

THE FAMILY ABBEY

By

James Wesley Stivers

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	page 7
Introduction	page 9
Glimpses of the Celtic Abbey	
Chapter One: Abbey or Church?	page 17
The Biblical Foundation; Keys of the Kingdom & the Institutional Church; Given Enough Rope; A Fertility Cult?	
Chapter Two: The Failure of American Religion	page 45
Fathers v. Preachers; Family Church or Church Family?	
Chapter Three: The Abbey Defined	page 59
Abraham's Abbey; What is a Family?; The Family of Heaven; The Land & the Abbey	
Chapter Four: Starting the Family Abbey	page 73
The Abbey Charter; By Oath Consigned; Sample Contract	
Conclusion	page 81
Appendix A: The Legal Foundation for Polygamy in American Jurisprudence	page 83
Appendix B: The Casting of Lots in the Appeals Process...	page 91
Appendix C: Abbeys & the Traditional Family	page 95
Appendix D: Headship & the Sacraments	page 103

Preface

Unless you believe that polygamy is a righteous custom taught in the Bible, you will not find this book to be of much use to you. It presupposes a Christian polygamy as introduced in my book, *Eros Made Sacred*, a quarter of a century ago. It also benefits from the aspects of relational theology discussed in my book, *Restoring the Foundations*, in which a Christian patriarchy is envisioned patterned after a view of the Holy Trinity as the proto-heavenly family.¹

As with all my books, I introduce them as propositional. Such is the case with this one. Although argued from conviction, one must always allow for the possibility of human error. One must also provide the time and opportunity for refutation before taking the next step. To this date, my theses described above have not been refuted, although many have tried. To the contrary, a host of capable Biblical commentators have arisen in recent years, easily found on the Internet, who have provided cogent argumentation supporting both the notion of polygamy and patriarchy.

And with the decriminalizing of polygamy in American jurisprudence near at hand,² it is time to look at how a family

¹ Both of these can be obtained from Patriarch Publishing House, PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963 or www.PatriarchPublishingHouse.com

² See Appendix A on “The Legal Foundation for Polygamy in American Jurisprudence”

which is patriarchal and polygamous might look as an outpost of the Kingdom of God in our society.

Such is the purpose of this book.³

The reader will sometimes find obscure terms used in the text which are not entirely explained: “Grail theology,” “hierogamy,” “Desposyni,” and so forth. These terms refer to the spiritual tradition to which I belong and represent. Although I have footnoted explanations in the text, it is highly recommended that the reader obtain the books which are referenced for a complete understanding.

³ This book was first published in 2004 for internal circulation among members and affiliates of the Cambrian Episcopal Church of the Grail.

INTRODUCTION

In the old Celtic Church there was a tradition of a unique form of church organization. Unlike the Latin and Eastern traditions which centered their religious life around a place of worship supervised and controlled by clerics, the Celtic tradition provided for *the abbey*.

Although the abbeys later became monasteries, in the beginning they were simply the result of Christian families which devoted all or part of their estates to a spiritual mission. The heads of these abbeys, as the name suggests, were the fathers of these respective families.

At first, these fathers – called “dads” by the Celts, but later known as “abbots”⁴ - were ordained by Culdee missionaries. The Culdees were Druids who had converted to Christianity under the ministries of the Apostles and other missionaries, such as Joseph of Arimathea, who had come to Britain during the 1st and 2nd Centuries. These men not only brought the Gospel but also representatives of a Sacred Bloodline - the family of Jesus - which became mingled with certain families in Celtic lands.⁵

⁴ See Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary under *ab*, *abba*, *abbey*, *abbot*, and *daddy*. Thought to be terms of endearment from the Hebrew, “abba” (Galatians 4:6).

⁵ *The Origin & History of Christianity in Britain*, Andrew Gray, D.D (1897)

Father Priests

The abbeys were ordained by these Culdees to be self-perpetuating spiritual entities. Unlike the Latin Church which required the presence of three bishops at the ordination of a new bishop, the Celtic Church required only one. Thus, the earliest abbeys were Apostolic and Episcopal, but also Patriarchal, because they could be perpetuated in a succession from father to son. They could be propagated this way, as well, as men sent out their sons in a mission of colonization.

According to Celtic custom, the family abbey did not represent the conjugal or nuclear family familiar to modern times. The "family" in Celtic lands referred to the clans or family groups which represented a multi-generational extension of the family, encompassing villages of various sizes. These family clusters lived under the leadership of the leading male (or female) heir who acted as their chieftain or lord. They led, not only in temporal matters, but in worship, as well.

The Druids and Bards formed a distinct cast separate from these family groups. They provided the foundation of instruction for their future leaders. Usually, the heirs of rulers were sent to various Druidic colleges for training. As Celtic civilization matured, the Druids became identified with these chieftains who, in turn, formed their own schools within their villages.

When converted to Christianity, it was natural for these father-priests to continue leading their people in worship and in religious instruction. As time went on, they would delegate specific tasks to various local teachers, vicars, and priests, but as abbots, they retained the right of episcopal succession and ordination. This heritage remained as a viable custom in Wales for many centuries. A land dotted with family chapels and conventicles - often no more than mud huts - the Welsh stubbornly resisted the claims and dictates of the Latin Church.

During the Protestant Reformation, this tradition was revived and became the foundation for England's departure from the Church of Rome. The King, as the nation's father, claimed the right of priestly succession as well as the regal succession. Heir to the mantle from Joseph of Arimathea, the Church of England was recognized to be of greater antiquity than of all the other national churches.⁶

Although Protestantism departed from this familial model and drifted toward individualism and sectarianism, the Church of England retained it part. The Puritans, still members of the Anglican Church, recognized the father as king and priest to his own household, but in America, lost the vision quickly as New England churches became infatuated with doctrine. They were controlled by a spiritual aristocracy which employed a thought police to eliminate dissent.

Ever since then, America has been the setting of an on-going culture war between a learned clergy protecting the ruling class on the one hand and a populist rebellion which doesn't know what it wants, on the other. Seeing the right and wrong in both groups, the Grail Church⁷ does not endorse either one. Rather, it clings to its heritage in ancient Wales and points to a third way: the way of the family abbey.

Glimpses of the Celtic Abbey

Evidence of the kind of Christianity which existed among the Celts and the other barbarian tribes of northern Europe is lacking for the earliest centuries. Folklore does exist, but the world of

⁶ *The Origin & History of Christianity in Britain*, Andrew Gray, D.D (1897)

⁷ "The Grail Church" refers specifically to the Cambrian Episcopal Church of the Grail, the spiritual communion of the author, but also generally to any group which teaches the esoteric doctrines found in the Grail legends propagated during the Middle Ages.

scholarship is not much interested in it. Of the scraps that have come down to us, we learn something peculiar: they reveal a very different ecclesiastical organization than what we see in the classical (i.e. Greco-Roman) world.

I now quote at length from Father Thomas Freeman Hudson's work, *The High Age of the Celtic Church* (Attic Press, 1992):

After the death of Ninian on 16 September circa 432, and Patrick on 17 March 461, darkness came upon the Church in Britain and Ireland. The barbarian invasions of the western continent began in those years and contact with Gaul became increasingly difficult. As Rome steadily withdrew from Britain, paganism reasserted itself and the Church went into eclipse in both Britain and Ireland. The next information about the Church in the British Isles was the emergence of the Celtic Church and Celtic Christianity, bursting forth without prior evidence of an active life. This new expression of the Christian Church made no use of the old Roman imperial districts in its organization. The Celtic Church was, however, always fully orthodox in doctrine.

Here, I would interject and argue that this was the *original* organization of the Church in Britain, prior to its first subjugation under the rule of Constantine, which was reasserting itself. Hudson continues,

The most singular difference between the Western Church and the Celtic Church was in ecclesiastical government. The church of Ninian and Patrick had monks as leaders. There also were married and celibate clergy, monks and nuns, and monasteries with abbots. The leadership in those times, however, was always episcopal. The bishop and his see and his diocese, even

though in Celtic lands the territory might have been small and ill-defined. When the Celtic Church emerged, roles radically changed. Monasteries, not dioceses, formed the basic governmental unit of the church. The local church in the village became a monastic place. In place of the diocesan bishop, the abbot of the larger monastic houses, usually in episcopal orders, governed the church throughout the surrounding countryside. In some cases, the abbot was in priest's orders, as was the case with Columba, the great abbot of Iona in Scotland. Local clergy like Patrick's father and grandfather were gone. It was monks and nuns who did the missionary work and local pastoral care. The married monastic families lived within the confines of the wall and not in the local village. (page 26)

One must not read into Hudson's description of the monastery the misconception as it prevails in popular thinking. These were not places for "solitaires." The Celtic monasteries were places of scholarship and worship, yes, but they were also the places of hard work and practical living. The task of reconstruction during those violent years included the preservation of knowledge in general, whether it pertained to agriculture, medicine, the arts, and so on. In many ways, the vision of the modern homesteading movement finds its antecedent in the Celtic monasteries of the Dark Ages.

Not a Monastery

Notice that there existed "monastic families" and that the monastery had "walls", like a citadel or a fort. These were places of refuge - spiritually and physically - for the people living in the countryside.

Notice, also, that the primary leaders of these "monasteries" were abbots, a fact which made them "abbeys." The leaders were

usually from episcopal orders, although sometimes, as in the exception of Columba, they were priests only.

For a further description of the Celtic abbey, I now quote from Dr. Andrew Gray's work, *The Origin and Early History of Christianity in Britain*:

[Of St. Columba] *He is said to have founded more than thirty monasteries, aided, no doubt, by his kinship with many of the chieftains and kings. His monastic life never severed him from the ties of clan and family. Indeed, the Irish monastic communities seem to have been incorporated with the clans, the dignity of Abbot frequently descending in the family of the founder. The communities seem, in many cases, to have consisted of a religious house, with a large outer circle of tenants, workmen, and followers, like the household of a chieftain, more or less connected by the ties of blood.* (p. 95)⁸

In this description, we see something like a commune, but not communism; since in communism, there is no patriarchal figure available for leadership. Most modern churchmen would label these communities as "cults."⁹

Both of these authors quoted above are high churchmen. They have little sympathy for this ecclesiastical structure and only grudgingly acknowledge its existence. Fr. Hudson thinks it was the primary weakness in the Celtic system and Dr. Gray spends much time arguing that the episcopal powers were distinct from that of the abbot, even though they were possessed by one man. He does

⁸ *op cit*

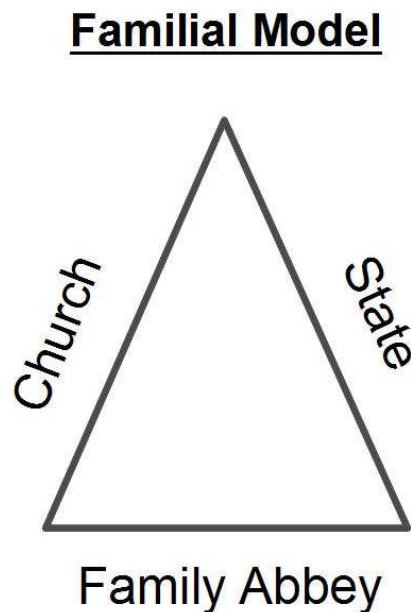
⁹ Oddly, the fraternal and bureaucratic nature of most modern churches bears a striking resemblance to the communistic structure. See my discussion in a forthcoming book: *Jesus Was a Polygamist: Churchianity as a Heresy of Eunuchs* (2014).

this, of course, to protect the traditional view of apostolic succession.

We are under no such reservations and can fully appreciate the value of the Celtic system. Our world is facing the prospects of cataclysm and a new age of darkness. This social structure seems to be the most practical and enduring one in the experience of our species. It deserves further examination.

* * * * *

Diagram #1 – The Structure of Society



Chapter One

ABBEY OR CHURCH?

In an age when the doctrine of the separation of church and state has served well the cause of liberty, peace, and a well-ordered society, the family abbey might be a perplexing proposition. The integrity of the church as a distinct institution in society may seem to be under assault by this kind of ecclesiastical organization. In blurring the distinction between family and church, might we be committing the same error of the past, when the church was simply an agency of the state?

What we mean by "Church"

It depends upon what we mean by "church." If by church we mean religious worship and observances, do we not find enough in the Bible to teach us that men are to worship God everywhere and at all times? Is there anything in our heritage that requires us to worship by proxy, that is, through a priest or mediator?

On the other hand, if by "church" we mean the building designated for religious worship, again, how is it that a family chapel would not qualify? What would make one building more sacred than another?

The word "church" as used in the Bible comes from the Greek word "ecclesia," meaning "those who are called or summoned to a meeting." It corresponds to the Old Testament word for "congregation," which refers to the gathering of the Covenant People to perform some collective task, such as a religious observance or a civic duty. We see in this the idea of a parish, that a "church" pertains to the people of a given locality who gather to their meeting house - much like the Congregationalists who founded New England - at times to worship, and then at other times to settle town business.

We can also see how the structure of such an institution might take different forms depending upon local customs. In an urban society, we can envision temples and cathedrals with an elaborate entourage of priests and other specialists who might supervise the religious activities. In a rural, tribal culture, on the other hand, the structure would be greatly simplified, in which the local chieftain would provide such supervision or appoint someone to act in his stead.

However, we cannot reduce this question to one of mere convenience. It involves the issue of spiritual authority and who has the right to speak for God. Within the church, we find the Kingdom of Christ mediated to the world. Is the family abbey a legitimate representative of the Throne of Christ?

In recent years there has been renewed interest in home churching. In part, it has grown from the phenomenon in America of home schooling. For many people, it has seemed very natural to extend the role of the family in education to include religious instruction and then religious worship. This development has alarmed many churchmen.

Rushdoony: Champion of Patriarchy

One prominent figure in the home schooling movement who has supported home churching has been the late Rev. Rousas J. Rushdoony. The author of numerous books pertaining to the issues of Christian civilization, he is best remembered, perhaps, for his classic, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*.¹⁰ In that text, he recaptures the vision of independent Christian men living like Biblical patriarchs, with all that that implies. He sees the clergy as a nuisance.

His "low church" ecclessiology has solicited a hostile response from his former colleagues in the Presbyterian movement. Dr. Gary North - his very own son-in-law, no less - has led the charge, writing a blistering diatribe entitled *Baptized Patriarchalism: The Cult of the Family* (1994).¹¹ The title says it all.

He cites Matthew 10:34-36, in which Jesus says "I am come to set a man at variance against his father" as the justification for this astonishing claim:

*Jesus understood that patriarchalism was an anti-Christian force to be reckoned with in the ancient world, especially the Roman world, where the father had the power of life and death over the children of his household. He launched a frontal assault against every societal ideal of the family which would place loyalty to the family above loyalty to Him. Jesus did not identify the family as the central institution in society. Instead He identified it as the central institutional threat to the kingdom of God. Loyalty to the family rather than to Him, He said, is **the** great temptation. (emphasis added)*

¹⁰ He was an early advocate of home education, and armed with a Masters Degree in Education, was the decisive expert testimony in *Leeper v. Arlington* which decriminalized home schooling in the state of Texas.

