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Mastering Master's Future **Pannenberg on the Past** **Was Jesus A Christian?** **Feminization of the Culture** **Kingdom**

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PANNENBERG ON THE PAST

Arthur J. Moen, Ph.D.

More than 30 years ago, Wolfhart Pannenberg wrote the book that was translated into English as *Jesus - God and Man*. On page 230 of that work, Pannenberg makes a suggestion about the relationship between Jesus' proclamation concerning the true nature of the creation and the end of this world age. It reads:

... the true nature of creation is revealed for the first time in the light of the approaching end. This has fundamental significance also for the understanding of creation itself. Creation is not to be understood as an act that happened one time, ages ago, the results of which involve us in the present. Rather, the creation of all things, even including things that belong to the past, takes place out of the ultimate future, from the *eschaton*, insofar as only from the perspective of the end are all things what they truly are. For their real significance becomes clear only when it becomes apparent what ultimately will become of them. Therefore, the nearness of the imminent Kingdom of God puts all things into that relation to God which belonged to them as God's creatures from the very beginning. It is just this that demonstrates the universal truth of Jesus' eschatological message: it reveals the "natural" essence of men and things with an urgency nowhere achieved outside of this eschatological light.

It is difficult to grasp the extraordinary significance of this statement on first reading. But with a careful, thoughtful review of the implications of Pannenberg's insight, we find the key to a puzzle that has baffled professional theologians and common believers alike for many centuries. The implications of Pannenberg's statement lead us to consider the entire question of God and time. In particular, his articulation about the significance of Jesus' message concerning the immanence of the Kingdom can help us answer several critical concerns about the apparent intractability of the past - and God's singular ability to reconstruct it.

If you are a thoughtful believer, at some time you have probably raised the following question for yourself: "Why, oh Lord most high, have You let this tragedy come upon me? If you are truly the God of loving kindness, and all things are possible for You, then why have You not sheltered me from adversity, kept evil from my path, delivered me from this sorrow and suffering? If I were the perfect loving Father, I would do that for my children. And yet, somehow, my world is filled with horrors and pain. Why?"

It is the age-old question of the abiding presence of evil in the creation of a good and loving God. And the age-old answers seem not too comforting despite their ancient origins. How can a good God allow such evil? We have been taught to accept one or more of several suggested solutions.

The first solution deals with the issue of culpability. It begins by asserting that God is not responsible for this mess. This is a very old solution. It comes in many forms, the most current simply says that evil is somehow a result of the Fall of Man. God's creation was good but it was utterly and permanently corrupted by Man's desire to become as God. Today's evil is the result of human divine defiance. There are some ancient variations on this theme. Plotinus, for example, proposed a descending series of lesser creations, each one



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a bit further removed from the perfect original until, somehow, evil got in the mix. Plato believed that the problem lay in the shadowy replication of the ultimate where the copies were never quite as good as the originals. Some theologians have placed the blame at the foot of Lucifer and his rebellious army. But most of the time, the mess we are in is eventually laid at our own feet. We, in the prototype of Adam, made some pretty bad choices and now we have to live with the consequences. It wasn't God's fault. It was ours.

There is an obvious retort to this statement about God's moral innocence. After all, if it is really His creation, if everything that is a result of His activity, then the retort is simple: God must have created beings that were capable of defiance and evil. In fact, He created them in spite of knowing that they would defy Him. And His knowing that Man would rebel before He created Man means that He created us knowing full well that we would bring destruction to the perfect moral order through our rebellion. That certainly makes Him responsible, for even though He may not have pulled the trigger, He put the loaded gun in our hands, placed our finger on the trigger and dared us to squeeze. Perhaps this solution isn't as adequate as it first seems.

Another response attempts to counter this renewed attack on God's culpability. It invokes the risk-love principle. Yes, God did know that we would rebel. Yes, He created us with the full knowledge that we would defy Him and bring about the Fall. But choice is a prerequisite of true love. God could have made us incapable of defiance, but then we would not have been able to love, for love always involves choosing another instead of myself. God did not want robots. He wanted sons and daughters. So the risk of evil was present in the creation. But risk is not the same as the blame. God created us under the canopy of risk in order that we might choose Him freely and discover love.

Of course, there are rebuttals to this excursion as well. We may be left feeling a little uncomfortable about the smoothness of this answer when we face the immensity of evil in the world. At the personal level, I might be inclined, with some mental gymnastics, to say, "All right. I see that love must be a choice. And for that choice, I must have the freedom to do otherwise. So my personal evil is my fault, a result of my choices. And yes, I also see that some of the evil that I endure at the hands of others is also the result of personal choices. I acknowledge human culpability for choices that are passed down through their consequences from generation to generation. All of this I can rationally justify. I recognize that I am at fault for many things. I see that God is not to blame for the actions of my evil choices. Even though He may have created me knowing my potential for evil, in some sense I can acknowledge that He didn't actually make me do it. But what about Job?"

Job is a real problem for this particular answer. Here is a man who loved God, who was blessed by God, who was chosen by God. Job, of all people, is **not** personally responsible for the terrible evil that befalls him. He is God's pawn, in the worst sort of game. God simply allows the Devil to take Job's life apart. And for what? Theologians answer: so that we might see the power of God, so that Job would learn humility, so that the very depth of our souls will experience the insidious nature of defiance. It sounds academic, correct, even rational. But it is not very comforting, especially when we consider that even though Job's fortune is restored and he begets a new family, his old life cannot be more than undeserved, unremitting heartache. His children are dead, his friends forsake him, and he sees a side of his wife he might just as soon forget. Pain in the past is his watchword. Memories are not easily erased in this world. Time does *not* heal all wounds. Job will shed tears for his past as long as he lives. How could he not? Who among us would easily forget the

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Master's Journey



WAS JESUS A CHRISTIAN?

Rev. Barry L. Jenkins, Sr. J.D., D.B.S.

The answer to the question presented may at first seem obvious. However, upon closer scrutiny, a problem becomes apparent. There is a difference between how Jesus worshipped God and how the modern Christian church worships God. These differences in practice should cause the contemporary church to examine its methods and beliefs. If Christianity centers its faith and practice upon the teachings of Jesus Christ, should it not resemble its leader? Moreover, a consideration of the religion of the Jewish carpenter from Nazareth confronts us with a most unsettling question: Is Jesus Christ the founder of Christianity? If He isn't, then who is? In an effort to direct the inquirer, this paper addresses five differences between the religious practices of Jesus of Nazareth and the modern church. The reader should be prepared to examine his "Christianity" in light of the principles and practices of the Jewish rabbi called Jesus.

The first difference is that while the contemporary church worships God on Sunday, Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Luke 4:16 says: And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read.... (Emphasis supplied) (RSV) In fact, many if not most of the miracles performed by Jesus were done on the Sabbath.^[1] In comparison, the modern day church believes that the day of worship was changed from the Sabbath to Sunday. One on-line Christian resource explains:

death of all our children? The answer may be academically sound, but it is of little comfort to Job, and to us. If God plays this sort of game, then our tragic existence must be His fault, no matter who says otherwise.

So what about Job? Is the divine prerogative to play dice with his life recompensed by multiple blessings after tragic endurance? How many head of cattle does it take to pay back the death of a child? How many acres of land make up for the loss of faith by one's mate? How much treasure is needed to erase a memory? The story of Job is remarkable not for its difficult interpretation but for its very presence in the holy text. If we were going to write about our interaction with other sentient beings, and we wanted to avoid the knotty problem of divine culpability, we would certainly not have included Job's story in the mix. And yet there it is. Standing in utter defiance of all that we would like to say about God's innocence is this story that recounts the full disclosure of His hand in Job's misery. It is as though God were saying, "Look. I am the Creator and you are the creature. What I have in mind is not for you to judge. Understand who is the boss here and stop complaining."

In fact, this sort of response opens another passageway out of the maze we are in. Sometimes we hear references to this approach when someone proposes the "potter and clay" analogy. We are the created. He is the Creator. Who are we to object to how we are treated? He's the Boss, with a capital 'B'. But this is not an explanation as much as it is a capitulation. It implies that we, as created, have no rights, even to an explanation. And some would argue that is really the case. But the sting of this rebuttal does not evaporate so easily. If He made us rational, sensitive, inquisitive, we may not deserve an answer but we certainly long for one. To say that the only answer is He doesn't have to tell us is not very helpful.

Some theologians have taken a flanking position claiming that God as the creator of all, really is responsible for evil, but in a sort of "I couldn't help it" way. We see this in the argument of Augustine that we will examine in a moment. Other theologians have been bold enough to assert that our very conception of *freedom* is ultimately illusory and the real truth is that we are predestined by causal connection to either good or evil. God is responsible, they assert, but we can't know why He does what He does and so we cannot rightly judge what is moral or fair. This is a little like the corrupted Golden Rule – He who has the gold makes the rules. The implication is that what is moral is not up to us to decide. It is up to God. And since God is always righteous, whatever He does must be moral. Sort of a solution by definition. This is a version of the "I'm the Boss" position. Let us examine these two arguments a little more carefully.

