

THE MINISTRY OF THE FIRSTBORN

By

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INTRODUCTION

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- Romans 8:29

When the ministry of the Firstborn is established after the pattern of Christ, then we will be ready for a self-perpetuating, family-based society.

- J. W. Stivers, *Restoring the Foundations*, p.33

Over 22,000 families left Egypt under the staff of Moses (Numbers 3:40-43). The average Israelite family had over two dozen sons, men of war (Numbers 1:46, see *Eros Made Sacred*, p. 9-10). Being a patriarch or the firstborn son was an awe-inspiring task and duty in those days. The firstborn were leaders of a host.

Today, the pathetic curiosities we pass for families are really rooming arrangements for the slaves on the great federal plantation. Boys who would be men talk of becoming patriarchs. The modern West has neglected and discredited this doctrine of patriarchal familism for so long, that only a few renegades, like the heretical Koresh, are willing to make the attempt. We have a growing list of phony patriarchs and cult leaders, but nothing resembling what we see in the Bible. This wonderful philosophy of social order still remains a dead letter in the Sacred Writ. Fortunately, a new day dawns.[\[1\]](#)

Do we really need the family as the foundation for social order? What is the alternative? We know that socialism is a dead-end street. Look at the implosion of the Communists in the old Soviet Union. They are not replacing themselves. And socialist Europe is not far behind. America's corporate and public institutions seem to be adequate, but they are capitalized by enormous debt. America's demographics do not look much better than Europe's. A declining birth rate is a sign of weakness in a social order. Ours is in decline.

The looming era of crises and “decession” compels the Christian to come to grips with our peril. A new Dark Age awaits us if we do not promote a Biblical model for society. If history is any guide, the alternative to the revival of a Biblical patriarchy is the age of the warlord.

In all corporate bodies there exists the need for a head, someone who has authority. The family is a corporate body, a collection of people bonded together by kinship. It needs leadership and a command structure.

In the Bible, that leadership was provided by the oldest adult male heir, presumably the father. In the absence of the father, the task fell to the firstborn. Herein lays the first distinctive feature of the ministry of the firstborn: **it is a doctrine of succession**. It is a mechanism for the peaceful transference of temporal power to a succeeding generation.

God was able to make Abraham into a great nation and company of nations because he had a strong doctrine of succession. Consider Yahweh's remark in Genesis 18:19,

For I know him well, and that he will command his children and his household after him, to keep the ways of the LORD, to do justice and righteousness; that the LORD may do for Abraham the thing which he has spoken concerning him.

Only a few great men leave public legacies which last for many generations. For most of us, the fact that we were ever here is one which fades and is quickly lost to mankind. Our public influence, like our lives, is not immortal.

But in our families, our names and our life messages can be preserved, taught, and handed down from generation to generation. Our sepulchers may be weathered and forgotten, yet our memories can live on to the end of time through our descendants.

It is a natural thing for a child to want to cling to the memories of their parents, and to do so throughout their lives. Preserving these parental legacies while forming their own is why children need the firstborn. He is the link in the chain which binds the past with the future.

For a family, learning its lineage ought to be as important as knowing the names of American Presidents. Its places of sojourning are as important as the migrations of Israel. A family's legends ought to be as precious as the biography of any public figure. Learning family histories, family creeds, family achievements and so on - all are more important than any public history, church confession, or national triumph. For they are uniquely our own.

Once upon a time, families had a seal, an ensign, and sometimes a flag. These things promote loyalty, unity, and a cause bigger than oneself. It is more appropriate for families to have these things than the state or its creature: the corporation.

These sorts of things are the responsibility of the firstborn to maintain. Often, the "nuts and bolts" of this family heritage falls to the women, who tend to be more sentimental than men and who teach the small children. But it is ultimately the duty of the firstborn to see to it that it is done.