¹¹ North has published this book on the Internet. Rushdoony politely ignored him.

While no one can quarrel with his "Jesus first" theology - like motherhood, apple pie, and the American Way - and no Christian would look to pagan Rome as a standard for family values, is North really saying that the restoration of a *Biblical* fatherhood is a denial of Christ? If fatherhood is the greatest evil, perhaps we should promote war and castration, since these would be more effective and pre-emptive weapons against fatherhood!

We might ask the good Doctor why he doesn't level the charge of paganism against the saints of the Old Testament who practiced a patriarchal religion. Philip Schaff, the great 19th Century church historian, has noted that they lived as "kings and priests to their own households." In building their own altars, were they practicing the "cult of the family"? North never says.

While we might be tempted to dismiss his polemic upon the strength of this argument alone, a review of his book would be in good order. I will avoid responding to his personal attacks against Rushdoony's marital history, a dubious tactic in any theological debate, but especially so in this case, as it seems to really portray Rushdoony as a martyr, which obviously is not North's intent.¹²

The Biblical Foundation

It seems straightforward enough. Jesus said, "For where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). It has been a popular mantra over the last few centuries among the multitude of Anabaptist churches which have spread over the Protestant world in never ceasing sectarian divisions.

¹² Rushdoony was the innocent party in a divorce early in his ministry.

The Notion of Apostolic Authority

But Jesus said these things to His Apostles, not to the common people who followed Him. Jesus ordained these men and imparted judicial authority to them to act on His behalf. That is why they were called "apostles." *Apostle* was a term with specific legal meaning in the ancient world to refer to those who acted under a law of agency on behalf of a principal. Nowhere do we find in the Gospels or in the New Testament the right of anyone to simply assume the right to speak for God on their own initiative. Protestants argue, of course, that they hide behind the authority of the Scriptures. That seems to solve the problem until you pose the question, "Who authenticates the veracity of the Scriptures and the translations from which the preacher derives his doctrine?" The translation committees? The Pope? The printer at the print shop? Who?

William Tyndale, that earnest and capable translator of the English Bible was burned at the stake for his trouble. He felt the king was derelict - which was true - in his royal obligation to produce an English Bible for the people. His death shamed the king into action. But Tyndale was rash and impatient, as all Separatists tend to be who want "reform without tarrying for any." He saw the hunger in the eyes of the Lord's sheep and tried to do something about it without the blessings of the church or state. Upon what authority, then, did he rely to justify his actions? Modern advocates of home churching face the same issues as did Tyndale.

I return, now, to North's book, in his condemnation of this new phenomenon in American Christianity:

The reason why this little book is necessary is that there is a professedly Christian patriarchalism being

seriously proposed today as the solution to the modern messianic state. What do I mean by "Christian patriarchalism"? I mean the suggestion that a Christian father, as the head of his household, possesses the keys of the kingdom: the right to baptize his children and serve the Lord's Supper on the basis of the marriage bond, not on the basis of his membership in the institutional church.

*The new patriarchalism insists that the twin sacramental monopolies that identify the institutional church as a separate covenantal jurisdiction are not monopolies of the institutional church, but in fact are family rites. This assertion, if true, would strip the institutional church of its **authority to bring sanctions, both positive and negative, in God's name**. (p. 3, emphasis added)¹³*

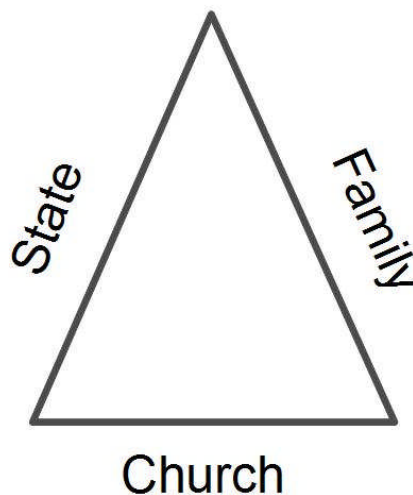
Yes, North is correct in his assumption that such a claim would strip the institutional church. As a true Augustinian, he believes that a Christian theocracy requires three covenantal institutions: the church, the state, and the family. The church is based upon the confession of faith and the promise to submit to one's spiritual rulers, namely, in receiving the sacraments, including the preached Word, and in the church's various rulings on doctrine, morals, and so on.

¹³ The "sanctions" to which North is referring are presumably the "blessings and cursings" delineated in Biblical law. But this is not always clear in his arguments. Different church traditions teach different levels of sanction and North seems to be ambivalent as to which tradition he represents. The notions of salvation and excommunication suggest eternal consequences, while blessings and cursings suggest a less permanent and more redemptive consequences. For the purposes of our discussion, we will assume that "blessings and cursings" refer to the redemption found in the temporal or dominion covenant, while "salvation and excommunication" refer to the redemption found in the eternal covenant that decide whether we go to heaven or hell. See Appendix D – "Headship & the Sacraments."

The state is based upon an oath of allegiance and the sundry contracts to which a citizen must bind himself. Voting is an act of covenanting. It is a word which comes from the Latin *votum*, to vow. Hence, when a citizen enters the voting booth and participates in the electoral process, he agrees by this act to submit to whomever the majority of citizens decide should be elected.

Diagram #2 – The Structure of Society

Institutional Model



The Source of Patriarchal Authority

North may be correct in saying that the family is created by the marriage vow, but he is certainly *incorrect* to say that a father's spiritual authority grows from it, also. The Christian religion teaches that every man must give account for himself on Judgment

Day. He does not and cannot share his fate with another. Our eternal destinies are dependent upon our relationship with Jesus Christ, and Him alone. Neither your priest nor your father can stand in your stead before the Great White Throne of Almighty God.

If this is the case, then what use is any collective body or any representative of God on Earth, unless it is to administer the sanctions of the Kingdom of God in *temporal* matters? If the "Word of God is not bound" - as says the Apostle (2 Timothy 2:9) - then North's notion of "the keys of the kingdom" must refer to the current reign of Christ over the temporal world and not to our eternal destinies. Spiritual truth which results in salvation can be imparted to the hungry soul at anytime and in anyplace. It can come from reading a Gideon's Bible in a motel room, a spiritual vision, or a street urchin who is parodying the parson's latest sermon. North is defending the institutional church - a concept which will be discussed later - as a dispenser of God's grace in the ordering of society and sometimes confuses that role with the authority to decide whether someone is saved or damned (excommunication). Typical of Presbyterians, North halts between two opinions: the high church claims of Rome and their denial by the Anabaptist wing of the Reformation.

Knowing that each person is accountable to God for his or her eternal destiny, from whence does a man derive the authority to be the spiritual leader of his home? Why does he have the right and even the duty to administer the sacraments to his offspring and to teach them the ways of God?

It comes from the authority of the 5th Commandment to "Honor thy father and thy mother." Nowhere in the Law of the Covenant (Exodus 20-23) do we find the sacralizing of a relationship as we do here. Obviously, fathers are to be honored because God has entered a covenant with them and blessed them

with offspring. It is inherent in the office of fatherhood to provide spiritual nurture to children. That is why we are "baptized into the name of the *Father*."

*If Christian fathers possess lawful authority over the sacraments merely on the basis of their legal status as heads of households, then so do widows and divorcees who are heads of households. **The new patriarchalism becomes the new matriarchalism.** Marriage becomes the means of an implicit ordination of women as second in command. (p. 4)*

I don't know why North uses this argument, except that he assumes his readers are so paranoid about feminism that he can prove his argument using it as a scare tactic.

Again, like the father, the spiritual authority of the mother does not grow from the marriage bond. She is not a priestess in her home because she is or was someone's wife. She is a mother, and the 5th Commandment imparts a dignity to her office which requires her to minister to the spiritual needs of her offspring. She cannot save them anymore than a preacher, priest, or prophet can. But she has a moral obligation to see to it that her offspring receive the sacraments and the blessings of the Covenant, even if she must administer them herself.

As will be shown, because North and the high churchmen he represents have not considered the implications of the 5th Commandment as the source of spiritual authority for parents, they have committed a *non sequitur* in mixing the doctrine of eternal salvation with the doctrine of temporal dominion, and in so doing have failed to explain why the church has a monopoly on the sacraments.¹⁴

¹⁴*Non sequitur*. In logic, the conclusion does not follow from the premise. Frequently, used in comedy: "Mr. Brown bought a new *pair* of shoes; they didn't *appear* well with

Diagram #3

Possible Syllogisms

(Choose what you think fits best with the respective arguments)

- #1 – None can be saved without priestly-administered sacraments.
Fathers are not priests.
Therefore, father-administered sacraments cannot save you.
- #2 – None can be sanctified without priestly-administered sacraments.
Fathers are priests.
Therefore, father-administered sacraments can sanctify you.
- #3 – All are cursed without priestly-administered sacraments.
Fathers are not priests.
Therefore, all are cursed who receive father-administered sacraments.
- #4 – All are blessed by priestly-administered sacraments.
Fathers are priests.
Therefore, all are blessed by father-administered sacraments.

the apples.” In our discussion here, “The things necessary for salvation do not necessarily follow from the things necessary for righteous dominion.” (See Diagram #3)

The Tithe to Defund the State

He moves on to the issue of money:

*There is an unbreakable rule in institutional theory: **the source of the funding determines the structure of the system.*** (p. 8)

North is here preparing to attack Rushdoony's view of tithing. Arguing that "the judicial subordination of the family [to church and state] is an inescapable concept," he then defends the modern *status quo* which embraces the right of governments to collect taxes and the church to collect tithes.

Rushdoony believes that the tithe-payer has the authority under God to allocate his tithe as he sees fit. (p. 9)

In Rushdoony's social theory, when God's people use their tithes to fund covenant-keepers in the work of the Kingdom, it results in diminishing the tax burden. *Taxes and the growing state are the result of covenant-breaking in the area of tithes.* Tithing was meant to fund the social as well as the spiritual needs of a society. When the tithe is hoarded or given to agencies which are covenant-breakers, the spiritual and social needs of society are not met. This results in the breakdown of order, the increase of crime, and so on. The state then must intervene to hold society together. When people begin to tithe to covenant-keeping agencies, those needs are reduced and the role of the state diminishes proportionately.

North blindly attacks this brilliant insight by claiming that Rushdoony's "familism" teaches a "divine right of the head of the household" and "undermines the church." He never considers that

Rushdoony is not opposed to the church or the state as institutions. Rushdoony doesn't think in those categories. He thinks only in terms of covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking. He would say that it borders on blasphemy to argue that any institution has the right to be funded by God's people regardless of whether it is keeping God's Law or not. He would also argue that it is blasphemous to think in institutional categories instead of covenantal ones, as North and his allies have done. According to Rushdoony's familism, institutions represent agents which perform functions. Their offices are not sacred, except insofar as they represent the work of righteous men.

Is Familism Racism?

North continues with a lot of scary talk about excommunication (p. 10-12). He quotes Calvin (p. 11) - assuming that his readers think Calvin was an authoritative man - and then restates (but never proves) that the institutional church holds a monopoly on the "keys of the kingdom" (p. 12). Then he shocks us with this one:

Basic to pagan familism is a theology of racism. Because the pagan family is seen by its defenders as a blood covenant, the question of inter-racial marriage becomes decisive. (p. 13)

Notice that he said "pagan" familism. Somehow, his broad strokes are meant to imply that "Christian" familism must also be racism.

He quotes verses like Galatians 3:28 ("there is neither Greek nor Jew" *et al*) to tear down as unchristian the notion of ethnicity. Again, a Christian familist would never argue that one's salvation depended upon belonging to the right family. It would be like a church which claims to be the one and only church, without which one is eternally damned unless he is a member. In our enlightened

age, such exclusivity is considered arrogant, divisive, and a menace to the public peace.

In saying this, Christian familists would never deny the reality of ethnicity as something created by God which ought to be respected as a part of the temporal order. North, when it suits him, confuses the issues of eternity with the task of temporal dominion and uses Rushdoony's beliefs concerning hybridization, for example, as a pretext to charge him with racism.

In my opinion this tactic by North is unbecoming of a gentleman. Rushdoony would have been the first to say that a black man has the right to administer the sacraments to his family just as a white man does. And he would have also defended the right of a racially-mixed group of believers to join together in remembering their Lord in Communion.

The Keys of the Kingdom & the Institutional Church

Another example of North's slippery logic is his repeated condemnation that Rushdoony failed to partake of the Lord's Supper for two decades, and that once he began administering Communion to his house church, he was doing so to himself (p. 59 *et al*):

To refuse to celebrate the Lord's Supper is self-excommunication. (p. 16)

Ministers and priests serve themselves at the Altar. We see it all the time. What difference is there in the fact that a man will administer the sacrament to his own household in his own home or the priest in the sanctuary? Is there something magical about the steeple of a church or the vestments of the cleric?

North says the difference is ordination: the laying on of hands. There's the magic. And don't get the idea that he would accept the policy of a religious group which routinely ordained fathers as family pastors and empowered them with a familial doctrine of succession. In North's lexicon, the Church consists only of the "adopted children of God":

*What Calvin proclaimed in the **Institutes** was the doctrine of the church as the ecclesiastical assembly of the adopted children of God. . . he insisted that to be so accounted, a person must be inside the institutional church. "Hence it follows, that strangers who separate themselves from the Church have nothing left for them but to rot amidst their curse. Hence, also, a departure from the Church is an open renouncement of eternal salvation." When Calvin wrote **church**, he meant institutional.* (p. 19)

Claiming that Rushdoony is no longer a Calvinist (p. 27), he comments extensively on Rushdoony's assertion that the marks of the Church consist in four and not three criteria:

Rushdoony: Again, the true church is defined in terms of (1) the faithful preaching of the word, (2) the Biblical administration of the sacraments, (3) godly discipline by the church. C. John Miller has wisely added another, (4) the fruits of the Spirit . . .

North: The addition of this point moves the doctrine of the church from Calvin's strictly judicial definition to Anabaptism's partially mystical definition. (p. 20)

Judicial Authority

North's lucid treatment of Calvin's view is worth quoting at length:

*Calvin defined the institutional church covenantally, i.e. judicially. . . [Knowing the deceitful nature of the human heart: JS], [h]e defined the church in terms of outward standards: profession of faith **and conduct in conformity to God's law**. . .¹⁵ This emphasis on external means was not afterthought on Calvin's part. He was challenging two rival views of the Church: Roman Catholic and Anabaptism.*

The Roman Catholic position views the institutional church as having the power to infuse grace into people through the sacraments. The Anabaptist view denies that the sacraments are more than memorials: authority through naming (nominalism). Calvin rejected both views. In his theology, the sacraments are neither an aspect of Greek realism ("secret powers") nor Greek nominalism. They neither infuse grace, as if grace were a substance, nor do they serve merely as symbols. His theology was judicial, and so was his view of the sacraments. He said that they are signs and seals of the covenant, which is a judicial bond between God and man. . .

