



# CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

The Danger & the Draw



# Outline

- The Discussion About and Definitions of Christian Nationalism
- Why History is Important—The Case of European History
- The Danger of Christian Nationalism
- Where Do We Go From Here?

# The Discussions About Christian Nationalism



Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene recently said,

“We need to be the party of nationalism and I’m a Christian, and I say it proudly, we should be Christian nationalists.”

# The Discussions About Christian Nationalism



Marvin McMickle from *Baptist Global*, says,

“Not only is Christian nationalism a bad political philosophy, it is also faulty Christian theology, asserting that God has some special bond with the United States.”

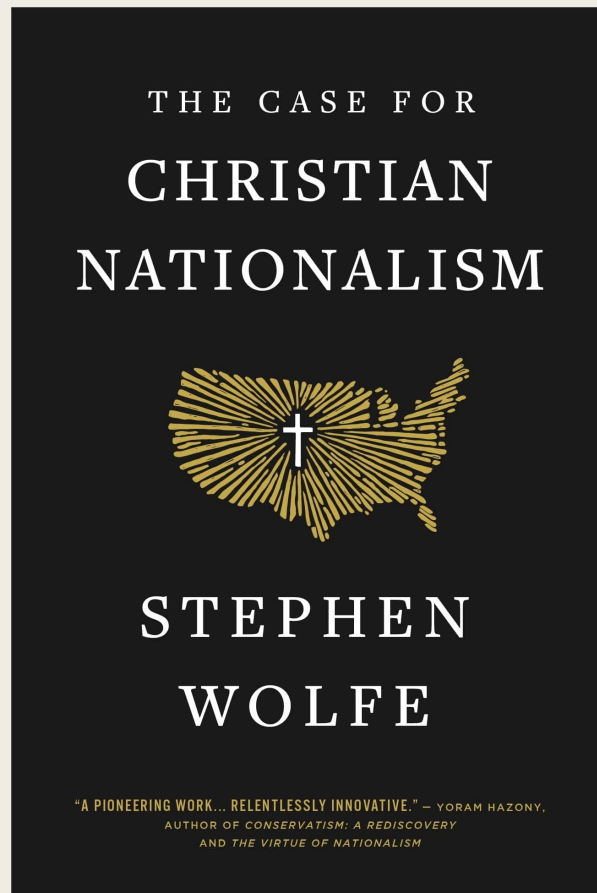
# The Discussions About Christian Nationalism



Paul Miller from *Christianity Today*, says:

Christian nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way. Popularly, Christian nationalists assert that America is and must remain a “Christian nation”—not merely as an observation about American history, but as a prescriptive program for what America must continue to be in the future. Scholars like Samuel Huntington have made a similar argument: that America is defined by its “Anglo-Protestant” past and that we will lose our identity and our freedom if we do not preserve our cultural inheritance.

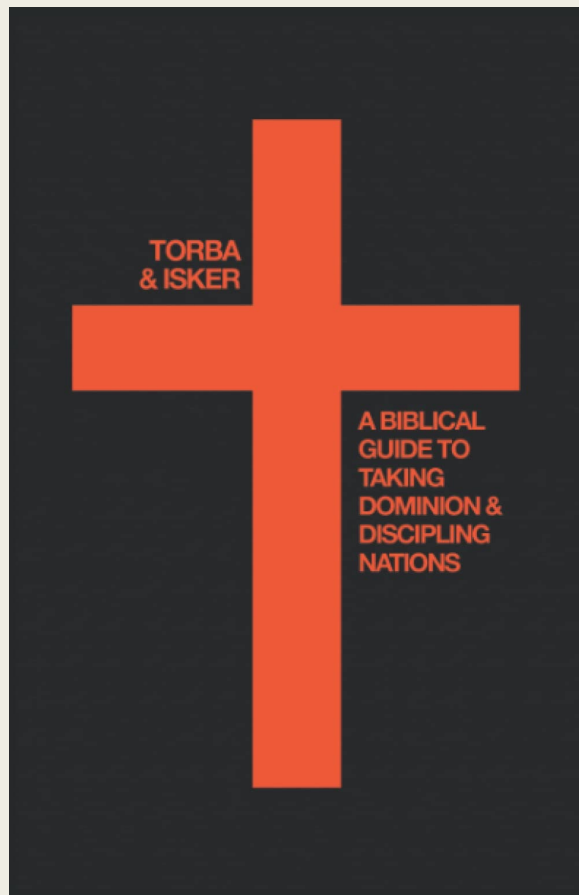
# The Discussions About Christian Nationalism



- Stephen Wolfe in his book, *The Case For Christian Nationalism*, defines CN as follows:

*“Christian Nationalism is a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation, in order to procure for itself both earthly and heavenly good in Christ.” CCN, 9.*

# The Discussions About Christian Nationalism



- Andrew Torba and Andrew Isker, claim, “Christian Nationalism is loving your neighbor . . . . Christian Nationalism is a movement of rebuilding, reformation and revival. We are not trying to overthrow the existing state or even necessarily earn positions in its highest levels of power.” *Christian Nationalism*, xxiv; xxvii
- Shane Schaetzel, in *Christian Nationalism*, claims, “Christian Nationalists are Christians, before anything else, we profess to be followers of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. One cannot be a Christian Nationalist unless one is first a Christian . . . . Christians are integralists not theocrats, in that we have always favored two separate institutions, one for religion (the church) and one for government (the state) . . . . Christian Nationalism is more than a political movement. It is also a social and economic movement.” xvii-xviii; xxi.



# Varying Definitions of CN



John Wilsey in his article, *The Many Faces of Christian Nationalism*, notes:

*There are many nuances to American Christian nationalism. One thing we can say for sure is that nationalism is necessarily historical. All nationalistic paradigms orient the nation in time, but not all in the same way . . . . Each of these nationalisms was committed to the idea of inevitable progress. These nationalisms are progressive in that they situate America as the nation of the future. And Wilsonian idealism, as a progressive nationalism, directly emerged from the political and religious left (Richard M. Gamble has written extensively on this subject).*

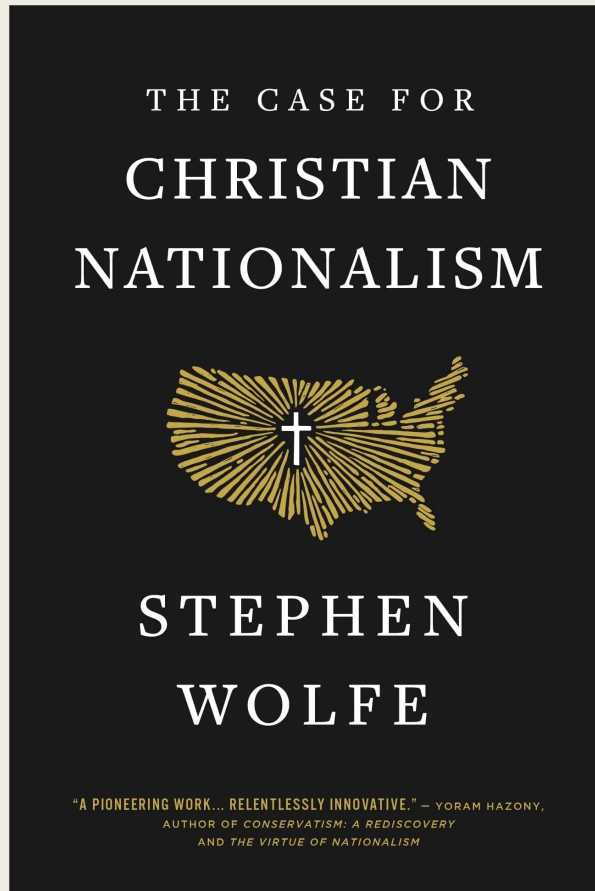


# John Wilsey's Different Illustrations



- Puritan millennialism, Christian republicanism, Manifest Destiny, Lincolnian unionism, and Wilsonian idealism were oriented toward the future.
- Puritan millennialism looked ahead to the thousand-year reign of Christ.
- Christian republicanism and Manifest Destiny saw America turning its back on the past and turning toward the future.
- Abraham Lincoln cast America as being in the throes of a national death, but also experiencing “a new birth of freedom” as “the last, best hope of earth.”
- Woodrow Wilson and John Foster Dulles looked forward to an international order with America as the indispensable nation, guaranteeing free trade and world cooperation.

# Stephen Wolfe's Definition



- Stephen Wolfe would disagree with Wilsey's claim that nationalism must be understood historically.
- Wolfe claims, "I do not describe nationalism by appealing to historical examples or historical developments. Thus, I have no need to celebrate or defend or denounce past 'fascist' regimes or 'populism' and other socio-political phenomena." *Christian Nationalism*, 164.
- Ironically, even though Wolfe does not want to take an historical approach, his view is clearly in keeping with the *Christian America* view discussed by Wilsey.

# Wilsey on Christian America



- The Christian America thesis orients the nation to the past.
- Assumes the American founders were Christians, and the founding documents were inspired by Christian sources.
- Advocates of this movement understand American exceptionalism to be a token of God's election.
- This movement arose from the general decline of Protestant Christianity in America.

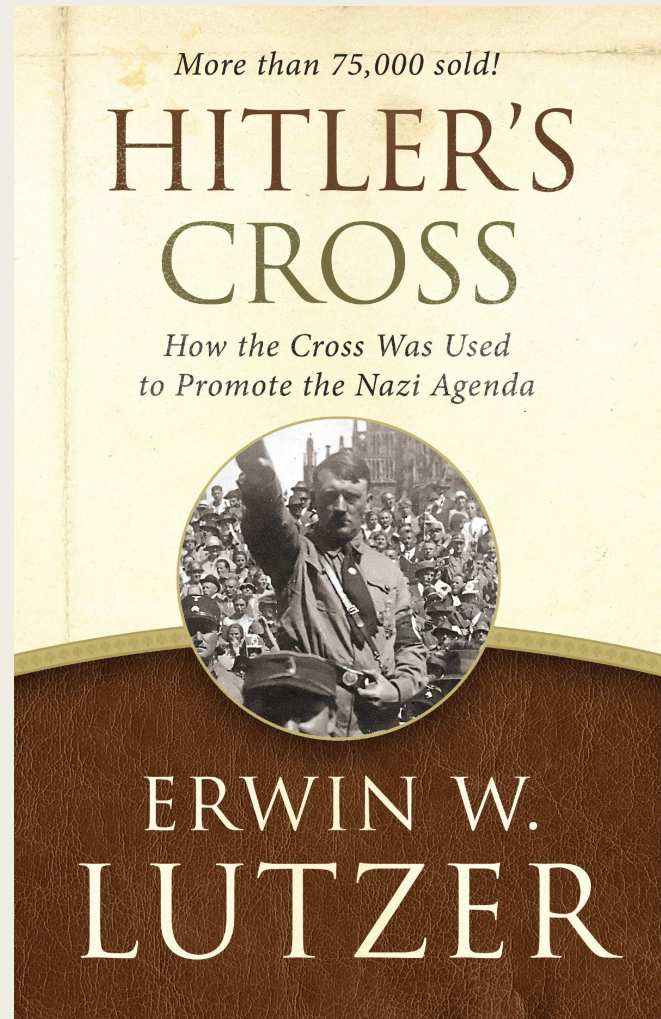
# Wilsey on Christian America



The Christian America movement is different than previous iterations of Christian nationalism in that its proponents orient the nation toward the past. They are concerned with the faith of the founders, the Christian origins of the nation, and returning America to a golden age. Nostalgia plays a crucial role in this brand of nationalism. Prior to about 1970, every generation of Americans took for granted that America was a Christian nation. With the slow dissolution of an American Protestant consensus, however, this is no longer broadly assumed. Advocates of Christian America are now trying to *recover* a Christian nationality.



# Why History is Important



# The First Reich (800-1806)

- The First Reich (800-1806)—Charlemagne (Charles the Great) was crowned as emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in 800 A.D.
- Charlemagne was praying in front of a crypt in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome while Pope Leo was singing the Mass. Without notice or warning, Leo placed the crown on Charles' head and the congregation gave its blessing. Charles did not expect this coronation but he was pleased, and as he left St. Peter's he was determined to use the sword to build the one universal, Catholic Church.
- This is where we get the start of the phrase: The Holy Roman Empire.
- Voltaire was probably right that it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.

# The First Reich

- The union of the church and state began much earlier than Charlemagne.
- The early Church faced significant persecution by the Roman Empire, but all of this came to an end when Constantine conquered the city of Rome in 312.
- When Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire it was the advent of a sacralism between church and state. The coronation of Charlemagne was merely the high point of this harmful and fatal marriage.
- Charles saw his role with the state as the protector of the doctrines of the church. Infant baptism was considered the entry into the church and anyone who opposed could be put to death.
- He was most interested in keeping the diverse countries “Christian,” but he was known for imprisoning or killing anyone who differed with the Mass or the authority of the Pope.
- True Christians went from being persecuted by Pagan Rome to being persecuted by Religious Rome.