The story of Job creates a kind of moral dyslexia. In order to understand its meaning, theologians usually ask us to read it in a rather odd way. Until we have been "theologically trained" otherwise, we are not very happy with the implications of Job's story for two reasons. The first is the moral impact of an attitude that says "I am the boss, I can do what I want". While we might acknowledge that this is true, that God is the potter and we are the clay, it just doesn't help very much when we think about fairness. Even if our concept of "fair" is humanly myopic, it still seems pretty certain that "fair" has something to do with "moral". If God creates other sentient beings only to go around allowing them to have pain and suffering, even if He is the Creator, it just doesn't seem very moral. Wouldn't those creatures be better off not being created at all? Moreover, this picture of God seems in conflict with the picture of a loving Father. Nevertheless, one historical theological camp has used this approach as the last word about evil. Their argument goes like this: God is God. His ways are not our ways. He may do as He pleases and we are assured that what He pleases to do is consistent with His holy

Still others Christians would say that we no longer observe the Jewish Sabbath, but worship instead on Sunday, a distinctively Christian holy day. They argue that the early church very soon began meeting on Sunday in honor of the resurrection of Jesus, which took place on the first day of the week.^[ii]

It is not the purpose of this work to explore the reason for the change or the timing of the change as there are many resources available for those who seek to know the historical truth.^[iii] It is sufficient to state that according to Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, the day of worship began to change around A.D. 115.^[iv] The point is that Jesus did not worship on the first day of the week; He worshipped God on the Sabbath.

The second difference is that Jesus honored and celebrated the Biblical feasts, while the Christian church celebrates Christmas and Easter. Leviticus 23 sets forth the following as the Lord's Sabbath and appointed feasts which are to be proclaimed^[v]:

1. The Sabbath,^[vi]
2. The Passover and Unleavened Bread;^[vii]
3. Firstfruits;^[viii]
4. Feast of Weeks;^[ix]
5. Feast of Trumpets;^[x]
6. Day of Atonement;^[xi]
7. Feast of Tabernacles;^[xii]

Since Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it,^[xiii] it would seem difficult to contend that Jesus disobeyed a direct commandment from His Father. Indeed, it would seem odd that Jesus who proclaimed that He did what He saw the Father doing,

character. So, if He chooses to make us agents who are capable of evil, and even if He seems to act in ways that promote this evil, we must simply accept this *apparent* contradiction as an example of **our** inability to understand the ways of a Holy God.

We might label this the *a priori* approach. Its fundamental tenant is that God is holy and therefore, whatever actions He takes are holy. This is the *a priori* condition of trying to understand what God does. And if for some reason we are not able to see how such actions of God are holy (that is, if these acts *appear* to be less than holy), then we must fall back on our presupposition that they are holy **no matter how they appear to us**. This certainly solves the problem about culpability, but it does so by dismissing the problem as a non-issue. Clever, efficient, but not entirely satisfying. It is somewhat equivalent to the parent answering the child's inquiry with the reproach, "Because I say so, that's why!"

The second reason for our discomfort with this moral dyslexia also depends on the *a priori* condition of God's holiness. It attempts to redefine the notion of *freedom*. This solution is not so brash as the first declaration, although ultimately it amounts to the same thing. This solution begins with the assumption of God's foreknowledge of our evil acts. Since God is infallible in His knowing (that is, He can never be mistaken about what He knows), then it seems to follow that if God knows we will commit evil acts **before** we actually commit those acts, the very fact that He knows this to be the case predestines us to commit those acts. To counter the implied divine culpability, this solution takes the more gentle approach by suggesting that what God knows in His infallible foreknowledge is that we would *freely* choose to do evil. It is not the case that God's knowledge of our acts before we do them preconditions us to do only what He knows to be the case. It is rather that God knows what we will in fact freely choose to do. We still make the free choice, but God knows what that choice will be.

St. Augustine may have been the first to suggest such a wonderfully constructed semantic solution. Theological tradition has passed this answer down for centuries in the form of foreknowledge and predestination. But this solution does not remove the discomfort of imagining that God knows I will sin before I actually do sin, and that His knowing it means that I will (freely?) sin. The final line of the argument must still rely on the *a priori* holiness of God. When I respond that I cannot for the life of me understand how God could be moral and actually know that some of His created beings will sin in such a way that He will in fact send them to eternal punishment, when my mind cannot fathom how a good God can relegate beings to everlasting punishment for choices that they somehow were predestined to make no matter what adjective I use to describe the condition of their predestination, then theology comforts (?) me by saying that God is holy and I am human and I just can't understand because I am not built for such knowledge. As Kierkegaard would say, it is believable precisely because it does not seem to be rational [1]. It requires the wonderfully escapist "leap of faith".

In the end, by these arguments we are reduced to a sort of determinism. It may not be the hardened form of determinism claiming some direct causality between God's actions and ours. Nevertheless, our *free* acts are finally not *free* in the usual sense of the word. They are rather technically free; that is, they are not to be ascribed to some causal chain that begins with God. But in every other sense, they are caused. Our evil choices are free only in the sense that they cannot be ultimately explained - that there is no chain of causation which ultimately accounts for the action - only because the final link in the chain, the link to our very existence, is *a priori* forbidden as a violation of the holiness of God.

would suddenly cease being obedient regarding the feasts. [xiv] John instructs us that to transgress the law is sin. [xv] Therefore, if Jesus remained sinless, He must have obeyed the law of God regarding the feasts.

Generally, the names of the feasts listed above are rarely mentioned in the Christian church much less proclaimed. In their place, the modern church has embraced Christmas and Easter, both with acknowledged pagan connections. Jesus had ample opportunity to instruct His disciples to celebrate His birth, but He did not. Further, in the forty days before His ascension, He had the opportunity to teach that His resurrection was to be celebrated in place of Passover but there is no record of such instruction. The point is that Jesus and the church do not celebrate the same holidays or feasts.

A third difference is found in the diet of Jesus when He walked the earth. The law prescribed a kosher diet that forbade the eating of certain types of animals, fish, and fowl. The argument referenced above concerning the obedience to the feasts is applicable to Jesus' obeying the food laws. Certainly Jesus would not have disobeyed a command from His Father. It is of interest that in approximately A.D. 41, Peter told the Lord in the vision concerning clean and unclean animals: But Peter said, "No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." (RSV) [xvi] Christ had been crucified approximately ten years earlier and Peter was still following the dietary laws from Leviticus. Since Peter had never eaten unclean food, this would be a compelling argument that while he was with Jesus, no unclean foods were consumed.

In the modern church, to mention the dietary laws would invoke allegations of legalism. Many churches have specific gatherings around food that Jesus would never touch. How many "pig roasts" or "clam bakes" take place in the church today? Jesus might attend, but would He eat the pork or the shell fish? From the Bible, we can ascertain some portions of Jesus diet: He had broiled fish and honeycomb after the resurrection, [xvii] bread and wine at the Last Supper, [xviii] wine at the wedding at Cana, [xix] and bread and fish at the feeding of the multitudes. [xx] The point is not to debate the continuance of the dietary laws, but to acknowledge that the practices

Where does all of this leave us? We seem to have inherited a single, although somewhat convoluted, stream of theological thought regarding God's relationship to evil. That stream basically says:

1. *A priori* God cannot do evil, be evil or be culpable for evil
2. A large majority of evil acts are the direct result of human choices for which
 - human beings, individually and collectively, are to blame
3. those choices are either particularly (specifically) or corporately (collaboratively)
 - free choices
4. God's (fore)knowledge of these free choices does not logically determine the
 - choices although His (fore)knowledge does imply their actual occurrence
5. Catastrophes, disasters or unexplainable evil befalling the world both corporately
 - and individually which do not appear to be caused by any known direct or indirect consequence of free human evil choices do not imply that God is therefore culpable for such acts for there are also spiritual and other invisible forces perpetrating evil upon the creation
6. Finally, since God created the present existence, and since God sustains the present existence in all its forms, we may confidently conclude (based on statement 1 above) that God created all present existence good and that whatever evil has befallen creation is not of His doing and is sustained only because His plan for the ultimate goodness requires this present existence even in its current fallen form.

Now this is a very odd philosophical conclusion. It implies that there are **two** ultimately uncaused things in the universe. The first, of course, is God's existence. There is no answer for the question, "Who made God?" because God was not created. God is. He is, as Aristotle pointed out centuries ago, the uncaused cause. There is no explanation for His existence. He is rather the explanation for everything else.

But now we see that tracing the causal chain of our own free will evil acts leads us to the conclusion that those acts must also be uncaused. They cannot be ascribed to God since God is not the author of evil. And yet they exist. So if God is not their source, what (who) is? And for this we have no answer. For everything depends on God for its existence. Yet God cannot be the cause of evil. We have reached the NO EXIT sign. Is that Kierkegaard in the shadows whispering, "Only believe"?

Is it any wonder that theologians have reiterated time and again the intractability of God's wisdom?

In summary: We are quite uncomfortable suggesting that God is responsible for evil. We would like to understand (explain) the

of Jesus and the modern church are dissimilar.

A fourth difference can be observed in the Jewish dress as worn by Jesus. Jesus was a Torah observant Jewish rabbi and dressed as one. One of the most important aspects of His dress was His *tallit* with its *tzitzit*. How do we know that Jesus dressed as a Jew? He was recognized by the woman at the well of Samaria by His outward appearance. The outer garment was called *himation* in Greek, *pallium* in Latin, and in Hebrew it was first termed *adderet* or *me'il*. At some later time, it came to be called *tallit*.^[xxi] While the *tallit* was not unique to Israel, the fringes on the borders, known as *tzitzit*, were.

