then, of course, they would get back to their practice of sharp mercy.

How far is the example of Christianity from the heart of Paul the Apostle, who saw his entire ministry among the Gentiles as a means to, “somehow move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.”⁹

The radical difference between Martin Luther’s “sharp mercy” and Paul’s compassion,

For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of

⁴Matthew 7:15-20 ⁵For a sample cover, see the Time-Life World War II series, *At the Center of the Web* (1989) ⁶John 17:15,16 ⁷*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, A History of Nazi Germany*, by William L. Shirer, page 327 of the 1962 paperback edition. ⁸Quoted in *Luther’s Last Battles, Politics and Polemics*, by Marc Edwards, Jr., page 205 (1983) ⁹Romans 11:14

*my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh, who are Israelites ...*¹⁰

would cause any reasonable man to question whether they had the same spirit empowering them.

CHURCH AND STATE

Martin Luther's thinking has borne much fruit since he wrote his fateful three books. Religious persecution resulting from the merging of church and state has been its most common expression since then, the Holocaust its most specific and awful statement. But it is the unholy merger of church and state that gives such persecution both its earthly power and political motive. In such states a threat to the state religion (unbelief or a contrary belief) becomes a threat to the state. Whether Roman Catholic or Protestant in origin, religious persecution, strengthened by the power of the state, is an expression of beastly insensitivity to the human spirit. When such an atmosphere prevails in a nation, the most unthinkable cruel acts become utterly reasonable, and even receive the enthusiastic support of the large mass of people.

Martin Luther's three treatises sowed an enormous evil of the Roman Catholic system in the soil of the Protestant faith. This evil waits still, unrepented of, for the day when it can again be unleashed on the world. Martin Luther was a false prophet who spoke a tainted word and Adolf Hitler was a beast who waged war against God's chosen people. These things are types of the end times prophesied in the Scriptures.

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

The development of Martin Luther's thinking was a gradual process, taking shape during his entire adult life. He grew up in Roman Catholicism, for that was Europe's only religion. It was the binding force in society and government by which everyone knew their place, and heaven was the reward for the generally short and harsh lives people lived. Anything besides strict adherence to Catholicism was perceived as a threat, not only to this life, but to the next. For if the Catholic Church was not the only truth, then heaven might not await good Catholics, and they may have lived their lives in vain. So ingrained was this view of reality that often the Church had to restrain the common people from taking the lives of Jews and other non-Catholics into their hands.

This mindset has always regarded with active hostility every attempt to raise up something new on the earth, especially anything that challenged by its sincerity the insincerity and compromise with the world of

the established church, whether Catholic or Protestant. There has been a consistent pattern down through the centuries in dealing with these attempts: lies and intimidation are followed by the seizure of the heretic's property, which is followed by cruel physical punishments; and if all this failed to bring the unbeliever back into the fold, execution by the most merciless means.

Martin Luther, like other Catholic theologians before him, thought the same way — earthly punishment inflicted by the Church, and where necessary the state, is actually the working of God's grace to save some from the flames of hell. In other words, it's always done for *their own good*. And not only their good, but the good of society as a whole — for unbelievers in a "Christian nation" represent faction and division, and must be dealt with, or else the society cannot be blessed by God.

This has been the story of practically every nation and society where Christianity has been the predominant influence. It is part of the essential nature of Christianity. For when Christians take the reins of power, ultimately the denial of rights to nonbelievers is inconsequential, because they are all going to hell anyway.

"Heretics" like the Anabaptists suffered a similar fate at the hands of Martin Luther. Their desire for restoration of the true faith was a threat to the established Church. Martin Luther only sought *reformation* of the Church that already was, and not *restoration* of the Apostolic Church that had fallen away at the end of the first century. His crucial decision to persecute those who did seek true restoration, like the Anabaptists, made inevitable the likeness of Catholicism and Protestantism, like a mother and her daughter.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is entirely fair to give Martin Luther the credit (he would not see it as the blame or the shame) for all future Christian rulers who treated the Jews according to the wisdom of his policies. In the light of God's word, how shall we judge this wisdom? Is it the pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable wisdom from above, full of mercy and good fruits? Or is it an earthly, natural, demonic wisdom that comes from below? What then was the source for Martin Luther's words, that with them he could bless Jesus Christ his Savior and with them lay the most bitter curses on men made in God's image?¹¹