# Napoleon Bonaparte

- In 1804, there was another attempt at a grand coronation. During this time, Napoleon Bonaparte was in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, and as the Pope was attempting to place the crown upon his head, he grabbed it from the Pontiff and crowned himself.
- The significance of this interaction was to signify an anti-Charlemagne, because he was able to win the rights of the empire based upon his own merits.
- Napoleon sought to substitute the French empire for the German one that dominated Europe. He went on to overthrow Austria and turned on Prussia.
- When he marched victoriously into Berlin, it signified the end of the First Reich.
- Hitler later used the actions from the First Reich to prepare and justify his unity between the church and state.

# The Second Reich (1871-1918)

- Germany was functionally split into 300 independent states, each having their own currency and measures.
- Otto von Bismark (1815-1898) had risen to power in Prussia. He had the political ability to bring unity to the split German-speaking people throughout Europe. Therefore, he sought to overthrow the military accomplishments from Napoleon, so he went to war with Austria and eventually went to war with France.
- Bismark also had the Prussian King (William I) brought to France in order to be crowned in the Halls of Versailles as the head of the new unified empire. He was crowned as Kaiser (Caesar) Wilhelm to send a clear and bold message that his goal was to reclaim the old Holy Roman Empire for German rule.
- This was the apparent beginning of the Second Reich.
- Hitler later used this rationale to justify his two spheres of morality, or as Eichmann used to say, “I had to obey the laws of my country and my flag.”

# Otto von Bismark

- Bismark claimed to be a Christian and to have had a conversion experience in the home of some pietistic friends in Germany.
- This new found conversion caused Bismark to suffer a conflict of interests: How can I reconcile my public actions and private morality?
- Solution: Bismark reasoned that as a public servant of the state he was not under or bound unto, the same morality one must live by as an individual.
- Political Effects: The state can be judged according to its own laws (conventional laws) because its responsibilities went beyond ordinary human values.
- The state was to be obeyed without asking for any moral rationale.
- The second Reich came to an end because Germany lost WWI.

# The Third Reich (1933-1945)

- Germany was suffering from every form of defeat and humiliation. Inflation was soaring, hopes were low, the country was destroyed; they needed a new leader.
- The Third Reich, Adolf Hitler, was the man for the job. It is claimed he cried upon his mystical vision and “call” into politics. It is said he cried for the first time since the death of his mother. He was destined by God to play a role in Germany’s future.
- Hitler was appointed by Hindenburg as chancellor on Jan. 30, 1933. He took the oath of office to uphold the Weimar Constitution, but later went on to destroy it. The key issue Hitler had to address was the upcoming election in March of 1933. He did not have the majority to win the election, so he created a few “divine opportunities” to help him win.

# Reichstag Building

- On Feb. 27, 1933, from out of nowhere the Reichstag building in Berlin caught fire and eventually burnt down. It is claimed Marinus van der Lubbe entered the building and set the building on fire.
- Hitler blamed the communists for the fire and used the incident to encourage Hindenburg to sign a decree that Germany would suspend personal freedoms for “the protection of the people and the state.” This allowed Nazis to search homes without warrants, outlaw any meetings that might oppose the state, and confiscate all private property.
- Hindenburg was acting according to the Weimar Constitution that allowed the president to bypass Parliament in the event of an emergency.
- In short, Hitler never got the majority vote but through threats and murder, he was able to get the 2/3 in Reichstag and to amend the constitution. This amendment transferred all legislative functions to Hitler and on July 14<sup>th</sup>, he decreed that the Nazis would be the sole political party in Germany.
- Hitler definitely saw the burning of Reichstag as “a gift from the gods.”

# Reich and Hegel

- Otto von Bismark and Adolf Hitler both held to a radical form of two-spheres to justify their actions.
- Hegel (1770-1831) taught that war was a great purifier and necessary for the ethical help of the people. He claimed that private moral values must never stand in the way of the state's agenda. Private morality must remain PRIVATE and state morality must be the dominant PUBLIC morality.
- Hegel taught that Germany would flourish again because it represented the highest form of dialectical development.
- This form of dialectical thought, plus the separation of the two spheres, was the philosophical foundation for the later developments by Marx and others (dialectical materialism and a dialectical development of the state) to create the ideal state.
- In short, the universe and/or God (or if you don't believe in God, the dialectic) are on our side as we develop the ideal state.

# Reich and Religion

- Hitler sought to use the swastika to replace the Cross of Christ. He intentionally broke the cross and formed a *Hakenkreuz* (broken cross) to form the symbol of Nazism.
- In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler said, “In red we see the social idea of the movement; in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan race.” Shriner, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 44.
- At one of the Nuremberg rallies, a large photo of Hitler was displayed, saying, “In the beginning was the Word.” The Lord’s Prayer was changed by some to read, “Our Father Adolf who art in Nuremberg, hallowed by thy name, the Third Reich come . . .”
- There were occultic practices, transformations of consciousness, a state approved church, attempts at surveillance culture, the use of the Nazi salute (which was to invoke the power of earth and soil in the occult organization of the Order of the Golden Dawn. See: Lutzer, *Hitler’s Cross*, ch3.
- In sum, Hitler recognized this historical development of Christian Nationalism and used it for his political ends.



# Reich and Religion



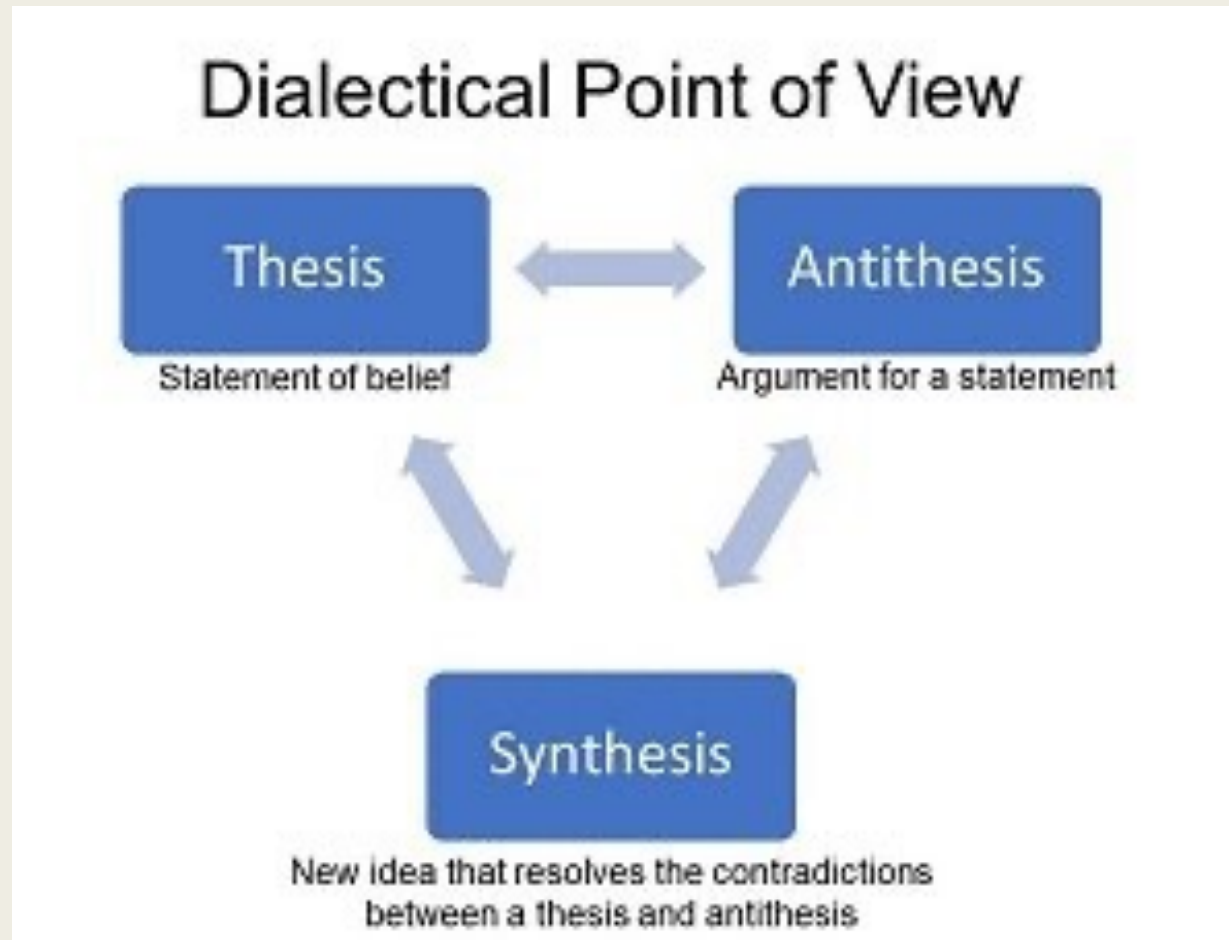
# Summary

- There are varying definitions to Christian Nationalism. No one definition captures what the term means.
- The best way to understand the term is by tracing the history of the term. Even then, it does not present us with a single definition.
- The term can encompass anything from leftist progressive politics to right-wing politics.
- Western history is replete with clear warnings to us whenever we try to mix the state and religion, and/or embrace any version of integralism and/or sacralism.
- Historical warning that the state can try and use the church to accomplish its political ends.

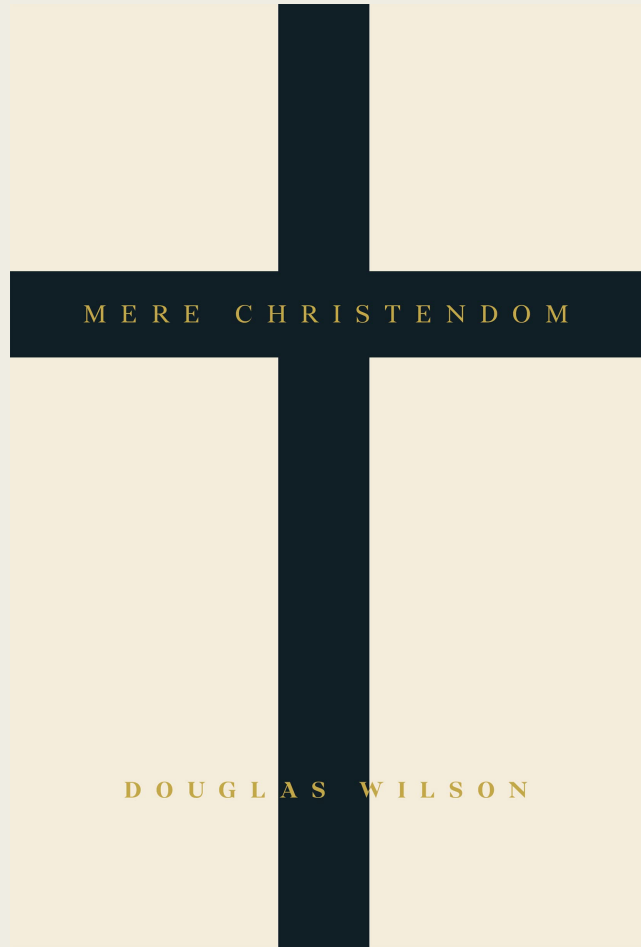
# The Danger of Christian Nationalism



# Dialectical Definitions



# Ideological Definitions



“The one possible toxin in the phrase *Christian nationalism* is found in the pesky suffix *-ism*. As the fellow said, beware all *ism* [sic., of all isms] except for prisms. Christian conservatives are hostile to ideologies, and ‘Christian nationalism’ *can* be made to function in such a troublesome ideological way. But if we take care to define our terms and guard our hearts against the poison of party spirit, we should be all right.” *Mere Christendom*, 84.

# Wokeness & Dialectical Definitions

- What the two terms have in common: (1) both products of social engineering; (2) used as tools of alignment; (3) means of side-taking and division; (4) each has been fruitful in the destruction and unity of the church (intentionally meant to fracture and divide).
- Reductionistic approach with Wokeness:
  - *You believe in justice? You believe justice should be applied socially? See, you believe in social justice?*
  - *You believe in Nationalism vs Globalism? You believe Christians should work to bring about Christian morals in society? See, you're a Christian Nationalist*
  - *You're a Christian? You believe in your nation? See, you're a Christian Nationalist.*
- CN's are not controlling the definitions, even though many believe they are. The left is controlling the narrative towards their desired end.

