

Inherit the Earth (1)

By Andrew McColl, 24th July, 2012.

Today, I begin a new multi-part series on Christian economics.

It was not necessary that God fill the Promised Land with every conceivable natural resource. It was only necessary that He give them His law and the grace to obey it, which allows men's creativity to flourish. This creativity is the basis of most economic growth. Raw materials have always been available. What makes them valuable is men's knowledge of productive, consumer-satisfying things to do with them. What makes them worth searching for and digging up is the income potential provided by other men with other things to exchange. He who has the productive skills that produce the finished products that consumers desire to buy will not lack anything in whatever land God places him, but only for as long as there is freedom.¹

The Bible is relevant to economics, as it is for every other area of human thought and endeavour. It is not only relevant: it is essential. God gave us the Bible for these reasons: that we might read, study and obey it. We were not given Bibles to serve as ornaments in our churches and homes, or as relics to imply that this is a book to be revered, but essentially ignored.

When men go to God and the Bible with faith, honesty and obedient hearts, God reveals Himself and His glorious plans to them. This has always been how He deals with people. Consider Josiah, the king of Judah from 642-611 B.C. Josiah became king when eight years old, and the Bible says “in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, he began to seek the God of his father David (II Chron.34:3).

He began the long term process of tearing down the altars of Baal, getting rid of all the national aspects of paganism that had built up for generations, and began to rebuild the house of God. While work was being done on the house of God, a copy of the law of God was given to Josiah, and Shaphan the scribe read from it in the presence of the king.

The Bible says that “when the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes” (v.19), for he realised how far Judah had departed from God’s Word. Josiah acknowledged that “great is the wrath of the Lord which is poured out on us because our fathers have not observed the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book” (v.21).

What was the outcome? Josiah received a promise from God through a prophetic:

“Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and because you humbled yourself before Me, tore your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,” declares the Lord. “Behold, I will gather you to your fathers and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, so your

¹ Gary North, “Inheritance and Dominion,” 1999, ch.20.

eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place and on its inhabitants...” (II Chron.34:27-28).

What God did for humble Josiah, He will do today for His people. Why? Because He is in covenant with them, as he was with Josiah.

But it’s a foolish person indeed, who claims that “that was the Old Testament Andrew, and Josiah lived 2,600 years ago. We’re living under God’s grace now, don’t you know?”

My response to such a comment, is to remind people what the Bible says in the New Testament: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb.13:8). His standards remain the same. Furthermore, where does the Bible ever suggest that God’s grace means we are not obligated to obey His Word? God gives us grace so we CAN obey His Word.

The Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20) show us that God has absolute standards. “Absolute” means they are not negotiable. “Thou shalt not steal,” prohibits theft of any kind. The modern world has rejected this. Today, we say, “thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote.” So, socialists say, “you rich people have lots of money. We want to take much of it from you and give it to poor people, and we’ll find voters who will go along with us,” and they do. But as Frederic Bastiat wisely predicted,

When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living together in society, they create for themselves in the course of time, a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.

Then God’s consequences arrive:

The Bible is clear: When the central government collects as much in taxes as God demands in the form of a tithe – 10% – the nation has moved into tyranny. It has moved in the direction of Egypt. The Israelites in Samuel’s era, let it be noted, wanted this change in administration. They wanted a highly centralized State. They voted for it.

Conclusion: There is no political salvation in democracy if the voters are hell-bent for tyranny...So, the tax ratchet will continue upward. The regulatory system will tighten. If the victims cannot recognize tyranny when they are taxed by it, then they are blind indeed. They need additional experience with tyranny. They will get it.²

Economics means how we think about and deal with God’s assets. As Christians we accept that He owns everything. Here is the basic framework for the whole picture:

The Basics of Christian Economics: (based on the Biblical covenant model):

- 1. God owns everything.*
- 2. Men owe God everything.*
- 3. God establishes the ethical rules of ownership.*

² Gary North, “Taxation under the Pharaohs and Today,” 2008.

4. Profit and loss are the appropriate sanctions.

5. Covenant keepers inherit.³

I am deeply indebted to Dr Gary North (www.garynorth.com) for his insights in economics, and these points greatly explain how Christians must prepare to inherit the earth, which Jesus predicted we would (Mat.5:5).

But before then, we'll have some learning to do. Before then, we'll have to undergo some pain, because of our ignorance and disobedience, which stretches back centuries. This disobedience and ignorance has contributed to the bad state of the world today.

Are you ready to change?

³ Gary North, 9/6/2012.

Inherit the Earth (2)

By Andrew McColl, 31th July, 2012

Liberation and the law of God go together. God's announcement to His people that He is the God who delivered them from Egypt, and then His presentation of the Ten Commandments, makes this connection between freedom and Biblical law inescapably clear. The Christian economist who takes God's word seriously has a responsibility to begin to examine the case-law applications of God's law to see where economic issues are involved, and what requirements God sets forth for economic relationships.

To abandon faith in the reliability of God's law in economics is to abandon faith in what the Bible proclaims as the only basis of liberation, namely, liberation under the sovereign power of God, who sustains the universe and calls all men to conform themselves to His ethical standards in every area of life, in time and on earth.⁴

It requires a major shift in attitude for Christians today, to come to grips with the idea that God's law implies permanent economic principles. Oh yes, we accept the commandment that "Thou shalt not steal" in general terms, but go any further? I don't think so. We baulk at that. Our predisposition to distance ourselves from the Old Testament (where the fundamentals of Christian economics are laid out), because of our false idea that the Old Testament isn't that relevant anyway put us at the mercy of humanists, and makes us vulnerable to compromise and abuse.

This is logical. In giving up the Old Testament as a valid place for practical, day to day doctrine, we forsook the very knowledge and resource that could sustain us from the attacks of humanism. We trade the crown jewels of Christian doctrine, for what? A few centuries later (for that's how long it's taken), we find ourselves consistently on the back foot all around the world, and then we say, "How did all this happen?"

It happened when we stopped obeying God. We gave up the linkages between the Old Testament law, with its dual emphases on liberation and responsibility, and accepted (even with misgivings) the creeping role of an ambitious, avaricious and ruthless State. So when the stable door drifted open in the wind and the stallion bolted for the hills, it was the negligent stable hands (the Church) who were to blame.

Now, we've got a recovery job on our hands, but who wants to take a saddle and bridle and go off to the hills to find that wayward horse? "Too hard. I'd rather sit around the stable door." Then the property owner arrives, and wants to know where his prize stallion is.

Let me show you what was both a dreadful and classic example from history. The rise of the totalitarians in the twentieth century was preceded by the decline of the church in those particular nations. Just like a see-saw, one declined: the other arose. Take Germany.

⁴ Gary North, "The Sinai Strategy," 1986, p.23-24.

For decades before the rise of Hitler, Christians were subjected to arguments like the following from pastors and theologians based on the two-kingdom theory:

*The Gospel has absolutely nothing to do with outward existence but only with eternal life, not with external orders and institutions which could come in conflict with the secular orders but only with the heart and its relationship with God.*⁵

*The Gospel frees us from this world, frees us from all questions of this world, frees us inwardly, also from the questions of public life, also from the social question. Christianity has no answer to these questions.*⁶

*Once the Christian understands the moral significance of the state, Wilhelm Hermann declared in 1913, "he will consider obedience to the government to be the highest vocation within the state. For the authority of the state on the whole, resting as it does upon authority of the government, is more important than the elimination of any shortcomings which it might have. . . . For the person who is inwardly free, it is more important [that] the state preserve its historical continuity than that he obtain justice for himself."*⁷

You thought the problem for Germany was Hitler and the Nazis? Oh no. Germany's problems went back well before the term Nazi was ever coined, to the abandonment of proper Biblical responsibility by German theologians and pastors, some fifty years earlier. *When there's mist in the pulpit, there'll be fog in the pew.*

Where must change begin? With us. Who else has the mandate from God? If the Church is "the pillar and support of the truth" (I Tim.3:15), isn't it logical that Biblical truth must be applied to economics too?

Our negligence has already cost us enormously, and it will cost us a lot more yet. It is Christians who must take up this charge from God to see Biblical law, including God's economic law, restored to the world. Otherwise there will be no end to the pillage and plunder in the community.

*If Christians are to make a consistent Biblical case for economic freedom, they must make it in terms of the Pentateuch. There is no other way to make a Christian case for economic freedom.*⁸

⁵ Christian Ernst Luthard (1867). Quoted by Pierard from Karl H. Hertz, "Two Kingdoms in One World: a Sourcebook in Christian Ethics," (Minneapolis:Augustburg, 1976.) p.83. Quoted by Gary Demar, "Facts do not Speak for Themselves," American Vision website, July 27, 2010.

⁶ Hertz, p.91.

⁷ Hertz, p.87.

⁸ Gary North, "The Dominion Covenant," 1987, p.xxvi.

Inherit the Earth (3)

By Andrew McColl, 7/8/2012

Introduction:

*Believers have for over a century retreated into antinomian pietism and pessimism. This retreat began in the 1870's. They have lost the vision of victory which once motivated Christians to evangelize and then take over the Roman Empire. They have abandoned faith in one or more of the five features of Christian social philosophy that make progress possible: (1) the absolute sovereignty of the Creator God; (2) God's covenant that governs all men; (3) the tool of the covenant, Biblical law;(4) Biblical pre-suppositionalism-the self-attesting truth of an infallible Bible, which is the ultimate judge of everything; and (5) the dynamic of **eschatological optimism**. We should conclude, then, that either the dissolution of modern humanist culture is at hand, or else the regenerate must regain sight of their lost theological heritage: dominion optimism and Biblical law.⁹*

In 1985, a U. S. Anglican minister named Ray Sutton made a remarkable discovery. He had been considering the Bible's symbols of covenant: in the Old Testament, circumcision and Passover, and in the New Testament, baptism and communion. What did they have in common, and what precisely, is the covenant?