I hope in this short study to provide a more detailed overview of this neglected and much misunderstood ministry. Following a Trinitarian model for the home, it is Jesus Christ, the Second Person, who is our model here. And while I do not intend to repeat what was written in my book, *Restoring the Foundations*, we will look in greater detail at the three familial functions and the single public function:

I. The Ministry of Succession

II. The Ministry of Redemption

III. The Ministry of Vengeance

IV. The Public Diaconate

I. SUCCESSION (Psalms 90:12; 102:28)

The first need that any man has, after accomplishing his basic dominion task, is the establishment of his work that it might endure. This need is universal; for without a mechanism to preserve the gains from past labors, civilization cannot exist.

Inventing the wheel is of no use to mankind unless the inventor successfully teaches wheel-making to another - **to another one who will outlive him**. But mere knowledge of wheel-making is not enough. The inventor must teach the skill and provide the capital (the physical means) of building wheels to one who is willing to make wheels and to perpetuate wheel-making.

Competence (ability) plus disposition (desire) equals dominion (production). In ages past, men have looked to their offspring for a means of succession.

In our statist era, we have the modern phenomenon of artificial persons - legal fictions - which imitate the family. These are corporations. Corporations are a powerful force because of succession. They make possible the transference of power and wealth without discontinuities. But they are also rivals of the family for critical resources.

The American experiment in government has been successful because of its strong doctrine of succession. In spite of the many perversions and outright violations of the Constitution, the electoral process has been carefully respected, especially in regards to the Presidency.

One of the few times I have ever watched the CBS news program, *60 Minutes*, was the time Andy Rooney shared an experience he had with an Iowa farmer. It was soon after the time Richard Nixon got mired in the Watergate scandal, and it seemed the whole world was against him. Mr. Rooney was in the farmer's house and noticed a picture of Richard Nixon on the wall. "Oh, I see you still have a picture of Nixon on the wall." The farmer responded, "No, Mr. Rooney, that is not a picture of Richard Nixon. That is a picture of the President of the United States."

This Iowa farmer was committed to the *office* of the Presidency, rather than the *person* who held that office. This kind of commitment - a commitment to a doctrine of succession - has preserved the United States more than any other single principle.

Why do men want sons? It is because they want **successors**. They want "chips off the old block." Sons are more likely to honor their heritage than are strangers. We all know this instinctively. There is greater loyalty among kindred.

Among the great examples of this truth were the sons of *Mattathias Maccabees*. The "Book of Maccabees," once in the apocryphal section

of the King James Bible, is perhaps the most relevant book for our times. Maccabees led the Judean revolt against the Hellenistic Syrians during the Intertestamental Period. Much prophecy was fulfilled during this exciting era. Maccabees soon died, but his sons carried on the successful rebellion. First, it was *Judas*, then *Jonathan*. Upon his death, *Simon* took his stead. The ability to outlive your adversaries is a powerful thing. Because Maccabees had sons, his mission was successful. A strong doctrine of succession creates an aura of immortality to a cause, a tradition, or a heritage.

A misunderstanding which must be overcome is the tradition of primogeniture - that is, the custom in which the firstborn *becomes* the father to the family. He inherits everything and his brothers get nothing, but stand in vassalage to him. This is a Norman corruption of Anglo-Saxon Common Law copied from Rome.

Nor is it a Biblical standard. According to Biblical law, the firstborn gets a double portion (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). He succeeds his father in a certain capacity separate from his own dominion task. He is given a trusteeship over those who remain of his father's house who are dependents: women, minors, servants, etc. He executes his father's final contracts, secures and defends the estate, arbitrates family disputes, and speaks for the family to the outside world. He officiates at family gatherings, festal celebrations, and generally inherits the parental homestead (after the passing of the mother). In these respects he succeeds his father as a family prince and priest.

Succession requires a bridge from one generation to the other. An estate requires an executor, a trustee who is respected by all parties to fairly and competently distribute the inheritance. In ancient times, it was the firstborn who performed these important duties.

As I wrote in my book, *Restoring the Foundations*, one of the important functions for the firstborn son was to perform this duty. In our time, attorneys and bureaucrats fulfill these needs. But in a

family-based society, the firstborn is the logical office to turn to as trustee and executor. There are three reasons why this is so.