There are other guidelines in the Word regarding righteous judgment as well. It is a remarkable thing, but the Son of God never said you shall know false prophets by their *doctrine*. He said you shall know them by their

***“Such practices
commonly proceed
from that great whore
the Church of Rome,
whose Daughters are like
their Mother, and all of a
bloody nature, as most
commonly all Whores be.”
Roger Williams, 1644***

¹⁰Romans 9:3 ¹¹James 3:9-18

fruit. He also said that a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. If Martin Luther and the Reformation were a good tree, then it cannot have produced bad fruit. If it has produced bad fruit, it cannot have been a good tree. These are the words of the Son of God of which we are not to be ashamed.¹²

He also said, "*A pupil is not above his teacher, but everyone, after he is fully trained, will be like his teacher.*"¹³ It is pathetic to see the Messianic Jewish congregations springing up around the country who owe their standard Protestant theology to Martin Luther and the Reformation. For they shall be like their teacher, as will all who stay under the fallen, compromised, disobedient gospel of the Reformation.

The Son of God spoke this in the Good News of Matthew:

*But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is within you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*¹⁴

Is not Martin Luther the eye through which Protestantism saw her clearest doctrines? How did the clarity of his doctrines carry through to the purity of his deeds? Is the whole body of the Protestant church then full of darkness? How great is that darkness!

The writer to the Hebrews wrote,

*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.*¹⁵

We will all receive the reward we merit for the faith we imitate. For each person's faith is known by his conduct, or as James put it, his works.¹⁶

THE TRIUMPH OF GNOSTICISM

There is a compromise faced by all who seek to remain in the world, with its possessions and its power, instead of being saved from the wicked and perverse generation they live in.¹⁷ As a Lutheran scholar and historian of the Reformation, Marc Edwards wrote of Martin Luther, "*Through compromise and accommodation to political realities, he tried to maintain his influence in order to preserve his central insights into Christian faith.*"¹⁸ Judging by the history of Christianity since then, especially as regards the Jews and the Christian's role in the state, it is evident his insights were preserved.

Martin Luther taught by word and example that the ends of preserving one's life — one's influence, power, wealth — justify the means of compromising the truth. This is all any emperor has ever demanded — his pinch

of incense — the acknowledgment that there is none greater than he. It is no different than what was offered to (and refused by) the Son of God in return for worshipping the evil one — the kingdoms of this world.¹⁹

All one is left with once this incense is given (once the world becomes the standard for faith, and not the Word of God) is a gnostic faith, devoid of saving power. It is a faith so thoroughly divorced from the reality of life and the balm of human compassion that the most fundamental violations of the conscience (like the murder, theft, lying, and hate that the Nazis practiced and the German Christians made room for) are overlooked, if not praised.²⁰ It has nothing to do with the God who is love. It heaps shame on the Jew born in that stable so long ago, and leaves Him hanging on the cross, not risen from the grave. The cross of this gnostic faith is not a rugged one, but rather a mere mental concept, suitable for those who will not pay the true cost of following Him.²¹

The thought that Martin Luther, and the German Christians of the Third Reich who carried out his recommendations, will dwell in eternal bliss, is only possible in the unreal realm of gnosticism. Gnosticism was the heresy that destroyed the early church by substituting knowledge and intellectual pride for faith. The Gnostics said that a man was saved by what he believed in his mind, by so-called *faith alone*, regardless of his works. For Martin Luther and those who received his legacy, this faith could be so far removed from their works that they could murder the Jews without invalidating their claim on eternal life. It is obvious that the faith Martin Luther made so much of was not saving faith, or he never would have done and said the things he did. He would have had the heart of Paul the Apostle towards the Jews. The Savior whom Paul served is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.²²

In reality, it was no faith at all, since it did not bring anyone into obedience to the gospel.²³ It was instead only knowledge about the truth, biblical principles for men to live by. History has shown the infinite uses to which such principles may be put.

In spite of everything the evil one has done to malign the name of the Savior, the word of God will prove true. Those who were once not His people will be called the sons of the living God.²⁴ They will be those who receive the same Spirit Paul did, and like him, they will forsake everything for the sake of gaining Messiah.²⁵ They will make the Jews jealous through having God's law written on their hearts, fulfilling all the prophets have spoken about the New Covenant. ❖

The thought that Martin Luther, and the German Christians of the Third Reich who carried out his recommendations, will dwell in eternal bliss, is only possible in the unreal realm of gnosticism.