One Old Testament scholar he consulted, Meredith Kline, suggested that Deuteronomy's structure had significant parallels with the ancient pagan world's suzerain (king-vassal) treaties. The king (suzerain) would initially announce his sovereignty over a nation, demand loyalty, impose sanctions for disobedience, offer protection for obedience, publish a law code, and establish the rules of succession.¹⁰ Kline suggested that these might have five, six or seven parts. Were these treaties original documents, or had they in their day, been taken from Biblical literature? Intrigued, Sutton looked at Deuteronomy himself, to see if there was an identifiable structure; he found five parts.

Then, he examined other books of the Bible that were known to be divided into 5 parts: the Psalms, and Matthew's Gospel. He also found a five part structure in some of Paul's epistles, such as Romans. This led him to a conclusion: *there was a 5 part structure to the Biblical covenant.*¹¹

The Covenant Structure:

What is a covenant? God comes before man and 'lays down the law'-His law. Man must either conform to God and His law, or be destroyed. As He told Adam, "Eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and you will die."

⁹ North, G., "Liberating Planet Earth," 1987, p.142.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.52.

¹¹ Sutton, R., "That You May Prosper," 1997. Sutton details his discoveries and conclusions. This paper draws heavily from his work.

*God deals with men as a king deals with his subjects. His covenant is to prosper us when we obey and curse us when we rebel.*¹²

Sutton concluded that a Biblical covenant has five sections:

- 1) An announcement that God is transcendent- the supreme Creator and deliverer of mankind. God is completely superior to and different from men and the world He created, yet He is also present with it: *immanent*.
- 2) The establishment of a *hierarchy* to enforce God's authority on earth.
- 3) A set of *rules* or laws man must follow in exercising his dominion over the earth. God will judge man by how he follows these rules.
- 4) A list of *judgments* that will be imposed by God, who blesses man for obedience and curses man for disobedience.
- 5) A program of *inheritance*- a lawful transition that mortal men need in order to extend their dominion over creation.¹³

This can be abbreviated, this way:

- 1) Transcendence/Immanence (presence)
- 2) Hierarchy/Authority (submission)
- 3) Law/Dominion (stipulations)
- 4) Judgment/Oath (sanctions)
- 5) Inheritance/Continuity (survival)

Another abbreviation, drawing on the acronym THEOS (the Greek term for God), is:

- 1) Transcendence
- 2) Hierarchy
- 3) Ethics
- 4) Oath
- 5) Succession

A light-hearted way of considering this, is:

- 1) Whose in charge here?

¹² North, G., "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.5.

¹³ North, G., "Inherit the Earth," p.6.

- 2) To whom do I report?
- 3) What are the rules?
- 4) What happens to me if I obey (disobey)?
- 5) Does this outfit have a future?

B. The Structure Elaborated:

Remarkably, the Great Commission itself is essentially a paraphrase of the five components of the covenant: *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Mat.28:18-20).

Covenantally, these verses can be considered this way:

- 1) Christ is sovereign over heaven and earth, yet present with His people. He is both transcendent (high above) and immanent (present) with us.
- 2) He is the Supreme Commander over a hierarchy, so His followers are to bring the nations under Christ's authority through baptism.
- 3) His kingdom is a kingdom of law, meaning ethics, for Christians are commanded to teach men to observe (obey) all that He commands.
- 4) He judges the nations, for baptism is a covenant sign, a form of oath taken before God; violating the terms of the Biblical covenant always brings cursing (Deut.28:15-68), while obedience brings blessings (Deut.28:1-14).
- 5) There is continuity over the generations of men, for He promises to be with His people always, to the end of the age.¹⁴

¹⁴ De Mar, G., "Ruler of the Nations," 1987, p.4.

Inherit the Earth (4)

By Andrew McColl, 14/8/2012

I. God Owns the World

The first principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of transcendence: God's absolute supremacy. God reigns supreme over everything. This means that He is high above the creation, and totally different from it. We deal with a sovereign God. In short, God runs the show.

This principle of transcendence relates to economics because ownership is ultimately theocentric (God-centred). He created all that exists, and He is at the centre of the universe as its owner. This means that ownership is ultimately a religious concept. It cannot be properly understood without reference to God as the absolute owner of the creation. Similarly, it is impossible to discuss properly the responsibilities of ownership (which is what this book is all about) without also discussing what God specifically requires of men in their capacity as owners of property.¹⁵

Genesis 1:1 tells us that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” What does this make clear? God and His creation are separate. He is infinite, but what He made isn't- it is finite. And if God as the sovereign of the universe made it, then He owns it. As the Bible says elsewhere, “...everything that moves in the field is Mine” (Ps.50:11).

Because God made and owns everything, then He does with it what He likes, because it's His! Speaking as a landowner, Jesus said in His parable, “is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own?” (Mat.20:15) He gives account to no one; as the owner, He makes the rules.

But He doesn't wish to rule what He has without delegation, and His declared vice-regent (Gen.1:26-28) is man. He placed the first people in the Garden of Eden, so they could learn responsibility in this training ground. They had tasks to apply themselves to in the garden, and they had a wonderful relationship with God, Who was teaching them many things.

They were learning property management. They had great freedom, but didn't own what was entrusted to them, and so they were stewards of God's resources, like every person today. Paul encouraged the Corinthians, “let a man regard us in this manner as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (I Cor.4:1).

A steward has obligations and responsibility; he does not have the position merely to please himself, but to honour and please the one who placed him there. That means accountability for use of time, what tasks are engaged in, and how the work is done.

¹⁵ Gary North, “Inherit the Earth,” 1987, p.11.

The first law of the garden was obedience: “the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘from any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die’” (Gen.2:16-17).

Just as God revealed what He required of Adam and Eve in the garden, so He has shown us today what He requires of us, in the Bible. The Ten Commandments speak of the issue of ownership: “you shall not steal” (Ex.20:15). This commandment teaches us that private property is a Biblical concept, established by God right from the beginning as the owner of the garden. To ignore the issue of private property today leads to theft.

God’s ownership of all things has important implications for everyone, today. When men own things, they tend to act faithfully to the Biblical teaching that we are made in the image of God: we want to get the most out of our assets by putting them to the most effective use. That means a profit and loss analysis, which is a good thing to do. Most of the time, we want the best return: “more bang for your buck,” we say today. If place A promises more return in a year than place B, I’ll put my money in place A. “Highest bid wins.”

What God established as the rule of the garden of Eden, is certainly just as applicable for us today. He effectively said to Adam and Eve, as representatives of humanity, “this is My land, so work here My way.” Every owner of assets says the same thing today, and has Biblical justification for doing so.

Conclusion:

We can begin our study of economic principles by assuming the following beliefs:

- 1. God is the supreme Creator.*
- 2. God is the absolute owner of all property.*
- 3. God declared that man should rule over (have dominion over) the other creatures of the earth.*
- 4. God gives man the responsibility of property management (stewardship before God).*
- 5. Ownership is a social function (stewardship before men).*
- 6. God has established standards for legal ownership.*
- 7. God has established laws for man's management of God's property.*
- 8. Biblical law reveals these standards.*
- 9. Man, unlike God, has limited knowledge.*
- 10. Profit-and-loss standards help men discover the best use of the property which God has entrusted to them.*
- 11. The free market economy is a giant auction.*
- 12. The normal rule of this giant auction is "high bid wins."*
- 13. The middleman is the economic agent of consumers.*
- 14. Biblical law establishes the proper rules of ownership and administration of property.¹⁶*

¹⁶ *ibid*, p.22.

Inherit the Earth (5)

By Andrew McColl, 28/8/2012

The first principle of a Biblical covenant is transcendence. God is the Creator. How does this apply to man in his relation to the creation? Man is made in God's image. Therefore, man is a ruler over creation, too.

In the Old Testament, the guardians of God's holy sanctuary were the priests. This is why the Old Testament occasionally refers to the religious leaders as gods. "God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods. How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?" (Ps.82:1-2). Men are rulers, or judges, over the creation. "I said, You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Ps. 82:6-7).

God's judgment was to fall on the religious leaders just as it was about to fall on princes. They all judged unrighteously. Thus, men are to exercise their rulership over the creation, which is similar to the absolute rulership which God exercises over His creation. This is what the first principle of the covenant, the Creator-creature distinction between a transcendent God and dependent men points to. Man is God's image and God's lawful representative on earth.¹⁷

Men and women are created beings. We are not God, but we are made in His image to exercise rulership. And what should distinguish Christian men and women in this regard, is their willingness to exercise *representative* rulership.

Jesus understood this. Speaking of His Heavenly Father, He said "...I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (Jn.8:29).

We have already observed that the garden of Eden was Adam and Eve's proving ground. God placed them there, with a condition: leave the tree of the knowledge of good and evil alone. God had excluded them.

Why? Because they were subordinates. The tree was not theirs. They were on probation. They had to show through their obedience that they were capable of the limited tasks assigned to them. As it turned out, they weren't.

When Adam and Eve rebelled in the garden, they tried to overturn the principle of property rights. They were agreeing with the devil, accepting the legitimacy of theft as a life principle. What did God do? He threw them all out of the garden: Adam, Eve and Satan.

God's action didn't represent the abolition of property rights, but the reinforcement of them. Adam and Eve before the fall had greater freedom of movement. Now they had less, because an angelic guard was there to keep them out of the garden (Gen.3:22-24).

¹⁷ Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.74.

The notion of exclusion is Biblical, and necessary. The notions of property rights (“Thou shalt not steal”-Ex.20:15), and the sanctity of marriage (“Thou shalt not commit adultery”-Ex.20:14), is contingent on property rights. It is important to note that socialists historically have disputed this fact, and thrown into question the notion of private property. Why? They want maximum control of everything, so that nothing is excluded from the power of government, including the education and control of children.