The element of faith is given to men through God's sovereign grace. But this is God's work, not the work of the church. The church baptizes, but it does not impart the grace of saving faith. (Emphasis added, p. 20-21)

We might wonder why North doesn't follow through with a consistent application of Calvin's reasoning: *if faith is not the work*

¹⁵ Evidently, North does not see a conceptual equivalence of the expression, "the fruits of the spirit" with "conduct in conformity to God's law." We normally think of "fruits" as external manifestations. If, as we are taught in Evangelical theology, "love [a fruit of the spirit] is the fulfillment of the law" (Galatians 5), then North is attempting to draw a distinction between Rushdoony and Calvin that does not exist.

of the church, then neither is damnation. That Reformed theologians (Calvinists) still want to cling to a church that has the power to damn men¹⁶ for their lack of faith is telling of their temperament and fondness for the power of the medieval church. In that superstitious age, the people feared the Church as if it were God Himself, until Wycliffe exposed the fraud.

Of course, North tries to draw the distinction that excommunication is a *judicial* act, just as baptism. Yet, baptism is presumed to have eternal validity. Why not excommunication? Either we must say that they both are binding eternally or neither of them are.

If laymen could baptize in the Early Church (although it required an act of confirmation by the bishop before the baptized could receive the sacraments), why could they not excommunicate? Isn't that what Jesus implied when he said to "tell it to the church" (Matthew 18:17)?

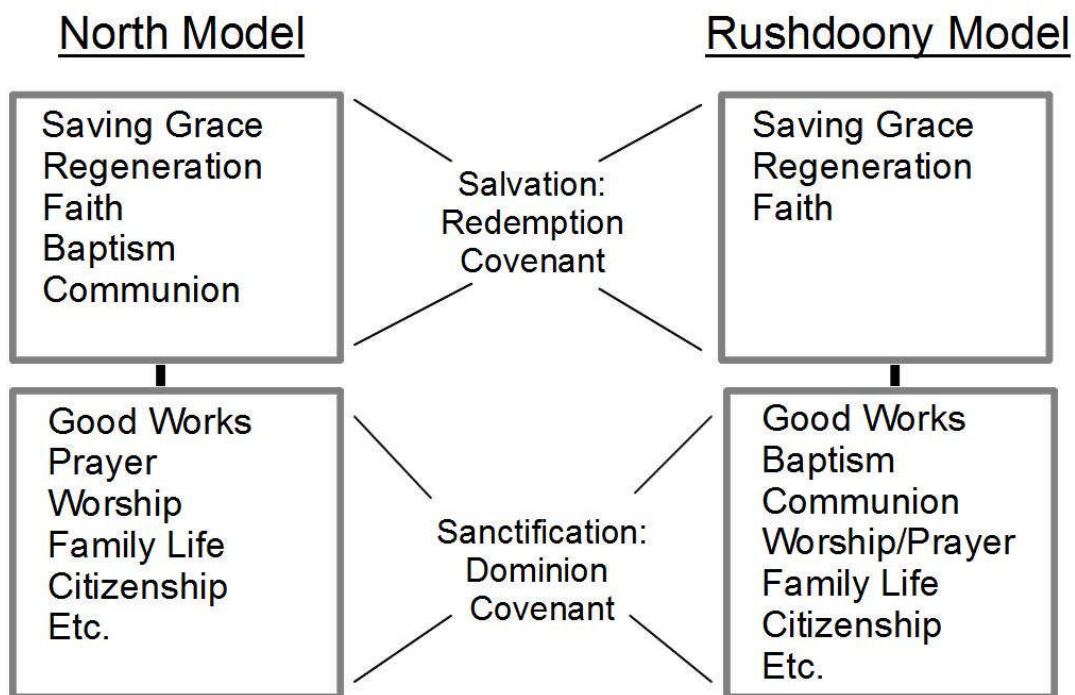
The Christian familist would say that baptism is a ceremony for the benefit of temporal rule and the life of sanctification. It involves the redemptive rule of Christ in this world, not in the next. It doesn't save anyone. It is something that people with saving faith will do to show their unity with their Savior and the community which He founded. Not every believer in Old Testament times was circumcised, nor were they expected to be (e.g. Jethro). How can we accept the notion that baptism is necessary to salvation, except that its neglect is the sign of a disobedient heart? Many have died - millions of small children, in fact - without the benefits of baptism. Can we imagine their eternal destinies are doomed because they lacked this sacrament?

God honors His symbols and imparts His grace in every act of obedience, whether it is in worship or in the routine of daily living.

¹⁶Or curse them; it's not clear what he wants.

The fact that Rushdoony and home churchers have no interest in the institutional church offends the pontifical urges of the clergy. It strips them of their pretended power over the eternal destinies of men.

Diagram #4 – Salvation or Sanctification?



“Faith without works is dead”

We cannot expect that Rushdoony was able to articulate a satisfactory alternative to churchist theology. His ethnic Armenian heritage probably accounts for his friendliness to the family church, but he cannot be described as its theological vanguard so late in his life. But he did make it as far as congregationalism: the foundation of New England's self-governing society and the nemesis of Puritan Presbyterianism. He said,

*Another aspect of jurisdiction is this: every church small or great, is Christ's congregation, not man's. Its loyalty must be to God in Christ, and to His law-word, **not** to a denomination nor a sister church. . . There is in this an implicit and sometimes unconscious **heresy**. Heresy is a strong word, but nothing less can describe the problem. This authoritarian attempt to control other churches is revelatory of a lack of faith in the triune God and an unseemly faith in the power of man. It assumes virtual non-existence of the Holy Spirit. [p. 24-25]*

With this kind of talk, Rushdoony has made a lot of enemies.

Given Enough Rope

North moves the debate to the issue of priesthood (p. 25 cf). He disputes Rushdoony's claim that the New Testament clergy is derived from the Levitical priesthood. He tells us that the patriarch Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of Salem. He thinks this proves that so-called "family priests" must still submit to the institutional church, because the priesthood of Jesus is one after the order of Melchizedek, and in a derivative sense, so is the Christian clergy (Hebrews 7). Abraham submitted to the sacramental meal offered by Melchizedek and so should fathers to an ordained clergy.

Succession

He is entirely correct, except that the ordained clergy of the established church has never met this description. Melchizedek was not just a priest; he was also a king. North cannot use Melchizedek as a standard for the clergy of the institutional church, unless he is willing to dissolve the separation of church and state. But he would have to abandon the classical model of the church which has prevailed since the 2nd Century. The role of the clergy in the institutional church has never been acknowledged as a function of temporal dominion, but rather, a ministry limited in its concern to the eternal destinies of men.

Also, men usually become kings through dynastic succession and the ordination of their fathers. There are ceremonies by which a new king is *recognized* in his office, but his subjects do not make him king. In the institutional church, no one can inherit an ecclesiastical office as a family right. A man is either ordained by persons with apostolic authority (Catholic, Orthodox, etc.) or by the vote of the laity in the Protestant tradition.¹⁷ In Grail theology, the order of Melchizedek is recognized as a Messianic office assigned to a Davidic priesthood. David, too, was the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and was "a priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Jesus became the true anti-type of this priesthood because He was the legitimate heir of the Davidic throne. He alone holds this office. It no longer needs a succession because He has the "power of an eternal life." Hence, He still reigns as king and priest. Yet, on Earth, in terms of temporal dominion, He has assigned rulership to His heirs and kinsmen just as did David (2 Samuel 8:18). The descendants of David have legitimately received tithes of the people.¹⁸ And North is correct to challenge Rushdoony's view that the tithe served, primarily, the

¹⁷I say "laity" includes the clergy in the Protestant scheme because they do not claim apostolic succession.

¹⁸*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 8, p. 433, "Gospel of Nicodemus"; see Appendix D.

social needs of Israel (p. 40). The Levitical claim to the tithe was based on their task of guarding the Temple, even though that accounted for a small part of their work. The Temple was built near Zion, the citadel of King David's private estate (2 Samuel 24:24-25).

In distinction from this priestly office, the Apostles, on the other hand, were the ambassadors of Jesus Christ who were called to establish communities of the faithful as they traveled throughout the earth. Once these "churches" were started, they would be followed by a member of the "Desposyni" (the ancient name for the Lord's kinsmen) who would come to rule the people in Christ's stead. This is where the idea of the episcopal office first originated.¹⁹ Before it was made an office of apostolic succession by the Roman Church, it was first a familial and royal office representing the family of Jesus. The "keys of the kingdom" Jesus referred to are the "keys of David" (Revelation 3:7).²⁰

North would likely say that there is no longer anyone who can claim to be of David's line. So, the priesthood has been passed on to the institutional church. The Grail church calls this a rogue priesthood.

It smacks of Herodianism, as well, to claim that there are no longer any descendants of David in the world. King Herod, to eliminate any rivals to his throne, had the genealogical records of the Temple burned. But there were private records that survived. We find two of them in the Gospels.

It is difficult to take North's reasoning seriously here. At least the Roman Catholics can claim apostolic succession and the Anabaptists can claim some miraculous spiritual awakening to justify their existence. The heirs of the Lutheran, Puritan and

¹⁹ *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*, op cit., p. 223-225 (textbook edition)

²⁰ This does not diminish that the apostles were in fact given the keys of the kingdom. I am simply pointing out that there is no such thing as "apostolic succession."

Reformed tradition have what? Scholarship? North has often complained that the Protestant clergy have replaced the moral and familial criteria for leadership found in the Pastoral Epistles with an academic degree from a seminary. What does he expect from a branch of the Reformation based exclusively on clever hermeneutics?

North wrestles with Rushdoony's grammatical interpretations. He argues over whether the terms *elder*, *deacon*, *presbyter*, *minister* and so on should be identified as household positions or ecclesiastical offices. Both North and Rushdoony are wrong, but at least Rushdoony tries to consider the larger historical context. He realizes that the familial culture of ancient Israel has hermeneutical precedence over the later Imperial culture of the Roman world.

But before there was the decimal system of judges set-up by Moses in Exodus 19, the Israelites were ruled by family elders.²¹ Before there was a Passover, these elders led their families in ritual remembrance of Yahweh in a sacrificial system unknown to us today. Before there was a Tabernacle or Temple, there was the "Tent of Meeting." Before there was the priestly tribe of Levi, there was the ministry of the firstborn which served the spiritual and social life of the nation.²²

When North argues for the model of the historic church, he is defending Rome. When a man thinks he's on the road to Chicago, but discovers he is on the road to Mexico City, when would it make sense to turn around? The high-church Protestants are wannabe Catholics who insist they are on the right road, even though they have circled the wilderness of Sinai for nearly five hundred years. The human race cannot wait for them any longer.

²¹ *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*, op cit.

²² *The Ministry of the Firstborn*, Stivers (2001)

A Fertility Cult?

North has one more bomb to drop before he is done with Rushdoony and anyone who would dare to worship God at home. He has called them *pagans, excommunicants and racists*. Now, he wants to call them *sexual deviates*. Follow closely his charge, under his heading "Blood Covenants and Sacramental Marriage":

*In his chapter on the covenant [referring to Rushdoony's Systematic Theology: JS], Rushdoony affirms: "Because of God's covenant law, blood is central to the doctrine of the covenant." This is an accurate statement. The question is: **Whose blood and whose covenant?***

At long last, we come to the heart of Rushdoony's new theology, which is a variation of a very old theology. It may be the second oldest theology in history. It is a theology of blood, as all of Christianity's meaningful rival religions must be. Historically, there have been two forms of self-conscious, explicit blood covenants: biblical religion and patriarchalism-familism. Biblical religion affirms the necessity of shedding the blood of a judicially clean representative sacrifice: the sovereign mediator. Patriarchalism-familism also affirms the judicial authority of a sovereign mediator: the head of the household. It places blood ties over all other bonds. You are about to read the most dangerous and misleading sentence in Rushdoony's career.

"The family is a blood tie; communion celebrates the body and blood which makes us one family."
(p. 48)

Here we go again. Somehow, we are supposed to believe that worshipping at home is "a rival religion" to Christianity now based upon the atoning work of the family's father.²³

Recall what he wrote in preparation for this announcement. He asserted the authority of the marital family over the two covenant oath signs: baptism and communion. [Not true, in my opinion. North has asserted it many times, but has not proved it: JS] He transferred the locus of authority over the covenant signs from the institutional church to the marital family, in which husband and wife seek to produce a blood line (procreation). (p. 49, emphasis added)

Horrors! The very thought that a Christian man and his wife would want to produce Christian offspring through procreation. Isn't that what Peter promised in Acts 2:39?

*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*²⁴

Now that North has piqued our prurient interest, he proceeds:

*He [Rushdoony] self-consciously and explicitly challenged the church's entire history regarding the sacraments. He did not cite a single creed, confession, or theologian to defend his position. He forthrightly announced the centrality of the marital family as the covenantal institution on which the other two rest. Now he invokes language of a blood covenant. **But the judicial context of the marital family is sexual bonding!** Therein lies the danger. (p. 49)*

²³ See Appendix D: Headship and the Sacraments

²⁴ *Biblical Midwifery*, Stivers (1997) for an extensive treatment on the subject of Covenant Lines

The Dynastic Family, not the Marital Family

What is the danger in sexual bonding? Is North implying that Rushdoony is teaching salvation through sex? Indeed, he is:

*In this context - Rushdoony's assertion of the family as the administrator of the sacraments - read his statement again: "The family is a blood tie; communion celebrates the body and blood which makes us one family." This is disastrous. With the institutional church stripped of its authority over baptism and communion, **this statement opens the door to paganism.** Rushdoony's theology of the sacramental marital family substitutes a blood covenant whose oath is confirmed by sexual union in place of a blood covenant whose oath is confirmed by priestly baptism. (p. 51, emphasis added)*

***Rushdoony's ecclesiology substitutes the physical act of sexual consummation for the physical act of the laying on of hands.** (p. 65)*

This is not a product of theological confusion on his part. He has been thinking about this for years. He is not some backwoods preacher who has never read a treatise on theology or a history of ancient religion. He has self-consciously transferred the covenantal authority based on the blood of Christ from the institutional church to the original Adamic bloodline: the marital family. He does define the Christian church in terms of the blood of Christ, but then he identifies the administrative agent of the church's covenantal signs: the marital family. (p. 49)

North is swinging wildly, here. Does not the atonement save the whole man? Including his sexuality and his seed (1 Corinthians 7:14)? How can he say that the *Christian* marital family represents the "original Adamic bloodline?" Perhaps sexual bonding is the sign and seal of the dominion covenant (Genesis 1:26-28), but it

certainly is not the sign and seal of the redemptive covenant. Baptism is supposed to be, and so is Communion (Mark 16:15-16). North is putting words in Rushdoony's mouth, and in citing Matthew 18:19-20, deviously and obliquely suggests that he is advocating polygamy:

How can three people be bound by a marital oath? (p. 58)

North's repeated insistence that Christian familism is based upon the marital oath is a gross error which has skewed his whole perception of the Church and the work of the Kingdom. Because of that error, he is opposing God's work in attacking people like Rushdoony. It is not the marital family which holds the keys of the kingdom; rather, **it is the dynastic family, specifically, the family of the Covenant. The dynastic, patriarchal family was perpetuated through procreation *and* ordination.**

Witness the sons of Jacob receiving his blessings at his death-bed (Genesis 49-50). All Christians are called to perpetuate this Covenant, the Covenant of the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." God does not call Himself the "God of the Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians."