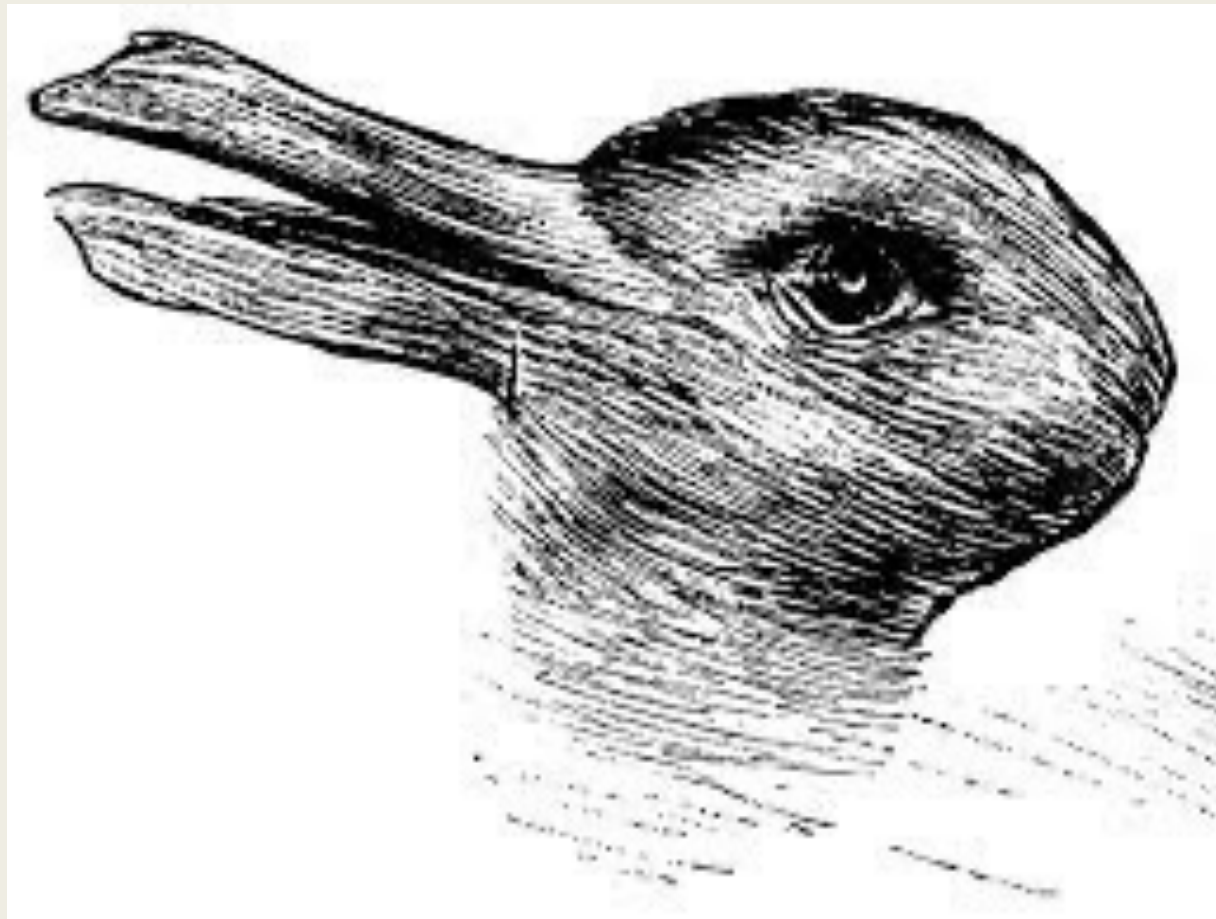
# Summary:

## Dialectical Definitions

- Many times today there is an intentional blurring of definitions or agnosticism towards definitions. While it is true sometimes people do not know the meaning of a term, it is false to claim this is always the case. For example: How do you define woke? How do you define Christian Nationalism?
- Many critical theorists know the high level power play they are imposing upon language. That is a fancy way of saying proper definitions would be fixed and objective, which undercut their non essentialist philosophies.
- However, many average people fall for the same game. Whenever you attempt to label something as woke they will deny it because “there’s no real definition of woke” or “there’s competing definitions of woke.” Without knowing it they are enacting the same game as the academic.
- Practically speaking, we get into this triangulation process in which everyone tries to address the situation but no one actually ever defines the term woke. This furthers the blurring of terms and allows theorists to control the narrative.
- What is actually going on? It is a philosophical and linguistic manipulation. They are using postmodern and political rhetorical devices to not only divert but redirect the conversation. How do we fix it?
- We fix linguistic manipulations by calling them out. We do not play the game nor entertain the process. We call out the game and reject the process. What happens next is the theorists and followers typically flip out. Let them throw a tantrum. Let truth win.

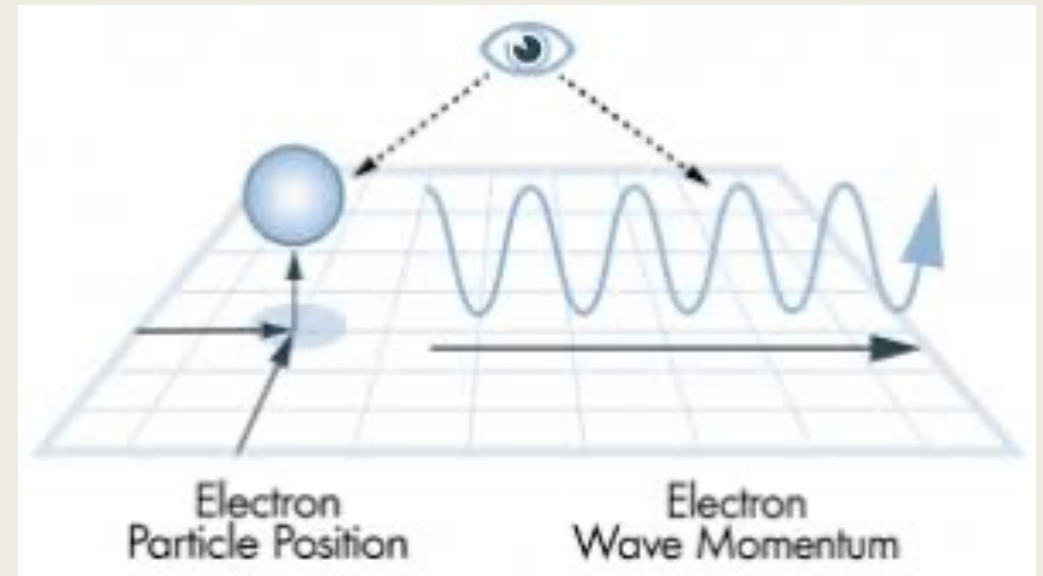


# Perspectival Epistemology



# Academic Illustrations

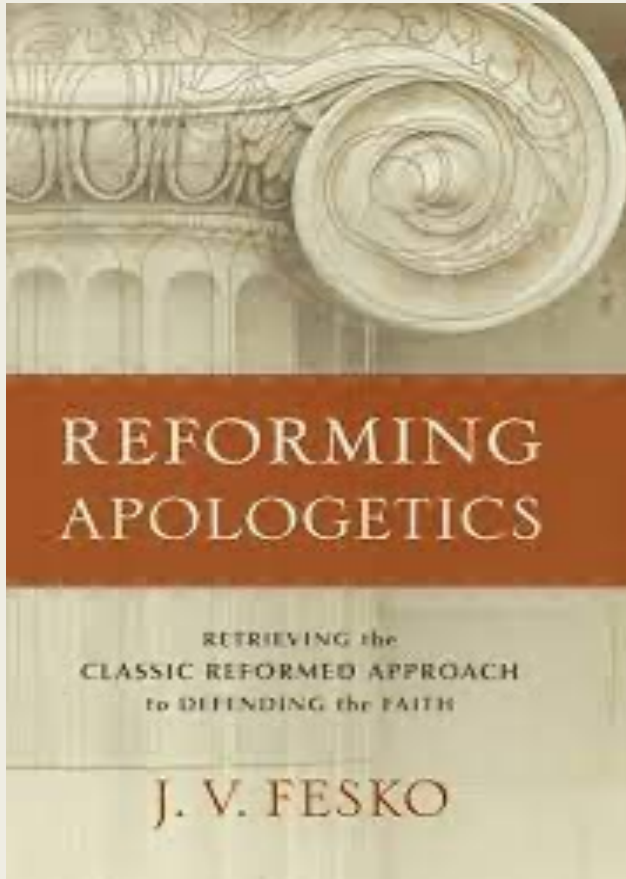
- Academia, which is largely committed to varying forms of anti-realism, relativism, and subjectivity in nearly every discipline, is dominated by the core tenets of perspectivalism (i.e., no true independent reality or basis for knowledge).
- Examples abound:
  - *Psychology and Sociology:* Eurocentric vs Afrocentric Interpretations (Sociologies of Knowledge)
  - *Science:* Causal Perspectivalism and our Perceptions of Time and Light



# “Worldviews” and Perspectival Epistemology



# Kuyper and Stone Lecture Series

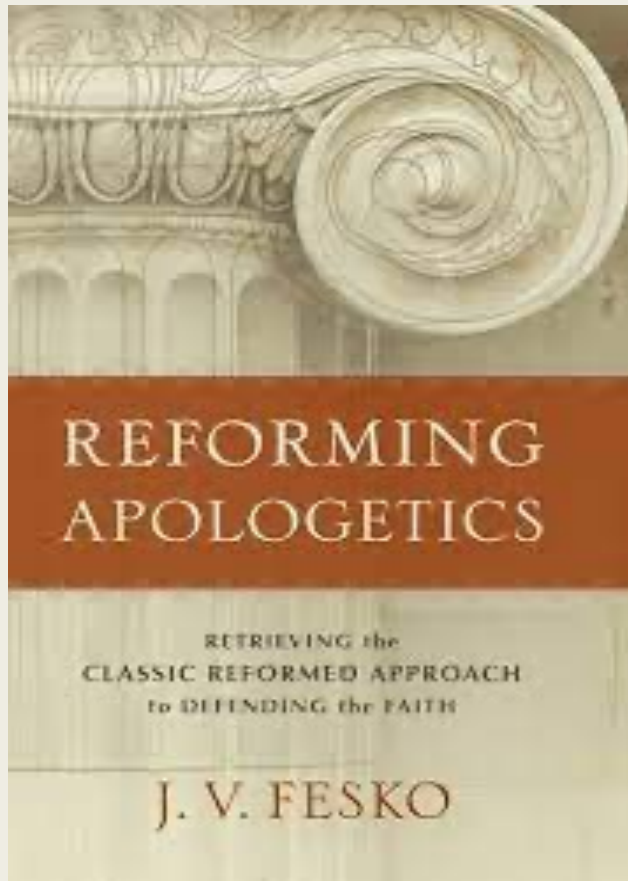


“The term *worldview* is quite common in evangelical and Reformed circles likely due to the popular and influential nature of Kuyper’s 1898 Stone Lectures at Princeton Seminary, where he advocated the need for Christians to develop a holistic life and worldview. **But seldom has anyone questioned the historical origin of the term and concept.** Proponents of the worldview concept acknowledge that the term originated with nineteenth-century German philosophy and the term *Weltanschauung*, but few drill down below the surface and explore its specific philosophical content. Recent research has traced the first use of the term *Weltanschauung* to Immanuel Kant (1742–1804). In his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant put forth the idea that people need to dig beneath the substrate underlying the world’s appearance and our worldview: ‘For only by means of this power and its idea do we, in a pure intellectual estimation of magnitude, comprehend the infinite world of sense **entirely under a concept**, even though in a mathematical estimation of magnitude *by means of numerical concepts* we can never think in its entirety.’ Kant identifies worldview as a **perch from which someone views the totality of the world and subsumes it under a concept, and organizing principle.**”

# Intellectual Background

- “This idea resonated with a number of nineteenth-century philosophers, including G. W. F. Hegel (1779–1831, Soren Kierkegaard (1813–55), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). Dilthey offers one of the more sustained explorations of the concept, so we can focus attention on his view. He has been described as the father of HWT because he first presented a systematic treatment of the subject.”
- Many Christians, such as James Orr in his published work, *The Christian View of God and the World*, and others such as Kuyper, Van Til, within the modern Reformed tradition, taught that worldviews offered a comprehensive view of reality. These figures believed that Christian and non-Christian worldviews were incompatible and antithetical to one another.
- They also claimed that someone must necessarily deduce an entire system from a single concept. According to these figures, the proper single concept to deduce all of reality from was the historic biblical worldview. Namely, by presupposing the singular concept of the biblical worldview, and from that particular perch, we could provide an organizing principle to understand and subsume all of reality.
- This approach necessarily required the use of transcendental reasoning and the Transcendental Argument for the existence of God.