First, presumably, of all the children, he has lived in the family the longest. There is a longer acquaintance with family history. The eldest will likely have known grandparents and great-grandparents, while younger children may not have. The eldest would have seen the struggles of his parents in their early years, and would have himself been denied privileges and benefits that his younger siblings take for granted. The firstborn shares in the sacrifices of his young parents, which creates a unique bond and teaches him to put the family's collective interests ahead of his own personal pursuits.

Second, the firstborn is often the translator of the adult world to his younger siblings. They rely upon him as their mentor and guide in the life zones not covered by his parents. This is especially true with children at play. The eldest establishes the rules and enforces them. This process carries into adulthood.

Third, the firstborn is often the sacrificial lamb. He is blamed by parents for misbehaving children, while also the sounding board for siblings who are critical of adult demands.

Kevin Lehman's book, *The Birth Order Book* (Revel, 1984), is very good in profiling firstborns. They often complain of not having had a childhood. That is because their station is a separate familial office, separate from parent and child.

In this sense, the firstborn is analogous to the incarnation of Christ, who is "very God of very God, very man of very man." Christ had two natures, one human and the other Divine. For that reason, He was equipped to be a mediator between God and man. Analogously then, the firstborn is adult and child, parent and offspring. In that capacity, he can be a mediator, trustee, and executor of the estate.

As mediator, Christ is a guarantor, a Surety of "a better covenant" (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Likewise, a firstborn son finds it his duty to establish his brethren in their allotted inheritance and to carry out his father's final instructions (1 Kings 2). The book of Hebrews offers much source material on the doctrine of the firstborn (see Hebrews 3:1, 6; 5:5-10; 7:3, 22-28).

II. REDEMPTION (1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 9:12)

I know that my redeemer liveth - Job 19:25

One of the most developed Christian doctrines is that of redemption. It is not my desire to go over it again here. A book on Systematic Theology or even a good, Topical Bible will be sufficient. If you feel a little lost, I suggest you review those study helps before proceeding with this article.

The Hebrew word for "redeem" is *gaál* (or *go'el* for some references) which occurs some 90 times in the Old Testament. Literally meaning to "buy back," *gaâl* is most often translated as "redeemer" (Leviticus 25:25), but it is also translated as "deliverer" (Genesis 48:16), and "avenger" (Deuteronomy 19:6). The "Avenger of Blood" (Redeemer of Blood) will be the topic of the next point below. The concept of the Redeemer as a Deliverer (like a rescuer - Psalms 69:18; 103:2, 4) seems closer to the militant activities of the Avenger, and will also be discussed later. In this point, we want to look at **the idea of redemption as restoration.**

The idea of buying back is to restore something that was lost. This might be something uniquely precious to a family, such as land, houses, slaves, livestock, and so forth. Things pledged in religious vows can be redeemed (see Leviticus 25 and the book of Ruth and Leviticus 27).

Redemption was the responsibility of the next of kin. Vine's Expository Dictionary summarizes the matter thusly,

Thus, the kinsman-redeemer was responsible for preserving the integrity, life, property, and family name of his close relative or for executing justice upon his murderer.

- p. 144

What are the consequences of this kind of doctrine? **It is a form of social insurance.** In a family-based society, this is one way risks are mitigated. Kinsmen provide a safety net in case one of their own is overwhelmed by disaster. Some suppose that the Church has replaced the family in this capacity. But this is not the Biblical pattern (1 Timothy 5:8). It is appropriate for the Church to become a surrogate family when a nation is evangelized for the first time. Introducing a new religion will break-up families, since some will accept it and others will not (Luke 12:51-53). However, God has ordained the family as His instrument of social welfare (1 Timothy 5:4, 16). Because the Church usurped the family's control of charity, a new collectivism was created. Socialism was conceived in the Church, and then was copied and enlarged by the welfare state. Charity is a source of tremendous power. It buys loyalty, for one thing. This power must be diffused into family collectivism; else it will be centralized into a single, tyrannical institution.