¹²Mt 7:15-20 ¹³Luke 6:40 ¹⁴Mt 6:23 ¹⁵Heb 13:7 ¹⁶James 2:17-20 ¹⁷Acts 2:40 ¹⁸*Luther's Last Battles*, p. 208, ref. 8 ¹⁹Mt 4:8-10 ²⁰Rom 1:28-32 ²¹Luke 14:26-33 ²²Heb 13:8 ²³John 8:51; Rom 1:5, 10:17, 15:18, and 16:25 ²⁴Rom 10:26 ²⁵Phil 3:8

T A K E N I N



HE YOUNG MAN was hungry and lonely. He realized as he adjusted his heavy pack that he was lost as well. All around, the city bustled with activity, everyone heading somewhere with great purpose. Weary with trying to find his way, he sat down, leaned back against a tree to rest, and closed his eyes. A shadow passed over him. Thinking it to be a dark cloud, he quickly opened his eyes and saw a beautiful, wealthy woman staring intently at him. Maybe she thinks I'm someone she knows, he thought. Starting to close his eyes again, he was startled when she walked confidently over to him and greeted him with a warm smile.



The martyrdom of Savonarola in Florence, Italy.

“Are you lost?” she inquired pleasantly. The man stumbled for an answer, wondering why such an alluring woman was taking an interest in him. “Uh, yeah, I guess so. I took a wrong turn somewhere.”

“You must be hungry. Why don’t you come home with me? We can have dinner and you can spend the night.”

Overwhelmed by her kindness, the young man said, “I’d love to go with you.” He wondered if this was the woman he’d always dreamed of finding.

“Good,” she said, and locking her arm in his, she began walking down a maze of streets and alleys, arriving finally at an ornate old house in the center of town. “This has been in my family for years,” she said. “Do you like it?”

“It’s quite impressive, but I feel out of place.”

As they entered the foyer, the woman said, “Now don’t worry about anything; you’ll be fine. Leave your pack here and make yourself at home. What would you like to eat?”

“Anything would be fine, but don’t go to a lot of trouble.” He didn’t quite know how to answer such an accommodating woman. He thought how fortunate he was to be taken in by her.

“It’s no trouble. I enjoy helping people out. I’ll just surprise you, then. It won’t take me long to prepare dinner.”

“Can I help you do anything?” the young man said.

“No, no. Just rest here. I’ll take care of everything.” She turned then and left him alone in the living room.

He looked around the spacious room, full of lavish furnishings, soft chairs, and couches covered with tapestries. He began to feel important and secure. Who could ask for anything more than this, he thought?

Drawn to the bookcase, he noticed an old box on one of the shelves. Pulling it out, he blew off the dust and looked inside, thinking it probably contained some old family mementos.

In the box were numerous newspaper clippings, tightly packed and yellow with age. Unfolding one, he read an account of a horrible murder. The second was about a grisly torture, and the third a bloody massacre. The descriptions seemed like something out of a nightmare. The young man was greatly perplexed at the contents of the box.

Why does she keep all this stuff anyway, he thought? She certainly doesn’t seem to be someone who would be interested in such gruesome accounts. He quickly put them away.

Just then the woman returned. She had changed clothes and was wearing a silky, loose-fitting gown. “Dinner will be ready soon,” she said. “Can I get you anything while you are waiting?”

The young man was stunned by her enticing attire and was still a bit shaken up over the discovery of the box. Stammering a bit, he answered her. “Uh well, I guess I’m fine. I ... I don’t think I need anything.”

She noticed his shaking voice. “What’s the matter? Oh, you must have found the box with all the articles, didn’t you?”

“Yes, how did you know?” he said.

“Everyone who comes here seems to find them. I keep forgetting to throw them away.”

“But, who did all those horrible things?” he asked.

“I did,” she said, off-handedly.

“You!” His heart began pounding, and he stammered in disbelief, “But ... but ... how could you be so cruel and heartless?” The woman did not answer him, but simply continued to smile sweetly. Beginning to feel trapped, he edged toward the door. “I think I’d better be going.”

The woman stepped in front of him, and gently took his arm. “You don’t understand. That’s all past. I’m not like that anymore. Those were violent times. Everyone was doing things like that. If you’d been there, you would have understood. You wouldn’t have thought it cruel or heartless.” Her words were spoken as smoothly as flowing oil and her voice was calm and sweet.