Conclusion:

1. *God, as the sovereign owner, excludes men from whatever He chooses to keep for Himself.*
2. *He chooses some for eternal life (adoption, Jn.1:12), and excludes others (Ro.9).*
3. *He delegates to men a limited legal power to exclude others in every area of life.*
4. *Redeemed men are to take dominion from Satan's followers in every area of life.*
5. *Redeemed men are therefore to exclude rebellious men from ownership in every area of life.*
6. *The means of lawful economic exclusion is productivity within a competitive market, not political force.*
7. *This power of exclusion operates in every area of life: family, church, State, business, education, etc.*
8. *Exclusion is basic to dominion: it is the training ground for personal responsibility.*
9. *Ownership (the right to exclude) of property is not to be violated by the State, just as the right to exclude others in marriage is not to be violated.*
10. *The State is not to become the single owner; therefore, the State cannot legitimately abolish private property.*
11. *Socialism is theft: the illegitimate exclusion by the State of lawful owners.*
12. *Socialism is therefore anti-dominion and pro-power.*
13. *Socialism is historically and theoretically anti-family.¹⁸*

¹⁸ *ibid*, p.84-85.

Inherit the Earth (6)

By Andrew McColl, 11/9/2012

II. Dominion by Subordination

The second principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of hierarchy-authority. God directly and personally controls His creation (principle one: transcendence). Nevertheless, God, the sovereign owner who created the universe, has delegated to mankind the full responsibility of caring for the creation as a whole. God doesn't directly control the earth apart from those He has chosen to manage His property. He directly controlled all of it during the first week of creation, but He no longer does. In His providential control and mercy, He has decided to delegate control over His property to mankind throughout history.¹⁹

Despite the fact that God has all power and all knowledge, He is not what we call today, a “control freak.” He owns all things, but has delegated much of the oversight and control over the earth to men. The scripture says that “the heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of men” (Ps.115:16). That is what He began to do with Adam, in the garden. And that is what He has done through the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom the Bible calls “the last Adam” and “the second man” (I Cor.15:45, 47).

How do we know this? Because Jesus said “all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Mat.28:18). How does God do this? By redeeming His people from the dominion of Satan through Christ, and giving them His Word (the Bible) and His Spirit, so that they can go about the task of subduing the world for Him. The Psalmist said concerning man, “You [God] made him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet” (Ps.8:6). Thus He places men and women in places of authority and responsibility, all over the earth.

Men are not responsible to have their own ideas about how to get things done on God’s behalf. We are to be self-starters, for sure. But we are always to start by obeying the commands of God, for He has given us our marching orders.

This means that Christians ought to be people of the book-the Bible. We are to seriously study how to apply the scriptures to all situations we may find ourselves in, in order that we may put into practice God’s plans and not our own. This is what the Bible refers to when it tells us, “Great are the works of the Lord; they are studied by all who delight in them” (Ps.111:2).

With knowledge comes responsibility. In one place, God lamented saying, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos.4:6). Thus ignorance is not an excuse before God. We are thus duty-bound to find out what it is that God requires of us, and to do it. Great men and women in the Bible did not see themselves as independent people, but as His servants.

¹⁹ Gary North, “Inherit the Earth,” 1987, p.23.

This was the case with Paul. When this arrogant and self-righteous Jew was converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), he learnt to submit to the authority of God, represented by a person, Ananias (Acts 9:5-19). As he grew in the faith, he gained the ability to take a lot more responsibility as an apostle. But how did it all begin? When he submitted to the authority of God on the road to Damascus, accepting God's direction for his life.

Men outside of Christ reject His authority. They suppress the truth about God (Ro.1:18-22), because to acknowledge the truth would require them to change their attitudes and behaviour. They say in effect, "there is no God, no providential oversight of the world. It is up to us to make our own plans and decisions, based upon our knowledge and attitudes."

The political outworking of this in the twentieth century led to socialism's central planning, which places a great responsibility upon central planners, that restrict individual initiative and liberty in favour of their "master plan."

But socialism has never benefitted anyone except bureaucrats and politicians. Its inherent restrictions stifle growth, because people are not able to go about their life unimpeded by government control. Socialism has always been wasteful, inefficient and frustrating, actually leading to greater poverty for the community.

Men are called to enjoy their service and liberty under God, while they engage in productive and profitable pursuits, in serving the community. And the basis of this is always to be God's law.

In short, Christians are supposed to recognize that authority is inescapable, and therefore that hierarchy is inescapable. It's always a question of whose authority and what kind of hierarchy. To understand the nature of responsible ownership before God, we need to acknowledge these Biblical principles:

1. *Men are responsible primarily to God.*
2. *God is the only true central planner.*
3. *The primary agency of economic planning is the family, as the primary owner of property.*
4. *The primary agent of the family is the husband.*
5. *Socialistic central planning is demonic; it is man's attempt to replace God.*
6. *Socialistic central planning requires a tyrannical elite.*
7. *Individual responsibility requires individual initiative.*
8. *Individual initiative requires personal liberty.*
9. *Obedience to God is the basis of liberty.*
10. *Reconciling differences requires a system of appeals courts (plural).*
11. *Men are responsible (subordinate) to several human agencies.*
12. *No one human institution is absolutely sovereign.*
13. *Submission to authority is absolutely necessary. Man must serve someone.*
14. *Leadership begins with "followership."*
15. *Man operating independently from God (autonomy) results in failure and defeat.*
16. *Wealth flows toward those who accept personal responsibility for their actions.*
17. *Responsible action requires a concept of law and ethics.*
18. *Biblical law is the basis of responsible dominion.*²⁰

²⁰ *ibid*, p.35-36.

Inherit the Earth (7)

By Andrew McColl, 18/9/2012

A continuing theme in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is the danger of debt. The Bible is clear: the borrower is servant to the lender. This principle of debt-free living is an aspect of the second principle of a Biblical covenant. The second principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of authority-hierarchy. There is no escape from authority and hierarchies: the dominion of some men over others according to their ability. Hierarchy is an inescapable concept. It's never a question of hierarchy vs. no hierarchy. It's only a question of which hierarchy. It's a question of who rules over whom in which spheres of life.

In the field of applied economics, the principle of authority applies in several areas: employer-employee, master-servant, teacher-apprentice, and so forth. The Biblical response to God in the field of personal economics is the tithe: God is to be honoured by a payment of ten percent of our increase after taxes. (God does not expect us to pay Him for any increase which has been eaten by locusts or the modern equivalent of locusts, tax collectors.) We acknowledge our obedience to Him by paying Him His tithe.²¹

Dominion and hierarchy are facts of life. The important first question is, “Whose dominion?” The Bible shows that God owns all things, and He wants to use His people in places of authority and responsibility to serve Him. But they cannot do this effectively, if they are tangled up in debt.

Why? The Bible says that “...the borrower becomes the lender’s slave” (Prov.22:7). A person’s ability to serve God is compromised if they have to pay back their debts. No man can serve two masters.

The Christian should always follow the “Good” principle-Get Out Of Debt, and then stay out of debt, so that his service to God is not compromised. That simply means that he does not borrow money, and learns to make do with what he has.

Should the Christian make every effort to increase his income and productivity? Of course. This is one aspect of what it means to be a diligent person: “the hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack hand will be put to forced labour” (Prov.12:24). That way he has money set aside for unforeseen events, and is able to plan for future expenditures, without needing to borrow money and pay it back, with interest.

Modern governments have laughed at this idea. Their attitude has commonly been, “Spend till the End,” and the outcome of this attitude has been disastrous for communities, who then have to pay back foolish government borrowings that were used to finance foolish government

²¹ Gary North, “Inherit the Earth,” 1987, p.86.

schemes. Furthermore, this indifferent attitude of governments to debt could very well lead to another financial calamity, similar to the Great Depression.

When Christians are prepared to work hard, avoid debt, plan for their future, save their money and tithe to their local church, they can have confidence to ask God for His blessing on what they do. This approach is one of the key aspects of being free, self-motivated people under God. These kinds of people are rewarded with dominion by God. "... You have given me the inheritance of those that fear Your Name" (Ps.61:5).

Conclusion:

1. *There is no escape from servitude: we either serve God or Mammon.*
2. *The debtor is servant to the lender.*
3. *Christians are to serve God.*
4. *This service to God is manifested by our tithing to God through His church.*
5. *The debtor has mortgaged his future.*
6. *He has thereby announced that he can see the future.*
7. *The Old Testament limited debt to no more than seven years (Deuteronomy 15).*
8. *The New Testament says that we should not be in debt at all (Romans 13:8).*
9. *This applies to all institutions.*
10. *Usury is Biblically defined as any interest payment from a charitable loan.*
11. *Usury is not defined as "high interest."*
12. *Lending to "foreigners" is a means of bringing them under God's yoke.*
13. *Politically controlled money gives debtors a means of defrauding creditors and bringing them under Satan's yoke.*
14. *Widespread long-term debt leads to political pressures for monetary inflation.*
15. *Monetary inflation is a form of theft.²²*

²² *ibid*, p.97-98.

Inherit the Earth (8)

By Andrew McColl, 25/9/2012

III. Ethics-Dominion

The third principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of ethics-dominion. The basis of long-term authority is obedience to God's law. This principle of dominion through moral obedience is related to economics in numerous ways, but nothing is clearer than the Bible's prohibition against theft. The eighth commandment (seventh, if you're a Lutheran) prohibits theft. This unquestionably is the basis of a defence of the idea of private property.