We do not need more soup kitchens. We do not need more houses for unwed mothers. We need a social doctrine which will enable the misfortunate and outcasts of society to be reintegrated into families:

God setteth the solitary in families.

- Psalms 68:6

We are being strangled to death by our institutional remedies.

The firstborn son was the first line of defense for the family. He was empowered for his redemptive task by receiving the double-portion of the family estate (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). This is important. The ministry of the firstborn cannot be accomplished without capital. To deny the firstborn his double-portion is equivalent to releasing him from his familial duties. It destroys his ability to succeed his father; for he needs his portion for his own family. Without it, he too may fall prey to calamity and not be able to recover.

It should be added that the firstborn was not obligated to come to the aid of impenitent and morally derelict brothers. Nor were parents. The Prodigal Son was penitent, yet his inheritance was forfeited to his elder brother (Luke 15:31, 32). The protection of a family requires compliance with its rules.

Many young people self-righteously spurn their parents' advice, thinking they have the right "to live their own lives." But parents have a right to be concerned. They can be impoverished and ruined by coming to the aid of foolish children. Parents have the right to control what kind of men their daughters associate with. They may have to pay and care for bastard grandchildren. Parents have a right to a say in a young man's career. They may have to bail him out of a lawsuit or even out of jail. Foolish children cause everyone in a family to suffer, sometimes for many years.

Yet, the educational and welfare systems encourage rebellion against the family. And it spreads the costs of that rebellion by collecting taxes (or tithes) from the parents. If you subsidize folly, you will get more folly.

The answer is not to launch a direct attack on socialism in the church and state. That will only create chaos and a power-vacuum. The answer is for families to follow the Biblical pattern. A renewal of Biblically-based families on a large-scale will sever state and church

like withered vines. There will be struggle and hazards in the transition. But it is the only non-violent solution. Welfarism cannot be abolished; it can only be replaced.

III. VENGEANCE (Deuteronomy 19:6-13)

One of the more significant books of recent years is Bruce Benson's study on the privatization of law and law enforcement: *The Enterprise of Law, Justice Without the State* (Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, San Francisco, CA, 1990). He dispels the myth, convincingly, that a statist system is necessary to justice and the protection of a population from crime. To the contrary, he demonstrates that the over-criminalization of society has led to wide discretion of enforcement by magistrates, and in turn, widespread corruption.^[2] It is endemic to the system. By submitting it to an end-product analysis, he demonstrates the current market failure in law and justice.

People and businesses are responding by using private means. There are currently twice as many armed security guards as there are police officers of all kinds. Sixty percent of all disputes are settled by private arbitration. City streets are being deeded back to citizens and cordoned off. Private security systems, neighborhood watch groups, and even vigilance committees are growing in popularity. Although the state has been obstructionist and restrictive, the trend to privatization is well-established and in its advanced stages.

The current veneer of the old government system will probably disappear after the next national catastrophe. A sign of lessons not learned has been the nationalizing of airline security after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Although we have no statistical data to prove it, we have a steady stream of anecdotal evidence from airline passengers that security has not significantly improved. One passenger, on a

flight from Miami, was relieved by security guards of her make-up kit because it contained tweezers, scissors, and other dangerous items, only to board the plane to find the very same items (including a razor!) in an on-board first-aid kit offered to passengers. May we not suggest that safety has improved because of the increased vigilance of the airline industry, flight crews, and passengers themselves rather than increased policing by the state? The government may take the credit, but it will take the blame the next time. No longer can government agencies complain of inadequate resources or obstructionist civil procedures. The public has given them everything they say they need. Should the government fail to keep the public safe from future attacks; its usefulness will be thoroughly discredited. It is hoped that Christians will be ready to offer a Biblical alternative.