“Here, come sit down with me. I’ll explain it all to you. Those articles only tell half the story. I want you to know the truth.”

She led him to a couch and sat down close to him, taking his hands in hers. She said, “Listen, those people were really evil. They were the worst sort of men. They were liars. What they said made me look so bad. They were turning people against me and ruining my reputation. They wouldn’t listen to me, no matter how hard I pleaded with them to stop spreading their lies. I *had* to kill them. No one would ever have come home with me after listening to them.”

She slid closer to him and rested her head on his shoulder. “Please don’t fret over



Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer were burned together at Oxford for preaching against the Catholic belief in transubstantiation and purgatory.

the past. I'd never do those sorts of things anymore, and all their accusations have been laid to rest. It's all forgotten. I've prepared a nice dinner for us. After dinner we'll go and burn that old box. Then it won't trouble anyone any more."

COVERING UP THE PAST

If you were this man, would you feel secure in this woman's house? It's a long-established fact, regrettable though it is, that just like this woman's victims, many people have been put to death, sent to prison and persecuted for their religious beliefs by the institutions of Christianity. I'm not going to horrify you with the historical details; they are easy enough to find, though they are a bit yellow with age. Doesn't it make a knot twist up deep inside your guts to think that someone could kill or torture another human being because of what he believes about God? It's really kind of sick, isn't it?

The Catholic Church has often been blamed for the thousands of deaths that occurred during the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition. Many people have used the details of her sordid past as a basis to reject her, wondering how God could actually be behind such slaughter. Many others choose to ignore the facts and write them off as "regrettable errors of the medieval mind." Yet Catholicism alone cannot take the blame for such atrocities. Ungodly men in every religion have always sought to suppress the truth in unrighteous ways.

What Christians today may not know is that many of the Fathers of the Protestant Reformation were just as guilty of shedding the innocent blood of fellow "believers" as the Catholics were. The Protestant Reformation set the stage for some of the bloodiest wars that were ever fought on the European continent (See "The Legacy of Martin Luther" in *The Stone* paper). Many were fought in the name of Christ, with the express purpose of establishing a civil authority that would be under the ever-watchful eye of the church. Anyone who would not conform to the teaching of whichever church was in power would be handed over to the civil authorities to be punished. Any sects resisting the established church were deemed hostile to God and justly condemned.

Like the woman in our story, Christianity has tried to cover up the past with a facade of good deeds, thinking mistakenly that

all has been forgiven and covered by the blood of Jesus. Yet the very words of the Master make it clear that He did not come to establish an earthly kingdom among His followers. Rather, He condemned the killing of other human beings by anyone who claimed to follow Him.¹ Because innocent blood has been shed by those who claim to know the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for their sin.² There is no high priest over their house, therefore there is no forgiveness for the bloodguilt of all their wars.³

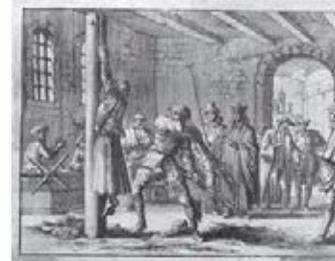
WAR AND THE NATIONS

Revolutions and wars are fought by the people of the *nations*, not the people of the *kingdom*. Many honorable men of the nations have gone to war to defend their inalienable rights of conscience when they were threatened by oppressors who did not respect those rights. Wars are fought for the preservation of the nations, and those who participate in them are people of the nations.

The word of God does not condemn this participation in war for those who make no claim to be disciples of the Son of God. For those who claim to be disciples, however, it is another story.⁴ No true follower of Him can get around the high standard of the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, warfare was permitted in order to establish the nation from which the Messiah would come, but after His arrival on earth, He established a much higher law.⁵ As He was in the world, so must all those be who call upon His name.⁶

The first church would not participate in war. It was unthinkable for them to assume the role of a soldier in battle (or a magistrate, politician, statesman, or policeman for that matter) without renouncing their sacred covenant to follow their Master as His disciples. Neither would the churches of Christianity during the first two or three centuries, as they continued to follow some of the traditions of the first church. This put them at odds with the Greco-Roman world. Our Master's word disqualifies this way of life for disciples,⁷ because, as John the Apostle makes it quite clear, the world is under the power of the evil one.⁸ Paul also warned the believers in Corinth not to be involved in the affairs of the world.⁹

Early in the fourth century, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire and was protected by the State.