The Family of Jesus

North acknowledges that "the Lord's Supper is indeed a family rite," but

It is a rite for adopted sons and daughters who have been removed, by God's grace, out of the family of Adam and into the family of Jesus Christ. The blood covenant of every human family other than the family known as the institutional church of Jesus Christ is an Adamic covenant, a covenant of judicially cursed blood. (p. 51, emphasis added)

This is why Grail theology affirms that the idea of "the *family* of Jesus Christ" must be interpreted **literally** to mean His physical descendants; for only such people have inherited a judicially blessed bloodline. In so doing, they, **and all who are in covenant with them**, are no longer judicially under the Adamic curse but are free to exercise dominion in Christ's stead.²⁵ But this fact requires us to keep a distinction between the natures of Christ: His *divine* nature, by which He is the Savior of the world, and His *human* nature, through which He has mediated His rule to the world. It also requires us to keep a distinction between the *dominion* covenant and the *redemptive* covenant. The redemptive covenant is mediated and can only be mediated by the Holy Ghost. We all participate in administering this covenant by proclaiming the Gospel. Its signs and seals - baptism and Communion - are redemptive, but also for the purpose of righteous dominion over our spiritual natures. The institutional church has the authority to mediate God's redemptive covenant in this sense, as so do all Christians, wherever they may choose to congregate.

In terms of the dominion covenant, however, it has not been perfected in the institutional Church because God's people have not completed a covenantal union with the bloodline of Jesus Christ. This is achieved *sacramentally* and *eschatologically*: **sacramentally** in the five rites of the Desposynic Church, and **eschatologically** when the Church Militant has achieved unity with Christ in a *real* sense,²⁶ and not just in a judicial sense. When

²⁵See Chapter 4 of *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*. In a household communion.

²⁶"Real" in the ontological sense: The only alternative to the Grail doctrine is the transubstantiation of the Mass (with its Protestant variants) propounded by Catholic doctrine. If grace cannot be obtained through a covenantal union with the bloodline of Christ, then it must be obtained in the ritualistic cannibalism of the Eucharist in which the elements of the sacrament are in some sense magically transformed into the very blood and body of Jesus Christ. In contrast, the Reformed and Evangelical view of the Eucharist lacks a completed reformation. Its Eucharist is commemorative and judicial in this limited sense: that it creates a union with the Divine office of Christ. But it falls short of, as the Creeds and the Incarnation require, a union with the human office of Christ. The exclusion of the human office of Christ is a Gnostic expression of doctrine.

God's people share in the federal headship of Jesus Christ - as the last Adam - over their physical natures, when the whole loaf of the human race shall have been leavened, then will the Kingdom come.

North concludes his treatise with threatening anathemas against schisms and warns,

The family cannot be made sacramental without making it a cult, a substitute for the institutional church. (p. 71)

How can any Protestant charge anyone with schism and cultism? The whole Protestant movement - with its culture of splinter groups - began as a schism and a cult. The Church of Rome has spent its entire existence in hunting down heretics. Will North now take Rome's charge?

The Grail Church agrees that all groups - including home churches - need a symbol of covenant unity. We believe that unity is found in the Desposyni, the Grail family, and not in the institutional church.

See Appendix D: Headship and the Sacraments. The ordinance of footwashing figures prominently on this matter in bringing a doctrinal unity of the two natures of Christ in our sacramental practice.

Chapter Two

THE FAILURE OF AMERICAN RELIGION

Fathers vs. Preachers

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

- John 10:11-13

One of my alleged ancestors was William Arnold. He was one of twelve men who accompanied Roger Williams to found the Providence Plantation - later known as Rhode Island. This occurred in 1635.

Williams was one of the most original thinkers in the America of his time. His Puritan opponents marveled at his scholarship. He believed that Massachusetts was not separate enough from the Anglican Church and that it meddled too much in government matters. He opposed the compulsory attendance law (the one for

church, not for school) and the use of taxes to support religion. For *his* trouble, he was banished from Massachusetts. He was luckier than Tyndale.

Like Tyndale, Williams was a Separatist. He thought it was a waste of time trying to reform existing institutions. He believed forming new institutions which were spiritually pure was the better course. His separatism exceeded even the separatism of the Pilgrims. At least the Pilgrims practiced a guarded communion. Williams would not practice communion with you at all, if your church did not meet his standards of purity.

Family histories are often sketchy, but we have an interesting account of a dispute which arose during those early years which involved my ancestor:

At Providence, also, the devil was not idle. For whereas at their first coming thither, Mr. Williams and the rest did make an order that no man should be molested for his conscience, now men's wives, and children, and servants, claiming liberty hereby to go to all religious meetings, though never so often, or though private, upon the week days; and because one Verin refused to let his wife go to Mr. Williams' so often as she was called for, they required to have him censured.

But there stood up one Arnold, a witty man of their own company, and withstood it, telling them that, when he consented to that order, he never intended it should extend to the breach of any ordinance of God such as the subjection of wives to their husbands, etc., and gave divers solid reasons against it.

Then one Greene replied that if they should restrain their wives, etc., all the women in the country would cry out of them, etc.

Arnold answered him thus: "Did you pretend to leave the Massachusetts because you would not offend God to please men, and would you now break an ordinance and commandment of God to please women?"

Some were of opinion that if Verin would not suffer his wife to have her liberty, the church should dispose her to some other man who would use her better. Arnold told them that it was not the woman's desire to go so oft from home, but only Mr. Williams' and others.

In conclusion, when they would have censured Verin, Arnold told them that it was against their own order, for Verin did that he did out of conscience; and their own order was that no man should be censured for his conscience.

- History of the State of Rhode Island, "The Verin Case," Samuel Arnold, vol. 1, p. 104-105²⁷

Arnold and Verin lost their cause; for the only entry on the town books to this affair were these words:

It was agreed that Joshua Verin, upon the breach of a covenant for restraining of the libertie of conscience, shall be withheld from the libertie of voting till he shall declare the contrarie.

We see, here, that Williams, no doubt under the influence of Anne Hutchinson, pursued a course of individualism that destroyed

²⁷One should note that the term "witty" was not used as in current vogue to mean a funny man. "Wit" is an old Welsh word meaning "wise." The Welsh expression, "nit-wit," means "no wisdom." Mr. Arnold, who was a Welshman by the way, is here considered a wise man.

family government. Williams, apparently, wanted everyone to come to his meetings, and he was willing for housewives, who were discontent with their husbands' instruction or bored with the humdrum of daily chores, to have the freedom to come to his services.

The Cambrian View²⁸

Arnold, representing the Cambrian view, defended the integrity of **ecclesiastical familism**. He defended the priesthood of the father to his own household and saw Williams' activities as duplicitous and destructive. He had followed Williams out of the state Church of England and then out of the mini-state church of Massachusetts. He thought Williams was restoring the old Celtic tradition of the family church. Not so. Williams had grander designs. He wanted to build a super-church around the super-spiritual leader. He would be that leader, of course. This vision became the foundation of the American congregational principle: the idea of one man, with oratorical skills, leading a flock of people through life, and then finally to Heaven.

This principle was extended a century later by Francis Asbury, the founder of American Methodism. Methodism was built upon the oratorical skills of evangelists. When the American churches were cut-off from England during the Revolution, Asbury took William's principle a step farther. He made himself bishop, much to John Wesley's consternation. (Wesley was an Anglican priest and never advocated leaving its communion.) With this move, the super-spiritual man could become not only the leader of one church, but the leader of many.

The Protestant preaching ministry quickly followed the path of the ancient rhetoricians. You have heard of the sophists. Rhetoricians and sophists were a phenomenon of classical Greece

²⁸ "Cambrian" referring to ancient Wales.

and Rome. They were advocates for hire. Rhetoric was the art of the persuasive speech. An entire sub-culture developed, especially in the legal profession, which used the techniques of rhetoric to win arguments and sway audiences. It wasn't long before the general culture was entranced by the entertainment of speech-making. Image became everything. The sales pitch was more important than the merit of the cause or the product. It destroyed sound education, as the young discovered success in sales rather than in skill and craftsmanship.

The Heresy of Rhetoric

The rhetorician was a fake. He *pretended* to know something about his topic, much like modern day commentators who study an issue for 15 minutes before forming an opinion and providing an analysis. The modern pastor is this way. He needs something to preach on; there's a new topic that's hot in his congregation. He needs to be a leader, right? So, he visits his local Bible bookstore and buys a book. That makes him an expert.

Hugh Nibley summarizes Zellinger's study of Christian rhetoric, that

*In the early church. . . rhetoric was avoided like the plague; "content was everything while its verbal presentation counted for nothing." But when the church became the Imperial Church, then the "pampered ear demanded of the preacher the same language which it was used to hearing in the lawcourts and the rostrum. And the church gave in, in spite of all theoretical insistence on preserving the old simplicity of the gospel." . . . The process began, according to him, with our dear friend Origen, and reached its full development under the great Christian orators of the fourth century. The first and foremost qualification for the office of bishop from then on was **eloquentia**. "In the middle of the fourth century a complete revolution took place in the*

language of the Christian sermon," he writes. "The earliest Church had preached in exceedingly plain and simple language, and . . . scrupulously avoided any contact with the ill-reputed rhetoric of the imperial age." But all this was suddenly taken over by the church, and, says Zellinger, "along with Hellenistic rhetoric and its ear-tickling refinements there were smuggled into the churches the established techniques of applause. Approval was expressed by noisy shouts, hand-clapping, stamping of feet on the floor, jumping up and down, and the waving of handkerchiefs. The sermons were interrupted by resounding shouts of 'True Believer!' 'Teacher of the Universe!' 'Thirteenth Apostle!' 'Anathema to whoever disagrees!'" and so forth.

- The Word and the Prophets, Vol. 3, p. 112-113

This description bears striking resemblance to the circuit riders and the camp meetings which characterized the early American frontier *and* of the renowned New York evangelist, Charles Finney, who became the first among the nation's evangelists, but only because he was a Yankee who could preach like a Southerner.

The fault of rhetoric was not so much its polish and eloquence, as it was that it did not represent the man. The rhetorician did not speak from personal knowledge or conviction. He *pretended* to have personal knowledge and conviction. His feelings were affectations.

How many impassioned sermons have you heard - fire and brimstone, weeping and wailing - only to shake the preacher's hand in the foyer afterwards as he jests and laughs? At least Finney believed his own rhetoric. He was a man given to fasting and all-night prayer vigils to the point of physical exhaustion. There are too many preachers today who disprove their stern warnings with their fat bellies.

And how often have you heard a minister, to win an argument, charge his opponent with commerce with the devil or some other *ad hominem* attack? They are rhetoricians. Rhetoricians are trained to shift the point of attack from facts and sound thinking - which they know little about - to emotional issues of personal integrity and credibility. They are consummate existentialists.

Augustine is credited for bringing secular education into the Church. Nibley adds,

When the emperor established the great state University of Constantinople in 425 . . . he provided for one chair in philosophy, two in law, and twenty-eight in grammar and rhetoric. Augustine himself we are told "studied it [rhetoric] for ten years, taught it for fifteen, and practiced it all his life." (p. 108)

This was certainly true of Augustine in how he handled Pelagius. Both Catholic and Reformed theologians fawn over Augustine's works as if they are holy writ. Yet, Pelagius carried the day until Augustine convinced the emperor that he was a Druid and an enemy of the empire. . . Rhetoric!

The phenomenon of a religion based upon the oratorical skills of the preacher now has a scientific explanation of how it works.

I have a transcript of a revealing speech delivered by a leading hypnotist in the United States. In it, he explains exactly what transpires at a religion meeting. It is based upon the rhythm of the cant. When it matches the heart-beat of the listener, then the brain is ready for a mechanism to switch it from a *beta* to an *alpha* wave pattern. Generally, it is a jolt of some kind, such as a sudden change of inflection in the speaker's voice. When that happens, the listener is ready for brainwashing. Modern Christianity is based upon hypnotic techniques which revival preachers discovered by accident. It has been called the Spirit of God. But I have often

wondered how it could be the Spirit of God, when the very same phenomenon occurs among rival denominations, even the much despised cult groups like the Mormons.

Now, most pastors are quite boring to listen to. Their churches do not grow. So, to bring in a new flock of converts, they sponsor a crusade that will feature a man with oratorical skills, special music, and so on. At these crusades, people make a "decision" for Christ. Then, they are herded into the myriad of programs and support groups to condition them to accept a life-long commitment to a local church. When their faith and fervor begin to wane, they schedule a retreat, once again, to hear an "inspirational speaker."

I know what I am talking about. I learned how to preach in a black Pentecostal church in the South. I love a rowdy sermon. I used to preach rowdy sermons. Why don't I do it anymore? Because the preaching culture is based upon the flesh. It is not the Spirit of God. Pentecostals call it the anointing. But popular politicians have used the same techniques. Have you ever listened to some of the old tapes of William Jennings Bryant or Huey Long? Do you remember the non-acceptance speech of Ted Kennedy at the Democratic National Convention of 1980? These men spoke like revival preachers. Jesse Jackson still does.

The Family Church or the Church Family?

19th Century revivalists complained about the Christian schools: they produced young people immune to revival preaching. What that meant was that youngsters with properly trained minds could dissect the evangelist's sermon and expose it for what it really was: a bunch of hooey. The revivalists liked the public schools because they were "non-sectarian" - meaning, they were limited to secular subjects. Doctrinal issues were not subjected to the scrutiny of reason which could be found in the classroom.

In contrast, a faith which is passed on from father to son is a solid faith that will stand the test of time and produce fruit that will last. Over 70% of all converts to Christianity are the result of efforts by family and friends. Less than 10% are the result of crusades. Yet, our entire religious structure is geared to exhaust our resources in pursuing a method of evangelism from which results are a fraction of what the family structure can provide.

There is a certain phoniness to organized religion which becomes obvious with a little honest reflection. A lot of people think the problem is that they are members of the wrong church. They keep trying new churches, hoping to find the right one. **The problem is not for the lack of a better church; the problem is with church itself.**

I can cite numerous horror stories. The problem is that each religious group will say, "That would never happen in our church." Most people have not attended their current church longer than ten years to know it could happen and has happened in their church - many times.