That alternative ought to re-incorporate the *gaâl*, the kinsman-redeemer in society. The concept of the next-of-kin as a deliverer and an avenger was basic to the Biblical system of justice. The popular stereotype of Biblical justice is that of primitive villagers taking an offender outside the gates and stoning him. While that was one form of execution, the normal method of execution for homicide was death by sword at the hands of the *gaál*, a custom which might trouble the faint of heart, but which - living in an age when soldiers still fix bayonets - cannot be described as ancient primitivism.

The Avenger of Blood would have been the firstborn son, generally, although not always. He was the law enforcement officer of society and his jurisdiction was his family's estate. The king became the nation's firstborn and the Avenger of Blood for those who had no kinship group.[\[3\]](#)

This was the pattern which was followed with uncanny resemblance by the early Celts and Anglo-Saxons, a fact suggesting their Israelite ancestry. Benson discusses this form of government at length and demonstrates its effectiveness. How is it possible that a

criminal justice system can have more sympathy for the criminal rather than the victim? It is because the prosecutor has no personal attachment to the victim and thus his zeal is likely to falter and he will attempt a plea bargain. **A kinship group has a natural zeal to see that justice is done.** It used to be possible in this country for the families of victims to hire their own prosecutors (see Bouvier's *Institutes of American Law*) to enforce criminal sanctions against criminals. Now, all they can do is file a civil lawsuit.

The scenario of feuds like the proverbial "Hatfields v. McCoys" is a myth foisted by government propaganda. Benson shatters it as he describes the vigilance committees of the American frontier:

The widely held perception that government must establish and enforce law is a recent phenomenon. When government law was unavailable or undesirable to a particular community, private options filled the void. The vigilante movements that were so common in the American West and the decisions by many to establish and enforce their own custom-based laws illustrate an important point about a valid legal system. Vigilantes re-established law when government officials were ineffective or corrupt and, therefore, in violation of the law.

- p. 321

And he adds,

Similarly, historian Roger McGrath concluded that "some long-cherished notions about violence, lawlessness, and justice in the Old West are nothing more than myth."

- p. 312

There have been 300 historical vigilante movements in the United States since 1767. Most had to resort to capital or corporal punishment to be successful. Often, corrupt government officials

swung from the end of a rope, hence the predictable unpopularity of vigilantes among government officials. But these movements were necessary to preserve life and property. Men arose to protect their families and neighbors from organized - and sometimes, state-sponsored - looters, rapists, and murderers. It has an honorable history.

With the rise of the Enlightenment, a Gnostic abstraction of justice was bequeathed to the modern world. It taught that emotional detachment was necessary to the dispensing of justice. Consequently, kin were replaced by lawmen and shepherds by hirelings. The result has been the increased capacity for violence by governments. More lives have been lost and more property destroyed by the wars and revolutions of the last two centuries, than by all of the family feuds over the entire history of mankind combined.

To cite Benson again, as he reviews the historical record:

In fact, virtually every instance of temporary reigns of terror involved the power of some centralized government authority.

- p. 294

The current abuse of the forfeiture laws, even in defiance of the Supreme Court, is answered by its profitability to police. Poor performance has led to diminished revenues from a stingy public which resists tax increases. Too many police departments are making up for the shortfall by plunder. It will get worse.

Betraying their truncated religion, most Christians avoid, even condemn, the concept of a ministry of vengeance. Many of them do not believe in hell, either. I attended an Evangelical church for two years, and hell was never discussed once. These kinds of people are easy prey for Communist-style dictatorships because they have no

Divine Judge in their theological doctrine. And nature hates a vacuum.