^[xxii] These were worn in obedience to Numbers 15:38: "Speak to the people of Israel, and bid them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put upon the tassel of each corner a cord of blue..." (RSV) In addition, in order to fulfill the law, Jesus would have worn *tefillin*. *Tefillin* were two leather pouches which contained the Word of God and were bound to the arm and forehead in obedience to Exodus 13:9, 16 and Deuteronomy 6:6-8 and 11:18. Another indication of Jesus' Hebraic dress is that it was a requirement of the Torah. Jews were commanded to wear *tzitzit* and *tefillin*. Torah observance required a certain dress to set Israel apart from the nations so that God might use them to reach the world.

It is of interest to note that some Bible translations arguably seek to conceal the Jewish dress of Jesus. In Matthew 9, the story is told of the woman with the issue of blood that sought to touch the hem of his garment. The Greek word for "hem" is *kraspedon* and the Greek word for "garment" is *himation*. When referring to Jesus, the translators of the NIV used the phrase, "touch his cloak."^[xxiii] However, in Matthew 23:5 when Jesus is pronouncing seven woes on the Pharisees, the same Greek words are translated: "the tassels on their garments." Is there a valid reason for the translators to interpret the phrases differently? It would seem that the translators did not have any difficulty identifying the Jewish dress when it applied to the Pharisees but sought to conceal the true dress of Jesus.

The point to be remembered is that the modern Christian church does not adhere to the dress commandments contained in the Torah as referenced above. What would be the reaction in the church today, if it was suggested that members honor the Exodus and

existence of such evil and at the same time show God's moral righteousness. No one is really happy with the suggestion that God really is responsible and we just are too stupid to see how He is blameless. And no one wants to really live life with the conviction that what I freely chose to do is either predestined in some way or else a ubiquitous human illusion. Where are we to go?

Pannenberg's statement about the creation may offer the hidden exit out of this dilemma.

The first thing to see is that Pannenberg asks us to abandon completely the defective Cartesian model of existence – the clock model. God is not the clock maker, putting the thing called creation together; winding up the springs, and letting it run. Every model that postulates the entry of evil into a perfect creation assumes this "clock" model. Somewhere along the way, something happened to the mechanism and bad things got into the works. Maybe it was human beings that mucked up the machinery. Maybe it was the Devil and his minions. Maybe it was "fate" or "chance" or whatever we cannot explain. But the model is the same. God made it once, a long time ago, and now it runs, rather imperfectly. Evil got in the oil.

Pannenberg asks us to put all this mechanical modeling aside. He says something entirely different. Suppose for the sake of argument, that the creation is not complete, that creation is not a noun but rather a verb, an activity begun in the past but continuing unabated in the present. God creates. Continuous action in the present. Not "God created" or "the creation" as though something once came into being and now is as a result of the causal chain stretching forward from its previous state, but rather, that what is (present tense) is at this moment because it is being at this very moment created ever anew. Existence is not the result of activity in the past that perpetuates itself into the present but rather, God sustains this present existence through His moment by moment creating. The immanence of God is not limited to His singular presence among us. The immanence of God is an ontological statement, expressing the utter dependence of the entire creation on His sustaining power and will at this precise moment of existence, and at the next, and the next. "In Him we live and move and have our being" takes on a much deeper, and awesome, meaning. Right now God is creating what is.

Of course, what is being created right now is a very mixed bag. Some good, some evil, some we're not so sure about. So how does this view of immanence relieve God of the culpability for evil, you ask? Pannenberg has suggested that the true meaning of the creation (since it is in the process of being created every single moment) cannot be known for what it really is while it is in process. *You must wait until the end to see how each moment of the creating renewal finally takes shape.* It is sort of like trying to imagine the taste of a fine burgundy while the grapes are ripening on the vine, or while they are being mashed, or put in casks, or bottled, or aged. The true taste of the wine depends on all these things, and many, many more, each of which determine its final character. But only at the very end can we pull the cork, pour the red liquid, put it to our lips and say, "Now I know what a great burgundy is". This was worth waiting for". And if something as simple (or complex) as the taste of wine can take 20 years before we know the true results, the real meaning, just imagine how long the wait must be to see the true results of the process of creating all that is.

Actually, we have already been told what the true results will be. God's kingdom will prevail. God's children will rejoice. Fellowship will be re-established. Jesus' message makes clear that we need not fear the results. But we'll have to wait because the process of creating is not yet complete.

Deuteronomy passages? The response would most likely be that we are not required to do so because those commands were for the Jews and we are not Jewish. Essentially that would be my point; Jesus was Jewish and the church has departed from its Jewish roots and represents an institution that does not follow its purported leader.

The fifth and final difference reviewed would be that Jesus kept the Torah and the modern Christian church does not. Jesus said: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them

shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (RSV) ^[xxiv] As explained by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr. in the work,

Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus:

"Destroy" and "fulfill" are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation. When a sage felt that a colleague had misinterpreted a passage of Scripture, he would say, 'You are destroying the Law!' Needless to say, in most cases his colleagues strongly disagreed. What was 'destroying the Law' for one sage, was 'fulfilling the Law' (correctly interpreting Scripture) for another." ^[xxv]

When one understands the Hebrew idioms, Jesus' words are seen in a light contrary to the doctrinal position of many in the Christian church. Today, law and grace are seen as two separate and distinct dispensations. It is argued that the Jews have law and the Christians have grace. While a debate on the merits of this perspective is outside the scope of this work, it is sufficient to acknowledge that the religion of Jesus upheld the Law of God. The religion of Jesus was based on the Torah. He came not to misinterpret the commands of God, but to correctly tell His people how they should live. The question must be asked, if the church rejects the Torah, are they "His people"?

This paper has demonstrated that the religion of Jesus Christ is far removed from the practices of modern day Christianity. If a person presented himself for membership in your church and he worshipped

So what about evil acts? What about Job? Plotinus, a theologian of sorts who lived after Plato and before Augustine, postulated that evil resulted from mistakes made by demi-gods that were responsible for producing the creation as it passed through ten layers of preparation. Much of Plotinus' thought has been dismissed today. But perhaps it is worth rescuing one critical idea - that creation is a process passing through stages which, along the way, entail events and actions that at that particular stage take on the appearance of the character of evil. This may not get God off the hook for ultimate culpability (we have one more card to play in that arena), but it does force us to look beyond our current assessment for the evaluation of evil.

"What do you mean?" you might ask. "You can't possibly be suggesting that what we consider evil is somehow just a development on the way to good? That rape, murder, genocide, environmental destruction, mass disasters are just stages of creative good? This is no better than saying that *freedom* is an illusion. Are you suggesting that evil is an illusion?"

No, evil is real. Sin is real. And God recognizes it for what it is. It is not an illusion. But what it means is not altogether clear to us now even though its hideousness is apparent. Do you suppose that the Devil is so stupid that he would deliberately incite the crowds to call for Jesus' crucifixion if he knew in advance that the crucifixion was the very event that would bring about his downfall? Isn't it much more plausible that the Devil did not know the true meaning of this evil act? That he pushed for the death of God's only Son because he believed that it was to his advantage, to his victory. And yet, God had the final say in even this most hideous of all evil acts. The true meaning of this evil act was unspeakable good. God knew. Neither the Devil nor we had a clue. Our moment of interpretive evaluation was limited by the temporal conditions of our existence. And when Jesus said, "It is finished", we all believed that he meant he had failed. He died. Everyone knew he died. It was over. No one thought that God could make anything out of this tragedy. But He did. He created anew the entire realm of existence, providing us with insight into its ultimate meaning, in that moment three days later when God created Jesus alive. Evil became the platform for creative good.

Does that excuse the evil? No, and God as judge says "No". Does that justify the evil? No, again. Evil acts are not justified simply because God can make something good out of their consequences. What it does is cause a change in our perspective in terms of understanding and explanation. And this is why Pannenberg's insight can help us solve the riddle of the past.

We often say that the past is fixed, the present fluid and the future undetermined. The logic of our concept of free choice rests on this ordinary understanding about the connection between time and action. How often do we lament that we cannot undo the past? The framework of law, the idea of consequences and punishment, the structure of historical research are all predicated on the static nature of the past. Of course, science fiction authors have exploited the desire to change our own histories by inventing the somewhat illogical notion of a time machine. But philosophers and theologians should reject such a concept as self contradictory since it carries such impossible implications as the ability to move through time to a point where I could prevent the birth of my paternal grandfather (which of course would mean that I would not have been born in the first place). So we are confined at least on one side of the time division by the inflexibility of the past. What is done, is done and cannot be undone. And yet Pannenberg is suggesting that in at least one sense this is not true. The past can be undone. Perhaps not re-made but rather re-connected. For in at least one sense, God can re-new the past by connecting the fixed actions of past events to new,

on the Sabbath, celebrated the Biblical feasts, worn a *tallit* with *tzitzit* on it with *tefillin* on his arm and forehead, ate a kosher diet, and believed that the Torah was still a requirement, what would be the result? I submit that the church committee would probably decline the application for membership. Does that concern you? I believe it should. Perhaps it is time for us to follow the words of the Apostle Paul: Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified.^[xxvi] Whose faith are you in if you are a member of a modern "Christian" church??

On further reflection, maybe the answer to the question is obvious.

[i] See Matthew 12:10-12; Mark 3:5; Luke 6:10; 13:13; 14:4; John 5:9; 9:14.