Oberlin

The religious movement which grew from the ministry of Charles Finney is a case in point. Finney is remembered for his great revivals, but few people are aware that Finney and his graduates from Oberlin College were largely responsible for many of the various reform movements prior to the Civil War: movements to ban dueling, Sabbath-breaking (in a time when the poor had to work seven days a week), usury, the Masons, alcoholism, legal prostitution, and slavery. Oberlin led the charge to found free schools, orphanages (remember the *Orphan Train*?), mission societies, and other charitable works unheard of in its time. It was the first co-ed college which, for a generation, provided many of the school teachers and teacher's colleges in the American

heartland. In almost every respect, what we call "Midwestern values" was the product of Oberlin.

Oberlin was the first to let persons of color attend its classes. For this, it was banished from the academic world until after the Civil War. It was subjected to relentless scandal-mongering. The Southern states forbade postmasters from delivering the *Oberlin Evangelist*, the college's principal publication, to Southern subscribers.

Oberlin was ridiculed for its doctrine of perfectionism. Finney was ever annoyed at the misrepresentations of his views; for he did not believe in perfectionism, but rather a doctrine of entire sanctification. The difference was free will. He believed that however imperfect a person may be, we are all called to be pure in our motives.

In teaching free-will to an age which embraced Calvin, he was accused of Pelagianism. It might escape the modern reader what was so bad about the Pelagian label, but we must remember that 19th Century churchmen were still scholastics who quarreled over things like the moral obligation to purchase your own pew. It shouldn't surprise us that it was a stinging vilification.

In spite of its detractors, Oberlin was held-up as a 19th Century Mt. Zion with an earnest piety and a zeal which would have shamed the Puritans. Yet, in the heart of Oberlin there was scandal.

While Finney was Pelagian in his view of free will, he was an Augustinian in everything else, especially in viewing human sexuality like it was some kind of disease. Finney himself enjoyed the benefits of matrimony three times and felt the liberty to compliment a student for her "well-turned ankle." But otherwise, strict rules applied to issues of courtship, clothing, and entertainment.

Horace Taylor, the editor of *The Oberlin Evangelist*, was found guilty of pilfering subscription money and of a lechery which shocked his colleagues: seducing his children's governess and procuring an abortion for her. He had been a widower eighteen months.

What aggravated the scandal was that it followed so soon after another; namely, "the Norton lynching." In that unfortunate incident, a student was caught writing what was judged to be obscene love letters to a female student for which he had an infatuation. For his crime, he was caught by faculty members - including Taylor - and fellow students. He was then laid on a log and given twenty-five lashes. The harsh hypocrisy was inescapable, especially in the South.

At this time, the South was not yet entirely Puritan. It was still run by the descendants of English Cavaliers who were *sportin'* men: card-playing, horse-racing, whiskey-drinking, slave owners. They were fond of dancing with the ladies, and should they be in short supply, had no scruples with paying a visit to the slaves' quarters. To them, Oberlin was a byword.

My reason for this digression is to simply illustrate that these problems are endemic within Churchianity, no matter how earnest and pure the group may seem to be. Ignorant of our history and of human nature, we look at the scandal of philandering priests who molest little boys and think it is all something new. It's not. Whether it is the Synod of Dort and its call girls or Victorian masters demanding oral sex from their kitchen maids, the world turns on sex and the pretensions of the Church only ruin whatever healthy use that can be made of it.

Church: the Optional Family

Your church does not have problems with sex? Did you know that the average pastor spends 90% of his working time

counseling, and most of that has to do with sexual problems? You don't know anything about it because your pastor could get sued if he made it a topic of concern at the next prayer meeting.

Your church does not have problems with sex, you insist. Well, then, what about the Church's claim to be this wonderful family of God? Let me cite two innocuous experiences that happen in *Anychurch*, USA, which prove the fraud.

Some years ago, a Christian woman was pleased that her unbelieving husband was finally warming-up to the people of her church. There were home get-togethers which he started to attend. It came his turn to host a family gathering. He bought the food and carefully prepared for company. He was excited; he bought steaks for a cook-out.

Nobody came. Nobody bothered to even call.

A week or so later, he found out that some of these new church "friends" had gone shopping; others had gone fishing, and so on. What he thought of as real friends getting together, to them, it was just another optional church meeting. He vowed never to have future dealings with Christians.

Now, I am sure that this evangelistic error was corrected at the next "church-growth" conference or deacon's meeting. It doesn't matter. What is the difference between phoniness which is detectable and the kind that is not?

In another church I attended, I spent months trying to get together with people who held themselves out to us as our friends. It never worked out. Then suddenly one day, they cheerfully appeared on my doorstep with groceries. Not that I needed any, but I was grateful for the gesture.

Later, I found out that they were newly-appointed deacons in charge of the Benevolence Ministry. Our names were on the roster. They were just making the rounds. Our friendship - whatever it was - was based upon a mutual, institutional commitment.

I am the father of several children. I do not have the option of ceasing to be their father.

Do pastors have the option of resigning their churches? Yes, they do, all the time.

Do I have the option of resigning my family? No, I do not.

Do members of churches have the option of leaving their church? Can they leave if the company they work for transfers them to another place? Yes, they can.

Can I leave my family because of my career? No, it is a sin. That is the difference between shepherds and hirelings.

When we start prosecuting as sin pastors who leave their parishes and church members who put their jobs above their spiritual covenants, then I will take seriously this talk about "church families." But until then, the churchists are simply perpetrating a fraud.

Fathers: the True Holy Men

Are men fathers because they are saints or are they saints because they are fathers? Historic Christianity has exalted symbolic fatherhood over real fatherhood. They have made "holy men" fathers of the Church, instead of recognizing the fathers of the Church as the real holy men.

Historic Christianity has held up a standard of effeminate piety - a standard only achievable for non-phallic men - and has honored those men who could meet that standard. In the Old Testament, the

standard was much different. Fathers were honored whether they met a standard or not, simply because they were the fathers (e.g. the 5th Commandment). Men become fathers because they can get erections. Phallicism and holiness are closely related concepts in Semitic theology.²⁹

What is wrong with this picture? Paul tells us that the Elect are "beloved for the fathers' sake" (Romans 11). *Covenant fathers were center stage in God's plan*. Today, our leaders are not even preachers. The two leading spokesmen for Evangelical Christians in the United States are a psychiatrist and a professional sports celebrity!

I do not question the good intentions of these men. I do question the claim that our churches are authentically Christian. It's comparable to a new and improved KFC Chicken Meal, only it's pork. Our Laodicean Church is quite happy with its delusion.

Jesus said that shepherds have greater care for the sheep because they have a proprietary interest in the sheep. Likewise with fathers, they have a natural concern for the spiritual welfare of their children, just as they do for their physical welfare. People who are paid to be spiritual do not.

²⁹*Hierogamy and the Married Messiah*, p. 62 ff., op cit

Chapter Three

THE ABBEY DEFINED

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

- Genesis 18:19

Abraham's Abbey

An essential difference between pastors and fathers is that fathers speak with the voice of command. Pastors plead, beg, cajole and threaten. They are salesmen. Fathers are not salesmen.

In this respect, it is impossible for pastors to represent the Kingdom of God; for the simple reason that God is a king. Kings do not plead, beg, cajole, and threaten. They command. Fathers are kings. God is a father.

In defining a family abbey, we must begin with the Biblical understanding of those terms. "Abba, father" said the Apostle in describing the God of Heaven. We must first define what

fatherhood is and is meant to be in the Kingdom of God; then we must define what a family is.

The first thing that is immediately obvious about fathers is that they have children. Notice in the text above concerning Abraham. God had confidence that Abraham would "command his children" to keep the ways of righteousness.

At this juncture, Abraham had only one child mentioned in the Bible. But in God's mind, many more were on the way.

How many children must a man have before he can call his home an abbey?

That is an important question. Would one suffice?

It is obvious that Abraham³⁰ conducted himself as an abbot - a patriarch with religious and civil authority - prior to his entrance into fatherhood. The reason this was so was because he had a "household" as indicated in the text above. He had over 300 servants who could "carry the sword." He was a sheik. And while he had no children of his own for many years, he did inherit a household from *his* father. Acting as his father's firstborn, he was prince and priest to those who had made alliance with his father and with him. These servants and their families were a part of the extended family over which Abraham stood as guardian and lord.

Would it have sufficed had Abraham remained childless? Apparently not. Abraham, at one point, offered his servant Eliezer to God as his legitimate heir. God rejected that proposal. God insisted that Abraham have an heir which came from his own body and from the body of his wife, Sarah.³¹ He was not interested in

³⁰ "Abraham" is a name which means, "father of the people." Thus, we can say that every abbot is an "Abraham" to the extent that he is literally the father of his people.

³¹ Sarah, as Abraham's half sister, shared the same lineage as Abraham, whereas his concubines did not (Genesis 15:2-4; 17:15-22).

"symbolic" fatherhood and a "symbolic" family. He wanted the real thing.

Because Abraham's abbey was so large, it was possible for him to give it to his son Isaac as his single heir. He sent away the sons of his concubines with gifts and with the command, no doubt, to form abbeys of their own (e.g. Ishmael did and Jethro was the priest of Midian). Had Abraham's abbey been small, it would have been needful for Isaac's brethren to have stayed to help him. This fact suggests that size matters when it comes to forming an abbey and keeping it viable.

An uncomfortable fact for churchmen, yet one that is irrefutable is the family size of the average Israelite household at the time of the Exodus. Comparing the census reports in the book of Numbers with the number of firstborn sons, and doing simple division, results in a figure of 27 sons per family.³² These censuses excluded the "mixed multitude" that were not counted. No wonder the fecundity of the Israelites alarmed their Egyptian masters!

Does God want families this large? Again, it depends upon how you define the role of fatherhood.

If fathers are expected to spend their days playing tinker toys with their three year-old sons, then it is obvious a man will not have the time for this kind of family. However, if we understand fatherhood as primarily a spiritual and judicial ministry, then we can begin to see its larger role in social organization.

How an abbey works will be explored later in this study. What is needful, at this point, is an understanding that fatherhood begins with the biological reality of virility, procreation, and labor.

³² see *Eros Made Sacred*, Stivers, 1991 or the Appendix D in *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*

What is a Family?

Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

- Malachi 4:4-6

These were the final words of the Old Testament. After this, the Canon was closed until the coming of the Messiah. Even though the Intertestamental Period produced numerous inspired texts which were generally ascribed with "deutero-canonical" status by the Early Fathers, Malachi was the last direct revelation from God.

When someone is about ready to give you his final instructions, he tries his best to summarize the most important things he wants you to know and remember. This text in Malachi was Yahweh's last word to His people, both in instruction and in warning: *instruction*, in the sense of directions of what they were to do to prepare for the next phase in the Divine plan; *warning*, in the sense of what they *must* do to avoid calamity when He revisits them.

In this text we find three important instructions.

First, Yahweh reminds His people of the abiding validity of the Mosaic Law. He specifically mentions the "statutes and judgments" which were given at Mt. Horeb. He is referring directly to the "Book of the Covenant" (Exodus 24:7) as it was given in Exodus 20-23. That was a separate historical event in which Yahweh Himself descended from Heaven and gave the moral law

in the form of the Ten Commandments and their respective case laws. It is this law which is to be remembered and preserved "for all Israel." The ritual laws and later commandments (e.g. Deuteronomy) were inspired commentaries and applications of this first primordial revelation of Divine will. They can be modified to fit the circumstances, but the "Law of the Covenant" cannot.

Second, He tells His people that He will send the prophet Elijah to call the people back to this law, before the "coming" of the "day of the LORD." The Gospels tell us that John the Baptist was this Elijah who was to come to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Matthew 11:14; Mark 9:11; Luke 1:17; 3:4 *et al*) and that the subsequent Divine visitation came in the person of God's own Son: Jesus Christ.

Finally, the text tells us that the primary mission of this new Elijah was to restore the family as an institution in turning "the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." The text ends with a warning that should this restoration of family government fail, God would be compelled to "smite the earth with a curse."

In the light of this final prophecy, it seems odd that the Church should present to us two historical figures in its fulfillment - John the Baptist and Jesus Christ - both who were, *as we are told*, unmarried men. Indeed, when examining the Gospel records, we find no reference to this prophecy, except in identifying John with Elijah. John preaches a "baptism unto repentance" and announces "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), but we have no proclamation of this Divine plan for the family as envisioned by Malachi.

Further incongruities confront us in the life and teachings of Jesus. In the Gospels, we find almost nothing to describe His personal life. He preaches "the gospel of the kingdom," but tells us that it will destroy families (Matthew 10:35), rather than heal them.

He does display unusual affection for children, but spurns His mother and kinsmen (Matthew 12:48-50). In the final analysis, Jesus leaves the world with the condition of family life in the same state as it was before He came.

Or did He? What is going on here?

We might be tempted with a number of explanations. Perhaps, Malachi's prophecy was wrong; or God changed His mind. Perhaps, John and Jesus represent a failed mission, or maybe, a change in God's priorities.

The pious mind will reject these possibilities, but we still have the troubling incongruity of an unfulfilled prophecy. How might we explain this?

The message of the angel to Zacharias acknowledged and ratified this prophetic mission for John:

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

- Luke 1:17

So it wasn't that he didn't try. Does the ministry of John the Baptist, cut short by his martyrdom, represent a failure or is there something about his message that we have overlooked?

The parting words of Jesus ought to be remembered if we want to understand what the intended effect of the Gospel was to have upon the world (Matthew 28:18-20). In the Great Commission, the disciples were commanded to teach the ways of God to the nations of the world. Christ's atonement empowered them for this task. And they were to "baptize them [the nations] in the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I have already pointed out the significance of these familial titles in my book.³³

The Christian Mission

The central message of the Christian mission, then, is to adopt mankind into the family of God. Christ's covenant community is an extension of the family of heaven into the institution of the earthly family. So, immediately, we come to the realization that what Jesus did when He walked the earth was only the beginning of this restoration. In teaching the fatherhood of God to His disciples, Jesus began the process of restoring the bond between fathers and their children on Earth.

The New Covenant is Family-centered too

John's ministry accomplished the same thing in two important ways. First, in preaching a baptism of repentance, he called upon the people of Israel to renounce their covenant-breaking and to embrace, once again, the Law of the Covenant. As will be demonstrated later in this study, this ancient law created a family-centered social order that was built upon the enduring bond between fathers and their offspring.

Second, in introducing Jesus as both the Son of God and the baptizer of the Holy Spirit, we see John introducing the three persons of the heavenly family. In His baptism, Jesus is declared "the only begotten Son," and the Holy Spirit descends upon Him as a dove.