Anabaptists being burned at the stake, drowned, and tortured.

Mass hanging of the Huguenots.



Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths. For many are the victims she has cast down, and numerous are all her slain. Her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death. Proverbs 7:24-27

Many church officials were given civil authority and found it tempting to use that authority to back up their religious beliefs. It was easy to justify the slaughter of individuals or groups whose beliefs and practices threatened the established order. Thus began an unholy alliance between the church and the state which continued practically unhindered for the next twelve centuries.

In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, John Calvin and other Protestant leaders attempted to *reform* some of the corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church, but never went as far as severing the church's ties with the state. Instead, they merely brought forth a host of national or territorial churches, maintaining alliances with the political states and actively supporting them in their wars.

During this time, many Christians spoke out against the beliefs and practices of the national churches, including their participation in war. It seemed obvious to them that the Master did not want His followers to use the sword to establish His kingdom.¹⁰ Throughout the Reformation, these voices of dissent were violently suppressed. Many of the dissenters would not defend themselves, even as they watched their own families, children and friends being tortured and put to death. This the history books

faithfully record, like the woman's box of yellowed newspapers.

Like the woman in the story, Christianity excuses herself by saying that those were violent times in her distant past. Somehow this defense doesn't explain the present-day conflicts dividing both Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. In fact, the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Churches are *still* deeply involved in the affairs of this world. Christianity may be wearing a more enticing garment, but her nature hasn't changed. She still loves the world and the things of the world (like wealth and political power)¹¹ and willingly dispenses these things to the naive ones she brings into her home. She will fight to keep these things. She always has.

A tree cannot produce something good and nourishing and at the same time produce something poisonous.¹² Our Master made it quite clear that good trees produce good fruit and that the unmistakable fruit of those who are connected to Him is love.¹³

Consider the young man resting in the arms of the beautiful woman on the couch. Would you feel very secure being taken in by a woman like her? Though she seems nice enough now, what if she started acting like she did in her past? What if you suspected that the food she was serving you was really deadly? Would you run? 🚶

¹John 18:36; Matthew 26:52-54; Revelation 13:10 ²Hebrews 10:26-27 ³Hebrews 2:17 ⁴John 9:39-41 ⁵Matthew 5:38-48 ⁶1 John 4:17 ⁷John 18:36 ⁸1 John 5:19 ⁹2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 ¹⁰John 18:36 ¹¹1 John 2:15 ¹²Luke 6:43-44 ¹³John 13:34-35



St. Bartholomew's massacre in Paris, where 10,000 Huguenots died.



Methods of torture inflicted by Christians on other Christians during the Middle Ages.

Our Magnificent Obsession

**The kingdom of this world
has become the kingdom of
our Sovereign and of His Messiah,
and He will reign forever and ever.**

Revelation 11:15

Of all the spiritual errors of our time, the one that towers most ominously over us is the joining together of the religious and political institutions. The apostle John envisioned the coming union of church and state as a great prostitute riding on a hideous seven-headed beast. This reveals the sordid reality behind Christian politics. Though their motives seem most commendable — world peace, preservation of the family, upholding moral values in the media — they cannot help but reproduce the same militant intolerance that must always accompany religious leaders who gain control of government.

It may start when eloquent men and women with stylish but carefully-conservative hairstyle and clothing make their well-thought-out appeals to the country. They will condemn the conditions that we all hate and fear, yet feel powerless to remedy. They will present themselves as those who are bringing about the kingdom of God on the earth. They will gain all the power they need to put us under a moral tyranny, supposedly “for our own good.” Never mind that many of them will secretly practice the things they condemn. Never mind that the rich and powerful will always be able to buy exemptions. Never mind that the poor and weak, least able to withstand the inevi-

table public penalties, will suffer the greatest oppression. Never mind that these Christian Crusaders will label as “cult” any group that lives outside the boundaries of their self-proclaimed righteousness.

How far will they go? From what is written, it would seem that a great deal of human blood will be shed for the sake of this unnatural union.¹ What will be called *freedom*, we will feel as bondage. This is nothing new. During the Middle Ages and the Reformation, human beings were arrested, brutalized, and executed in the name of the Son of God. The men who framed our Constitution precisely intended to prevent this sort of tyranny from ever taking root in the United States. The Christian apologists will tell it all differently; they will say that the United States has always been a Christian nation. They will say these horrors of religious violence in the name of Christ were aberrations. They’ll say that it can never happen again. They’ll say anything to gain the confidence of the many. But what they say is wrong. In every age, voices have been raised against this madness, just as we raise our warning now.