The Bible teaches men to give place to wrath, for God is our avenger (Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30). Many people believe this teaching is a New Testament change of Old Testament standards. But is that true? No. It is an assumption made in ignorance; for it is an Old Testament concept, as well, and not at all contradictory to the doctrine of vengeance (Deuteronomy 32:35; Judges 11:36). God's vengeance is mediated by lawful authority (Romans 13:4). Whoever is the magistrate in society, he is the minister of the sword. In a family-based society, that magistrate is the *geber* (property owner) and the *gaâl* (the firstborn) who meet in convocation with the elders (other *gebers* and *ga'als*) at the city gate.[\[4\]](#)

The Father in Heaven is the great *geber*, and Jesus Christ is His *gaâl*. This was a popular theme among the early Church Fathers, as Gustaf Aülen skillfully shows in his work on the atonement, *Christus Victor*. Christ enters the world to deliver His brethren and to avenge them (Revelation 19). His robe is drenched with the blood of His enemies (19:13):

Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

- Matthew 10:34

IV. THE PUBLIC DIACONATE (Luke 2:23; Numbers 8:17)

We have shown how the firstborn in the families of Israel had certain key societal and political functions. We need to be aware of the fact, also, that all of the functions of the Levitical system originally belonged to the firstborn. It was not until *after* the incident with the Golden Calf, that God decided to replace the firstborn with

the tribe of Levi to perform the religious ministry of the tabernacle and the nation. The Aaronic priesthood may have been established (or at least contemplated), but not the Levitical system (Exodus 28-29, 32, 32:26-29; Numbers 3:45).

Thus, we can say that **the Levites took over the national civic duties of the firstborn**. The office of the Firstborn became a strictly familial and local position. While the civic work of the Levites was religious, very little of it was sacerdotal. Only a few were needed at the Tabernacle, and later, the Temple. The descendants of Aaron were in charge there.

The Levites were urban dwellers. They had no permanent ties to the land. They received the cities and the national tithe (a tenth of their tithe went to the priests (Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 12). Edward Powell, in his book co-authored with R.J. Rushdoony (*Tithing & Dominion*, Ross House Books, Vallecito, CA, 1979) identifies the Levites as the professional class in Israel. They were the educators, musicians, artists, deacons to the priests, judges, officers, and in general, the civil service. They were the physicians, health inspectors, researchers and scientists, archivists, writers and scholars. They were, undoubtedly, the pool from which prophets were drawn (e.g. Elijah, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist). They were the rabbis for local synagogues. Powell declares,

No area was to be exempt from the work of the Levites, because no area of life was to be separated from the Law of God.

- p. 109

Since the cities were to be populated by foreign immigrants, the Levites, thus, became *disciplers* of the nations. Immigrants were drawn by Israel's prosperity and justice. They could not buy land, but they could buy city houses. Consequently, the Levitical cities became cosmopolitan and required a strong discipling ministry. The

opportunity for world evangelism was ever present during the eras of Israel's success and was urged by the prophets (Micah 4:2).

While the Levitical ministry is clear, it has not been necessarily clear as to what class of persons succeed the Levites in our day. Of course, Christ's Melchisedekal priesthood has replaced that of Aaron. In the Church the five-fold ministry, to a limited degree, has replaced the Levites (Ephesians 4:11-16). But I argue that it exists functionally, not officially. For eschatologically speaking, the apostolic era has passed and we have been restored to the patriarchal era (Malachi 4:4-6; Matthew 28:19). The ministry of the firstborn has been restored (Hebrews 1:6). How can that be properly applied today?

Today, we have created institutional structures by which the Levitical ministry is mediated. A family-based society would see men institutionalizing their dominion tasks in their own families. Surgeons would teach their own sons how to perform surgery. You would call upon a specific family, for instance, if you wanted brain surgery. A family-based society does not preclude the division of labor. Rather, it restores the sense of pride and loyalty to a vocation which has been lost in this corporate empire of hirelings. The right of a young man to seek a calling different from his family is made possible by the Biblical laws of adoption. I see the future in terms of **family guilds** and a **family-based civil service**.

The firstborn must be a generalist, not a specialist. His position requires that he be a leader of men. He is first his father's lieutenant, and that task will train him in the exercise of power.

Of course, the ministry of the firstborn is severely limited in a tiny nuclear family. Without an estate, and without brothers to lead, the firstborn becomes a mere relic, a curiosity, sometimes an unwanted oppressor. We pointed out at the beginning of this study that Israelite households were quite large. They were really small tribes. Jesus Christ is "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

The government of Heaven is a family. I do not see why the government of Earth cannot consist of families.