In other important studies, I have identified the Holy Spirit as the feminine manifestation of the Triune Godhead. In declaring that Jesus was the great baptizer of the Holy Spirit, John has

³³*Restoring the Foundations*, Stivers, 1995; *The Mother Heart of God: a Study on the Pneumatic Role of the Woman*, Stivers, 2005. Also, extensive treatment of the mystery of "the dove" is provided in *Merlin: High Priest of the Holy Grail*, Stivers, 2011

prepared us for the idea of being "born again," as Jesus elucidates in John 3.³⁴ The Holy Spirit brings us to the Father, and in a symbolic way, *She* shows women how they too are the ministry which "turns the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to their fathers."

Churchists get all caught-up in the Gospel message of salvation, but fail to see its familial message. It is like a drowning swimmer who, after being rescued, decides to perpetually camp-out at the site of his rescue. He recounts the story and sings praises to his savior, but forgets the point of his deliverance. He forgets to live his life.

The Family of Heaven

In defining what a family is, we must look to three criteria: first, the pattern of Heaven ("Thy kingdom come"); second, the etymology of the word in the Biblical text; then third, how it is described in Biblical law.

First, since we are made in the image of God, it seems logical to begin with the relationships of the heavenly hosts. By introducing Himself with familial titles in the baptismal formula, we can say that the family is first defined by the way God is.

God the Father establishes a ministry of headship.

God the Son establishes a ministry of succession.

God the Holy Spirit establishes a ministry of helps.

These three elements are necessary to the formation of a family: a ruler with heirs and helpers.

³⁴ *The Mother Heart of God: A Study on the Pneumatic Role of the Woman*, Stivers, 2005. We point out that although there is an ontological equality among the Three Persons of the Trinity, there is an intentional economic inequality of function.

Second, the Hebrew word for "family" is *mishpachah* and does not mean the conjugal family as envisioned by Westerners. There is no word equivalent in Biblical Hebrew for such a family structure. This being the case, it seems odd that moralists crusade for laws to "protect the family" - and consider themselves good Christians in doing so - when there is no support for their concept of the family in the Biblical text.

The word "mishpachah" is usually defined by scholars to refer to a class or group of related organisms. In reference to the human family, it is applied to the extended family group. But the etymology of the word provides an additional perspective.

The lexicons tell us that *mishpachah* is derived from *shiphchah*, which according to Strong's Hebrew Lexicon, means "a wench." A complete analysis of this term is provided in my book *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*, but in short, the definition of "a wench" in old English simply meant a servant girl who was sexually available to her master. By adding the "mish" to the word, it denotes a group or class of females that fit this category.³⁵

In this discovery, we are immediately confronted with the polygamy of Hebrew culture. The ancient Semitic mind had no conception of the family as we do in modern times: one man, one woman, with their children. Certainly, the pairing of males and females for cohabitation is recognized in the Biblical text. And there are texts which suggest that Biblical figures such as Noah and Isaac were monogamous. But closer examination reveals that these "pairings" occurred within the context of a larger and more complex social structure which formed the "mishpachah." As we shall see, a more accurate translation of *mishpachah* would be *harem*.

³⁵ Nouns in Hebrew are derived from verbs.

Third, while it is tenuous to argue only from etymology, any discussion of the meaning of the family certainly must begin there. If the Hebrew word, "mishpachah," would be better rendered as "harem" - especially in reference to the human family - we should expect that its description in Biblical law would fit this profile.

Do we find this kind of evidence? Indeed, we do. Exodus 21 sets forth the Case Laws of the Covenant. It begins by a description of Israel's domestic organization in the regulation of menservants and maidservants. It is clear from the text that a Hebrew master who purchases a maidservant does so to add her to the family harem (v. 8). It might be that he will have conjugal relations with her. However, it might that he won't because she is reserved for his son or for one of his menservants. The harem then is described here - as we know was true throughout the ancient world - as the collection of females who were identified with a particular estate, which was in turn controlled by the principal male heir. They were treated as a class (e.g. Ruth and Naomi). He was their guardian and lord, but not necessarily their lover, for some of them would have been forbidden by the laws of consanguinity, for example.

Most modern churchmen deny that polygamy was ever more than an aberrant custom among the very few in Biblical times. They insist monogamy was the rule, trying to "Westernize" the received accounts.

But that is entirely untrue. The highly respected Aramaic scholar, George Lamsa, has noted in his commentaries that men may be mistaken for being monogamous because they may have only one wife, yet many concubines. The wife is mentioned; frequently, the concubines are not.³⁶

³⁶ *Old Testament Light*, George Lamsa, Harper & Row (1968) as discussed in *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*, p. 93 & 142 (see Footnotes) for this and concerning Noah.

The Biblical text tells us that Noah entered the ark with one wife. Yet, we are told that Ham uncovered his nakedness (attempted commerce with his father's concubine). This is completely lost in the English translation (Genesis 9). We are led to believe that Ham merely saw his father naked. That such an act would have solicited such a harsh curse from Noah begs credulity when one considers that many if not most children have seen the genitals of their parents at some time in their lives.

Isaac is another example. Rebecca was his wife; we assume he was monogamous. Yet, the text tells us that she came with an entourage of female attendants (Genesis 24:61). Later in the accounts, we discover that there are children other than Esau and Jacob. Jacob is blessed by his father above his "mother's sons" and "all thy brethren" (Genesis 27:29, 37). To whom was Isaac referring, if not to the sons of his concubines?

Moses was polygamous, having married a Midianite woman and an Ethiopian woman (Ex. 2; Num. 12). Some commentators, ever defending the monogamous cause, have insisted that these women were the same person. We cannot imagine why Moses' opponents would have waited years before challenging him on this issue. The text clearly makes this marriage recent.

There is another instance when Moses would have added to his harem in the spoils of war with the Midianites. In Numbers 31 we are told how the war captives were divided among the people. The Levites received their share of the virgins. Moses was a Levite.

Hierogamy & the Married Messiah has presented evidence that Jesus possessed the royal harem of the Davidic succession. As the Messiah, this would have been appropriate. The women disciples who followed Him - especially the ones who "ministered" unto Him (Luke 8) - were in Jewish eyes, His wives. In those times, it was impossible for a woman to share private space with a man on a

daily basis and not be considered a member of his *mishpachah* - his harem.

Returning to our first point above, does this description of the family fit the family of heaven?

Do we find a ruler? Yes, we do in the person of God the Father.

Do we find the multiplicity of helpers? If we believe the Holy Spirit is the feminine role model, yes, we do. The Holy Spirit is the great assistant to both the Father in His Divine activity, and to the offspring in bringing many sons into glory.

Of course, the Holy Spirit is one person, and not the plurality which is implied in the word "mishpachah." But in several places in the book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit is referred to as "the seven Spirits" or the "seven-fold Spirit" which is strongly suggestive of plurality. This name ascribed to the Holy Spirit is meant to teach us that while there can be only one ruler, there can be many helpers. And as I have explained in my book *The Mother Heart of God*, the mother divides (acquires maidservants) in order to multiply the sons (the heirs).³⁷

It is quite evident by any cursory review of the Bible, that God is known as "the Lord of hosts."³⁸ The family of heaven is a great company of beings which surround the Throne of God. This fact teaches us that earthly fathers are called to emulate the Father of Heaven. If He surrounds Himself with a host, so must we. If the family abbey of our heavenly Father consists of a multiplicity of Divine helpers (mothers) and a host of offspring (the angelic creation), do we not find here, then, the path we are to follow?

³⁷ See that the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:15 has maidservants

³⁸ "Lord of Sabaoth"

The Land and the Abbey

Heaven is the place of complete freedom. It is where God dwells and where He creates. It is the place of total dominion.

Hell on the other hand is the place of complete bondage. There is no dominion, for there is no power to create.

On Earth and the terrestrial universe, we find the fruits of God's creativity. Spatial creation provides an opportunity for man to exercise dominion. It is there that man can think God's thoughts after Him and finish the creation in a manner following the heavenly pattern.

Thus, if the family mirrors the relationships of the glorious Trinity and the heavenly host, we find, then, that the earth – spatial creation – becomes the opportunity to propagate that image.

A man – especially the self-governing Christian man – finds that spatial integrity an essential element necessary to complete his dominion task. He must surround himself with a host. To create and sustain that host, he must have land.

The abbey needs land for obvious practical reasons: the growing of food, housing, and facilities needed to sustain the human organism. But in addition to that, he needs land that is under his dominion because it is his use of the land – his stewardship – for which he must give an account to his Creator. The land becomes a source of self-identification and of validation.

We contemplate an agrarian setting for the family abbey, but an urban setting is possible, although much more difficult. The notion of an abbey suggests an economic unit as well as a spiritual community. The city creates a greater interdependency on the social order and reduces the distance between the abbey and its

distracting competitors. A rural setting, in contrast, enhances the abbey's monopoly of space.

As I have shown elsewhere, the abbey begins with an altar or shrine where there is one priest who stands up before the people. Abraham ("father of the people") was the singular priest of his household and built altars wherever he could.

Melchisedek was the priest and abbot of Salem, a walled city. We presume that he was both its king and priest in the sense of being the leading father and primogenitor of all who lived there. We have described his priesthood at length in the Grail trilogy³⁹ and do not intend to do so here, except to point out certain key aspects of his relationship with Abraham.

First, he blessed Abraham because we are told that Abraham would propagate this priesthood throughout the land. In blessing him and holding him in communion, he adopted Abraham as his son.

Second, in putting upon him the name of his god ("El Elyon"), Melchisedek charged Abraham and protected him from the avenger of blood. This is important because Abraham was in danger of reprisals for slaughtering heads of state. Without the sanction of Melchisedek, he was a terrorist.

Third, he redeemed Abraham because he offered him bread and wine signifying the covenant of the host and of the bloodline. Abraham was now free to again dwell in the land and to redeem it. The land is the thing which is given in covenant.

Thus, we see that the abbey's organic connection to the land completes its meaning in time and on Earth.

³⁹ *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah* (2004), *The House of Bethany* (2007), *Merlin: High Priest of the Holy Grail* (2011)

Chapter Four

STARTING THE FAMILY ABBEY

The Abbey Charter

There are five indicia required of abbeys: 1) a leader, 2) a doctrine of succession, 3) a ministry of helps, 4) a mission statement, and 5) a place to live and worship.

They should be put into writing and signed by its members.

#1 – A Leader: The usual leader of a family abbey (as the name “abbey” implies) is the leading father. This person could either be a grandfather or a young father by succession. In the Celtic tradition, it may be a woman (abbess). In any case, the leader assumes the usual managerial role of supervising abbey projects, arbitrating disputes, and providing guidance. The rules establishing his powers ought to be decided in advance. Usually, those powers should reflect the traditional role of fathers. He must officiate in abbey meetings and any ceremonial functions.

#2 – A Doctrine of Succession: For an abbey to cross the generations there must be a clear plan as to who the leader’s successor will be or a process delineated to decide a successor. This person should be someone who is currently a member of the

abbey. Abbeys should not recruit people for this position from outside of the abbey. For any potential leader, there should be a period of shared life with the members of the abbey.

#3 – A Ministry of Helps: There are certain tasks which are essential to the life of an abbey. These can be formalized into diaconal offices. The growing and preparation of food is important to an abbey. “Ministers of the Soil” can be a formal office. Midwifery is another. He or she might be called a “Minister of Healing.” Abbeys should have a school; so a “Minister of Instruction” is appropriate. Depending on the size of the abbey, there might be subdeacons who assist in its ceremonial functions or who are rectors (groundskeepers). Others might provide security (i.e. a Minister of Arms) to protect the abbey from dangerous animals in remote areas or criminals in populated areas.

#4 – A Mission Statement: This statement will form a part of the charter which creates the abbey. It should include the names of the people forming the abbey and why they are coming together. Each person should identify what they expect to be doing in the abbey. It should describe the talents, skills and other achievements of the person and what contribution that person is expected to make to the abbey. Depending on the size of the abbey, offices and titles can be ascribed to each person forming the abbey. This process will clearly define the role of each person, but should also allow for flexibility and transition to other roles if the need arises. For example, the Minister of Healing may need help from the Minister of the Soil in delivering a baby. Formalizing our tasks helps us to focus on the goal but should not restrict us from adapting to the normal flow of life’s challenges.

Notice that an abbey does not necessarily require that its members be related to each other by blood. However, *family* abbeys require in their mission statement the intention to form

either a conjugal union or a generational union of blood. The latter involves the intermarriage of offspring.

#5 – A Hearth & Altar: The notion of an abbey requires its members to live together or on the same parcel of land. It is the experience of living together that creates the bond of kinship and spiritual union. An altar, shrine, or place of sacred gathering is also important to the life of an abbey. Even atheists can have a designated place of meditation and communion of souls.

During these gatherings, time should be taken to express gratitude to each other, to air complaints, and to provide healing counsel.⁴⁰

By Oath Consigned

The abbey is not insulated from the political realities which dominate society. The state churches will label abbeys as cults or communes, especially if polygamy is involved. But cults and communes are legal in our society so long as it is clear the people enter them with fully informed consent.⁴¹

Thus written contracts signed before competent witnesses become imperative to validating an abbey. Even grown children should enter into such contracts with their parents that recognize their covenantal rights and obligations. In the final analysis, contracts are covenants.

⁴⁰The Grail Church propagates itself through abbeys which embrace the five planks of abbey renaissance: 1) family worship, 2) home schooling, 3) cottage industries, 4) family government, and 5) home health and safety.

⁴¹First Amendment rights of association and the free exercise of religion are long established doctrines of American jurisprudence. Communes have existed in the United States ever since early in the 19th Century, even scandalous ones, such as the Oneida Community. See Appendix A on polygamy.

Contracts which create family abbeys contain three essential elements. Guidance can be found in the biblical laws pertaining to domestics (e.g. Exodus 21). After a seven-year getting acquainted period, the following oaths would become permanent.

1. *The Vow of Fealty* – This is a formal recognition of the governing structure of the abbey and a vow of loyalty and submission. Such a person becomes a permanent member of the family abbey. He is prepared to make personal sacrifices for the abbey, even to the extent of life-risking ventures. In return, the member is cared for in life and in death, and so are his heirs. All previous vows, covenants and contracts pertaining to this temporal world are voided or rendered subservient.

2. *The Vow of Poverty* – This is a commitment which still has legal standing today. The member abdicates claim to ownership and property rights to all his possessions. They are given to the abbey including all contractual claims against him. His family is also given to the abbey. But the abbey assumes responsibility for them. All property which the member receives is by allowance until he or she is made an heir after the seven-year probation period.

3. *The Vow of Chastity* – This is a commitment which is still expected in most monastic orders, but since this is a family abbey, there is an assumption that sexual relations will continue. Chastity does not and never did mean the same thing as celibacy. History is replete with scandalous examples of monasteries where prostitution was practiced openly, even by the Popes themselves. What is required by the notion of chastity is that the member refrains from sexual activity unless issued a dispensation by the abbot. In any case, all previous marital vows are dissolved when joining an abbey. Members may be reassigned to other sexual partners or may be assigned to the same person they were with prior to joining the abbey (Exodus 21). If they decide to leave the abbey, their former spouses may be restored but their children remain with the Abbey.