The real Son of God wanted no one to act under compulsion. His interest in human affairs has always been the gathering together of a people who, like Him, freely choose to obey God at all costs. They will be His kingdom, a nation that knows no persecution or revenge. Love will rule, and the justice of God.

Those who truly follow Him will have only one thing to say to an evil world:

*Our message is that God was making all mankind His friends through Messiah, not keeping account of their sins, and He has given us the message which tells how He makes them His friends. We plead on Messiah’s behalf, let God change you from enemies into His friends.*²

They will have no political or social program for those who cannot receive the faith to believe their message.

We of the Community are not insensitive to the pain all around us. Still, we do not seek to make the world a better place for individuals to live in during this age. Instead, we seek to establish in places all over the world a foretaste of the life of the age to come, a demonstration of the love and care of our Master Yahshua. We believe that the light that is shed by lifting Him up in our midst will draw all who truly belong to Him to give up their independent lives in the world for His sake. When His love controls them, they will no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.³ Together our common life of love and unity will startle the world⁴ and fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 49:6: *I will also make you a light to the nations, so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

When that common life of self-sacrificing love has endured on the earth, being refined and purified through several generations until every enemy of our souls has been trampled underfoot,⁵ then it will joyfully be proclaimed in heaven: *Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.*⁶

Then Yahshua, the Messiah, will return triumphantly for His bride, destroy all of His enemies, and establish His glorious reign of peace upon the earth, along with all of those who have loved His appearing. And that is the *only* way that peace and justice will ever come to this desperate planet. That is our magnificent obsession — to be made pure and spotless as a people, loving one another as He loved us, becoming His bride, so that He can righteously bring an end to this wicked age and a beginning to His millennial kingdom. ❧

¹Rev 17:4-6 ²2 Cor 5:19-20 (TEV) ³2 Cor 5:15
⁴Isaiah 52:15 ⁵Heb 10:13 ⁶Rev 19:7

THE NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

What is the Name above all names? Is it a Greek or a Jewish name? Doesn't a disciple of His have the right to know the very name and pronunciation given by the angel Gabriel,¹ when he brought such good news to the virgin Miriam (Mary)?

יהושע

Hebrew

Or when the Master spoke His name from heaven to Paul on the road to Damascus, what name did He use, since Paul said that he heard an utterance from His mouth? "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'"² Surely the apostle Paul was not puzzled over language when told "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."³

Jesus
English

What then was the utterance of His mouth that proclaimed His name, since He spoke in Hebrew? Many names are promoted these days: *Y'Shua*, *Yeshua*, *Yahshua*, *Joshua*, *Yehoshua*. Shouldn't we be able to know His name? "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved."⁴ Should not a man be called by the same name all over the world?

Jésus
French

Jesus
German

WHO IS *IESOUS*?

Hundreds of times in the New Testament the Greek name *Iesous* is translated as Jesus. But if you have ever read an older King James Bible you might have noticed something odd in Acts 7:45. In his speech to the Jewish council, Stephen refers to the man who led Israel

into the Promised Land as *Jesus*, not *Joshua*! Is this an error?

Well, yes and no, since the Greek name in verse 45 is *Iesous*, the same word translated as *Jesus* everywhere else. But Stephen could not possibly have been referring to anyone else but the leader Joshua who took over after Moses. For immediately afterwards, in verse 59, Stephen cried out when being stoned, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Again the name is *Iesous* in the Greek. Was Stephen crying out to the historical figure Joshua, long dead, to save him, or was he calling upon the Son of God, since both names in the Greek are *Iesous*? So what does *Iesous* mean, *Jesus* or *Joshua*? Was Stephen, a man so righteous that heaven opened up at his martyrdom, was he so overcome by the stress of the moment that he couldn't tell a long-dead forefather from the Messiah seated upon His throne?

JESUS OR JOSHUA?