[ii] <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-t007.html>

[iii] An excellent resource is *Our Father Abraham* by Marvin R. Wilson, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989, at pages 79-81.

[iv] *Ibid.* at 79.

[v] Leviticus 23:2

[vi] Leviticus 23:3

[vii] Leviticus 23:4-8

[viii] Leviticus 23:9-14

[ix] Leviticus 23:15-22

[x] Leviticus 23:23-25

[xi] Leviticus 23:26-32

[xii] Leviticus 23:33-36

[xiii] Matthew 5:17

[xiv] John 5:19

and sometimes rather startling, future consequences - consequences that were not at all obvious when the action in the past was consummated. God does have a time machine, but it is not one that allows Him to travel along a continuum of events. That image of time, as a linear sequence of causal events, must be abandoned. The Greek view of time as a river is wrong. God's time machine is located solidly here, in the present, but it is able to weave a future fabric from the strands of the past in gloriously unexpected ways.

God can re-new (create anew) anything. There is no element of the present that is not created anew in the next moment. That is what it means to say that God is the ontological ground of being – not once in the past at Creation, but right now, in the present as He holds, sustains and renews all that is, moment by moment. God's immanent domain makes anything possible, including the re-connection of causal consequences from past actions. If God's immanent domain is the actual sustaining power of this realm of existence from one moment to the next, then the causal connections which proceed from the past into the present are also directly dependent on the divine will. Effects follow from causes not due to their inevitable causal connection, not because they are self-propelling, but because the sustaining will of the Father precipitates them. In this model, a miracle is nothing more than God choosing not to sustain the expected causal connection, but rather to re-distribute the cause of the past to a new effect in the present. The raising of Lazarus is miraculous because it is not the expected consequence of dying. But it is nothing more than completely ordinary if we view it as the re-connection between past causes and present consequences (effects). It is no more or less miraculous than the moment by moment continuance of gravity or the motion of electrons in an atom's nucleus. In fact, as modern theoretical physicists are becoming more accustomed to say, the regular continuance of the universe from one second to the next is nothing short of a miracle of the highest magnitude. Anyone with the slightest appreciation of sub-atomic physics is quite likely to believe in the unseen power of a sustaining God. Electrons "show up" only when you look for them. The largest component of everything that is is empty space. Explanations of the universe depend on build-in "uncertainty". Martin Heidegger expressed it well with his fundamental question of all philosophy and science, "Why is there anything rather than nothing at all?"

So what about *free* choices? Are the causal connections between our free choices and the resulting effects any less miraculous - or less ordinary? If the existence of everything is renewed moment by moment through the immanent domain of the Father, and this is considered perfectly ordinary in spite of the fact that it is entirely an act of will, why should our choices be any less an act of will that connects the strands of the past to undetermined effects in the present?

In order to appreciate the full impact of this revelation, we need to spend a moment considering the nature of time. Just suppose that there is no **ex**-temporal existence; that the essential quality of existing is being temporal. Certainly we have no difficulty with this view when it comes to our existence and the existence of everything in the universe. In fact, the only place where we even try to contemplate ex-temporal existence is when we think about God. How we came to ascribe ex-temporal existence to God is a long story.

[2] But for the moment, let us put that history aside and ask what it would mean if God were also a temporally existing being. The first consequence would be an end to the rhetoric about foreknowledge and predetermination. God certainly knows a lot more than we do. He knows everything that can be known (this is what omniscience means). But if my free choice contains the possibility of unexpected connections between past determinants and future consequences,

[xv] 1 John 3:4

[xvi] Acts 10:14

[xvii] Luke 24:42

[xviii] Luke 22:14-20

[xix] John 2:1-13

[xx] Matthew 14:13-21

[xxi] *The Hem of His Garment* by John D. Garr, Ph.D., Golden Key Press, Atlanta, GA 2007, at page 26.

[xxii] *Ibid.* at 44.

[xxiii] Matthew 9:20 NIV

[xxiv] Matthew 5:17-19

[xxv] *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Biven and Roy Blizzard, Jr., Destiny Image Publishers, Shippensburg, PA 1994, at page 114.

[xxvi] 2 Corinthians 13:5 NKJV



PERSPECTIVES

FEMINIZATION OF THE CULTURE

Ian Hodge, Ph.D.

Culture, argued Henry Van Til, is religion externalized. This can be put another way. People act out their core beliefs.

The culture in which we live is not the culture that transformed the Roman Empire into Christendom. For many, that is the great heresy. The very idea that our culture should be Christian is an idea that many people resent. I do not understand why.

It appears to me there are choices: either our culture can be Christian or it can be something else: Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist, or some other belief system.

But there are some inescapable facts. First, the major influence on the development of Western culture following the collapse of Rome was Christianity. It shaped the political order, the judicial system, the economic order, and became the predominant force in education. We cannot understand our concepts of local government, a limited federal government, and a judicial system that was once independent

then the actual outcome of the choice cannot be known until the choice is made, until it becomes real. Of course, I might anticipate all the possible effects but that does not make them real. They are only hypothetical possibilities.

Since God knows everything that can be known, God knows all the hypothetical possibilities. He holds **all** the strands of the past in His hands, waiting to connect them through immanent domain to the effects in the present. But until I act, those strands in at least one crucial sense, are not real. They are only possible realities, not actual reality. In this sense, time is more like a branching tree rather than a flowing river. It is not a single stream of events flowing toward me, moving from the future to the present and into the past. It is rather that I stand at a growth node on a branch. There are many, many possible directions for the branch to grow. Out of all those possibilities, my act will initiate one direction as opposed to many other possible directions and the branch will grow in that direction until I come to the next node. The direction of growth is not fixed in advance. The branch does not exist out there in the future. It is growing as I choose. Just like Alice in Wonderland, the path unfolds before me as I take the steps forward. In this regard, my choices are truly free since the shape of the future is actually created through my choices. God, of course, can anticipate all the possible directions. My own past actions and the past actions of all creation, incline me in some directions. I am in that sense pre-determined. Not all logical possibilities are real possibilities. I cannot decide in the next moment to fly. For example, I am highly likely to make choices that will do me harm if I have been pre-determined by growing up in an alcoholic family. I am conditioned by my color, my economic status, my place of birth. From the Christian perspective, sin plays a dominant role in circumscribing my choices. And the results of the cumulative effects of sinful acts throughout human history are the context of any choice that I might make today. But while these pre-determining conditions affect my choices, they do not eliminate my choices. And insofar as I have some options left to me, those options are possibilities that I create as realities when and only when I exercise them.

Once exercised, my choices form the fabric called reality. They become real, a part of the past, a strand in God's hand. Then they are available to, and dependent upon, His will to connect them to the next moment of creation. In this sense, I too am a creator. While God alone creates *ex nihilo*, I have true creative power (the image of God?) to bring into existence something that did not exist before, namely, the consequence of my freely chosen act. That the conditions of my existence and the nature of my humanity circumscribe this act does not make it any less free or any less creative. It is the one arena of the miraculous that I initiate every moment. And it is perfectly ordinary to do so. If we had the time here, we might give some consideration to what this new model of creating means for the traditional notion of *ex nihilo*. The Greeks stumbled over this because they could not imagine making something out of nothing. But perhaps *ex nihilo* has more to do with the absence of past pre-determinants than it does with the physical nothingness.

How does this help us to deal with the problem of evil? It should be obvious that evil, as a possibility, is one of the directions that my branching choices can take. My creative acts can be evil and, in fact, often are. Human culpability is not exculpated because of the determining conditions of my choices for I could always choose otherwise. Evil is not the **only** possibility. And because my choices are in this crucial sense truly free, because they are creations of new reality, I am culpable for their consequences. The problem of evil certainly rests on the shoulders of Man.

If we reflect on the implications of this statement for a moment, we

unless we understand the Christian Bible and how it was applied.

But that has changed. At least since the 13th century, the political order has gained ascendancy so that it again now occupies the place it held in the time of the Empire. At one time, the word sovereignty was attributed to God alone. Now the political orders in all the nations of the world take for themselves the ultimate power and authority in all matters. No limitations anywhere. They are truly sovereign.

The Christian church once fought this idea. That's why the Empire disappeared.

The church today, however, seems impotent against this notion of secular sovereignty. And there are many possible reasons for this impotence. One of them is a growing feminine view of the world. Everyone knows that men and women are different; the distance suggested is the distance between Mars and Venus.

In this essay I want to explore the idea of the feminization of the culture, and in so doing also explore some of the reasons for the failure of the church to halt the slide away from Christian belief. I've identified five steps that have contributed to the feminization of the culture.

Step One: Eliminate Masculinity in the Church

I've a confession to make. If you're like me, you go to church, sing some hymns or spiritual songs, listen to a sermon, listen to someone else pray (except when you're in a church that allows congregational participation) then go home and forget the experience.

Take this morning for example. The song leader extols the virtues of "He loves me" repeated many times. Now you could be forgiven for making a mistake on the meaning of these words if you did not realize the "he" meant Jesus. Otherwise it sounds just like any other romantic love song.

And there, in the midst of the regular Sunday worship service, we sing and hear of the feminization of the culture -- starting first in the church.