The reason for this is found in Biblical law and is calculated to create an incentive to remain and grow within the abbey covenant. Abbeys are meant to form permanent bonds and to colonize. The fosterage and education of children become an important means of achieving this end:

If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free . . . he shall serve him forever.

- Exodus 21:5-6⁴²

These three vows serve to create a true covenant bond within the meaning of Biblical law. Lacking a bond of blood, a group of unrelated people can become one body through these oaths.

In any matters of controversy, an abbot's counsel and ruling can be overturned by the casting of lots,⁴³ but only if the members agree that such an appeal is warranted and that the outcome is binding.

Although families are meant to be permanent, it is the reality of life that a free society must allow for the possibility of oath-breaking and sin. Abbeys must accept that some people will want to leave. No one should be forced to do something or be somewhere against their will. Having said that, a breach of contract cannot be permitted without sanctions. These must be clearly delineated at the beginning. Usually, some form of compensatory damages should be agreed upon should there be schism.

⁴² In this text, it is the wife and children who are retained as leverage for the master, but this is because the wife was provided by the master to the manservant. In the case law found in Deuteronomy 15:12-18, the woman is free to go, but in neither case are the children. Abbeys have always existed to protect children and others who are in need of refuge. For that protection and provision to be stable and meaningful, they must retain control and fosterage until the children reach their civil majority. See Appendix C.

⁴³ See Appendix B

Sample Contract

I, _____(Name)_____ being of sound mind and body and by my own free will do covenant and declare:

_____ (Name) _____ Abbey is my home and communion. I pledge to submit to its authority over my life. I relinquish my prior covenants, oaths, property, and entitlements and so consecrate, convey and give these to the Abbey. All the fruits of my labor, time and relationships, I give to the Abbey, and should I leave under sanction, I will accept forfeiture as my punishment.

My children I do commit to the Abbey for their care, guardianship and education until such time as they reach their majority. I make no marital claims upon my spouse but accept cheerfully the Abbey's rule of family life.⁴⁴

When six years are expired, I am at liberty to rescind this oath or renew it as a lifetime commitment. I understand that a tithe from my labor shall be assessed and reserved for me until the sixth year which shall be my patrimony should I decide to leave.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ It is probably impossible for traditional churchists to comprehend the morality of this provision. They will think this as some sort of divorce or adultery. They forget that we cannot know what adultery is until we first define marriage. Jesus said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9). He was responding to the practice of Jewish men to dismiss their wives without judicial review. Here – just as it involves a *representative* of God to create the union – we may justly infer that Jesus empowers a *legitimate* representative of God to end the union. The question is "Who is that representative?" In the context of Biblical law, it is this "master" or landholder who has that authority as a magistrate on his estate. Clearly, the larger family abbey has greater moral value than the conjugal family. (See additional discussions in *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*, textbook edition).

⁴⁵ Obviously, this six-year provision is following the Biblical "Year of Release" cycle described in Exodus 21; Deuteronomy 15 and elsewhere.

If I decide to stay, the tithe shall be disposed by the Abbot and an allowance shall be awarded to me each year.⁴⁶

Should I disagree with any ruling of the Abbot, I have the right to appeal to the general body and should they decide I have the right of lots, I may so appeal. If the lots shall fall against me, I have the right to leave under sanction or submit myself to the discipline of the Abbey. If the lots fall in my favor, the ruling shall be reversed.

A self-maledictory oath should accompany this contract:

Gracious Father in Heaven, it is with a sincere and earnest heart that I receive your truth and my place in this _____ Abbey. If I prove worthy, please spread your benediction upon me and those of mine house. If I prove unworthy, I pray for your chastisement upon my head. If I cause harm to others, I pray that their suffering shall become my suffering. Do not let me prove unfaithful to my vows. In Jesus' name I pray.

Certification

Sign and date the contract. It should also be attested by two witnesses.

⁴⁶Servitude requires the minimum of a double-tithe (20%) in the Biblical revelation: Genesis 47:24, assuming that the master provides nothing more than the land for the servant to live on. Additional capital investments by the master, among other things, would require a greater return, presumably negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the master and the servant or in more palatable parlance: *the abbot and the domestic*.

CONCLUSION

My first inspiration on the notion of a family abbey came as a child from a farm experience with my parents and grandparents. Although my siblings have been scattered to the four-winds since then and the old homestead is lost to us, we have always believed in the idea of the extended family group living in close proximity and helping each other through the stages of life. A gifted singer and musician, my father's final enduring legacy – which still rings in my ears and brings tears to my eyes – are the words to the old Gospel song, "The Family Bible."

My second inspiration came from Francis and Edith Schaeffer's experience in Switzerland and their *L'Abri* mission. I have always wanted to replicate what they did there, and always felt that Christians should find a way to live as they did.

Of course, in recent years, the corrosive effects of humanism and dealing with Christian hypocrisy have blunted the Schaeffer witness, if their son, Frank Schaeffer, is of any indication.⁴⁷ He has become a liberal – as I have, in some sense, also.

The difference between Franky's liberalism and mine, I suppose, is that he adopted his by a rejection of Biblical inspiration, Biblical law, and Evangelical theology. I, on the other hand, believe that Biblical revelation, when properly understood, is

⁴⁷ *Sex, Mom, & God*, Frank Schaeffer, Da Capo Press (2011)

already liberal. It is humanistic man who creates a society that is cruel, regressive, and ultimately destructive. What we sometimes think of as cruelty in the Bible comes from a failure to understand that nature is cruel . . . reality is unyielding. The Bible is about survival. We forget that less than two centuries ago, human sacrifice and cannibalism were common occurrences on the North American continent.⁴⁸ Through the centuries, righteous men have had to learn to cope with human depravity, sometimes that of their own.

We still have a long way to go, and for us to think that we have somehow outgrown Biblical revelation is truly naïve, if not immensely arrogant. There is a thin line between our civilization and the barbarism of the past. That line is the Bible.

Here I am in North Idaho with my wife and seven children, most who are now grown. We are largely isolated because we are surrounded by churchists: Mormons, Reformed Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Fundamentalists and so on. Many look to Idaho as the last vestige of the America of yesteryear. They come here for refuge but find that their antagonistic rivals, whether conservative or liberal, have come here, too.

The land is still empty; there are many farmsteads and ranches for sale. I suppose whoever wins the demographic contest will end up deciding what happens next. That is why, for several years, I have worked hard to bring credit union services to my area. If you as a reader want to throw your hat into the ring, there are resources here to get you settled, even if you are low income. I would love to see my part of the country dotted with family abbeys. If you have caught the bug, contact the publisher and he will get you in touch with me. *Shalom*.

⁴⁸ *Cannibalism, Headhunting and Human Sacrifice in North America: A History Forgotten*, George Franklin Feldman, Alan C. Hood & Co. (2008). "A vivid account of the barbaric practices of both Native Americans and European explorers and colonists."

Appendix A

The Legal Foundation for Polygamy In American Jurisprudence

The Gay Rights Decision⁴⁹

Very recently, the United States Supreme Court rendered a decision of epochal importance concerning the rights of homosexuals. Declaring that "the right to privacy" protects the sexual preferences of consenting adults, *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) appears to be the definitive "Gay Rights Decision" and a final judicial ratification of the controversial "Equal Rights Amendment" which was narrowly defeated during the 1970s. One of the effects of the ERA was to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.

The ramifications of this decision are far-reaching in their application. The Supreme Court in effect has declared that whatever heterosexuals do, it is okay for homosexuals and whatever homosexuals do, it is okay for heterosexuals. So it seems that whatever sexual arrangement the imagination of consenting adults can conjure (multiple partners, incest, etc.), it's protected by the Constitution.

Liberals are elated, of course, and conservatives are horrified. Believing that this decision will produce chaos for the institution of marriage, conservatives are faced with few options. Here they are:

1. Either try to reverse the Court's decision by electing a conservative President who will appoint better judges who in turn will rule differently in twenty or thirty years (an unlikely remedy, since they are still struggling, after thirty years, to reverse the *Roe* decision which legalized abortion), or

⁴⁹ This article first appeared in 2003 on the Grail Church website (now no longer published).

2. Try to overturn it through a Constitutional Amendment, which requiring the ratification of 3/4ths of the States is a Herculean achievement, or
3. Nullify it through civil disobedience.

The use of violence is normally the recourse of minority groups which have no political influence. In this case conservatives and traditional Christians have lost control of the culture in general but are still powerful in certain areas. I expect civil disobedience but not in the form of massive protests. Rather, the refusal of some jurisdictions to enforce this decision following the same scenario that we saw after the *Brown* decision which ended segregation.

There is a fourth possibility, a troubling one, and that is the possibility of civil war. I am not talking about the kind that produced the War Between the States but rather the kind which leads to a military coup. The social and political chaos in Germany of the 1920s led to the rise of Hitler in the 1930s. Hitler promised a return to traditional values, law and order, and a protection of the nation from international predators that were plundering the country. A similar scenario could occur in the United States. Considering the resentment of a majority of Americans toward global corporations, the fear of terrorism, and the sense of social chaos which Court decisions like this one will elicit in American pulpits, and then combine that with the fact that our military is manned (and *womanned*) largely by traditional Christians - we have the right ingredients for a repeat of history, if a savvy and self-serving political coalition wanted to exploit it.

It will not be the first time that a land has been bathed in blood in the name of Christ. But if that were to occur, it would only prove in the minds of many the failure of the Gospel. I remember some years ago a profound statement from Barry Lynn, the President of the liberal organization "Citizens for the American Way." In a radio debate with conservative commentator and Presidential candidate, Patrick Buchanan, Mr. Lynn challenged him with this theological justification for liberalism: "If God trusts people with free will to choose their eternal destinies, we should trust them with forming their own virtue."

Buchanan didn't have a response. Instead, he shifted to another topic. I wondered why?

It was hard for me to believe that he didn't have a response: the Jesuit educated and articulate Buchanan. No, Buchanan had an answer to Lynn's remarks but he could never dare to tell the truth. It would have been unacceptable and repulsive to the American people. His response would have had to declare the dogma of the Church, to wit, *man has no free will*. His choices are the work of God. God does not trust mankind with free will or with their eternal destinies. In the shadow of Augustine, the Church says that *God* predestines our eternal destinies.

Likewise, in reference to our virtue, God does not trust mankind with that either, according to Church dogma. He has ordained "ministers of the sword" to enforce a moral standard upon society. Had Buchanan stated this he would have been rightly branded a fascist. All conservative Christians who embrace classical Christian theology are necessarily fascist in orientation.

Classical Christian theology is not the fount of individual liberty. Pelagianism, the Celtic Church, and classical liberalism (the political philosophy of Jefferson and many of the other Founding Fathers) are the true fount of freedom. The kind of freedom that comes from Augustinianism and its Protestant imitation - Calvinism - is really a clever form of social engineering, creating a dialectic of competing special interest groups which are acting according to their selfish ambitions (sinful natures) from which comes the success of the nation ("Let us do evil, that good may come"). The political philosophy of Machiavelli is really Augustinianism, a practice of the Popes since the earliest centuries and secularized in the form of Communism. In Communist Russia, for example, people are *allowed* to have their zones of freedom; otherwise, the society would collapse. Farmers have their garden plots, without which, the nation would starve. In medieval times, men such as Augustine and Aquinas taught that prostitution was a necessary evil, a safety valve or the sewer of society. The only difference between medieval social theory and that behind the Gay Rights Decision is that the Court says the prostitute ought to be treated as a human being with dignity and fairness. In the medieval world of the Church, once the prostitute has done her service of gratification, she may be murdered or cast out into the dung of the streets.

The desire for a "Christian" dictator will grow among conservative Christians. And if they are successful, it will change nothing. If all the

sexual deviates of the nation were executed tomorrow, there would be new ones the next day. Blinded by their hypocrisy, like the Pharisees of old, Christians do not understand that the source of homosexuality is their own dysfunctional, fractured, monogamous families. I am not the first to state this. The Protestant Reformers saw it and blasted celibacy as the source of sodomy in the priesthood. Nor am I the first to argue that the polygamous family is the Biblical remedy for the needs which the fragile monogamous household can never meet. I am certainly preceded by Luther - and also John Milton, who was perhaps the greatest Puritan of his time. With every woman with a husband and every child with a father, there is no excuse for prostitution. What kind of logic is indulged by the Augustinians that can justify prostitution but condemn polygamy? ***It is just as evil to forbid what God allows as it is to allow what He forbids.***

The Gay Rights Decision will not cause the collapse of morals in our society. *They have collapsed already.* They collapsed a generation ago. What we have now is a level playing field. Finally, the Christian man who aspires to a patriarchal mission now has the chance to compete with our sodomite culture. The homosexuals hope to adopt children. Where do these children come from? From broken monogamous families. There is a safety net in the polygamous home unlike that of the monogamous one. In a monogamous society, the children are given to the orphanage. If Christians could ever see their opportunity, they could successfully compete with the homosexuals - and I might add with the rising tide of Islam - but only if they will embrace polygamy.

The Right of Religious Cohabitation⁵⁰

At press time, an important development has occurred in advancing the rights of polygamists. The United States District Court of the Utah Division has just handed down a decision overturning the portion of Utah's anti-bigamy law which prohibits plural cohabitation: the practice of polygamy without the sanction of state licensing. Relying in part on the *Lawrence Decision* of the Supreme Court, Judge Clark Waddoups found the State of Utah in violation of the 1st Amendment's protections of the free exercise of

⁵⁰ *Kody Brown, et al v. Jeffrey R. Buhman, Utah County Attorney*, 2013. The Brown family is known for its reality television program, *Sister Wives*.

religion, the right of association, and the 14th Amendment's right of equal protection under the law:

The court finds the cohabitation prong of the Statute unconstitutional on numerous grounds and strikes it. As a result, and to save the Statute, the court adopts the interpretation of "marry" and "purports to marry," and the resulting narrowing construction of the Statute, offered by the dissent in State of Utah v. Holm, 2006 . . . thus allowing the Statute to remain in force as prohibiting bigamy in the literal sense – the fraudulent or otherwise impermissible possession of two purportedly valid marriage licenses for the purpose of entering into more than one purportedly legal marriage.
(page 91)

While this Decision only applies to the Court's jurisdiction over the State of Utah, it does set important precedent. One can expect that Utah will appeal the Decision, but overturning it will be problematic. Judge Waddoups' cogent reasoning ties it inextricably to *Lawrence* by showing that plural cohabitation motivated by religious principle cannot be singled out and punished, while plural cohabitation motivated by lust (i.e. promiscuous fornication) can be protected by the rights of privacy and repose established by the U. S. Supreme Court.