More important, as we learn in the tenth commandment, God's law requires the protection of family property. The tenth commandment prohibits coveting anything that is our neighbour's. It prohibits the mental origin of grasping, greedy evil. The eighth commandment prohibits theft - a visible manifestation of this coveting process. It establishes for all time that it's illegal and immoral for an individual to steal property which belongs to someone else. As we shall see, it's equally illegal in God's sight to get the State to steal for you. The commandment doesn't say, "You shall not steal, except by majority vote."²³

All of God's law witnesses to the fact that Biblical ethical behaviour is critical for the Christian. This was the first point of conflict that Adam and Eve faced in the garden. God's Word to Adam and Eve was "do it my way," but Satan contradicted this. He effectively said, "Oh no, Adam and Eve. God's keeping something from you, can't you see? Do it my way!" Their decision to follow Satan led to them being guilty of theft, and their expulsion from the garden.

When the devil sought to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, his strategy was no different. He sought to subvert God's Word, and introduce a different plan for Jesus to follow.

Socialists are religious people, and they believe in ethics too: their kind. The Bible tells us that "...there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc.1:9), and the socialist's vision has come straight from the garden, and is one of theft: theft from people by government. The socialist says to the community, "We really care for you. In fact, we care so much we are willing to take extra money in taxes from those people in the community who are making a lot, and give it to the marginalised and the underprivileged in the community. And this will solve so many problems and make life for the community so much easier."

This also is a form of subversion; an attack on God through an attack on people whom God made. This form of government requires increases in taxation, or government debt, or both. Socialism has never made a community more prosperous, because it relies on coercion, it restricts individual choice, restricts the profit incentive for individuals and business people

²³ Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987.

through increased taxation, and then has to pay a whole army of bureaucrats to ensure there is an “appropriate” distribution of the wealth in the community. As a result, the community is poorer.

The Christian would rather be able to use his gifts and talents as he chooses, because the Bible instructs us to “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil.2:13). He would rather be able to make individual choices rather than be coerced, and he wants to see the poor cared for in the way that God has ordained, namely through individuals, the family and the church.

Every other form of government is a form of theft, is harmful to society, and is cursed of God.

The following Biblical economic principles are essential if we are to exercise effective, God-honouring dominion:

- 1. God is the absolute owner of property.*
- 2. Adam's rebellion was displayed as an act of theft. It began with the desire for something that was not his.*
- 3. Tyranny always involves theft (Pharaoh).*
- 4. The best cooperation is voluntary cooperation.*
- 5. Self-interested people cooperate voluntarily.*
- 6. Beggars don't exercise dominion.*
- 7. Appeals to charity are not to become the primary basis of gaining other people's cooperation.*
- 8. Theft by ballot box is not to become the basis of gaining other people's cooperation.*
- 9. Socialism and Communism are religions of humanism, for they are based on the belief in political man (rather than God) as the supreme ruler.*
- 10. Men's view of time affects their view of life.*
- 11. Present-oriented people suffer from poverty, both of the spirit and the pocketbook.*
- 12. Present-oriented people are lower-class people.*
- 13. Future-oriented people are upper-class people.*
- 14. Christianity is a future-oriented religion.²⁴*

²⁴ *ibid*, p.48.

Inherit the Earth (9)

By Andrew McColl, 18/9/2012

The third principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of ethics-dominion. For a man to begin to exercise dominion under God, he must be able to present himself as a living sacrifice before God (Romans 12:1). He must be allowed to offer himself and his talents before God and men. In short, he should be allowed to enter any market and offer his goods or services to consumers.

It's easy to misinterpret Paul's words. He isn't talking about how to get into heaven. He is talking about what to do on earth before you arrive at heaven's gate. Paul didn't say to work your way into heaven, or to make your own works the basis of your salvation. What he said was to work out the salvation which is yours with fear and trembling. He assumes that you already have received your salvation by grace through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ at Calvary.²⁵

Every person has assets. When God made Adam and Eve, they didn't have clothes, but they had assets in terms of health, mobility and intellectual capacity. They didn't know much, but God made it His task to teach them.

One of the most important things Christians should do is submit all their talents and abilities (their assets) to God. We all tend to find out over time what we are good at, what we like doing, and what people will pay us the most to do. And when we have determined these things, we should go to work to serve the community as well as we can, earning as much as we can, doing the things we enjoy the most. As the saying goes, "stick to your knitting."

The market place speaks to us. Where we can earn the most money, is generally what we should be doing with ourselves for a living. I have little ability in artistic work, or in carpentry. Why should I try to be an artist or a carpenter? But, I do have some intellectual ability, and seem to be able to write, so this is generally what I stick to.

The fact that God has made all people different, attests to the fact that He expects us all to be doing different things. Yes, there are thousands of artists and carpenters, but within art and carpentry there are realms of specialisation which individuals gravitate to, because that's what they like. In all probability, this is God's plan for them. With their work and output, they buy money.

The extremely successful comedian Bob Hope (1903-2003), when asked why he had cut short a fishing vacation, said "Fish don't clap." He'd clearly found his calling.

The ability to trade freely with one's assets is an aspect of the free-market, which itself is Biblical in origin. To restrict buying and selling is really a form of warfare against an individual or nation. To say to an individual, "you can't engage in that form of work here," only penalises them for gravitating to that occupation God has created them for. Thus it is counter-productive and evil.

²⁵ Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.99.

To say to a foreign manufacturer, “you can’t bring those goods into this country,” is only penalising them for producing and doing what they are good at, which is what God has given them to do. This too is evil, and a violation of the free-market.

To say to a foreign manufacturer, “you’ll have to pay 20% of the value of those goods to our government, to bring them into this country,” penalises that manufacturer, and also penalises the local consumer, who presumably has to pay 20% more for that product. Thus, it is a tax on the local people who want to buy that product, and stifles the flow of money and goods into the exporting nation. It may lead to the nation of origin imposing its own set of tariffs.

Thus in every way, tariffs are short-sighted and counter-productive, and never a good idea. But open borders to trade say to people, “Yes, you can come in here. You can work, buy and sell and do whatever you want. We want you.” And in the long-run that’s what proves to be a boon and a blessing to everyone.

Conclusion:

1. *People are responsible for their actions.*
2. *Christians should avoid slavery.*
3. *Each person knows his own skills and needs best- certainly better than bureaucrats do.*
4. *Western civilization was built in terms of self-responsibility.*
5. *The basis of profit in a competitive free market is service to the consumer.*
6. *A free market allows each seller to make any offer to consumers.*
7. *A free market allows each buyer to make any offer to producers.*
8. *Every buyer is also a seller, and every seller is also a buyer.*
9. *Sellers compete against sellers, while buyers compete against buyers.*
10. *The free market is a giant auction.*
11. *If I want sellers to compete to serve me as a consumer, I must allow sellers to compete against me as a producer.*
12. *Free trade means free trade for everyone, regardless of his geographical location.*
13. *A tariff is a tax.*
14. *An import barrier is at the same time an export barrier.*
15. *The worldwide division of labour increases everyone's opportunities, meaning everyone's wealth.*²⁶

²⁶ *ibid*, p.110.

Inherit the Earth (10)

By Andrew McColl, 9/10/2012

IV. Judgment-Evaluation

The fourth principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of judgment-evaluation. The covenant specifies penalties for breaking the terms of the covenant. What the economist calls scarcity was God's temporal curse on Adam and Adam's environment. Adam broke God's covenant, so God imposed punishment.²⁷

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they had two immediate problems. Firstly, God showed up. Secondly, He passed judgment.

This is God's way of dealing with sinners. He did it with David when he sinned with Bathsheba. First, he sent the prophet Nathan who trapped David into making a self-incriminating statement using a parable, then Nathan (on God's behalf) pronounced judgment on David (II Sam.12:1-15). Jesus did the same with the Pharisees (Mat.21:33-46).

One of the punishments Adam and Eve faced were curses (Gen.3:16-19). Now, they had previously unseen problems, and life wouldn't be as easy.

This was what the Prodigal Son faced (Luke 15). When he had run through his father's inheritance, he found out he was living in a world with limitations. He could 1) starve, 2) work in a pig sty, or 3) return to his father, and throw himself on his mercy. Initially, he chose the second option, but when the discomfort of this choice got unbearable ("how many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!"), he humbled his heart and returned to his father.

In this regard, the curse can work in our favour. "In a world where most goods are scarce, men need the voluntary cooperation of other men in order to achieve their goals."²⁸ Men may be sinners, but they figure out (regardless of their company) that they need to work together to get ahead. This is the basis of the capitalist system, which the Bible endorses.

Thus the free-market capitalist system doesn't make men good. Only God can do that, by His grace. What it does is "encourage men to serve the wants and desires of their fellow man, voluntarily, because of a unique combination of private property, self-interest, competitive bargaining, and personal responsibility. This incentive system to service is made possible by a legal order which respects the laws of God."²⁹

It has been this understanding which has been behind the productivity of the West for three centuries. It is being eroded by evildoers, and Christians who don't know what they've received from God or from Christian culture from the past have been content to let the erosion continue. This must stop.

²⁷ Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.49.

²⁸ *ibid*, p.52.

²⁹ *ibid*, p.56.

Conclusion:

If we are to overcome progressively the limitations and burdens of God's curse of scarcity, we need to acknowledge God's principles of wealth. We need to honour these Biblical economic principles:

- 1. God is the absolute owner of the world.*
- 2. Man rebelled against God.*
- 3. God cursed man and man's environment.*
- 4. Man is required by God to exercise dominion, despite this curse.*
- 5. The curse is progressively overcome by obedience to God.*
- 6. The curse was in part a blessing: it encourages voluntary cooperation.*
- 7. Cooperation is based in large part on personal self-interest.*
- 8. The free market provides incentives for service: the quest for profit.*
- 9. Market competition reduces waste and provides new opportunities for consumers.*
- 10. The most important form of competition under a free market is price competition.*
- 11. The free market increases the size and influence of the middle class.*
- 12. Socialism is based on a false view of man and nature: cooperation and productivity as natural, with private property as the cause of poverty.*
- 13. Socialism teaches salvation by law.*
- 14. The primary form of government is self-government under Biblical law.³⁰*

³⁰ *ibid*, p.58-59.