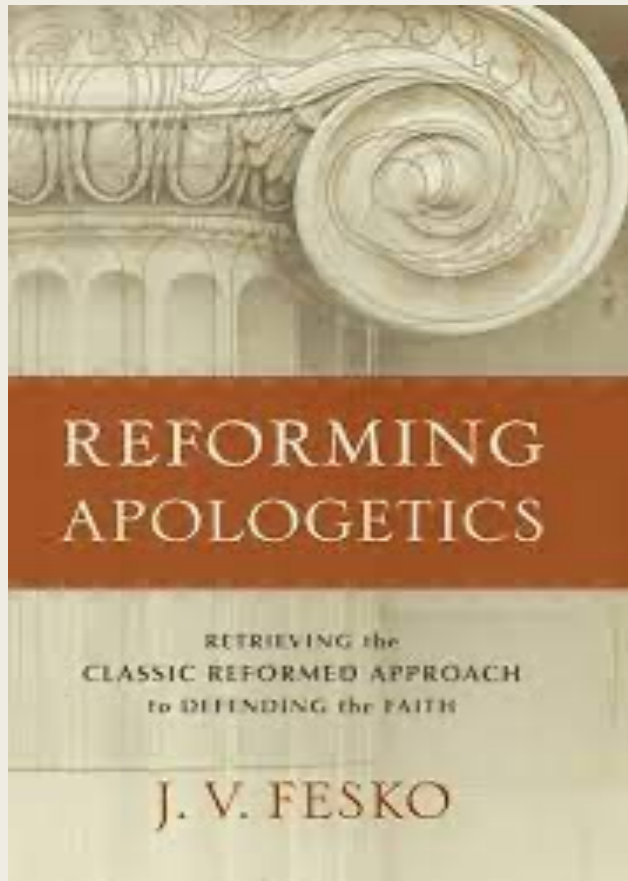
# Classic Worldview Theory



- In *Reforming Apologetics*, Fesko argues that the historic position of the Church is the **light of nature** and the concept of **common notions** entails the validity of natural theology. This idea of common notions, or innate natural knowledge of God, properly describes how human reason can function in a post-Fall world.
- Fesko argues that this type of realism, which in many ways is the manifestation of the Platonic tradition, finds its roots in Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, both the early and late Reformers, the Princetonians, etc.
- Fesko claims common notions and the light of nature are the Bible's depictions of **common grace** and the **common ground** found between the believer and the unbeliever.
- He sets these concepts over and against what he labels as "Historic Worldview Theory" because the latter is grounded in philosophical idealism, not metaphysical realism.



# Historic Worldview Theory

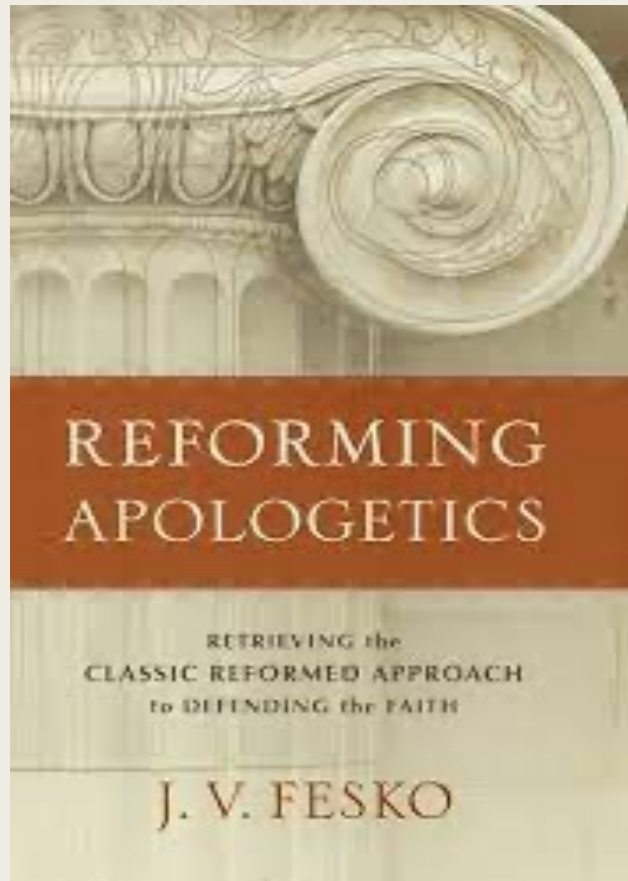


“According to those who have investigated its origin, historic worldview theory (HWT) is a very distinct idea that begins with nineteenth-century German idealism and includes the following characteristics:

1. the **rejection** of a common doctrine of humanity,
2. a single principle from which one **deduces** a worldview,
3. an **exhaustive** systematic explanation of reality, and
4. the **incommensurability** of competing worldviews. These aspects of HWT create an inhospitable environment for the historic Reformed appeal to the book of nature. The increased use of HWT is inversely proportional to the decreased use of the book of nature.”



# HWT and the Bible

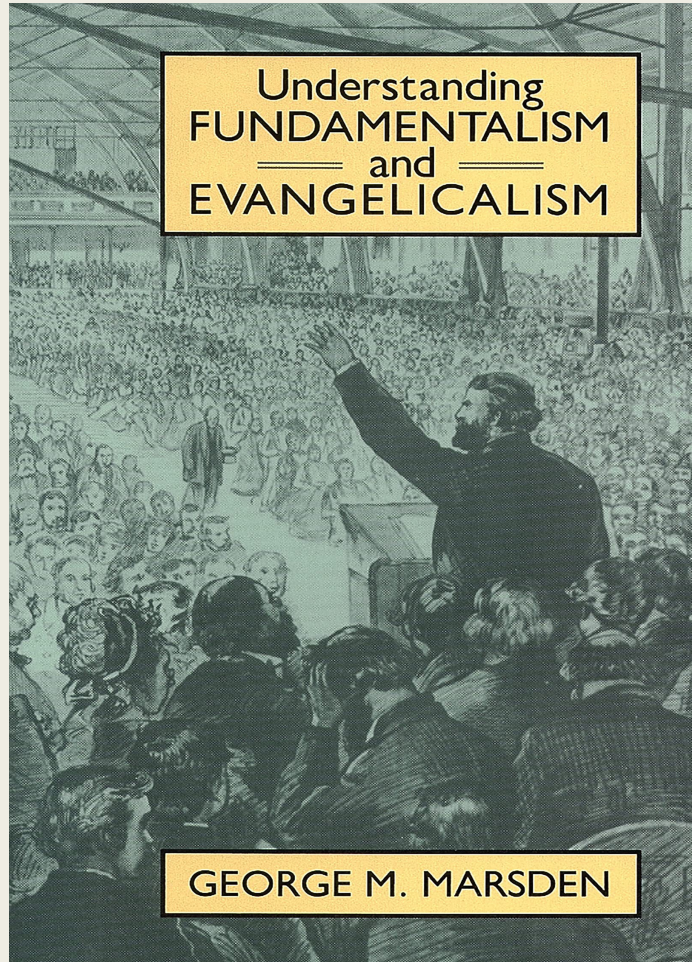


"If the Bible provides an exhaustive view of everything, then as some worldview advocates argue, **the Christian worldview must stand in complete antithesis to all other worldviews.** There would then be a unique Christian view on **everything** because the Bible **exhaustively** explains all reality, and it is **morally incumbent** on Christians to follow its teachings. The Bible must be the only foundation for **all knowledge.** The Bible, however, presents a very different picture. It explains that Christians and non-Christians possess a **shared knowledge of the world** and even God's existence; they share God-given **common notions.**"

# Key Distinctions

Classic Worldview Theory	Historic Worldview Theory
Unified Science and Unified Knowledge	Two Different Types of Knowledge and Science
Common Grace and Common Notions Between All Humanity	Affirmation of Common Grace, But a Denial of Real Common Notions Between All Humanity
The Unregenerate Mind Can Make Valid Rational Statements About Reality	The Unregenerate Mind Cannot of Itself Make Valid Rational Statements About Reality
Unity of Truth	Only the "Christian Worldview" Provides Truth
Natural Theology, Natural Science	No Natural Theology or Natural Science
Philosophical Realism: Broad Christian Platonism	Philosophical Idealism: Kantian and Hegelian Transcendentalism
Classical Apologetics	Presuppositional Apologetics
Philosophical: Plato and Aristotle (Ancient), Thomas Reid	Philosophical: Descartes, Kant, and Hegel (Modern)
Theological: Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin, Scholastic Reformers, Edwards, Princetonians, Gerstner, Sproul, Geisler, Helm,	Theological: Orr, Kuyper, Van Til, Bahnsen, White, Oliphint, Poythress, etc.

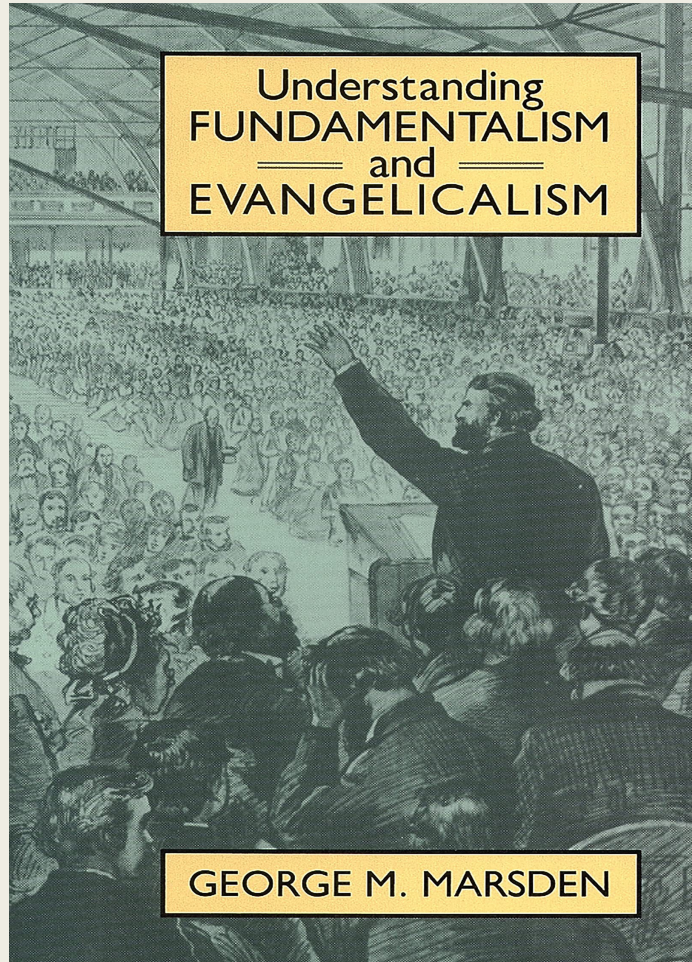
# Two Kinds of Science



“Despite his admiration for Kuyper, Warfield found the Dutch theologian’s views of science (and hence his view of Christian apologetics) ‘a standing matter of surprise.’ **Kuyper denied that there was one unified science for the human race. Rather, he argued that because there are ‘two kinds of people,’ regenerate and unregenerate, there are “two kinds of sciences.”** The differences in the two sciences, of course, would not show up in simple technical analyses, such as measuring, weighing, or the like; but insofar as any science was a *theoretical* discipline, Christians and non-Christians would reach some conclusions that **were different in important ways.** Each would be equally scientific, but they would be working from different starting points and **frameworks of assumptions.**” *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 122-123.



# Two Kinds of Science



“So, said Kuyper, **Christian and non-Christian thinkers were not working on different parts of the same building, but on different buildings.** Each ‘will of course claim for himself the high and noble name of science, and withhold it from the other.’ Kuyper, who anticipated some of the insights of Thomas Kuhn (although working from a much different philosophical base) was thus one of the early challengers to the dream that had dominated so much of the modern Western thought—that the human race would eventually discover one body of objective scientific truth.” *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 123.

# Two Kinds of Science

**“To B. B. Warfield, Kuyper’s view was sheer nonsense. Warfield was a man of his age at least to the extent of believing that science was an objective, unified, and cumulative enterprise of the entire race.** ‘The human spirit,’ he said, ‘attains this . . . . by slow accretions, won through many partial and erroneous constructions.’ In response to Kuyper, he maintained that ‘men of all sorts and of all grades work side by side at the common task, and the common edifice grows under their hands into even fuller and truer outlines.’ Warfield differed from most of his contemporaries not in this classic view of science, but rather in his resistance to the recent trend to limit the meaning of ‘science’ to the natural sciences and the new imitative social sciences. **For Warfield and his colleagues at Princeton, theology was still the queen of the sciences and its truth could be discovered once and for all on the same foundational epistemological principles as the truths of Newtonian physics had been established.**” *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 123-124.