Ann Douglas, in her provocative book, *"The Feminization of American Culture,"* had this to say about Christianity and how churches were feminized. The hymns played an important part. After pointing out that "In Puritan days, congregations chanted 'hymns' which were drawn from the psalms," Douglas comments that one of the problems of these psalms was it "necessitated a certain disrespect for easy comprehensibility" (p. 217).

If you ever get to look at some of the metered psalms and how they were distorted to create the words to fit the meter of the music, you will understand the truth of this comment. Read any Scottish Psalter to see poor English turned into singable meter.

The hymns were to be the solution. "If men were to sing about God, it must be in terms and tunes they understood. . . . Indeed, it is crucial for understanding the role of hymns in the changing American Protestant Church to remember that they were originally conceived as best adapted for domestic and familial rather than communal and ecclesiastical uses. *It was only when the church itself had been redefined in domestic terms that hymns could be central to their forms of worship*" (pp. 217-218, emphasis added).

see that the weight of my evil choices (my sins) is far, far greater than I usually consider. The adage, "If it doesn't harm anyone else, why not do it?" can no longer be a moral guide. Every one of my choices creates a new beginning, a radically different future than other possible futures. The repercussions of my acts will be passed down from generation to generation. They will spill out into the farthest reaches of the Universe. They will alter forever the direction of reality. My choices matter, not just to me, not just to my circle of influence, but to everyone and everything that will ever exist. The entire world rests on my shoulders now, in this moment of decision. And this is a weight that none of us can bear. Is it any wonder that God hates sin? Do you now appreciate the magnitude of our guilt and the depth of God's solution to our guilt?

But what about those "other" evil events? What about those evil events which seem not to be connected to human choices? Natural disasters, global tragedies, cosmic disarray? What is God's role in these?

In some sense, the present universe is out of control. Deliberately. I believe that the Bible teaches that the ultimate responsibility for this present chaos rests on the collective actions of finite beings, both human and non-human, who made choices that introduced the accumulating effects of chaos into this reality. Not all of those choices were made by Man, but Man certainly played a major role. Today we live with the advancing results of centuries of compounded deliberate evil choices. The range of our possibilities is narrowing as these cumulative effects shape the future. As an illustration, we might consider for a moment the cumulative effects of deforestation, now hundreds of years after the events of cutting down trees. Who would have imagined that cutting trees would put the entire planet in peril when the forests stretched beyond sight? Yet it was true then, just as we see the truth now. Still, we burn the rainforest at astounding rates, pushing the cataclysm ahead of us, faster and faster. If we knew all of the ramifications of the centuries of sins committed by Mankind and other finite beings, I believe we would be aghast at the scope of the effects. I believe we would find more than adequate explanation for much of what we now consider "natural" evils. Clearly, evil is unnatural. It is not what God created (creates) or intended. That His immanent domain carries the consequences of past evil acts forward with each moment of re-creation can only be understood if we see what Pannenberg suggests. The game is not up yet. God is steering this ship in spite of our collective efforts to sink it into the depths. But how God steers this leaking craft is not obvious to those of us who are concerned only with opening another hole in the hull. Our perspective is myopically human. Paul suggests so in Romans where he hints that "all creation groans" in expectation of salvation. This game is not just about humanity. It is about reality.

If this is an adequate, although somewhat truncated, explanation for the evils of our existence, then we seem to still be left with one crucial question. Didn't God know that creating beings like us would lead to all this chaos? And if He did know, and He created us anyway, isn't He still responsible

If God is temporal, then His choices are also temporal. The difference between created beings and God, the uncreated Being, is not the difference between time and timelessness but rather the difference between limited time and unlimited time (eternity). God gets to deal with temporal reality forever. That includes the temporal reality before any created existence came into being; the time when only God existed. Sometime during that temporal existence when only God existed, He created other existing things. Of course, He knew **all** of the possibilities that could occur once those beings were created. He could hypothesize about every contingency. But those possibilities were not real since they did not exist at that point in

Interestingly, Douglas points out that "certain sects were clearly dominant in the writing and publishing of hymns in the American Northeast." Consequently, "Protestants were singing more and more hymns written by Unitarians, like-minded Congregationalists, and women. The special trademarks of these hymns were their literary quality and their tendency to stress the more cheerful aspects of Protestant theology" (p. 218). Death was out, as it is out of our general culture, hidden away where it cannot be seen.

These words about female hymn writers were written long *before* Darlene Zschech and perhaps helps explain her popularity as a contemporary Christian song writer.

"Hymns were increasingly viewed as performing a very different function from that of the sermon they might accompany. . . . *Hymns were not, in other words, to be intellectual*" (pp. 218-219, emphasis added).

If they were not to be intellectual, what were they to be? The answer is: they were intended to be emotional. In this sense, contemporary hymns and the music that goes with them have their roots in nineteenth century romanticism.

So we sing "He loves me" with the appropriate romantic style accompaniment to go with it. We sing "And he walks with me, and he talks with me" as if it is a woman singing about her lover, again accompanied by the emotional music of worldly love.

The feminization of the church was done with hymns and non-scriptural songs. By non-scriptural, I mean the words were not taken from the Christian scriptures. The idea might come from there, but not the words themselves.

Putting Scripture -- the Psalms being central -- back into the worship service will be an important step to create biblical manhood which will, in time, halt the feminization of our church, our schools, our homes, and therefore our culture.

Something to think about: What kind of music will go with our Scriptural songs?

Step Two: Feminize the Culture With Music

In Step One I highlighted the feminization of culture with hymns. By that I mean the words. But there's another aspect to hymns and that is the music.

If your life is similar to mine, then we've both spent an awful amount of time trying to make up for a bad education. Public schooling was my background. It was not good. Here's why. Being hostile to Christianity, public school secular education left out anything that might point to God. That, according to St. Paul in Romans chapter one is most of creation.

Now it is through the arts that the secularization and feminization of culture has received one of its strongest influences. I was never taught this at school, though. Based on faulty philosophy and faulty conclusions, education began the "dumbing down" process which continues today.

Consider this:

time. God, in His infinite wisdom, must have concluded that creating, as opposed to not creating, was the correct righteous action to take, since God did create. He must have decided that this was the correct action in spite of His hypothesizing about the possible outcomes of His action. Perhaps this is what it means to say that God provided a means of salvation through His Son "before the foundations of the Universe". He always knew that this present state was a possibility, and He planned His own contingent actions in light of that possibility. But that does not make it reality. It only becomes reality when those possibilities are exercised into existence.

God created beings that were capable of acting with free choice. One of the possible outcomes of creating beings like this is that they choose in ways that are not consistent with the wishes of the Creator. If those choices are not pre-determined (either by creative fiat, divine omniscience or divine infallibility), but are rather the exercise of genuine creativity, bringing into being something that did not exist beforehand, then the only culpability that God has for the results of such actions is that God created the fabric that made such possibilities possible. That is to say, God created beings that could chose. Does this make God responsible for the choices they make? When my children make choices that bring evil consequences into existence, am I responsible? The answer to that question is "Yes" and "No". I am responsible for their existence since my actions brought them into existence. I am responsible for their development since I am the parent. And insofar as their existence and their development provide the backdrop for the choices that they make, I am responsible for their choices. But parents usually are not put on trial for the sins of their adult children. We recognize that culpability usually belongs to the perpetrator, not to the progenitor. So while I am responsible as a parent for my role in the sins of my offspring, I am not responsible for the creative acts they choose to bring such sins into existence. Sins are individual matters, with both individual and corporate consequences, performed within a fabric that is both individual and corporate. I share in the blame if I have failed to perform my actions of generation and development correctly, but that it not the same as personal moral culpability for the evil choice of my offspring. It seems no different for God the Father.

He is the creator. His creation, in all its aspects, has chosen to rebel. If He had been imperfect in His creation or His development or His love or His patience with the rebellious creation, then He would share in the blame, just as I would share in the blame for my children's sins. But unlike me, God is the perfect Father. His creation was Good; His development was perfect, His love unchanging, and His patience everlasting. Yet, in spite of all that, His children, both human and non-human, rebelled. And they carried with them in those acts of rebellion all of the creation into chaos.

Today, God sustains the creation through His immanent domain in a sort of voluntary chaos. It is chaotic because evil exists as a reality. Choices have been made and will continue to be made that bring evil consequences into existence. This is the epitome of chaos, since sin itself is the most illogical thing in the universe. But this present existence is voluntary chaos. It is not chaos run amuck. It is not out of control. God is still the sustainer of existence. He is finally, ultimately in control. At the moment, His method seems to be to voluntarily allow the consequences of the accumulation of evil creative acts to be perpetuated. Of course, we have no idea how much His hand has restrained the actual possibilities of evil. We only know that evil is with us now. And God has voluntarily chosen to let it run its course, to let us have our way and the results of our way, until such time as He chooses not to renew the connections between the past and the future. God is in charge. We just can't see quite how. But we have glimpses, hints, and intuitions about His control. Our task is to bring into existence a reality that is more in line with His direction for the future than with our current course. Pannenberg's

"Every melody, every rhythm, and every instrument has its own peculiar effect on the moral nature of man and of the state. Good music promotes the well-being of the *res publica* while bad music destroys it; therefore good and useful music is closely bound to and determined by the norms of moral conduct. This is emphasized by the same word, *nomos*, for correct musical 'harmony' and logic, and for the moral, social, and political laws of the state." (Paul Henry Lang, *Music in Western Civilization* p. 13).