Modern translations of the Scriptures, and even recent revisions of the King James version, have noticed this contradiction and changed the name in Acts 7:45 to *Joshua* so that it makes sense. (The same problem is found in Hebrews 4:8 also.) But where did these translators get their authority to change the Scriptures? Is it through integrity and honesty that *Iesous* is translated *Jesus*, except when it obviously has to mean *Joshua*? Or are the traditions of men so strong that translators can take liberties with the Word of God? At least the translators of the original King James

Version were consistent enough to translate *Iesous* as *Jesus* in Acts 7 even when it made no sense.

So if the new translations change *Jesus* to *Joshua* in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, why didn't they also change *Jesus* to *Joshua* in all the other Scriptures where they found the name *Iesous*? In Acts 7:45 the name *Iesous* is obviously *Joshua*, and could not possibly refer to anyone else. Isn't the name *Iesous* really *Joshua* everywhere it is found? Isn't His name really *Joshua* instead of *Jesus*? If it would be tampering with the Scriptures to change *Jesus* the Savior's name back to *Joshua*, would it not also be tampering with the Scriptures to change *Jesus* back to *Joshua* in Acts 7 and Hebrews 4? It's all the same word — *Iesous*! We want to know God's mind about these things, because it doesn't make sense that the translators would change the Holy Scriptures in one place and not the other. Not wishing to disturb tradition, do they hang onto the name *Jesus* for the sake of selling Bibles? For certain, one thing is true. Miriam and Yoseph (*Mary* and *Joseph* in English) named the child just as the angel commanded them. Would the angel speak to them in Hebrew or did he speak Greek? Everything would be more understandable if he spoke Greek to them. Then *Jesus* was exactly what came out of his mouth and we today pronounce His name exactly as the angel did. Except that there is no "J" sound in Greek ... or Hebrew ... or even English until the 1500's.

What a pickle! Why is there so much confusion surrounding the name by which all men must be saved? Should not God reveal to His followers the name above all names to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess? Will all His people gather around His throne someday and mumble all these distorted sounds as if we

were gathered around the tower of Babel? Are we not speaking of the God who longs to speak to the human heart, to save all men who call upon ... what name?

WHAT HIS NAME MEANS

Does the name of the Son of God have any meaning other than as a label? It certainly did to Yoseph: "*And you will name Him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*"⁵ If His name is *Jesus*, this Scripture makes no sense, since obviously the Name of the Messiah means that He will save His people from their sins. But do you know what the name *Jesus* literally means? No you don't, and neither does anyone else, because it has no meaning as a word in any language. It is, at best, a mere tag.

We might take a mere tag somewhat lightly, but not the Jews. When Yoseph and Miriam brought the child to the Temple in Jerusalem to dedicate Him, they dared not even utter such a name as *Iesous*. The Jewish priests jealously guarded the holiness of the Temple, and considered Greek to be a loathsome language. If Yoseph and Miriam had dedicated their Child in a Greek name it would have been viewed as an abomination, and they would have been roughly ejected from the Temple! Obviously, this did not happen, and they performed everything according to the Law.⁶

But if the Greek *Iesous* really is *Joshua* in Hebrew, the language that Yoseph, Miriam, and every other Jew spoke including the Savior Himself, then the angel's proclamation makes total sense. Hebrew names in the Bible are always meaningful, and the name *Joshua* is even more than that. It is prophetic.

In John 17:11 our Master prayed "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as we are." Since according to the words of the Savior, the Father's name is in

Jesús
Spanish

Jesus
Portuguese

Gesù
Italian

Jezus
Dutch

THE WEIGHT OF TRADITION

His name, it will help to know the Father’s name. Fortunately this is pretty easy, because the Old Testament was only written in Hebrew and a number of verses are very clear in proclaiming the Father’s name, such as “Sing to God ... whose name is *Yah*.”⁷ Also the Scriptures are full of the expression *Hallelujah*, a phrase very familiar to Christians, but do you know what it means in Hebrew? It is actually *Hallelu Yah*, a command meaning “Give praise to Yah.” None of this is secret stuff, for it is found in the margin readings of many Bibles today; for example, look at Psalms 116:19 in the New American Standard Bible.

Иисус
Russian

Ιησους
Greek

Jesu
Norwegian

So how do you say the Savior’s name in His language? Well, it would be *Joshua*, except that the letter “J” in English was originally a “Y” sound. So His name, which has His Father’s name in it, is YAHSHUA. And it has such a wonderful meaning that both Yoseph and Miriam marveled over it, because they knew full well their native language. It means *YAH* (translated “I Am”⁸) *SHUA* (“mighty and powerful to save”). So when the angel told this name to them, they were astounded, for His name was a declaration from the God of heaven to mankind that there had come a man who would be mighty and powerful to save; “And you shall call His name YAHSHUA, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”⁹ Now this scripture makes total sense.