# Two Kinds of Science

“Building on such assumptions, Warfield’s confidence in demonstrating rationally the truths of Christianity knew no bounds. ‘It is not true,’ he insisted, ‘that he [the Christian] cannot soundly prove his position. It is not true that the Christian view of the world is subjective merely, and is incapable of validation in the forum of pure reason.’ Indeed, ‘All minds are of the same essential structure; and the less illuminated will not be able permanently to resist or gainsay the determination of the **more illuminated.**’ The reason the regenerate, ‘shall ultimately conquer to itself the whole race.’ With such a prospect for total apologetic victory, **Kuyper’s insistence that science or rationality for the regenerate and for the unregenerate seemed to Warfield to border on cowardice. As long as science was the common task of all people, said Warfield, ‘it is the better science that ever in the end wins the victory. . . . How shall it win its victory, however, if it declines the conflict.’”** *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 124.

# Reformed “Worldview” Epistemology

- This underlying debate is essential to this topic because several Christian Nationalists, who are following in the vein of Kuyper, are arguing for a distinctly “Christian worldview” approach to laws, justice, epistemology, metaphysics, or any other discipline.
- Just like there are “two different kinds of science”, one is regenerate and the other unregenerate, there are also two different kinds of “law” and “nations.”
- Fundamentally, however, all knowledge is filtered knowledge. It is transcendently deduced knowledge. It is NOT based upon reality, common to all people, objective, or universally given to all human beings.
- There is also the epistemological necessity to reject all they consider to be antithesis.
- This is part of the “Purity Test” offered by many Christian Nationalists: Postmill, Presuppositional, Theonomic, etc.
- **Epistemic Integralism, Hegel’s Transcendental Concept of Antithesis, and Friend-Enemy Distinction.**

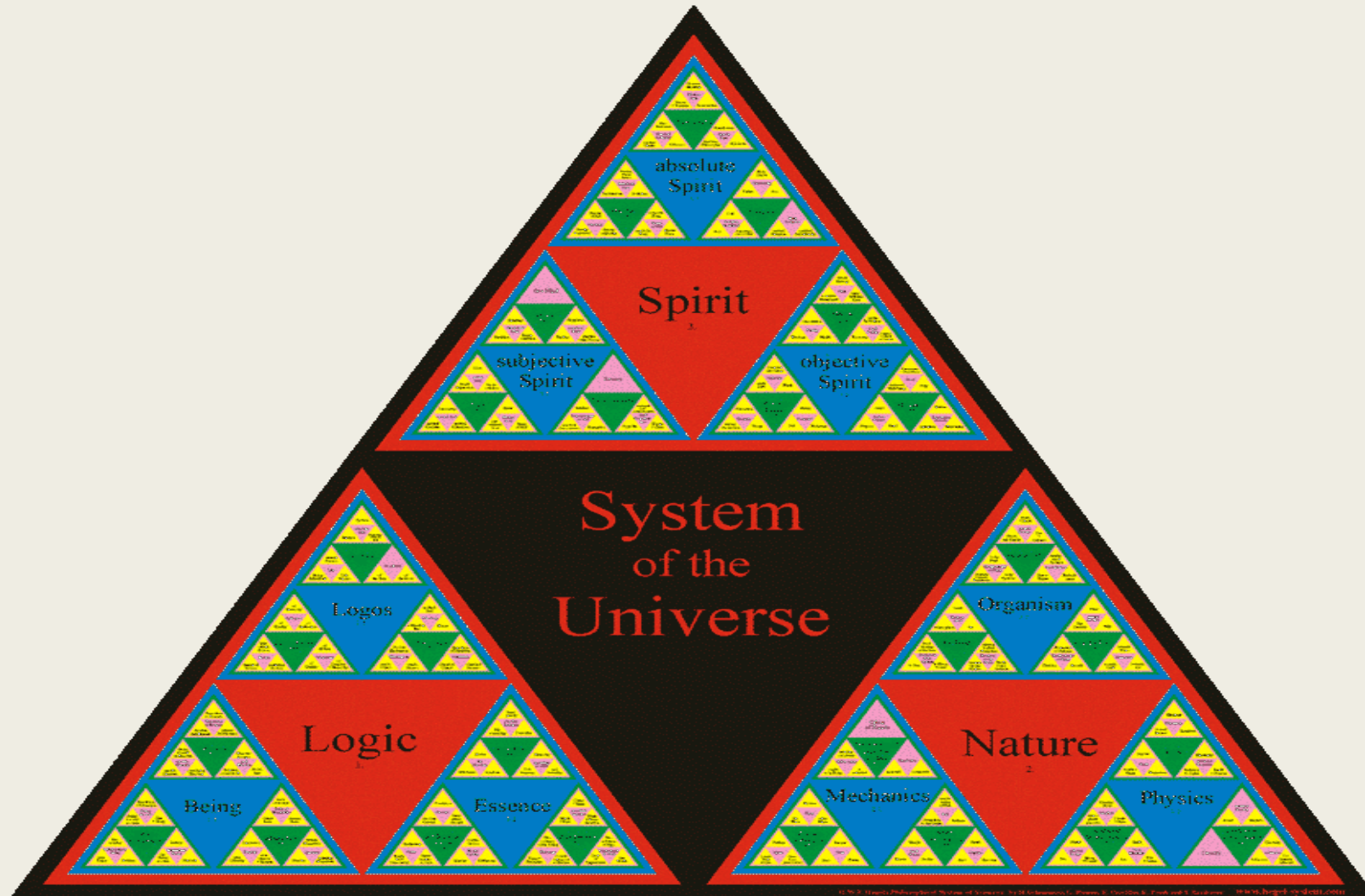


# Summary:

## Worldview/Perspectival Epistemology

- Not all Christian Nationalists agree with this approach to epistemology. In my estimation, Stephen Wolfe is more classical in his approach to epistemology and science.
- There is merely a difference of degree, not of kind, between the perspectivalism from the woke many Christian Nationalists. Both affirm a form of Transcendental Idealism, perspectivalism, and epistemic subjectivity.
- Consequently, the issue is you cannot fight subjectivism with more subjectivism, even religious subjectivism. You can only defeat subjectivism with an affirmation of objectivity.
- This is why we affirm both the objectivity of knowledge and the fact that the human mind can have knowledge of the objective moral law given to all of humanity.
- With such a prospect for total victory, CN's insistence that there are laws and rationality for the regenerate and for the unregenerate seems border on cowardice and are a synthesis with idealistic epistemology and morality. As long as knowledge was the common task of all people, we agree with Warfield, 'it is the better science [knowledge] that ever in the end wins the victory. . . . How shall it win its victory, however, if it declines the conflict.'"
- In short, their approach projects itself as the strong and masculine (even biblical approach), but it is none of those features. Rather, it is epistemic subjectivity wrapped in the garb of Christian language and sold as a bill of regenerate legal and philosophical theory.

# Hegelian Concept of the State



# Hegelian Totalitarianism vs. Freedom

- The state does not have jurisdiction over the conscience—Freedom
- The state's jurisdiction over the conscience is the highest expression of freedom—Hegel Political Philosophy
- The state won't bind your religious conscience because it lacks the jurisdiction—Religious Freedom
- The state's binding of your religious conscience is the highest expression of freedom—Hegel's Religious-Political Philosophy

# Parallels With Hegel



Consistently throughout the book, it is clear that Wolfe's understanding of the end of the Christian national state is to secure the highest good of the people. I understand this to be the central issue of the book. Others who have parted ways with Wolfe have done so on theological, practical, or historical bases. I also part ways with Wolfe, and I do so because his model is contra-American (note: not anti-American). **It is contra-American because it is closer to Hegelian state theory than to the American constitutional tradition of federalism and ordered liberty.**

# Hegel Refracted Through The Reformed



True, Wolfe nowhere relies explicitly on G. W. F. Hegel's (1770–1831) writings. He builds his argument on the basis of Reformed scholastic thought. **But Wolfe's model adopts, intentionally or unintentionally, the substance of Hegel's theory of the state and refracts it through a Reformed Protestant lens.** The effect is to render his Christian nationalism totalitarian. Wolfe's magisterial Christian nationalism is functionally and fundamentally incompatible with the American political tradition.



# Hegelian: Totalitarian Nation-State

- “Wolfe’s model is Hegelian and consequentially totalitarian. It leads to the opposite of what Wolfe intends by actually degrading the true faith as it inordinately exalts the state.”
- “The categories of “totality and national action” are Hegelian in that they underscore the nature of the nation-state as totalizing and defined by active will.”
- “Wolfe uses the analogy of the soccer team to explain the nation. Hegel’s conception of the unity of the particular with the general fits well with the team analogy also—the members of the team do not lose their identity *per se*, but they do act as one in a unified interest.”
- 4 examples of parallels between Hegel’s concept of the state and Wolfe’s project.

# Example One

- “The active will of the nation-state is expressed through “civil law and social customs” in Wolfe’s model—the same is true in Hegel’s model. The civil laws of Wolfe’s Christian nation and the laws of Hegel’s nation state both, in Wolfe’s words, “form an interrelated and oftentimes redundant web of obligation that orders everything ultimately to the national good” (13). It is true that Wolfe’s national good and Hegel’s national good are different—the former is a heavenly life, the latter is concrete freedom. But this is what I mean: **Wolfe’s model bears the substance of Hegelian statism, even though it is refracted through a Reformed Protestant lens.**”
- “Finally, the Christian nation conducts itself as a Christian nation, or as Wolfe later writes, “The work of the Christian nationalist is convincing his Christian nation to be a nation *for itself*” (38). **Hegel’s direction is the same—the state is self-conscious of itself, acts for its own sake, and is justified in acting for the good of itself as it defines the good, just as Wolfe’s Christian nation does.**”



# Example Two

“Throughout the book, Wolfe conceives of the Christian nation in Hegelian terms. . . . . **Wolfe employs the same categories as Hegel: a nation, equated with a state, having a self-consciousness of itself, defined by active will, bringing about the good as it defines the good.** While Wolfe does insist that his model does not immanentize the eschaton, “but has ordered itself to eternal life” (180), the logic of his model is inexorable. Hegel lifted the state to divine status, and in so doing, degraded religion by stripping it of transcendence. **Wolfe, in making the attainment of eternal life the purview of the state, is on the Hegelian path of doing the same.”**

# Example Three

**“Wolfe’s conception of the magistrate, and later, the Christian prince, also bear the substance of Hegel’s thought.** The individual citizen, in Wolfe’s model, “cannot always determine appropriate public action for the common good” but “civil leaders, having the whole in view, determine suitable action” (30). The civil laws, Wolfe argues, are both “theonomic and, in a sense, autonomic. The magistrate enacts and enforces laws of his own design, though only as a mediator, a sort of vicar of divine civil rule” (269). **Hegel was not as specific in locating the source of authority in a personal God, but the similarities between his and Wolfe’s conception of the rule of the magistrate are substantial enough to raise profound concern.** Hegel also believed that civil law in the state was just, and that it was the highest good of the people to obey that law. **And who made, interpreted, and enforced the law in Hegel’s theory? The magistrate, that’s who.”**

# Example Four

“Which gets us to Wolfe’s Christian prince—“the civil power of the prince comes immediately from God” (31) and “the prince mediates God’s divine civil rule” and “he makes public judgments in application of God’s natural law, effectively creating law (though derivative of natural law), and he has the power to bring about what he commands.” The Christian prince “holds the most excellent office, exceeding even that of the church minister, for it is most like God” (286). **In holding judicial, executive, and legislative power in his office, Wolfe’s Christian prince bears substantial similarity with Hegel’s monarch, who is supreme over the church, the ultimate self, and possesses self-determination to express the will of the state.”**

# Summary:

## Hegelian Concept of the State

- Wilsey is right that much of Wolfe's project is committed to the the belief that Classical Liberalism has failed. Moreover, that Wolfe's project is in keeping with Patrick Deneen's and Adrian Vermeule's (both Roman Catholic) claim that classical liberalism has failed.
- Much of the work by these types of figures makes use of the intellectual thought of the New Right that centers around the notion that Classical Liberalism is the cause of the present crisis. Therefore, it must be rejected and replaced.
- Unfortunately, much of the responses to Classical Liberalism bear the marks of a Hegelian concept of the state as described above.
- Most concerning will be the effects this movement will have upon the concepts of freedom as it relates to free speech, religious freedom, digital sovereignty, and the fracturing of people into different geographical parts of the country.