Inherit the Earth (11)

By Andrew McColl, 16/10/2012

PROFIT AND LOSS

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all (1 Cor.12:4-6).

The fourth principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of judgment-punishment, also called the principle of sanctions. God is the final judge. In the field of economics, the principle is best illustrated by the principle of consumer sovereignty, meaning the buyer's authority to make an offer. In economic affairs in a free market, the consumers, acting as competitive bidders in a giant auction, select economic winners and losers from among competing sellers. With their spending, they reward some producers and penalize others. They exclude some producers from business by driving them into bankruptcy. In short, consumers judge, and they judge in terms of what they want, not what producers want them to want: products, prices, terms of payment, and so forth.³¹

Everyone has their tastes and desires, which vary among individuals. Some people will eat the fat off the bacon, and some won't. I can assure you about a certain choice you need to make, "This is the best way to go," but there is a very good chance you'll disagree with me. These things exemplify the differences amongst people.

To try and change these differences among people is a very difficult undertaking indeed, and probably not worth even beginning. One of the good things about the free-market (and there are many) is that "one size doesn't fit all." There is no need to fit into some pre-ordained straitjacket, because the free-market is sufficiently flexible to cater to all the tastes of individuals in a society. Some people will want the "Budget-Special," others will want to go up-market, and some just haven't even thought about it.

Socialists have never liked the free-market. They believe it contains some inherent injustices, and that they have a legitimate role in regulating society and national economies, and implicitly telling people what they should believe, and what to do. They think people need to be changed, and that governments should do it. This means they assume power over people's decisions. The socialist says, "We have decided that this is what's best for you," and if you happen to have a differing opinion on the matter, you will have to live with it, at least until the next election.

This is always wasteful, inefficient, greatly frustrating and impinges on people's freedoms. Vast numbers of bureaucrats have to be employed as the servants of the socialist politicians to do their bidding, and much of the time the bureaucrats have little understanding of what people really do want. Why should they be bothered? They are isolated from the market-place, which is prevented from bringing positive and negative sanctions against them. As long as the politicians

³¹ Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.111.

have little idea what is really happening, the bureaucrat keeps his job. He can be an absolute disaster, yet it makes no difference.

*Every bureaucracy sees itself as the answer to all possible problems. Instead of the free workings of the people, of the market-place, of the churches, families, and institutions of a society, a bureaucracy sees all solutions in terms of bureaucratic action and control. In terms of this, nothing is more dangerous to a bureaucracy than freedom, and the ideas of a bureaucracy and a free people are mutually contradictory.*³²

The fact that individuals can make choices for themselves in a free society doesn't mean those choices will be the correct ones. People always make mistakes. But the free-market gives them the dignity and responsibility of making those choices, without the imposition of some person in Parliament or a bureaucrat's office saying, "This is what's best for you."

As people grow in responsibility, maturity and self-control, they have every reason to say to their political leaders, "Give us freedom. Remove the bureaucratic control. Let us do what we want to do, without some bureaucratic clown telling us what to do, or we'll vote you out."

Conclusion:

The principles undergirding the Biblical principle of the division of labour in a free market economy are these:

- 1. No society can operate without judges.*
- 2. In economic affairs, either consumers are the judges or State officials are.*
- 3. The Trinity is at the same time one and many, unity and diversity.*
- 4. The church is a unified body having many members who possess unique gifts.*
- 5. The church can achieve as a unit what its individual members could never achieve as individuals.*
- 6. The free market is an institutional arrangement which brings together many participants.*
- 7. They can achieve together what they could never achieve as individuals.*
- 8. Sinners cooperate in the market because it is in their self interest to do so, even when they hate each other. This increases peace.*
- 9. The division of labour overcomes scarcity, including the scarcity of accurate knowledge.*
- 10. Cost accounting is the integrating device by which producers make economic judgments.*
- 11. Consumers "vote by spending" in a free market.*
- 12. Consumers are sovereign in a free market; they serve as the judges.*
- 13. A market open to new competitors, stable money, and profit and loss: these are the trio that grants sovereign control to consumers.*
- 14. When consumers voluntarily vote to elect politicians who promise to steal from others, they place themselves in slavery.*

³² Rousas Rushdoony, "The Roots of Reconstruction," 1991, p.355.

15. Under socialism, self-serving bureaucrats would inherit the earth, if God were to allow socialism to continue.³³

³³ North, p.120.

Inherit the Earth (12)

By Andrew McColl, 23/10/2012

V. Inheritance/Continuity

The fifth and final principle of a Biblical covenant is the principle of legitimacy-inheritance. It could also be called the principle of continuity. In the field of economics, the principle of inheritance governs the transfer of wealth from parents to children. But the Biblical model of this family transfer is the transfer of property from God to His people.

Adam and Eve were given the garden of Eden to subdue and guard (Genesis 2). They were to use this experience as a training period; from the garden, they were to go out and subdue the whole world. Note: possession was not automatic. They had been given the whole world as their lawful legacy from God, but they could not possess it free of charge. They had to earn it, just as children are supposed to demonstrate their ability to manage money before taking possession of the family inheritance.³⁴

The Bible teaches us that "...as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the day set by the father" (Gal.4:1-2). This means that there are no free passes in the kingdom of God.

Everyone has to play their part, which means that there are obligations on all for godly labour, thrift and faithfulness. Jesus Christ is the greatest example of this. Even though He was the Son of God, He was compelled in His incarnation as the Son of Man to undergo all the normal trials that men face in this life, and more. He became sin on our behalf, and had to give up His life: the innocent on the part of the guilty. As such, all authority has been given to Him (Mat.28:18), and He has been rewarded by being made the "...heir of all things..." (Heb.1:2).

This is a point Christians must learn from. The testimony of the Bible from beginning to end, is that power flows to those who take responsibility, and this means in all the practical aspects of life under God. Responsibility leads to authority. Not only has our Lord received the inheritance from our Heavenly Father as a result of His responsibility/obedience, but Jesus now shares this inheritance with His brethren, the body of Christ.

Automatically? No. The inheritance is conditional on obedience, as it was with Jesus. Just as Joshua and Caleb were obedient and faithful in returning from the promised land with a good report (Num.14:6-9) and were subsequently rewarded, we are under obligation too.

For three hundred years the church has been in retreat. We have sowed poorly, and reaped poorly. We must take note of the Biblical warning, that "...let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it" (Heb.4:1).

³⁴ Gary North, "Inherit the Earth," 1987, p.60.

The Biblical principles of inheritance must be obeyed if Christians are to exercise their dominion responsibilities. They must acknowledge that:

- 1. God is the absolute owner of all things.*
- 2. He deeded this inheritance to Adam.*
- 3. Adam's moral rebellion led to his disinheritance.*
- 4. Jesus, as the true Son of God, inherited the kingdom of God-the whole world.*
- 5. His death passed His inheritance to His ethical brethren.*
- 6. Adoption comes with God's saving grace.*
- 7. Adopted children inherit God's kingdom.*
- 8. This lawful title to the world is to be collected by Christians.*
- 9. The basis of collecting the inheritance is godly labour, thrift, and leaving an inheritance.*
- 10. The welfare State is demonic.*
- 11. Inheritance taxes are demonic.*
- 12. The family is the primary agency of welfare.*
- 13. Charity begins at home, and spreads out.*
- 14. Where there is responsible behaviour, authority follows.*
- 15. Christ completely fulfilled the jubilee year.*
- 16. Land tenure is no longer governed by the provisions of the jubilee year.*
- 17. Immoral children must be disinherited before the parents die.*
- 18. The most competent and morally faithful child should inherit a double portion.³⁵*

³⁵ Ibid, p.73.

Inherit the Earth (13)

By Andrew McColl, 30/10/2012

*If the Church languishes, the State cannot be in health. And if the State rebels against its lord and King, the Church cannot enjoy His favour.*³⁶

From top to bottom, the nation of Australia is going to the dogs. Why? Because the church has gone to the dogs.

When did this happen? Over a century, when the church quietly accommodated a whole lot of things that were evil and detrimental to it, and to society.

The church must re-enter the fray. But this would be counter-productive, until such time as the church engages in a deep and fundamental re-evaluation of what it understands as its purpose in the community. This will take time-probably years. This will require lots of prayer and serious heart –searching amongst individuals. It will also require serious debate and consideration of major theological and contemporary issues, something we’ve swept aside for decades-perhaps generations, in the church’s desire for modernity.

“The path of least resistance makes men and rivers crooked,” and believe me, things have got crooked.

True national reformation has to begin at the house of God. What do we believe, and why do we believe it? These are important things to consider and debate. In fact, they need to be thrashed out thoroughly.

I think we will need to go on a crash diet to get fit for the action that God always intended the Church to embark on. We need to drop off a whole truckload of false ideas that we’ve been carting around, as part of the church’s furniture. That means “destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.” It means “taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (II Cor.10:5).

In another place, Paul warned us, saying “see to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col.2:8).

You don’t know what some of these ideas might be? Let me give you just one.

80% of Christian ministers are Marxist philosophically. Glenn Martin

Socialism is a very cheap imitation of Christianity, invented by atheists and popularised world-wide in the twentieth century. It is based on the monstrous lie, that “the government can look after you.” It requires the monumental confiscation of monies in taxation, followed

³⁶ A. A. Hodge, “Evangelical Theology,” p.246-248, circa 1880.

by the government's redistribution of that wealth throughout the community on its pet projects.

Public education (presently costing the Australian taxpayer \$13,500 per child per year) is but one manifestation of socialism. It is tragic indeed that we have socialism in Australia. It is even more tragic that 95% of the church accepts its legitimacy, and has done so for generations.