Thy kingdom come . . . on earth as it is in heaven.

What of the church? The modern, institutional church is socialistic by its very structure. It is also elitist, as all fraternal organizations must eventually become. There must always be a father and fraternal orders must always fill that void with an elite. This violates Christ's Word to call no man father (Matthew 23:9), unless he is truly your father (Matthew 19:19). Our current problems with civil government grow directly from our philosophy of church polity. As radical and impious as it may seem, a case can be made for the value of disbanding our churches. Such a proposal is unrealistic, of course, but what is possible is to re-introduce family churches. House churches are increasing in popularity. What might solidify the movement is to restore the kinsman-redeemer as an ordainable office of ministry in the house church context. This can be an exact mechanism to use the existing institutional church as a metamorphosing agent to bring about a truly family-based society. This is an Ecumenical option, since all churches and denominations and religions can create this office within their own governmental structures.

CONCLUSION

Following the ancient Celtic tradition, the Cambrian Episcopal Church promotes the concept of the "family abbey" in which family groups dedicate their estates to religious purposes. The "Abbots" or "Abbesses" are ordained as priests and priestesses upon their estates and can function as kinsman-redeemers. This is not an innovation. Within the ancient and Medieval Celtic churches, abbots were the kinsman-redeemers of those who were joined to their abbeys. And it was institutionalized by law (see Fr. Thomas Freeman Hudson's, *The High Age of the Celtic Church*, The Attic Press, 1992).

Such family groups need not all be related by blood, but may be a collection of families who share the same viewpoints in doctrine and mission. They are joined together by mutual covenant, the tithe, the promise of intermarriage, sharing in the same estate, and a common symbol for the Throne of Christ.

Although communal, such an abbey is not stereotypically a commune because it is not a static utopian body but rather a growing one which requires expansion and change. Each family group retains its identity and sphere of operation to provide for growth and the launching of new abbeys.

Footnotes:

[1] I hope that the reader will make the distinction between a "patriarchal familism" and a "patriarchal institutionalism." The West has practiced "patriarchal institutionalism" for over a thousand years. Patriarchal institutionalism is anti-family, misogynist, predatory and homosexual in orientation. It emphasizes institutions, the professions, militarism, and the masculine control of the public and private spheres of life.

"Patriarchal familism", on the other hand, is tribal and relaxed toward the role of women in society. It sees the functions of life as an extension and an outgrowth of the family. It is not imperial, minds its own business, and loves women and children. This kind of society we find in ancient times among tribal peoples such as the Celts. In these cultures, the men in charge were not professionals but fathers, who loved their people and respected the counsel of their women.

[2] "Over-criminalization" refers to the practice of governments to create new classes of criminals by making something illegal which law-abiding citizens currently do, especially if the law is contrary to nature or if the citizens are not informed of the new law. The notions of *ex post facto laws* and *bills of attainder* are prohibited in the Constitution. To illustrate, if a government agency were to outlaw the eating of bananas, and only publish it in the Federal Registrar - a massive tome which changes everyday and no one ever reads - it would probably ensnare large portions of the population into breaking that law. Since the law would be contrary to nature, probably many people would be willing to take the risk and eat them anyway. Once upon a time, it was not illegal to use opium in the United States. It is natural for the human organism to seek relief from pain. The use of opium for that purpose was widespread, although its abuse was widespread, also. It should not surprise us that an intractable criminal class was created once it became illegal.

[3] Here we have the rationale, which is valid, for the role of church and state, who act as representatives of the king to those who have no kinsmen. The king is the firstborn for the nation at large and is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek." There is a place for the clergy, for public prosecutors and public defenders, for a standing army, and so on. I am simply pointing out that families and their firstborn need to have the right restored to them to do these things within their law-sphere, and as "Avenger of Blood", to prosecute those who have committed crime against the family, including executing the sentence should they so desire.

[4] See the study "The Kinsman-Redeemer" (James W. Stivers) where the geber is described at length.