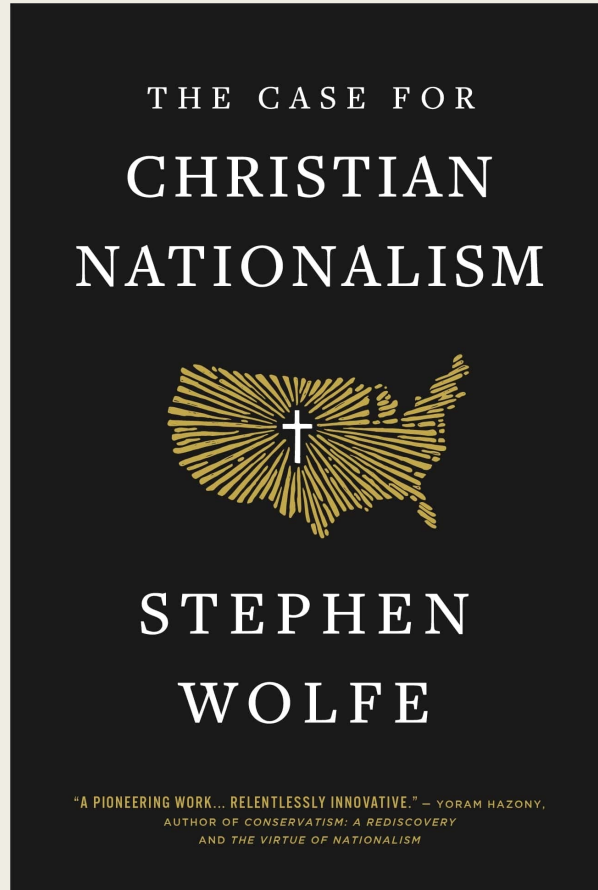
# Compulsion of Religion



**"Congress shall make no law  
respecting an establishment of  
religion, or prohibiting the free  
exercise thereof."**

First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

# Compulsion of Religion



- “The question is whether a Christian magistrate, having civil rule over a civil society of Christians, may punish (with civil power) false teachers, heretics, blasphemers, and idolators for their external expressions of such things in order to prevent (1) any injury to the souls of the people of God, (2) the subversion of Christian government, Christian culture, or spiritual discipline, or (3) civil disruption or unrest” CCN, 359.
- “Suppressing false religion in one’s own land can be called a “holy war,” for the intended effect is the elimination of sacrilege. . . . In our time, the suppression of false religion is not an end in itself but a means and matter of prudence; and such actions are prudent only if they conduce concretely to the good of the church” CCN, 373-74.

# Compulsion of Religion

- “As I argue below, false religion is a crime against God, *and* it can cause harm to one’s fellow man. Hence, one can reject the view that magistrates ought to punish the dishonoring of God and still coherently affirm that magistrates can restrain false religion in the interest of public good” CCN, 358.
- “All appropriate civil action against false religion is directed at its *external expression* in order to suppress external false religion and thereby prevent harm to the public, both to souls and to the body politic. Suppressing false religion is a *means*, not an end in itself. Thus, the question is not whether the suppression of external false religion by civil government is a good in itself or ought to be pursued for its own sake; nor is the question whether civil government ought to prosecute *all* expressions of false religion regardless of their consequences and circumstances; nor is the question whether civil power can force one to speak outwardly what is true, for that would cause one to lie” CCN, 358-59.



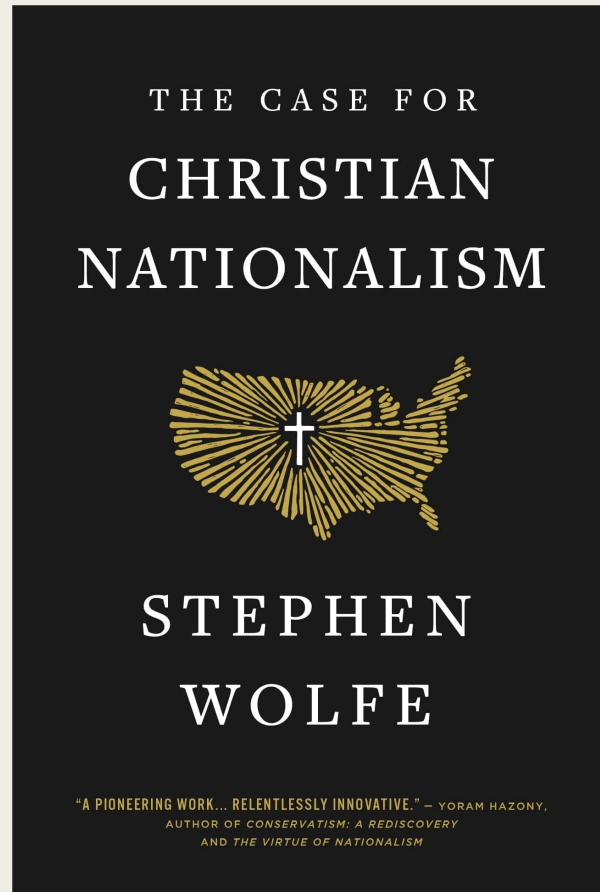
# Compulsion of Religion

- “We can expect a Christian magistrate, having this inscripturated clarification, to understand the most basic principles of man’s duty in natural religion and to know what clearly violates those duties, namely, (1) atheism, polytheism, and idolatry; (2) strange and profane rites; (3) blasphemy and sacrilege; and (4) profanation of the Sabbath. These principles and their violations should be indisputable to a Christian magistrate, since they are known by natural reason and conscience and clarified in Scripture. Therefore, the Christian magistrate has good and confidence epistemic ground to act against those to violate natural religion” CCN, 376-77.
- “And presumably, the Christian magistrate (thought not a theologian) would be no regular Christian but educated. He is, therefore, in a good and confident position to decide between disputes as to fundamentals [of doctrine]. Thus, a godly civil magistrate will have competence to decide on what pertains to mere Orthodoxy” CCN, 377.

# Compulsion of Religion

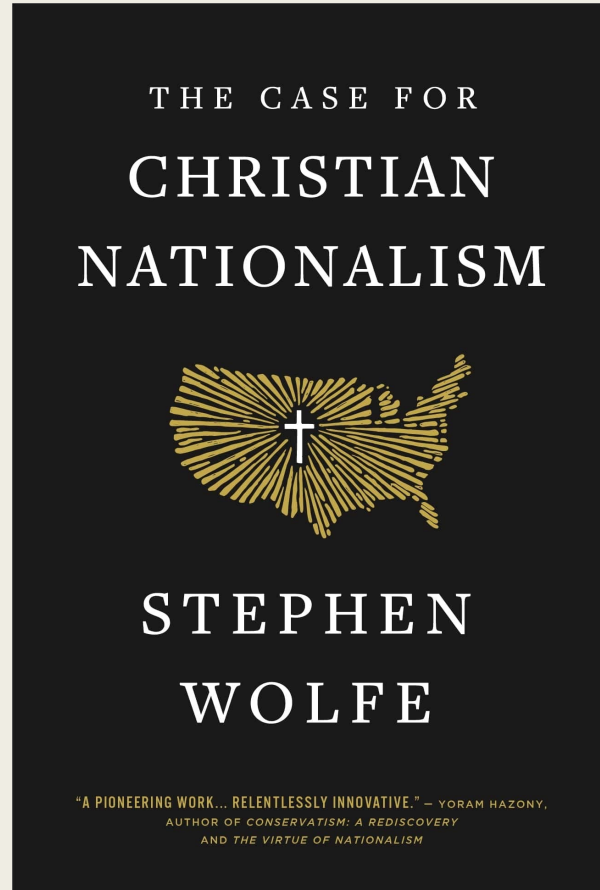
- “One of those principles [of inclusion and exclusion] is the primacy of Christian peoplehood, and so Christian nationalism will exclude at least the following from acceptable opinion and action: (1) political atheism, (2) subversion of public Christianity, (3) opposition to Christian morality, (4) heretical teaching, and (5) political and social influence of non-Christian religion and its adherents” CCN, 385.
- What about freedom of speech? Wolfe states, “Of course, the range and type of diversity allowed is a matter of prudence and collective experience. The purpose here is not to stifle public debate but to maintain conditions for public debate to serve a Christian people. Public debate is a means, and as such it ought to conduce to what is good. I affirm, therefore, that there ought to be freedom of speech and, as with all societies and institutions, that freedom must be bounded prudently such that public discourse conduces to what is good” CCN, 385.

# Compulsion of Religion



“As I’ve said, the magistrate as magistrate has no interest in heretical belief itself (as an inward error) but only public heresy (the outward expression of error). The belief itself harms no one except the man who holds it, which is a matter between him and God. But public heresy has the potential to harm other’s souls by causing doubt or distraction or by disrupting public peace. The magistrate, who must care for the souls of his people, may act to suppress that heresy. The Reformed tradition has a long and widely acknowledged practice of ministers admonishing and disputing with heretics prior to magistrates exercising the sword” CCN, 387.

# Compulsion of Religion



“Arch-heretics are publicly persistent in their damnable error and actively seek to convince others of this error, to subvert the established church, to denounce its ministers, or to instigate rebellion against magistrates. For this reason, they can be justly put to death. . . . This is not to say that capital punishment is the necessary, sole, or desired punishment. Banishment and long-term imprisonment may suffice as well” CCN, 391.

# Summary:

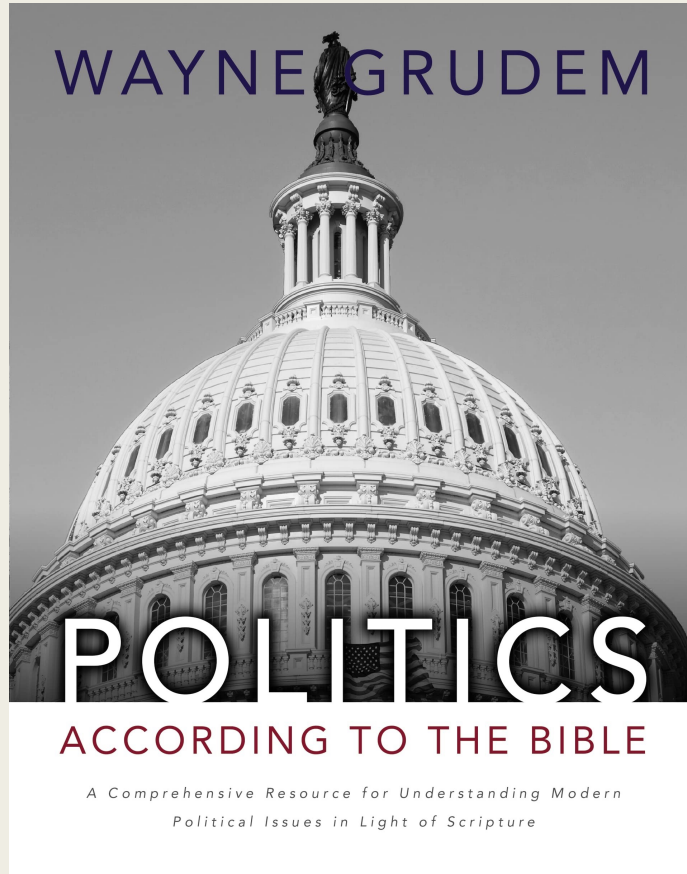
## Compulsion of Religion

- Wolfe and other CNs clearly oppose the First and Second Amendments. The Freedom of Speech and Religion are not prioritized amongst this movement.
- Wolfe and other CNs seem to wrongly impose Reformed tradition as the standard on the topic. However, Reformed theology is marked by a commitment to *sola Scriptura*, not a blind allegiance to any tradition, including the Reformed tradition.
- Moreover, Wolfe wrongly assumes the few figures he cites represent “The” Reformed tradition. To be Reformed is a much broader concept.
- Finally, many Reformed theologians disagree with Wolfe’s exegetical and theological conclusions.