The Bible says a lot about education. It teaches that it's a parental responsibility, not a government one. The Bible says a lot about welfare, that it is firstly an individual, then a family, and lastly a church responsibility, to be financed partially by the tithe. It is not a government one. Similarly with health.

But the church's unwillingness to deal properly and scripturally with these fundamental social issues, has led to tax rates being as high in Australia as 47%, as governments try to extract such huge amounts from the community to pay for all their promises.

Do tax rates matter to God? Of course. God warned Israel that the king of their choice (Saul, see I Samuel 8), would take a tenth in taxation, and this would be an indication that Israel was apostate, and under God's judgment. Could we be apostate too?

...In those seasons of history, like our own, when the people refuse to tithe, and the Church is not faithfully proclaiming and educating in the Word of God, then the State will grow to massive size, and will exact a terrible tribute. The reformation of the state, then, begins with the reformation of the Church and the proper use of the tithe.³⁷

We don't need cheap imitations of Christianity; no society does. When Eve believed the tempter's lie in the Garden, it led to all manner of drama and pain for her and her foolish husband.

And it's no different for us. Without that fundamental re-evaluation in the church of what we are doing and why, we will keep playing the same old records, with the same old results: continued government theft and waste in the name of the poor, the abuse of people, injustice and social tyranny, that inevitably follows when people don't follow the scriptures.

It's time for change, before we re-enter the fray. Not in politics primarily, but in the church, the institution God has called to be the most influential in society, "...the pillar and support of the truth" (I Tim.3:15). And if the church can get back on the path of truth, society will benefit immeasurably.

³⁷ James Jordan, 'The Mosaic Head Tax and State Financing,' "Biblical Economics Today," Vol. IV, No. 3, 1981.

Inherit the Earth (14)

By Andrew McColl, 6/11/2012

Capitalisation is the product of work and thrift, and the accumulation of wealth and the wise use of accumulated wealth. This accumulated wealth is invested in effect in progress, because it is made available for the development of natural resources and the marketing of goods and produce. The thrift which leads to the savings or accumulation of wealth, to capitalisation, is a product of character.

Capitalisation is a product in every era of the Puritan disposition, of the willingness to forego present pleasures to accumulate some wealth for future purposes. Without character, there is no capitalisation but rather decapitalisation, the steady depletion of wealth. As a result, capitalism is supremely a product of Christianity, and, in particular, of Puritanism, which, more than any other faith, has furthered capitalisation.³⁸

The Bible has a lot to say about our attitudes to work, to thrift, to diligence and to productivity. We are encouraged to be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor.15:58). If the work of the Lord for me today is to dig a ditch, paint a house or change a baby’s nappy, then these are just as important tasks as preaching and teaching, because the Bible never teaches or infers a form of sacred/secular dualism. Dualism is entirely a product of pagan Greek philosophy, not found in the Bible.

Pastors should teach the Biblical principles of financial success: self-discipline, thrift, hard work, customer service, thrift, future-orientation, saving for retirement, thrift, profitability, low or zero debt, thrift, long hours, family sacrifice, reduced lifestyle, and thrift.³⁹

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were productive people. They were workers, who got things done. We do not know specifically what Abraham did, but he was certainly a trader in livestock, goods and possibly precious metals, while Isaac lived similarly and was productive in farming and digging wells in one phase (Gen.26) of his life. Jacob successfully managed his father-in-law Laban’s flocks, and later his own, while all three patriarchs were able to successfully manage large groups of men, which could number hundreds (Gen.14:14; 26:12-14; 32:1-23) of men, or more.

Gideon, Elisha, James, John and Matthew had this in common: when God called them, they were *working*. The gospels make it clear that Jesus was a worker. This is particularly stressed in Mark’s gospel, which frequently uses the word “*immediately*” to describe His activities, and the rapid way in which He went about his work and ministry. Clearly, His time was limited, and He

³⁸ Rousas Rushdoony, “Chalcedon Report,” April 1967.

³⁹ North, G., “Inherit the Earth,” 1987, p.152.

had much to do. He also said that “*we must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work*” (Jn.9:4), and that “*My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working*” (Jn. 5:17).⁴⁰

It was the productive servants in Jesus’ Parable of the Talents (Mat.25) who were commended by their master. Why? Because they took what had been entrusted to them by their master, traded with it, and doubled the amount. For this, their master called them each a “good and faithful slave” (vs. 21 & 23). But the other servant who hid his talent in the ground, and refused to trade with it with a view to pursuing a profit, Jesus called a “wicked, lazy slave” (v.26).

Capitalisation has a number of facets, one of them being a future orientation. A godly person has to be thinking about the future; what he should be accomplishing, and what he should be preparing for. It means developing an awareness of local, national or international trends and problems, as these may affect us in time to come. “A prudent man sees the evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it” (Prov.22:3).

It means we ask ourselves, “What can I be doing with my assets today, to ensure I can maximise my asset base, ten years from now?” One aspect of this is leaving something for those that follow us, which will probably involve financial assets, but much, much more: “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous” (Prov.13:22).

In this regard, Job’s life serves as an important Biblical example:

*His blessings consisted of the restoration of his wealth beyond what he had possessed before (42:12), as well as the birth of ten children (42:13). As a final gift, he was granted a long life (42:16-17). In short, he was given the capital he needed to begin once again to exercise dominion over the earth as a godly family man: tools, children and time.*⁴¹

⁴⁰ Andrew McColl, “The Significance of the Godly Family,” 2009, ch.6.

⁴¹ North, G., “The Dominion Mandate,” 1987, p.164.

Inherit the Earth (15)

By Andrew McColl, 13/11/2012

When people have been convinced of a particular point of view for most of their adult life, and that view has been generally accepted for many generations, they cannot be expected to change their position overnight. It takes quite some time for them to be convinced; to reject their previous set of beliefs as inaccurate, unfortunate religious or cultural baggage.

This means that the person who sets out to change their mind has to be both patient and tenacious. He knows that “Rome wasn’t built in a day,” and so there must be a steady process of teaching, absorption and understanding, leading to repentance: a total change of mind. I accept that job description. There is much about the Church of our day that must change, and the sooner the better. This is especially the case in relation to economics.

It is true that Jesus did not teach a comprehensive social theory. He did not have to. He taught from the Old Testament. He said that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament (Luke 4:16-21). In His divine nature as the second person of the Trinity, He co-authored the Old Testament. Why would any Christian believe that Jesus annulled this judicial heritage? Why would He have done this? He did not say that He did this. Where is the evidence that Jesus annulled the social theory that had been taught from Moses to Malachi?⁴²

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul said that “for it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.’ God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops” (I Cor. 9: 9-10).

Writing to Timothy, Paul advised that “the elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,’ and ‘the labourer is worthy of his wages’” (I Tim.5:17-18).

Why must we take notice of these two Old Testament quotes, from Deuteronomy 25:4, and Leviticus 19:13? Paul, as a New Testament apostle uses them to teach the church. His teaching plainly shows these are legitimate, authoritative texts for the Church. He doesn’t indicate, “Well, these texts were fine for Moses’ time, but things have moved on now. We can ignore these. We don’t need to bother with the Old Testament now. The rules have changed.”

Paul doesn’t relegate these Old Testament case law texts to some divine dust-bin of history. On the contrary, he is effectively saying, “God spoke to Moses. He is the authority. What more do we

⁴² Gary North, “Treasure and Dominion,” 2012, p.xv.

need? This is what we're commanded to do." In fact, Paul actually writes, "Yes, for our sake it was written..." (I Cor.9:10).

Now, if these commands were legitimate for Paul's day, wouldn't they be just as legitimate for today, or any other period of Church history, past or present?

Let's look at Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." Notice here in this quote from the Ten Commandments (Ex.20:12), that Paul inserts a parenthetical statement: "(which is the first commandment with a promise)." Paul, who is very familiar with the Old Testament (as every Christian ought to be), takes the time to add a brief apostolic commentary to this Exodus passage, noting that a promise is attached.

Our Lord did not ignore the Old Testament. In fact, He inspired Moses and others to write it, and while on the earth He quoted from it extensively, emphasizing its relevance at all times. Its law, culture and social theory are what we ought to be giving particular attention to today. Our failure to do so in so many areas including economics, has hurt us immeasurably for centuries.

*Any attempt by antinomians, either Christian or anti-Christian, to ridicule the case laws of Exodus that govern bond-service is in effect a call for a return to Egyptian bondage, namely, bondage to the autonomous State. Bondage is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of "bondage vs. no bondage." It is a question of "bondage to whom."*⁴³

Conclusion:

God spoke to Moses and others in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, in His incarnation as the Son of God never annulled the Old Testament's social theory. In fact, He and His apostles confirmed its authority and legitimacy for the Church.

When the Church stops departing from His holy standards, and returns to God's Word in its many applications to life, we will have something useful to say to the world.

⁴³ Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, p.92.

Inherit the Earth (16)

By Andrew McColl, 20/11/2012

When men think about the universal forms of wealth, they think of gold and silver. Across the globe, men understand the value of precious metals. Abraham's wealth was counted in these metals (Gen.13:2). When men speak out against the economic importance of gold and silver, they speak nonsense. When John Maynard Keynes spoke of gold in 1923 as a barbarous relic, and when Lenin suggested in 1921 that the victorious Bolsheviks would someday use gold for public lavatories, they proclaimed utopianism ("utopia:" no place).

These two spokesmen of their era spoke for both sides of the Iron Curtain. Both men had contempt for Christian society. Keynes the atheistic homosexual and Lenin the atheistic revolutionary knew enough about Christianity to prefer the harlot of the twilight.⁴⁴

One of the first things a Christian person should learn, is that we are all accountable to God for the use of our talents; indeed, for everything: "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Ro.14:12).