But does it really matter to God what name we call Him?

It certainly was important enough for the Savior to cry out during the last hours before He was betrayed, “Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me.”¹⁰

And as stated before, it was clear to the Jews what that name was and how to pronounce it. *Hallelujah* is a universal expression, and *Yah* is the universal name of God. Yet so great is the weight of tradition that men have been blindly clinging to a name that has no meaning and makes the Scriptures mentioned have no meaning, either. Can anyone possibly maintain that the name of the Father is somehow incorporated into the name *Jesus*, or that the name *Jesus* means that He will save His people from their sins?

So we can see that His true name is in need of restoration based on honest scholarship and historical evidence. Acts 3:21 states that all things must be restored and made ready for His second coming, so this must surely include His name, too. And if something so essential and so fundamental as His name needs to be restored, what else might need to be restored, too? ❖

¹Luke 1:31 ²Acts 22:14; 26:14-15
³Acts 22:16 ⁴Acts 4:12 ⁵Mt 1:21, *New Century Version* ⁶Luke 2:21-39 ⁷Ps 68:4
⁸Ex 3:14 ⁹Mt 1:21 ¹⁰John 17:11

Iesus
Latin

*What does it mean to be in His name, the Name above all names?
His name has to do with the glory and radiance of His nature
and character. His name reveals all that He is,
and is what we must call upon to be saved.*

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

Our life is based on obedience to the words of the Messiah, Yahshua, as recorded in the Bible, the word of God.¹ He is the Son of God, the very incarnation of the divine Word.²

Out of love for mankind the divine Word was made to dwell in a human being, miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a Hebrew virgin named Miriam (Mary in English).³ Since He was born of a human mother but not a human father, Yahshua was free from the bondage of sin, just like the first man Adam was when he was created.⁴

Like Adam, He could have fallen, but (unlike Adam) He chose not to sin, for the sake of His Father's purpose, so that He could have a perfect, sinless life to offer as payment for the sins of us all.⁵ For this reason He willingly surrendered His life to die like a criminal, being tortured, mocked, and crucified.⁶ During three days and nights in the heart of the earth His soul experienced all the agonies of death that we deserved for our sins, and then He was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁷

He has ascended into heaven and has sent the person of His Holy Spirit to earth to dwell in the hearts of

men, giving His disciples the power to obey His teachings and live a life of love that will be a light to all the nations.⁸ Those who live by His Spirit are the Body of Messiah, a holy nation. We believe that Messiah's Body must be as the Bible teaches,⁹ or it is not His Body, for He cannot be divided into denominations.¹⁰ We also believe that the Biblical record of this life — as a community — is the only way that His Spirit can live on the earth.¹¹

He now sits enthroned at the right hand of His Father in heaven, waiting for the time when all things are restored and His enemies are made a footstool for His feet.¹² Then He will come to rescue His people and inflict vengeance on those who refuse to know God and refuse to obey the good news.¹³ He will judge all men, living and dead, according to the word He has spoken.¹⁴

By His grace, we have passed out of death and into life, through the faith He gave us when we heard and believed His word.¹⁵ We can know this has happened if we love as He has commanded us.¹⁶ It is out of love for Him who first loved us that we live as we do, no longer for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again for us.¹⁷ 🙏

¹Rom 1:5; ²Tim 3:16 ³John 1:1-3 ⁴Phil 2:6-7; Mt 1:18 ⁵Rom 5:12; 2 Cor 5:21 ⁶Heb 4:15; 1 Cor 15:3 ⁷John 10:17-18
⁸Mt 12:40; Heb 2:9; 1 Cor 15:4 ⁹Acts 2:33; John 13:34-35 ¹⁰1 Cor 1:10 ¹¹1 Cor 1:13; 3:16-17; Gal 5:20-21 ¹²Acts 4:32-37; 1 John 4:16; 3:17 ¹³Acts 3:21; Heb 10:12-13 ¹⁴2 Thes 1:8 ¹⁵Acts 10:42; John 12:48 ¹⁶Rom 10:17; John 5:24
¹⁷1 John 3:14, 16, 23; John 13:34 ¹⁸2 Cor 5:14-15