Did you get that? The same word, *nomos*, which is the New Testament (Greek) word for "law", is used to describe the correct rules of harmony and logic.

I don't know about you, but I was never taught this at school. Nor was I taught it in my church. Nor have I ever read this in any Christian book about music.

But the fact is this; music is a language that allows us to express ideas just as much as if we express ideas with words. Words, after all, are sounds. Music is sounds. It is sounds that communicate to us, and sounds are what we use to communicate to others. Singing, as my old singing teacher used to say, is merely "speaking" on pitch.

Sounds usually accompany our actions so there is a total communication at the time. The selection of the *right* sounds -- verbal or musical -- at the right time is important.

But since our music education has failed so miserably, we no longer think about the use of music to express our thoughts and emotions. We listen to music, we use music, but we don't get the connection -- or if we do, we ignore it.

Only the movie musicians today understand the connection. They get it right almost every time. That's why you will never hear the music of J.S. Bach when the visual scene is a disco with semi-naked female bodies in full motion. The actions and the music don't go together. They are a misfit. Neither are you likely hear the music of nineteenth century romanticism (e.g. music of Frederick Chopin) when the visual scene is a disco. They just don't belong together.

But somehow we are willing to allow the music that does fit the disco and those writhing female bodies into our churches under the silly notion that being "contemporary" is the way to attract people to the faith.

The trouble is, our verbal message and our music don't tell the same story. Add to this, the over-use of romanticized hymns and spiritual songs, and it is not hard to see why Christian culture is failing.

It is failing at the most critical point: in the church.

According to the Greeks, "the will can be decisively influenced by music in three ways. It can spur to action; it can lead to the strengthening of the whole being, just as it can undermine mental balance; and finally, it is capable of suspending entirely the normal will power, so as to render the doer unconscious of this acts" (p. 14). Is that why we see provocatively moving female bodies at the front of the church? The music has rendered them -- and the church leaders -- unconscious of what is going on? Hard to believe, isn't it?

If music is this powerful -- and it is -- then isn't it time we changed the music in our church?

suggestion that we will not see how the pieces all fit together until the end helps us to muster the courage to make one more choice for Good and propel reality in God's direction. We are co-creators of the future. Fortunately, He will prevail. The ultimate end is not in doubt. Therefore, the real question of responsibility lies ahead of us. God has asked us to join Him in creating something that has never before existed.

[1] There is another step usually attached to this solution. It is the commitment to "timelessness". Very simply, the position is that God is not "in time" but rather somehow stands outside the temporal schema so that He does not literally see (know) my freely chosen evil act "before" I commit it but rather He knows a-temporally (from outside time) my decisions. This spatialization of time allows the theologian to assert that God's knowledge was neither "before" nor "after" my action and therefore cannot have **pre**-determined my action. I am not predestined by God's knowing since His knowing is not temporally conditioned. There are a great number of problems with this solution despite its lengthy history. I have examined those problems in a much longer work. Suffice it to say here that I am convinced that this solution neither provides an adequate explanation of God's immanent domain nor addresses the knot of freedom and determinism.

[2] The history of this idea begins with the Greek philosopher Heraclitus and finds its way through Plato into the medieval theologian Boethius who influenced Aquinas. The idea is thoroughly Greek, not Judeo-Christian. But it has had sway for centuries because it is so firmly tied to an entire methodology of dealing with God's attributes, the *via negativa*.



KINGDOM ECONOMICS

John C. Thorman

The economic systems of this world are at war against the truth of God and His created order, but most Christians don't realize the enormity of the battle that's been raging or what the implications are in society.

Unlike the world's economic systems which begin with the allocation of scarce resources, Kingdom Economics begins with the first commandment "You shall have no other gods before me." If people believe God and place Him first in their lives, they are acknowledging Him for who He says He is which includes: creator of the universe, author of the instruction manual for successfully living in His creation, and the redeemer of those who disobey His instructions. What follows is the recognition that God is the rightful owner over all creation, the supreme authority, and the judge over all of life and society. Obedience to the first commandment requires that all individual and societal pursuits of progress, prosperity and wealth accumulation be conducted within His prescribed boundaries of righteous living.

The world's economic systems, at their best, are built without this foundational belief system and therefore they are void of moral authority and absolute truths that are necessary for propitious thinking, decisions and behavior. What necessarily fills this void is a heterogeneous and inauspicious system of beliefs that are based upon the subjective philosophical constructs of each member of

Please make note of this next statement: I am not here trying to say that all contemporary music is wrong. I am merely saying that in most cases, the words and the music don't belong together. We can often have good lyrics with bad music, or good music that doesn't "fit" with the lyrics.

Christian culture of the past was not possible without having something to say about the music. Christian culture will not be restored without the reconstruction of a Biblical view of art and music that speaks the language of Scripture rather than the language of romanticism.

Step Three: Use Music for the Moral Revolution

I've wanted to get you thinking about communication. In particular, communication with music.

First, I highlighted how hymns were used to help eliminate a rigorous intellectualism in the church and replace it with a more emotional environment
Second, I drew your attention to how music is an important ingredient in communication, and how we can contradict ourselves by having the wrong music with the right words.

One composer who understood this was Richard Wagner. Remembered often because his music was popular with German Nazism, it is also important to remember what Wagner contributed to musical development in another way. He contributed to a moral -- better known as an anti-faith -- *revolution* with his particular style of music.

At one time the church was known to speak out against certain types of music. Some music was too sensual. Some music could influence a particular licentiousness that was unhealthy in the eyes of the church leaders at the time.

Take certain European folk music, Spanish flamenco, for example. It can often be an example of seductiveness. But it is this type of sensuality that, if not held in check, can lead to something out of place.

Now the church fathers saw that to open the door to licentiousness in any form was just courting disaster. So especially in the church, music was devoid of the kind of emotions that, while they might have a proper place in the bedroom of a married couple, certainly did not need exposure outside the home in culture or the church.

With the 19th century onslaught against Christianity, one man who failed in political revolution turned his musical skills into a self-conscious desire to continue the revolution with music. The revolution was one against Christian culture, the key being Christian morals and moral restraint that had been achieved by the application of biblical principles.

Sexual licentiousness is relationships without rules. The emphasis is on emotion. So Wagner turned his hand to writing music that encouraged licentiousness and emotion. He had a choice. "He could either subordinate his desires to the logic of the music, or the music to the logic of his desires" (E. Michael Jones, *Dionysos Rising*, p. 43).

To understand this revolution, think about the basis of our music, the diatonic scale. According to Jones, "The diatonic scale with its ability

society. History has shown repeatedly that no prosperous nation can survive indefinitely under these conditions. They most assuredly deteriorate until they are eventually judged by war, or devastated under the weight of socialism and lawlessness. At their worst; the world's economic systems deny the existence of God and His laws completely. The rulers of these societies make themselves god and extort their citizens through corruption and force. This philosophy is a prescription for tyranny and abject poverty.

God is not a socialist or a tyrant! He is the original free-market economist and entrepreneur. In a passionate act of His own free will, God chose to create something of tremendous long term value. He is the developer, architect and builder of the universe and God's plan is to engage us as His junior partners to expand the family business. God gave mankind instructions on what work had to be done and how to manage His creation. Then, He delegated responsibility, giving Man the authority and the decision making capabilities to wisely steward the earth's resources in order that we might fill the earth, take dominion over it and deliver a return on God's initial investment.

The economic wisdom of the ages was not penned by history's great social scientists; rather it was authored by God and is especially detailed for us in the books of Moses. The Mosaic covenant, given on Mt. Sinai, is where God gave the nation of Israel the instructions and principles for how to create a prosperous free society, the kingdom of God, which is to function under His Kingship. What is interesting to note is that God gave them what was essentially their national constitution well before they entered the Promised Land. They were at Mt. Sinai, which was out in the world, and this implies that these instructions for living are intended for every nation, not just the nation of Israel. Throughout history we've seen this demonstrated as successful nations are the ones that have applied the principles from the Mosaic covenant, at least in part, either wittingly or unwittingly. In American society too, the Mosaic covenant was incorporated in the development of our economic and societal prosperity and included these principles: the importance of family and community relationships, accountability, responsibility, division of labor, individual ownership of property, written and recorded property titles, currency backed by gold, voluntary contracts between willing parties, enforcement of lawful contracts, establishment of justice through the Ten Commandments and other societal laws to protect and defend the citizenry and the property rights of owners, prescribed restitution to injured parties, and punishments to violators. In addition, God requires planning and decisions based upon present sacrifice for long range generational success; a principle which He uses Himself.

Post-Modern America has strayed far from many of these eternal principles of success and prosperity, choosing instead to embrace the wisdom of Man and the systems of this world. As we have drifted further and further away from the source of truth, we are experiencing increasing "isms" – socialism, secularism, materialism, individualism, etc. Today our society is far from God's design of family, community, accountability and responsibility because humanity has pursued independence, freedom and avoids taking personal responsibility for actions. This has been facilitated through increasing technological advances, institutionalization, financial intermediaries, and digital communications, to name a few.

Our federal government has increasingly sought to replace and remove God from society and establish itself as the supreme authority. The result is that both our spiritual and social freedoms are greatly diminished. The government takes more control and authority over our lives in an effort to be the savior and provider for its people, thereby insuring their re-election. With their myopic focus on constituent appeasement and perpetual progress, we will stumble and fall under the weight of unfunded social welfare programs, demographic devastation through legalized abortion, growing federal budget deficits, crippling debt burdens, fiat money, the Federal

both to arouse the emotions and to subdue them to the demands of reason had unleashed a burst of musical creativity without precedent in the history of the human race, a creativity that found one of its more significant expressions in the German-speaking lands of the eighteenth century."