Accountability in the use of our talents was taught by Jesus in the Parable of the Talents, in Matthew 25:14-30. The two servants who traded with the talents and gained double what they were originally given, were each commended by their master. But the servant in the parable who refused to invest his master's talent for reasons of fear, and hid the talent in the ground, was later called a "wicked, lazy slave..." (v.26), and the master had this servant consigned "into the outer darkness" (v.30).

The point of the parable, is that Jesus Christ expects us to be diligent servants in the use of all that He has given us, and that includes our resources, such as money. It is the diligent person who is often commended in the Bible: "the hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack hand will be put to forced labour" (Prov.12:24).

Upon his return, the master calls each man to give an account of his stewardship. He expects each steward to have increased the number of talents in his possession (Mat.25:20-23). The skills of each man are different, the initial capital is different, and the ultimate rewards are different. The only equality in the parable is the equality of the law. None can escape the final day of reckoning. In fact, the very term "day of reckoning" means a day of giving an account, a final counting.⁴⁵

In a number of places, the Bible warns us about our attitude to money and possessions. Jesus warned us that "no servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the

⁴⁴ Gary North, "Wisdom and Dominion," 2012, p.84.

⁴⁵ Gary North, "Unconditional Surrender," 2010, p.264.

other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Luke 16:13). Achan coveted silver and gold and brought judgment on himself, his family and Israel (Joshua 7:20-21).

So to please the Lord we must always be careful that we are holding to the correct attitude concerning money and resources, and that we “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Mat.6:33). It’s always an issue of priorities.⁴⁶ Wesley encouraged people to “earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.”

Precious metals and jewellery have been regarded as basic wealth objects for as long as man has left records. Gold has been a form of money for as far back as we can investigate. Its brilliance, durability, malleability, and universal respect as a metal of continuing value have made it a unique economic resource. Its scarcity in relation to the high value men place on the ownership of the metal (high marginal utility) has made gold a universal currency... The gift of gold was a fine one indeed. It still is... Even the New Jerusalem, God's final and most glorious physical gift to redeemed mankind, is referred to as pure gold (Rev.21:18). From the garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem, gold is wealth.⁴⁷

Clearly in Abraham’s day, gold and silver were considered worth acquiring. They were precious metals. They were also considered precious in Moses’ era (Ex.25:1-3), in David’s era (I Chron.29:1-3), and in the New Testament era (Acts 3:6). They are certainly considered precious today, and will certainly be considered precious a hundred years from now.

Today, governments all around the world are doing foolish things with money. This means that currencies everywhere are being steadily debased. Paper money is printed, but none of it has any gold backing. That means that governments can print a million dollars and put it into circulation, but not have it in the form of taxation. The U.S. government in this (in conjunction with its Reserve Bank) is being more irresponsible than the Australian government. This is one reason why the U.S. dollar has been steadily devaluing against the Australian dollar.

You may hold a hundred dollar bill in your hand today, but will it have the purchasing power in three year’s time, that it has today? You probably know that it won’t. \$100 today, will have the buying power of about \$97.00 in a year’s time.

In fact, the lesson of history is that all paper currencies end up being worth ... *nothing*. Over the last hundred years, a U.S. dollar has lost about 96% of its value. An item worth a dollar today, was worth about 4c a hundred years ago. So, a prudent person begins to consider, “*how can I protect my fixed assets? What can I do to stop the value of my money being consistently eroded through inflation?*”

⁴⁶ See Gary North, “Priorities and Dominion,” 2012.

⁴⁷ Gary North., “The Dominion Covenant,” 1987, p.78, 80, 81.

Anyone reading this article today has resources. You probably have a computer, possibly a house and a car, and a bank account. Almost everything we buy today, depreciates when we take it out of the shop.

But precious metals are different. The price will certainly fluctuate due to variations in supply and demand, but the precious metals have enduring value. At present, there are two factors driving the price of precious metals consistently higher.

The first is international uncertainty and suspicion among investors about the wisdom of the government borrowing and spending programs, which are endemic in the western world. Many countries are thus teetering on bankruptcy, especially in Europe. U.S. government spending is essentially out of control, and there is no determination to balance the budget. I doubt this will change until there is some form of financial calamity.

"Investors are frustrated with US monetary policy. They're saying the heck with the dollar, the heck with currencies and they're buying metals," said Ira Epstein, of the Linn Group.⁴⁸ Like an alcoholic who ransacks his wife's purse to steal her new credit card for another drinking binge, the U.S. government keeps finding new ways to borrow, slap the extra loan on top of the other unpaid loans, and say *"Who cares?"* This cavalier attitude, resulting in rapidly growing debt has been continuing for thirty years, with no concern of the future. In fact, over the last two hundred years, the U.S. government has rarely been out of debt.

*Debts must be paid. The alternative is default. The U.S. government's debts cannot be paid. Yet voters cannot bring themselves to face the reality of default. There has always been a way to delay the day of reckoning. There has always been another central bank rabbit to pull out of the fractional reserve hat. There has always been a way to move the decimal points to the right on the asset side one more time, and move the liabilities off budget. There has always been a way to persuade lenders to lend the drunken government enough money for another night on the town.*⁴⁹

The Chinese government appears to be seeing some of the writing on the wall in relation to the folly of the West, and is reportedly buying hundreds of tons of gold annually in response.

The second factor is that parts of the Chinese and Indians populations are moving into forms of middle-class capitalism, and their demand for precious metals both for jewellery and saving (especially gold), has been rapidly accelerating now for years. Australia is the second biggest gold-mining nation, producing 261 tonnes of gold in 2010, but we could only supply the start of the annual gold demand for these two nations. For jewellery alone, they needed over 1,100 tons of gold in 2010.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Quoted in 'Gold, Silver rise to Record Highs,' "The Weekend Australian," 17/4/2011.

⁴⁹ North, G., "The Billion Dollar Loser," 15/4/2011.

⁵⁰ Reuters, *Factbox*, "Gold and Silver Trends in 2010," 15/4/2011.

Furthermore, these nations' communities have historically been investors in precious metals: Indian fathers traditionally give their daughters gold as a dowry at their wedding.

What is a person to do?

- a) Make wise choices, based on what you know about God and His dealings with people, human nature, and history. Accountability before God is a fact of life for all of us.
- b) Don't trust in government promises. There is no "quick-fix" to our international economic and financial problems. They have been building for two generations.
- c) Prepare for further international economic upsets: they will come, and many will be caught short. The Bible teaches us that "the prudent sees the evil and hides himself, but the naive go on, and are punished for it" (Prov.22:3).
- d) Gold and silver have been considered precious, ever since the Book of Genesis. This side of heaven, they have been genuine stores of wealth right through history.
- e) Consider how to fit precious metals into your investment portfolio. Individuals should consider what proportion of their assets should be in silver and gold.⁵¹ Demand for precious metals is partially seasonal, so they are often cheaper around the middle of the year, and dearest in December.
- f) Seek to preserve and grow your assets for your old age, and the sake of others, so you are not dependent on government promised taxpayer-funded pensions. The government pensions of today may not be with us forever. "A good man leaves his inheritance for his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous" (Prov.13:22).

Conclusion:

Most people only learn some things the hard way, and few still living can recall the pain of the Great Depression. But Christians are remarkably privileged people: we have the Bible to guide us, so we know that human nature is fallen, we understand the shocking results of large-scale abuse of power which are apparent everywhere today, and we understand how God brings everybody, everywhere, to judgment.

*The future is uncertain. The Bible warns us about this. Man cannot know everything perfectly. He cannot know the future perfectly. Yet he has to deal with the future in terms of his knowledge and his resources today. Men must count the cost of reaching goals in the future. And what we know is that we all, constantly make mistakes when we try to estimate future costs and future rewards.*⁵²

We also know that when God's people have a properly balanced attitude to money and possessions, and we are acting obediently and faithfully towards Him, He is willing to bless abundantly. He said that "you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you

⁵¹ Precious metals in Australia are available at www.ausbullion.com.au

⁵² North, "Unconditional Surrender," p.263.

power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which he swore to your fathers, as it is this day” (Deut.8:18). Gold and silver have historically been evidence of His blessing.

Inherit the Earth (17)

By Andrew McColl, 27/11/2012

Becoming God's Asset Managers

Jesus Christ had a lot to say about assets. One good example of this, is Luke 19:11-27. In fact, about a third of His discourse in the gospels is about money. Now, evangelicals are quick to emphasise the dangers of covetousness, of loving money. That is certainly valid, but it is only a part of what Jesus had to say about money.

There is another extreme in relation to money, to that of covetousness, and that is being indifferent to it. "*Oh well, it's only money,*" some will say. In relation to someone about to die in a moment, it is certainly not that important. But indifference to money has another component, too. That is, not being diligent about its use, preservation or protection. That is neither God-honouring or good.

We are all called to be asset-managers for Jesus Christ, and it doesn't matter if we have a small amount, or a lot. He expects us to be faithful, regardless of what we have been given, and He promises that the faithful stewards will be granted more to look after, whilst poor stewards will have what had been given to them, taken away. What are you like at handling Jesus Christ's assets? He is called the "heir of all things" (Heb.1:2).

Historically, governments have not been very good at handling assets. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, few governments in history have had a serious perception of their responsibilities before God.

Secondly, tax-payers' money is just that: somebody else's. If it diminishes quickly, well, "*that's life.*" Governments don't care, because it isn't theirs. A good example of this occurred recently.

Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, decided to sell half of Britain's gold reserves in 1999. He got around \$260 an ounce over the next year. He bought euros. He was imitated by most other central bankers, including the biggest idiots of all, the Swiss National Bank...