# Theonomy



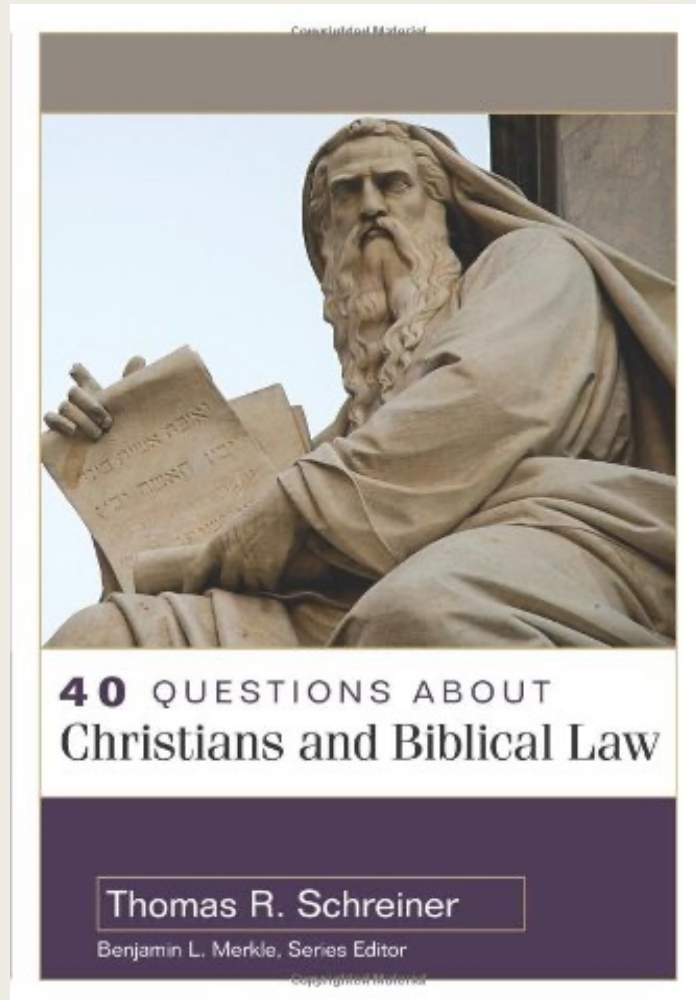
# Israel and Israel's Law



- Wayne Grudem states, “Proper interpretation of Israel’s laws requires a mature understanding of the place of the nation of Israel in the history of the Bible and Gods purpose for Israel in the history of the world.” *Politics*, 83.
- Grudem also notes, “Proper interpretation of Israel’s laws also require a realization that Israel was unique because it was to be for God ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ (Exod. 19:6). It was a *theocracy* ruled by God himself, and therefore *the laws of Israel governed the religious life of God’s people* (such as their sacrifices and festivals, and their worship of the one true God) as well as matters that ordinarily belong to all civil governments in all ages of history.” *Politics*, 83.



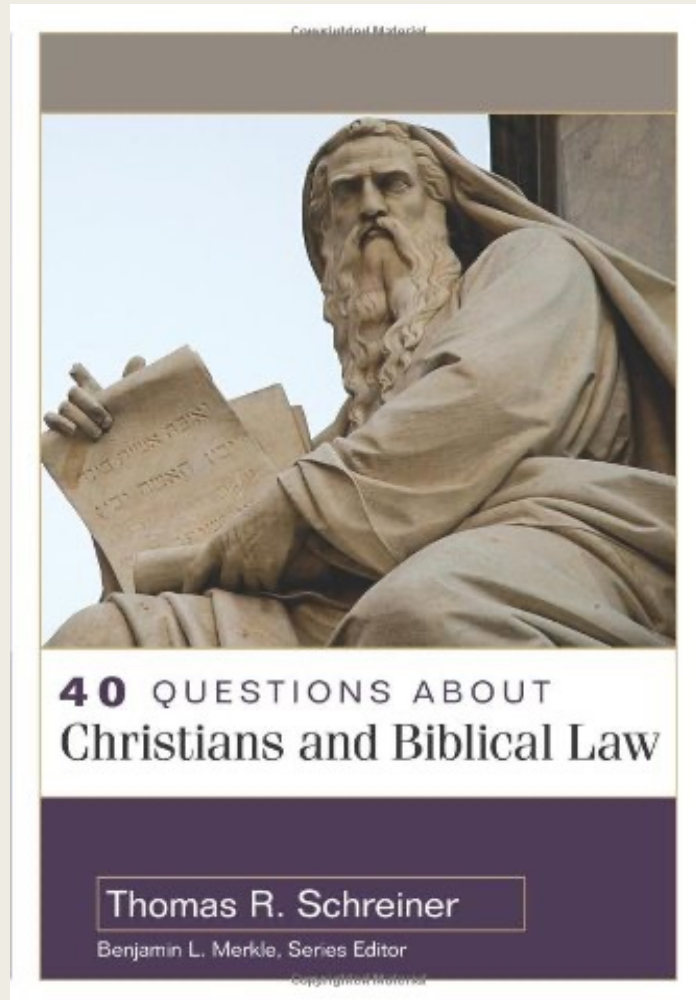
# Not Under Mosaic Law



Thomas Schreiner makes this extensive comment:

“I would argue that it is clear from Romans 10:4, 2 Corinthians 3:4–18, Galatians 3:15–4:7, and other texts as well that believers are no longer under the Mosaic covenant and law. The entire law has ceased to be an authority for believers. Hence, the notion that the civil laws for Israel should continue to function as the rules for nation-states today represents a fundamental misreading of the Scriptures. Believers are no longer under the law, for the law was given to Israel, which functioned as both a political and an ecclesiastical community. No nation today occupies the place of Israel, for no nation can claim to be God’s chosen nation.” Schreiner, *40 Questions*, 224.

# Not Under Mosaic Law



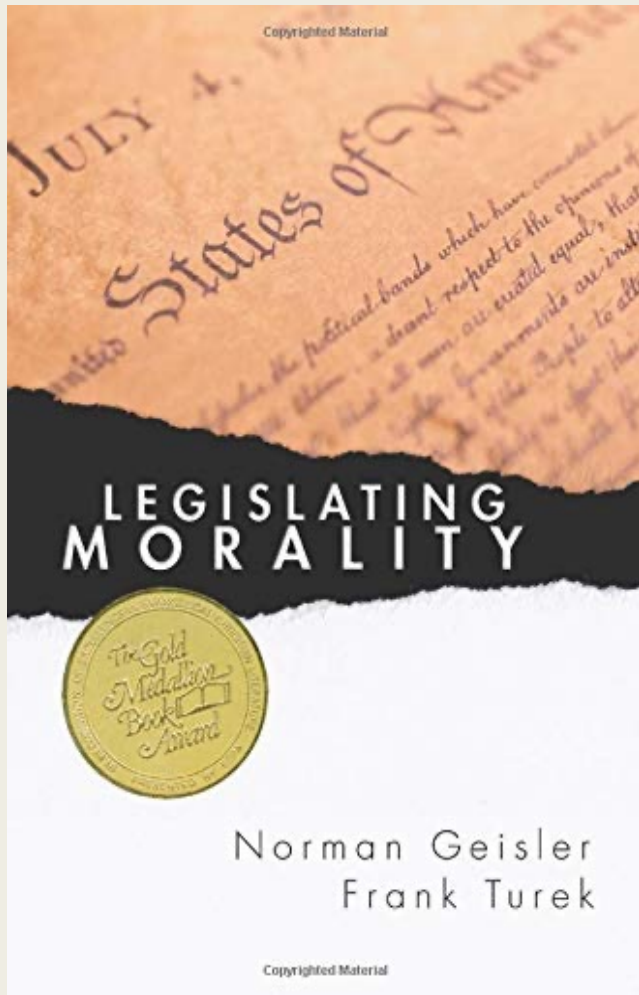
“Sometimes believers (though not all theologians) in the United States will identify their country as God’s chosen nation, but such a statement is a theological misstep, for it appropriates to a modern nation-state what was true only of Israel. The people of God now hail from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation and cannot be restricted or linked with any particular nation. Indeed, the New Testament gives no indication that nations themselves would ever become Christian. There may be many individual Christians, or even a majority of Christians, in a nation, but nations themselves are not Christian.” Schreiner, *40 Questions*, 224-225.

# Westminster Confession

## Chap 19

3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.
4. To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity thereof may require.
5. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation.

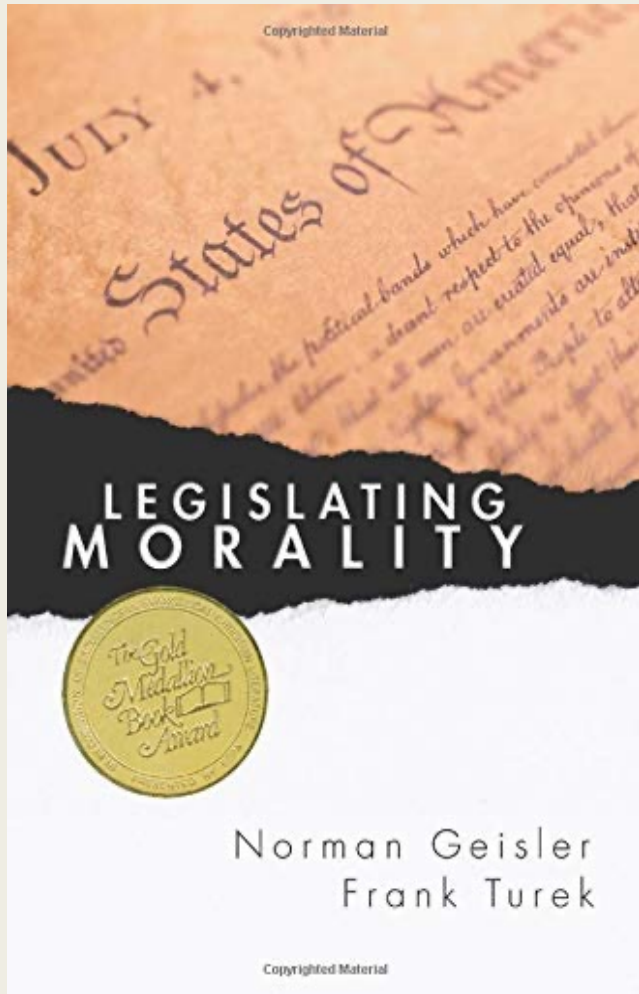
# United States and Theonomy



Geisler and Turek note,

“Contrary to what theonomists claim, *the United States has never had a government based on biblical law*. Our government is based on the Moral Law, which *is consistent with biblical principles*, but is not based on the written code of the Bible itself. Remember, that our national birth certificate, the *Declaration of Independence*, is not a distinctively Christian document. It was written by Thomas Jefferson, who wasn’t even a Christian.” Geisler and Turek, *Legislating Morality*, 100.

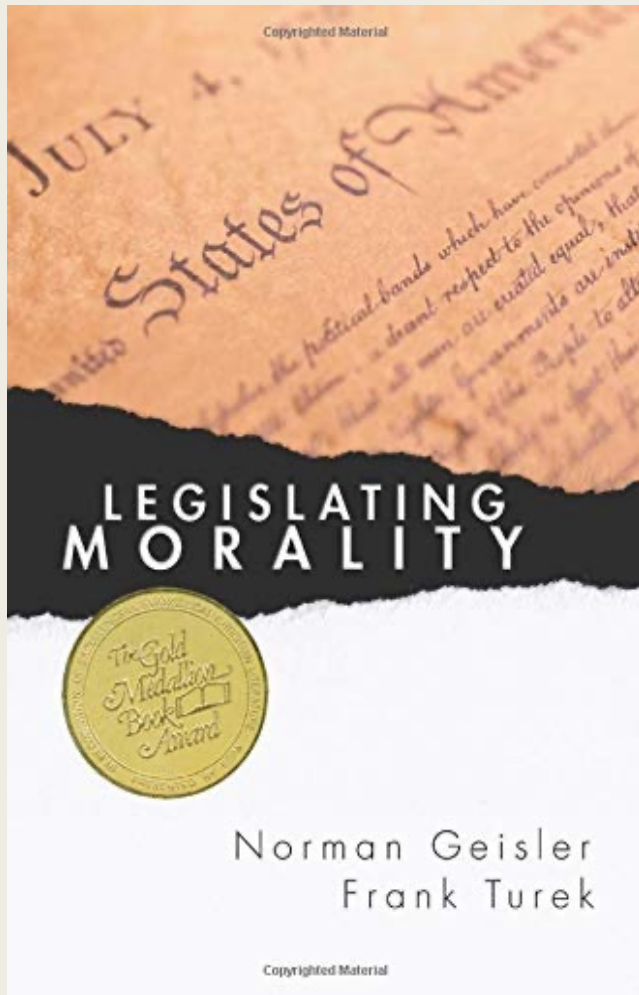
# United States and Theonomy



“Despite Jefferson’s deism, it is true that many of our Founding Fathers were Christians who put biblical principles into our Constitution (1787). However, the Constitution itself makes no reference to the Bible or any binding Christian basis for it. It doesn’t even begin with God, but with ‘We the people . . .’ Although the courts have referred to America as ‘Christian’ in a moral sense, Christianity was never the established religion of the nation. Given these facts, while we cannot deny there was a strong Christian influence at the founding of our country, there is no reason to claim that the United States has ever had a Christian government. **Therefore, our nation cannot ‘return’ to something it never had.**”  
Geisler and Turek, *Legislating Morality*, 100.