"The price of admission, however, was the rigor of the tonal, diatonic system, which conformed so admirably to the movement of human emotion. Because it possessed a beginning, middle, and end, the diatonic scale could evoke a catharsis of emotion unprecedented in other musical systems. But there was a price to pay here, and the price was the adherence to the canons of reason. The emotions that were aroused would be resolved only by returning to the key from which they originated. To modulate the notes unceasingly from one key to another, as Wagner's chromaticism did, was tantamount to blunting the emotional focus" (*ibid.*)

Stop!

Go back and read that again. Did you get the point?

Here's how Jones summed it up:

"The music that was the fullest expression of this modulation of emotion from key to key for hours on end with no resolution in sight had a lot in common with pornography. It was musical pornography and was having a sort of enervating, draining, and debilitating effect on the audiences that heard it" (*ibid.*)

Wagner self-consciously wrote the type of music he did to evoke erotic emotions. Just as pornography is sex without rules, so classical music following Beethoven -- who desired to compose without rules -- became just that. Music without rules.

We need to follow the music trend into the twentieth century to see the end result of music without rules. John Cage sitting at a piano for three or four minutes not playing anything -- yet pretending this was serious composition. Its equivalent is modern, abstract art that looks like it was painted by a two-year-old in a temper fit. A world without rules is a childish world, and music without rules becomes childish and primitive -- elementary.

Our churches, full of highly romanticised harmony and erotic rhythm are the breeding ground for emotions rather than reason -- reason based on God's word. If you understand this, you know why it is most often females standing in the front leading the new music in the contemporary church, with a tendency, when it suits them, to move with the music in ways that send a provocative message which they surely cannot intend.

But this lack of understanding -- the anti-intellectualism that is rampant -- in our age is playing havoc in our churches.

Until the music is changed, we are unlikely to effect a change in the culture which is increasingly recognized as feminized.

This is why we need musicians who can compose -- Christian music, if you please.

Step Four: Preach Psychology Rather Than Theology

If you want to radicalize the church and feminize it, there is not much left to do after you've replaced the Psalms with hymns and

Reserve's manipulation of the currency, inflation, and a growing entitlement mentality that breeds continued dependence upon the government.

While quick to deflect their own responsibility and culpability, the federal government criticizes business and the financial markets for our economic predicaments. However, history is clear that the more government interferes with and attempts to manipulate the currency and the economy, the more problems or "unintended consequences" they create.

God wants us to follow His instructions rather than the wisdom of Man because He knows what works, and He knows what is in our best interest and His. We are to apply His truths and economic principles while working diligently with the gifts, talents and resources that He gives us in order to produce results that benefit our families, our community and our society. In fact, as demonstrated in the parable of the talents in the New Testament, God demands a return on His investment in us!

The accelerating spiritual decay in our nation is the root cause of the massive moral decay in our lives, families, businesses, schools, churches, politics and our economies. The entire society is negatively affected when we ignore God's instructions and embrace the "wisdom" of Man.

By numerous accounts, today's American society is living like the devil and on the fast track to hell. What is so troubling is that the church is going along for the ride! While the Church and her members are to be salt and light to the surrounding culture, we have instead conformed to the cultures surrounding us. God's instruction is that we be holy as He is holy. By definition that means we must be different; holiness means to be set apart for God's purposes. We cannot be set apart to serve God while at the same time conforming to the systems of this world. We are to be in the world, but not of the world; we cannot serve two masters. God's pattern is this; we are to live our lives according to His instructions, our obedience brings blessings and disobedience brings cursing. God is glorified in the process and those who witness this are then drawn into relationship with the one true God too.

Western evangelical Christianity has over-emphasized the great commission at the expense of adequately teaching and observing God's covenants. Yet, it is our obedience to God's instructions for all of life which provides the foundation upon which the great commission is to take place. By over-emphasizing the message of salvation, the church has focused too much of its attention on the future, and on getting off this planet so we can enjoy paradise for eternity! But God's instructions to mankind are not concentrated on getting to heaven; rather they are the prescriptions for living successfully in His creation right now! The future and ultimate result is spending eternity in heaven with Him, but that's not the focus today. Obedient living is the focus.

When it comes to economics, business, and personal finance, Christians today are not much different from the society they live in. Compare the church's current dependence upon the government to solve our economic problems through political means instead of free-market means, our willingness to accept trillion dollar deficits, massive entitlement programs for our aging population that are not funded and are not affordable, and the rampant printing of currency so the government can finance its out-of-control spending at the expense of all consumers. Compare the reputations of Christian business leaders with non-Christians and their track records of honesty, integrity, reliability, accountability, greed, fraud, litigation, embezzlement, and breaking commitments and contracts. Our personal finances look very similar to the world's too with our high debt levels, low savings rates, bankruptcies, investment choices,

accompanied the hymn with 19th century romantic style music.

The only thing left to do is feminize the preaching, and that's pretty easy to do. Now I happen to think there is a place for women in the church, and there's even a teaching role for them. But, if *only* women do the teaching, you can be certain that some things in the Bible will be left out.

Even many hymns display this gender bias. I don't know of any female who would write a hymn such as "Onward Christian Soldiers". It does not suit their feminized idea of Christianity. Military hymns are masculine in origin.

With many churches the majority attendance is women and many preachers today are just as afraid of preaching a militant theology of victory, unless it is spiritualized. Women don't take to this military stuff. They want a domesticated, feminized theology, based on love and affection. George Gilder, in his book, *Men and Marriage* (rev. ed. 1986), called this "The Taming of the Barbarians."

Now don't get me wrong. There's a place for feminization in culture. But it has limits. And if the feminine view is all that is preached from the pulpit, then the congregation gets a distorted view of what the Bible really teaches.

So the contemporary pulpit is often full of messages designed to make you "feel" good -- about yourself and about the world around about. It is emotionally driven theology as opposed to a more intellectually driven theology. There is a place for both. But you shouldn't have one without the other, and therein lays the problem. Too often we do get one without the other.

An identification of the feminized church is its emphasis on prayer rather than righteousness. There is a place for both, but the modern church would rather pray than debate the meaning and application of righteous principles -- God's law.

Discussion of legal principles is both philosophical and can be, at times, apparently abstract, both of which do not appeal to the feminine mind.

And therein lays the problem of the modern Christianity...an anti-intellectualism driven by a feminine view of life and Christianity.

Step 5: Radically Change the Theology

This piece of historical information should get your mind racing!

In trying to understand the cultural changes of recent centuries, one has to look at religion. Trying to find those changes and identify the shifts is like putting together a jig saw puzzle without having all the pieces on hand.

In reading post Reformation literature and history, you see this great "battle" for the culture, especially in England. Was it to be Protestant or Catholic -- with a third option in the wings - *neither!*

The Protestants (especially Presbyterians) had hoped to use the monarchy as a method to get control of England. They backed Charles II who, once in control got revenge for his father, Charles I, who had been put to death by Cromwell's parliament.

But the battle for political control took a different turn when the English Parliament assumed full control in 1688. It was not interested in religion Catholic or Protestant. It was interest was control.

Within 50 years of this date, you see a new kind of religious literature appearing. It had abandoned the idea of the kingdom of God on earth, and had become other worldly -- Pietistic.

materialism and charitable giving.

If you are a business owner, all of this spiritual, moral, and social decay should seriously concern you because the consequences directly affect your ability to operate an efficient, profitable enterprise.

How well can your business contain costs, eliminate waste, innovate, raise capital and deliver long term value to all stake holders if your managers, staff members and trading community are all die-hard socialists? Their decisions and actions will not be in alignment with God's instructions and your own values. The desired behavior you seek from them and the business requires you need from them in order to be competitive, prosper and create wealth will not be found. It costs businesses real dollars in terms of lost productivity from bad attitudes, poor work habits, and underperforming teams. It also costs money in terms of absenteeism, sick days, accidents, non-compliance fines, lawsuits, employee theft, and employee turn-over. The worldview or philosophies of employees and the community you function in really does affect your business and our entire economy.

As Christians we need to take a serious look at what we believe to be true regarding economics and societal prosperity and compare it to what God actually said. For us, the Mosaic covenant is our starting point and our guide. This covenant was not abolished with the coming of Christ. Rather, it was renewed and illuminated by Christ. Jesus said that he had not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Yeshua, our Jesus, is the goal of the covenant and He inaugurated it with His death and resurrection. This renewed covenant is with the nation of Israel, and we as believers are grafted in and are part of the nation of Israel, so the covenant applies to us too.

Since we have conformed so much to our society instead of obediently following God's instructions within the community of His chosen people, our thinking and actions are now far removed from God's original design. To restore what has been lost, we must begin by educating ourselves with truth and then teach all those within our community of faith and go out from there. Our obedience to God's instructions are for our own best interest and in these rapidly changing times of judgment and discipline for the sins of our nation. We need to return to God's standard.

Let's begin by examining the very controversial issue of debt.

Clearly, it is more desirable to have a positive net worth and positive monthly cash flows than to have a negative net worth or negative monthly cash flows. Truly it is more blessed to give than to receive because the giver has a surplus from which they can actually give something!