The biggest loser is the Swiss National Bank which sold 1,550 tonnes over the decade and at today's gold prices is \$19 billion poorer, followed by the Bank of England, which is \$5 billion poorer.

These people were twits. They had no personal incentive to be smart investors. It was not their gold. It was gold their predecessors had confiscated in 1914 from commercial banks, and had never returned... They are blind idiots. Jesus warned against the blind leading the blind into the ditch. We are seeing it today.¹

Thirdly, most people in their sinful folly, tend to judge governments by how much money they are spending, and governments believe this, so they are very often happy to "*throw it around.*" They

¹ Gary North, "The Economic Stupidity of Central Bankers," his website, 11/5/09.

believe that it “stimulates the economy,” so it looks impressive. After all, they are doing something!

Stewardship doesn't rank very highly amongst the community, so it doesn't get too much of a mention amongst government. So, “*people get the government they deserve.*” There is always a correlation between a people's attitudes, and who they elect.

What's the lesson in all this, for us? Don't expect governments to do a good job with your money. They love to spend it. They think it's their job to do so, quickly. But every dollar they spend will have to come from you and I. So, Christians should always be out to elect governments that don't make expensive commitments, that want to cut taxes and expenditure, and that seek a balanced budget.

Is that hard? That depends on the politicians, but more than that, it depends on the voters. Politicians listen to voters. Have they ever heard from you? That just might be a part of being salt and light in the community.

The less they spend, the more we keep. The more we keep, the more we have to pay our bills, and to contribute to the needs of others. Paul said of the other apostles, “*they only asked us to remember the poor-the very thing I also was eager to do*” (Gal.2:10).

If Christians begin to take up the responsibility of the needy in the community, it will commence the process of taking the ground from under government “*welfare.*” Then we'll really see some impact of the gospel in the community: godly people, using their assets wisely.

God bless you as you learn to serve Him, economically.

Inherit the Earth (18)

By Andrew McColl, 4/12/2012

When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living together in society, they create for themselves in the course of time, a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it. Frederic Bastiat

Everybody likes help when they're in trouble. I do. Help is a good thing. But help must always be given responsibly, and received responsibly.

In economic terms, there are limits to responsible help. Sometimes we call them "lines in the sand." The lines in the sand quickly get blurred, when individuals or social institutions such as the family, the church, the state, or others deny the Biblical limits God has given us in the Bible.

A term has been coined in the recent decade: "too big to fail." This indicates that a bank or other institution is so big and influential, that to let it fail and go bankrupt would cause unwarranted hardship in the community. Therefore, the government (through the taxpayer) is pressured to "step in" to the financial mess and help the institution.

This is wrong morally, and financially. Why?

Every day of the week, there are businesses failing. They generally fail from bad management, from poor planning, or from too much debt. Sometimes they fail because of natural disasters, or from an unforeseeable economic calamity. But they do fail, and if an institution is "big enough" to gain financial assistance from taxpayers, then what about the smaller ones? Aren't they morally, just as entitled to help as well?

All this has come about because people have neglected to understand the Biblical role of government. Government has unfortunately been seen as some kind of social cure-all. This means government gets burdened with so many social problems, it finds it difficult, even impossible to do the things God requires it to do.

Help me Mr Government Man. I need help to educate my kids, to get my health problems sorted out, and I could really use a new house. Oh, and a job would be good, too. And could you get me to the shops, and help me pay for the shopping?

Is it the government's responsibility to help out people and institutions in financial distress? No. To do so only encourages further financial irresponsibility in the community.

But there is something worse than that. It means we have degenerated to a Fascist system. It means that the forms of freedom and democracy appear to be maintained, but there is an unwholesome relationship between business and government. Legalised nepotism is at work in the community, where "certain people" or companies are entitled to "certain favours," while

others get... nothing. Or worse, they are subject to extra restrictions, which the favoured ones are exempt from.

This is collusion, and is evil. This is corrupt. This is oppression, and God hates oppression. And today, the democracies are riddled with it.

It was President Truman who famously challenged his staff, "If you can't stand the heat of the kitchen, get out of the kitchen." But today, if you're running a big company that employs lots of staff, you can go to government for a bailout. "Hey, presto! Problem solved!"

That's one of the reasons why the United States today is rushing towards economic catastrophe. So many people have had their hands in the cookie jar, and so few people have been concerned about paying back debt. It's been happening for generations, and it's not looking good.

...the Biblical position is that every sphere, economic, political, educational, social, marital, scientific, and all others are governed by the absolute laws of God and are set within a context of law. R. J.

Rushdoony

Got financial problems? We all have them, at one point or another. Take responsibility for them. Know where the lines in the sand are. Do what the Bible says: "...work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil.2:12). Don't ask others or the government to do for you, what you should do yourself.

A godly society is based on free people. But there is no freedom without responsibility, without lines in the sand, so that people work hard at doing what they should do, without dragging others into their problems.

That's how Christians will get to inherit the earth.

Inherit the Earth (19)

By Andrew McColl, 11/12/2012

The topic of wealth and poverty should not be discussed apart from a consideration of the law of God and its relationship to the covenants, for it is in God's law that we find the Bible's blueprint for economics. Biblical justice, Biblical law, and economic growth are intimately linked. The crucial section of Scripture which explains this relationship is Deuteronomy 28. There are external blessings for those societies that conform externally to the laws of God (vv. 1-14), and there are external curses for those societies that fail to conform externally to these laws (vv. 15-68)... God provides gifts: life and land. He also provides a law-order which enables His people to expand their holdings of capital assets (the implements of production) and consumer goods. But these assets are not held by men apart from the ethical terms of God's covenant. The temptation before man is the same as the temptation before Adam: to forget God and to substitute himself as God (Gen 3:5). It is the assumption of all Satanic religion, the assumption of humanism, the sovereignty of man. God warned the Israelites against this sin -- the sin of presuming their own autonomy.⁵³

It looks as if the Church will have to be brought, kicking and screaming, back to obedience to the law of God. God's people have been in rebellion against His law since the time of Moses, and as the Bible says, "...there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc.1:9).

This mightn't happen in my lifetime, or for a long time. I can't make it happen. But I can play a role in challenging Christians and the Church to get back to God's law, as a crucial aspect of our faithfulness to God. I believe it is and always will be a crucial aspect of Christian relevance in the community. The further we have drifted away from the law of God, the more irrelevant we have become, and the less respect the world has for us.

God's law, coupled with our obedience to it, grants us great courage. But when God's people abandon His law, they become objects of contempt for their enemies. Whenever we turn from obedience and courage to disobedience and fear, everything changes.

Think of Israel's twelve spies. When they returned from spying out the land, ten of them were unbelieving and disobedient. They said "the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and ...we are not able to go up against this people, for they are too strong for us" (Num.13:28, 31). They then said, "we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and **so we were in their sight**" (v.33).

When Jonathan (I Sam.14) and David obeyed God in their respective confrontations with the Philistines, including Goliath (I Sam.17), where was Saul? Afraid and unable to act. (See I Sam.13:7; 14:1; 17:11). That is precisely what happens when you walk away from obedience to God's law. You lose the confidence to act fearlessly.

Fast forward to the twentieth century. Speaking of the German Protestants, Hitler said to one of his aides, "you can do anything you want with them. They will submit...they are

⁵³ Gary North, "Free Market Capitalism," Appendix E, "Inheritance and Dominion," 1999.

insignificant little people, submissive as dogs, and they sweat with embarrassment when you talk to them.”⁵⁴ Having abandoned God’s law, in what state was the German Church? Docile, weak and easily manipulated.

But it wasn’t always this way in Germany under Hitler. Some Germans were different. The Nazis were determined to gas to death disabled people: babies, older children and adults. The evil plan came to the notice of the Catholic Bishop of Munster, Clemens von Galen. In a pastoral letter, read out in many churches in August 1941, he declared (among other things),

We are dealing with human beings, our brothers and sisters. With poor people, sick people, if you like unproductive people. But have they for that reason forfeited the right to life?...

Woe to mankind, woe to our German nation if God’s Holy Commandment “Thou Shalt not Kill,” which God proclaimed on Mount Sinai amidst thunder and lightning, which God our Creator inscribed in the conscience of mankind from the very beginning, is not only broken, but if this transgression is actually tolerated and permitted to go unpunished.

What was the consequence of this? “*The sermon sent a shockwave through the Nazi leadership all the way up to Hitler.*” For fear of a national reaction, Hitler suspended the gassing plan, which had already accounted for nearly a hundred thousand deaths. The program quietly continued, but without the widespread gassings.⁵⁵

What will it be that makes people change, and reconsider God’s law?

Lots of pain, much of it economic. And rest assured, pain is coming. When people are hungry and hurting financially, they think, “I want out of this. How can I do it?” The gospel (which includes the law of God) has the answers for them, including real and lasting hope, both in this life, and for eternity. And this is what we must be faithful to communicate.

You want to see the Church suddenly become the most relevant, powerful institution in the world, proclaiming the truth in all areas, including economics? I most certainly do. It may be as simple as this: going back to proclaiming and demonstrating that God’s law is the only legitimate foundation of every society. We may suddenly find the world willing to be the inheritance of Jesus Christ, as He promised it would.

*Moses gave to Joshua a command: be courageous. This meant that Joshua must move forward, not being deflected by concerns about what was going on at his right or his left. The same is true of our adherence to God’s law. If we stick to God’s revealed pathway, veering neither to the right nor the left, we shall be victorious. God will stand with us for His own glory, delivering His enemies into our hands.*⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Quoted in William Shirer, “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” 1968, p.329.

⁵⁵ Quoted by Babette Francis, ‘Blessed Cardinal Clemens von Galen-the pro-life Lion of Munster,’ “Endeavour Forum,” October 2011, p.8.

⁵⁶ Gary North, “Inheritance and Dominion,” 1999, ch.71.