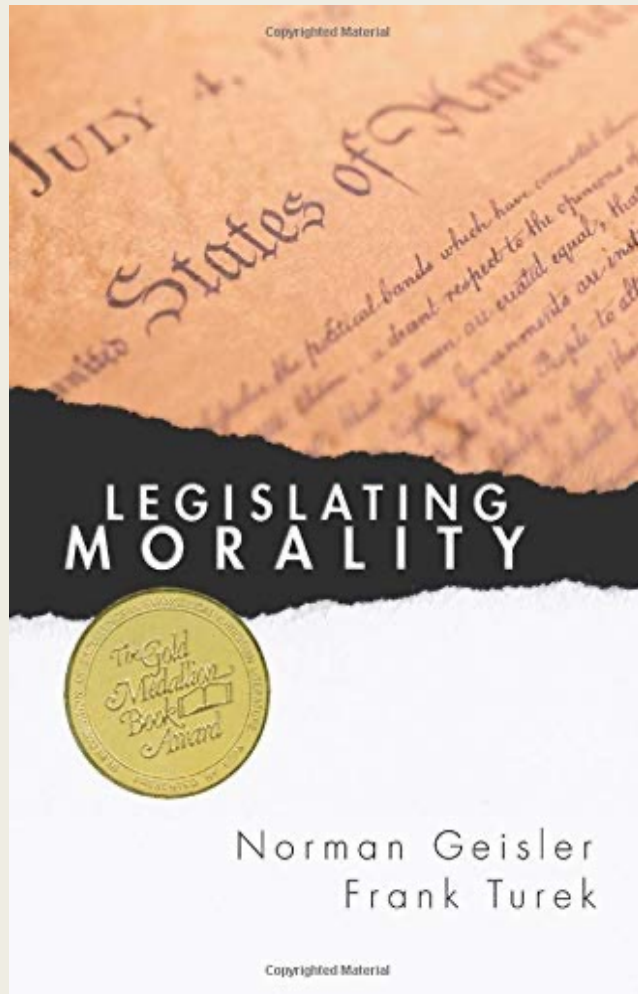
# Puritan New England



“The only time there was any form of Christian government on this land mass was in the Pilgrim settlements in New England, but that was over one hundred years before our nation was born. It must not be forgotten that under the Puritans in Massachusetts there was no religious freedom. They persecuted those who did not believe their way. Many of those calling for a return to ‘Christian America’ have forgotten what this so-called ‘Christian’ state was like. Ironically, some of them are Baptists who have forgotten that Roger Williams—a Baptist preacher from colonial Massachusetts—fled to what is now the state of Rhode Island in order to avoid religious persecution by the Puritans.” Geisler and Turek, *Legislating Morality*, 101.

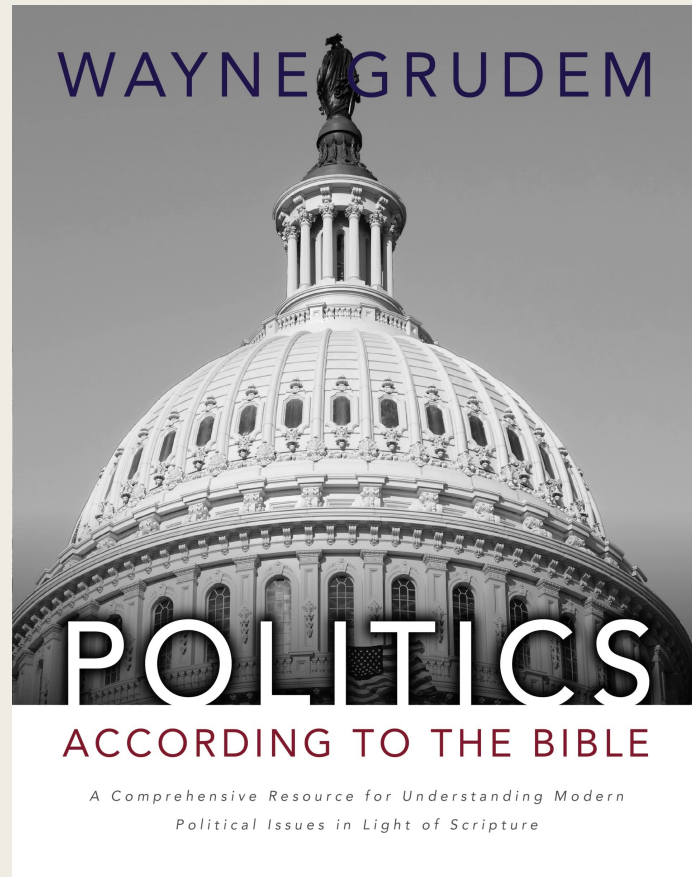


# First Amendment



“The second problem with the theonomists’ position is that it would violate the First Amendment by ending religious freedom in our nation. Theonomists want the same Law of Moses that was binding on the people of Israel to be binding on all the people of America. But there was no freedom of religion in Israel before the coming of Christ, because God himself was the ruler of the nation. Moreover, there was no separation of religion and politics as we know it because God ruled in their political lives as well as in their religious lives. However, once Christ came, even the theonomy of Israel was superseded. Yet even though Israel is no longer ruled directly by God, theonomists want to establish divine law in the United States!” Geisler and Turek, *Legislating Morality*, 101.

# Theonomy and Punishment



“Proper interpretation of Israel’s laws requires understanding of another unique aspect of the laws of Israel, namely, the imposition of the death penalty, not only for murder (as in Gen. 9:5-6), but also for promoting a false religion, for rebellion against family authority, and for sexual sin. These and other examples of the death penalty were part of Israel’s identity as a ‘holy nation’ (Exod. 19:6) before God, but that does not mean that nations today, which do not exist as theocracies or as ‘holy nations’ before God, should ever attempt to follow these examples. In fact, the Old Testament historical narrative shows that such severe laws and penalties could never produce a truly holy people, because the laws did not change the people’s hearts (see Jer. 31–33; Rom. 8:3-4; Gal. 3:21-24). Such severe penalties for religious infractions, family rebellion, and sexual sin should not be used as a pattern for government today.” Grudem, *Politics*, 83-84.

# John Calvin on Theonomy

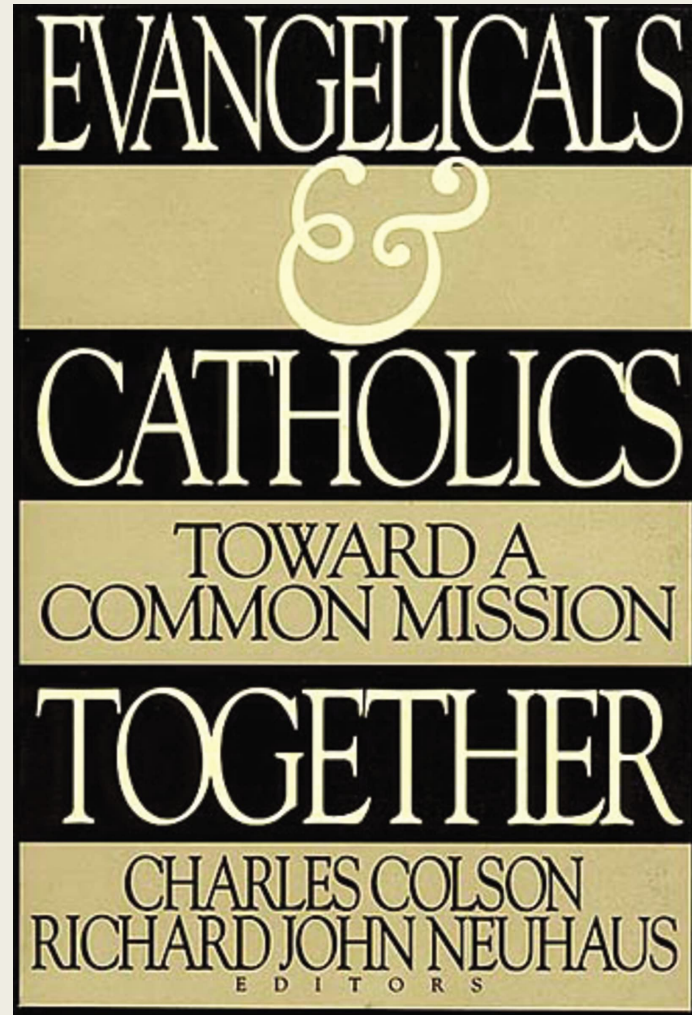


“I would have preferred to pass over this matter in utter silence if I were not aware that here many dangerously go astray. For there are some who deny that a commonwealth is duly framed which neglects the political system of Moses, and is ruled by the common laws of nations. Let other men consider how perilous and seditious this notion is; it will be enough for me to have proved it false and foolish.” Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.20.14

# Summary: Theonomy

- There must be a recognition that Israel is unique in God's economy. This is something that is true for both Covenant and Dispensational theologians.
- There must be a recognition that theonomy and Christian Nationalism would violate the First Amendment by ending religious freedom.
- It must be noted that theonomists and Christian Nationalists fail to recognize that even Israel, which was directly ruled by God, could not bring about universal obedience. In fact, that whole history of Israel is one long story of people "doing that which was right in their own eyes" and one of "exile and punishment."
- Even the Bible itself recognizes two different kinds of laws. First, the Law given to Israel. Second, the Bible explicitly says, "Gentiles . . . Do not have the law." But they have a law written on their hearts, which was the moral law.
- The essence of the New Covenant is that God writes his law upon the hearts of his people, not in tablets made of stone. A new heart is required for obedience, not a state enforced religion.

# Evangelicals and Catholics Together



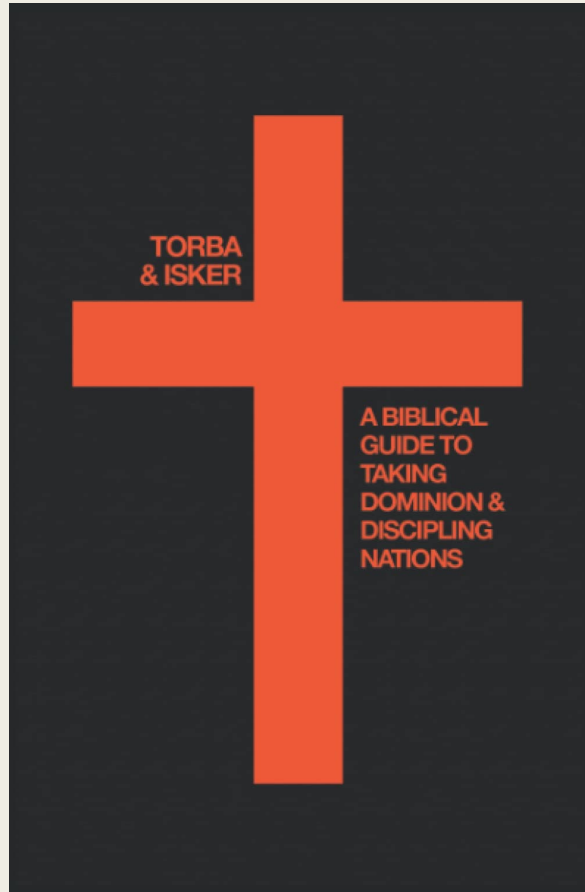


# ECT 1.0

- In 1994, there was a collaboration between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals who put out a joint statement to affirm co-belligerency for social purposes.
- Key figures included Charles Colson, J. I. Packer, Richard Land, Bill Bright, Os Guinness, Peter Kreeft, and several others.
- The key detractors from the statement were R. C. Sproul, John MacArthur, and D. James Kennedy.
- The central debate was whether or not Roman Catholics were truly brothers and sisters in Christ because the RCC denies at least one essential of the Gospel; namely, justification by faith *alone*.
- The debate concerning the 5 solas of the Reformation.



# ECT 2.0



- “Christian Nationalism will look different in every country and even every state depending on the Christian population and culture of the Christian Nationalists there. In many parts of America Christian Nationalism will take either a Protestant or Catholic approach” CN, xxviii
- "This book is the result of collaboration and influence from across the Christian faith. We are thankful for our Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox brothers and sisters who have inspired us to publish this book. We recognize and respect one another’s differences and unite in our shared love of Jesus Christ our King” CN, 55.
- What is it? Ecumenical Integralism.

# Where Do We Go From Here?



# Where Do We Go From Here?

- First, we must recognize that CN is just another totalitarian movement that is being used to balkanize and disrupt religious organizations. Some of the figures involved in the movement are useful idiots. Other figures within the movement are ideologues who are knowingly causing this fracturing within the church.
- Second, we must recognize that CN functions like the other totalitarian groups we've discussed at this conference. The current expressions of it are more conservative forms of it, but they operate with the same method and end goals (but they tell you it is all to bring about the Kingdom of God or the Lordship of Christ—religious propaganda).
- Third, pastors need to be aware of this movement and reject it within their churches.
- Fourth, we must support the Freedom of Speech and the Freedom of Religion, lest we lose it. This means we must return to Constitutional principles and the Classical Liberal idea of a Free Society.
- Fifth, Churches must be committed to defending the Gospel in our present-day culture. But it also must fight for a society that allows for the Freedom of Religion that is being attacked from both inside and outside the Church.