When individuals, businesses and governments use debt to finance purchases, they are leveraging their future expected incomes in order to acquire things in the present. Since we don't know the future, this could be tremendously presumptuous of us and we can easily and very quickly borrow much more than our future can support!

Having debt is not a sin, but our debts could be the result of sin in our lives from covetousness, greed, addictions, or simply not patiently trusting in God as our provider. God judges not only our actions, but also our thoughts and motivations. Therefore, if our debt is a result of sinful motives or disobedience that results in undisciplined behaviors and unwise decisions then we need to repent and change our attitudes and behaviors about money.

God commands us to be lenders to those in need and to not charge interest on loans to those in our community of faith that are poor and need the loans for their basic survival. (For the poor will never cease

Now the Pietistic movement with its origins on the European Continent had become a contentious movement. For with this movement had become an emphasis on religious *subjectivism*. According to Jaroslav Pelikan, the older phrase "Christ *for* us" had become "Christ *in* us." This subtle shift moved the view of Christ from an objective to a subjective one.

A study of Pietistic vocabulary would certainly show that in both homiletics and hymnody "Jesus" superseded "Christ" or "Jesus Christ" as the most common name, and -- perhaps even more significant -- that "Savior [*Heiland*]" replaced "Lord [*Herr*]" as his most common title. . . . (Pelikan, *Bach Among the Theologians*, pp. 64, 65.)

Notice the shift in language? But notice it is one of emphasis, not one of accuracy. Now the new emphasis would be on "Savior" rather than "Lord." It would be on "Jesus" rather than "Christ." And the hymns were one of the popular tools to express this new emphasis in Christian theology.

But the other new important word would be "love" rather than holiness -- emotional intimacy rather than moral righteousness.

And so we might see that culture is, after all, religion externalized, and Pietism directly influenced the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement that can be seen as a subset of putting human thought at the top of the pole.

Our modern culture is thus the victory of the emotions over intellect -- the feminine over the masculine -- in theology.

On this basis, the seeds of the transformation of the culture were sown soon after the Reformation with the Anabaptist and eventual Pietist movements. The widely held acceptance of the Pietists and their influence on the Wesley's, for example, is an indication that the roots of Pietist theology or its then radical changes to orthodox theology, and are not understood.

A question arises from this: would the modern world have been possible without these theological changes two centuries earlier?

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Master's Journey



New Books Recommended

Don't Give In...God Wants You to Win! by Thelma Wells, Harvest House Publishers, ISBN 978-0-7369-2614-0, 2009.

"Thelma's contagious energy and enthusiasm invites you to tackle life with a "can do" attitude."

to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, "You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in you land" Deuteronomy 15:11). Since this is true, it is not possible for debt to be considered a sin in this case. God would not have us lend money to our brother that would cause them to sin by being in debt to us.

Also, as creditors to the poor among us, we should be willing to forgive these loans if they are unable to pay them when they come due, and we must forgive them at the end of every seven years. (Deuteronomy 15:1-2)

When it comes to capitalizing a business or investing our surplus assets, debt is viewed differently than personal loans to the poor and needy. Debt financing of businesses is the cheapest form of capital when interest rates are low, and it offers the equity owners leverage that can potentially increase their returns on their equity investment. However, as the debt ratios increase, the risk of failure for the venture also increases. So, too much leverage in the capital structure of a business is a bad thing and it must be avoided. This tension between the risks and rewards of leverage should push us to our knees in prayer and cause us to seek the wisdom of multiple counselors to be sure that we are making business decisions that are in alignment with God's plans and purposes for our businesses. We must be careful to guard against the entrepreneurial tendencies of being overly optimistic and the delusions of perpetual growth and expansion in our businesses when our economy is characterized with boom and bust business cycles.

We have experienced unprecedented economic growth in our economy until recently. This growth has been greatly facilitated by the expansion of the money supply and access to easy and inexpensive credit. This credit boom has produced a nation of debt addicts. Our economy has become dependent upon debt to survive, and we have confused debt and the accumulation of things with true wealth and prosperity. If your total assets are \$1 million dollars and your total liabilities are \$2 million dollars, you are not wealthy! If your revenues and cash flows drop so that you can't afford your monthly payments on the \$2 million, you are bankrupt!

Unfortunately, we have ignored the numerous warnings about debt in Scripture, and we have been caught up in the illusion of wealth and prosperity in America that has been created by record high debt levels. As a nation, we are now beginning to pay for these mistakes and I suspect that it will continue to get worse.

Ecclesiastes tells us that there is an appointed time for everything, including a time to tear down, and a time to build up. We are being torn down, and this gives us an opportunity to repent, correct our mistakes and adjust our course of action.

For decades now our financial markets, fund managers and personal advisors have been focused on accumulating and growing assets to fund retirement using equity mutual funds and stocks but they must now shift this emphasis to preserving what's left of our decimated retirement portfolios and generating income from them as 75 million "boomers" enter retirement. The conventional wisdom is that as you grow older, you assume less and less risk and continue to shift assets out of equities and put them into bonds, which is government or corporate debt. How is this going to affect our markets, stock prices and the net worth of this most influential demographic?

Consider the future financial markets in light of our current economic and financial crisis, the aging Baby Boomer population, the insolvency of social security, the federal budget deficits and the expansionary monetary policy of the Federal Reserve. Since the federal government is already so highly leveraged, fiscally irresponsible, and incapable of meeting its entitlement program

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Christ Centered Reality Therapy by Tom Barnette, Xulon Press, ISBN 978-1-60791-578-2, 2009.

"Dr. Barnett's book on Christ Centered Reality Therapy (CCRT) persuasively and systematically pinpoints the key issues of effective counseling."

Dr. Barnett is a professional Christian counselor and the Senior Pastor of Believers Baptist Church in Pattison, Texas. He holds the Doctor of Biblical Studies from Master's International School of Divinity.



commitments to our nations seniors, do you want to invest your money in government treasuries? Traditionally this has been the safest investment, albeit with a low return, but it is not going to be a viable alternative for many seniors going forward who will need more supplemental income than they planned on - much more.

Also, investing your money by financing the debt of our publicly traded corporations given all of the significant problems of corporate governance, greed, fraud, corruption and excessive costs within the financial markets themselves is proving to be much less attractive. The problems in corporate America and the financial marketplace have severely damaged the trust that is essential for them to operate efficiently and effectively.

The financial markets today are characterized more by speculation and short term trading than they are long term disciplined investing and value creation. Our capital cannot continue being poured into a limited number of large corporations that are not adequately accountable to their shareholders, are not producing adequate returns or are unable to provide the required predictable cash flows to support retirees.

Instead, the Christian community must look to invest its surplus assets within the faith community through alternative investment options. Christians must separate themselves from the world's system and all of the problems and costs associated with our nation's largest corporations and the financial markets.

As wise stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to us, we need to be actively looking for people we can have a relationship with, and remain involved in our investment decisions by offering accountability, contacts, and our expertise to the business owners and entrepreneurs within the faith community to improve results and increase return on investment.

It's time to focus once again on the principles of kingdom economics as found in the Mosaic covenant. We need community, relationships and accountability to be successful at increasing the wealth and driving economic prosperity within the Christian community. We need to be intentional about working together in obedience to God's instructions for all of life so that we can be different and set apart for God. Then we will be salt and light to the world around us.

John C. Thorman works with the owners and executive management teams of small and medium sized companies to solve their problems and improve their results. As a management and marketing consultant, he is uniquely gifted to grasp the big picture and then execute winning strategies that bring about significant and profitable changes to an organization.

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Master's Journey



CAUTION: CARGO MAY SHIFT!

THIN SKINNED OR SKIN DEEP?

"Skin" is defined as "the external limiting tissue layer of an animal body" (www.m-w.com). I have skin, and i am very thankful that I do.

And since my whole body is covered with it I like it. I have a great appreciation for how important it is to me, and my fellow human beings. Take good care of your skin, and your skin will take good care of you!

However, unlike animals who have fur, feathers, and scales to cover their skin, human beings are what we call "naked." That is, we use clothes in place of fur, feathers, and scales. Without clothing, skin can be exposed to the damaging effects of a harsh environment. On the other hand, without clothes, others can be exposed to the harsh and damaging effects of ugly or unattractive skin. I like clothes!

Skin is kind of like money, show too little of it, and people will shy away from you, show too much of it and you will surely attract attention...and not always for the right reasons. Skin is like money in another way, it can be shown off as a means to an end.

Used to be that most folk knew when, where and how much skin to show off. Not so today, not even in church. There is plenty of skin to go around in church. I don't particularly like bright flashing lights, but they are hard to not notice, even if they make you sick. Skin is like that. Over the past few weeks I've seen lots of flashing lights at church. Some have been for effect on the worship(?) stage, and others have come from navels, thighs, backs and fronts...I think you know what I mean by "fronts."

Did I say I like skin? Lately, I've developed a decided dislike for some of it. Especially where it is *the external limiting tissue layer* of the more provocative areas of the human body. Not because it covers the human body in those places, but because I already know that people have it there, and do not find any satisfaction in being reminded of it in church. Am I being too thin skinned, or am I just fed up with those who parade a culture which for morality seems hardly more than skin deep?



Views expressed in the Ark Rocker are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of Master's Journey or the Divinity School. MJ