It is not my intention to provide a review of this decision here, any more than the *Lawrence Decision* discussed above. But there are a few salient features which are germane to the thesis of this book.

In a rare case of candor from any court on this controversial topic, Judge Waddoups provides an interesting and useful historical background to our nation's aversion to polygamy: that it was believed to be a threat to our democratic institutions,

It was not just that white American Mormons were engaging in a practice thought to be characteristic of Asiatic and African peoples who were believed, at the time, to be civilizationally and racially inferior . . . but also, as a practice of such peoples, "polygamy leads to the patriarchal principle," which, "when applied to large communities, fetters the people in stationary despotism . . .
- page 18 (citations omitted)

Duly noting the Republican Platform of 1856 linking polygamy with slavery as “the twin pillars of barbarism” to explain the anti-Mormon paranoia of the country, the Court rejected the linkage because, unlike slavery, the ban of polygamy represented “derisive societal views about race and ethnic origin prevalent in the United States at that time [and] has no place in discourse about religious freedom, due process, equal protection or any other constitutional guarantee or right . . .” (p. 20)

The Court also noted that the Statute “bottlenecked” law enforcement against other crimes mistakenly thought to be ancillary to polygamy – rape, incest, child abuse, etc. – because it drove polygamists underground and made it difficult, if not impossible, to collect evidence against offenders:

Accordingly, despite the gravity of this concern, the court finds that the cohabitation prong not only is not narrowly tailored to advance a compelling State interest but that it actually inhibits the advancement of this compelling State interest of “protecting vulnerable individuals from exploitation and abuse.” (p. 71) and,

[For] the observation that while the “perceived social danger may have justified the criminalization of polygamy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, . . . fundamentalist polygyny does not today pose the same kind of threat to federal and now state sovereignty over significant areas of the West.” But, different from the nineteenth century, this is an era in which women have received full legal and moral personhood in society. The court believes that with the cohabitation prong stricken, the communities engaging in religious cohabitation will have less of a need to be underground and the State can more directly prosecute the independent crimes that are sometimes alleged to be rampant in those communities. Women who have and are aware of their rights will be less likely to end up in abusive situations. (Fn. 64, p. 70-71, citations omitted)

The institution of marriage itself was once a form of slavery of the woman that was transformed in the latter decades of the 20th century into an equal partnership between the husband and wife.

Thus, we may surmise that the early leaders of the Mormon movement and of the Utah Territory saw this kind of polygamy as a means to power in society and sought to defend the practice, just as the South saw slavery as a

basis for its economic and political power and fought the Civil War to preserve that institution.⁵¹ When the Mormon elite saw that a greater source of power - namely, the electoral system and statehood - would enlarge their hegemony in other ways, they embraced the new system and abandoned polygamy. (Lust can be so easily satisfied in other ways.)

This shift draws attention to the nature of our political system, ostensibly based upon an informed electorate, but really an oligarchic system based upon the economic power of the banks. Modern banking is the greatest threat to democracy because politics follows economic realities. The quip of Amschel Rothschild holds true, "Give me the power to issue the nation's currency, and I care not who makes its laws." The involvement of bankers in the Mormon controversy was enlightening.⁵²

As I argued in my book, *Eros Made Sacred*, a legalized polygamy in the United States would have the opposite effect than what is imagined by its detractors. Polygamy by the common man would have the effect of creating a stable middle class. Monogamy forces families to rely upon the banking system because they are too small to create a household economy. They must integrate into the larger commercial economy to survive.

Patriarchal families, on the other hand, are large enough to form a collective and to make a subsistence economy possible. This was especially true of the Mormons who created the United Order cooperatives which were so greatly feared by the Eastern banking establishment.

The advantage of this decision in decriminalizing religious cohabitation might be greater than had the Court simply legalized polygamy outright. Striking the cohabitation prong of the Utah Statute has the effect of creating a useful filter. Only people with strong religious beliefs will pursue polygamy, while the general population will be dissuaded from the practice. Women who are motivated by religious principle will ignore the urge for status which traditional matrimony bestows upon the wife. They will sublimate the ranking of First Wife, Second Wife, Third Wife and so on and ignore the taunts of their monogamist peers. Our modern feminist culture finds this feature of polygamy to be odious. A religiously motivated

⁵¹ Although, it is generally known by historians that Southern slave holders used their female slaves as concubines.

⁵² See Appendix B, "The Mormons" in *Merlin: High Priest of the Holy Grail*. See also Ellen Brown's, *The Web of Debt*, Third Edition (2008), Third Millennium Press, LA

woman will accept her place in the marriage as a part of God's plan and ignore the desire of her fallen nature for exaltation and status.

Appendix B

The Casting of Lots in the Appeals Process

*The lot is cast into the lap;
but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*

- Proverbs 13:33

*And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias;
And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

- Acts 1:26

In an age which denies the sovereignty of God, we should not marvel that the casting of lots has lost its luster as a method to settle disputes. Called the “sin of divination”⁵³ among many historic churches, the remedy of choice among the clergy for unsettled controversies has simply been an appeals process to another level of clerics. Some traditions posit the final appeal in synods or councils, while in the Catholic tradition, the word of the Pope becomes the final word.

In Biblical times, the final court of appeals was the casting of lots: the use of stones (Urim & Thummim)⁵⁴ or other dialectic tokens for “Yes” or “No” which were chosen randomly by a neutral witness to settle a question. Sometimes, the momentous occasions were prefaced with prayer or ritual.

In the case of the apostolic replacement of Judas Iscariot in Acts chapter one, the field of candidates was narrowed to two by a vote and then prefaced with a public invocation, the final one was chosen by lots. In the Old

⁵³ Some pagan traditions have equivalent lottery systems, such as Odinists which use the ancient Runes. Appellations to a false god will not produce the same results as an appeal to the one, true God.

⁵⁴ “The Lights & Perfections”

Testament, the priests were given “Urim & Thummim” which were drawn from the breastplate of the High Priest. Sometimes referred to as “the ephod,” King David relied upon it heavily to receive Divine guidance.⁵⁵ It might be that many of Moses’ judicial rulings recorded in the Pentateuch were not from direct Divine communication through an audible voice as many suppose, but were simply the result of an extensive lottery system.⁵⁶

Modern churchmen will disdain such methods as profane games of chance, but to the Biblicist, it is the churchmen who are profane. To believe that there could be such a thing as “chance” is to deny the sovereignty of God as our text from Proverbs above clearly indicates. Typical of a humanistic age, men want final decisions based exclusively upon their own pretended wisdom. The casting of lots removes decisions from human control and places them squarely upon the providence of God.⁵⁷

Lest we be tempted to ascribe this practice to an earlier and less enlightened dispensation that has been replaced by a new “age of the spirit,” we should remember that the division of the Holy Land during the Millennium will be done through lots, just as it was during the times of Joshua:

This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord God.

- Ezekiel 48:29 (cf. Joshua 23:4)

Only a hyper-dispensationalist will pretend that the future Millennium will be an age of spiritual regression!

⁵⁵2 Samuel 5:19 & 23 and compare it with 1 Samuel 23:2 et al. David begins to “enquire of the LORD” immediately after the surviving son of the priestly family slain by Saul – Abiathar – took refuge with David’s band. He brought the priestly ephod with him (1 Samuel 23:6, cf. 21:9).

⁵⁶ Compare God’s affirmation of Moses’ authority in Numbers 12:6-8 with Numbers 27:21 which suggests that the privileges of the Urim & Thummim used by Moses were imparted to his successors. Other texts which shed light on this practice are Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 14:7-42 and 28:6 – “And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” This method of divine revelation here has equal rank with the other customary ones.

⁵⁷I choose not to be drawn into the paradoxical debate between the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty and human free will. They are both clearly taught in the Bible and deduced from rational thought.

While the casting of lots can be useful in obtaining Divine guidance, it can be abused. It is not meant to be a substitute for decisions which are plainly directed from Scripture or from the godly wisdom of our leaders. Such instances would constitute presumption and could backfire in dangerous ways.⁵⁸ In the hands of wicked pretenders, the casting of lots can simply be a tool to wage war against the rule of righteous men or even worse, against the right interpretation of Scripture. It should only be resorted to when the general body has reached an impasse, as in the case of when the apostles were trying to decide who should replace Judas Iscariot.⁵⁹

The casting of lots would be particularly suited to societies in which there is no central authority, such as during the time of the Judges when “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Libertarian societies can overcome gridlock and injustices by using this to settle disputes between parties of equal right and power:

*The lot causeth contentions to cease,
And parteth between the mighty.*

- Proverbs 18:18

Parties to a dispute who refuse to submit to the verdict derived from lots can be shunned by the civil body politic to enforce the sanctions.

⁵⁸1 Samuel 14 recounts the story of King Saul’s abuse. It still worked to reveal the guilty (v. 42) but was used in an attempt to enforce a rash oath. The people overruled the king’s command and spared Jonathan.

⁵⁹Among the Amish, for example, all their men are expected to be competent spiritual leaders of the community. Thus, it doesn’t matter that their leaders are chosen by lottery.

Appendix C

Abbeys & the Traditional Family

Considering the general state of Biblical illiteracy among typical readers and the inability of professing Christians to reason logically from the Biblical text, it is probably a good idea to add some points of clarification on the expected impact that family abbeys which follow the pattern of Biblical law might have on the traditional family and the institution of monogamous marriage.

No Such Thing as Marriage

The first thing that must be understood by the reader is that in the Biblical text, the institution of traditional marriage simply does not exist.⁶⁰ This fact explains why the Biblical statute on domestic relations which follows the giving of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 21) does not speak at all about marriage and the family in any sense familiar to our culture. It speaks about menservants and maidservants, sons and daughters, but nothing about wives and the family.

Law is Words with Exact Meaning

The words “marry” and “marriage” appear frequently in the Bible as do “wife” and “wives,” but those words in the original languages do not describe the same things that they do in our modern language. The term “marry,” for example, is the Hebrew word for “baal,”⁶¹ and simply describes

⁶⁰By “traditional marriage” is meant the exchanging of vows between a man and a woman before an authority figure for the purposes of legitimate cohabitation.

⁶¹The pagan deity known by the same name as “Baal” is obviously not what is in view here. Although the words mean the same, it is the etymology of the word which is employed for “husband,” just as the closing of a prayer with “amen” is not an appellation to the Egyptian god of that name, nor in praying to “Jesus” (*yea-sous*) are we saying that “Yahweh” is the Greek god of that name, nor in praying to “Jesus” (*yea-sous*) are we saying that “Yahweh” is the Greek god “Zeus.” (*Zeus* means “savior” in the Greek). The Greek word for marriage “gamous” means essentially the same thing. Readers might wonder what impact this interpretation will have on the

a woman or girl who has been acquired by a master as a possession. It is the same word for “husband.” A woman who has been “married” is a woman who has become “mastered” or “owned” in an economic exchange. In fact, the words for “wife” and “woman” are the same in the original languages. Thus, there is no word which signifies the modern understanding of a companionate relationship between “husband and wife.” The translation of “wife” in distinction from “woman” is often arbitrary in our English translations.⁶²

The usual texts which are employed to defend traditional marriage all evaporate upon closer examination. For example, the expression “one flesh,” as used by Jesus and others, simply refers to the physical result of cohabitation. If it is possible to have a “one flesh” relationship with a harlot (1 Corinthians 6:16), how is it sound reasoning to use the term as something unique to the marriage relationship? The same can be said of other marital terms, such as “dowry,” “bride,” “bridegroom,” “betrothed,” and even the term “divorce.” None of these words contain the same meaning in the Biblical text as they do today because in the Biblical scheme women under coverture cannot vow, promise, or otherwise enter a binding covenant (Numbers 30, *et al*).⁶³

Consequently, the notion of the “wife” is introduced in Exodus 21, not as a mistress, but rather as a “maidservant.” Her status is dictated by her association with the master. If she cohabits with her master, then she is his “wife.” If she cohabits with his manservant, then she is still his wife, but she has now become what is called in other places, a “concubine.” I say this because she stays with her master at the year of release. She does not go out with the manservant.

This law is troubling to modern moralists and I would be ready to chuck it were it not for the fact that this statute follows *immediately* after the Ten

notion of “hierogamy”: sacred marriage. A true hierogamy is not an institution; it is a *syneisactum*: cohabitation with a holy man. See the Grail Trilogy.

⁶²*Isha* in the Hebrew and *gune* in the Greek. See your *Strong’s Concordance & Lexicon*.

⁶³By modern standards the Bible reeks of sexism. It is no use trying to explain it away. Somehow we feel like it is an inferior revelation; yet, all the while, our civilization crumbles around us. Nevertheless, honest scholarship requires that we obtain an accurate understanding of the text. After that has been done, only then is it proper to revisit the question of its relevancy. We might find out that these laws accurately reflect the laws of human nature after all, and that the survival of our society depends upon their wisdom.

Commandments. It is a part of the same revelation, the same *corpus* of law which was personally promulgated by the Almighty. If we chuck this law, we can no longer embrace the moral authority of the Ten Commandments. We have to chuck the whole thing.

The Release: Three Textual Comparisons

We might also expect consternation from some moralists over an earlier assertion that at the year of release the maidservant *and her children* stay with the master. This practice seems to not only end marriages but to break-up families, as well. Could it be that we are interpreting it wrong?

We might wish it so, but this is not an isolated statute. It is the case in this text (Exodus 21) and also in Deuteronomy 15 where we discover that the maidservant is included in the release, but still not the children. Unless we want to believe that these two statutes are a jumbled contradiction with one another, we need to look closer and refine our understanding.

Three Classes of Maidservant (Wife)

Obviously, a closer examination reveals that as far as the maidservant is concerned, how she is acquired affects her status: in the one instance (Exodus 21:4) she was provided by the master to be the “helper”⁶⁴ of the manservant or to that of his son, or even of himself. She was not released. In the other instance (Exodus 21:3, Deuteronomy 15) she was *already* the helper of the manservant. Equity requires that she be released with the manservant as it says, even though she may have serviced the master sexually.

I say this because verses 7-11 of Exodus 21 describe yet another maidservant who can be released at the sabbatical year: *the woman who was denied cohabitation*. Although verse 7 says the maidservant is not to be released as are the menservants, the following verses provide the exceptions in detail⁶⁵:

⁶⁴I am using the *word of designation* given by God in Genesis 2:18 rather than the modern term of companion.

⁶⁵A maidservant who was beaten to the point of permanent injury was also released (Exodus 21:26-27). “Oppression” was legitimate grounds for flight (Deuteronomy 23:15).

- *Verse 8* describes the maidservant who has been *denied* conjugal relations. When she is “purchased” she must be taken, either by the master, his son, or by a manservant. If not, then she must be “redeemed” or lacking a redeemer, released at the sabbatical year as required by Deuteronomy 15:12.
- *Verse 11* requires she be released if the master *diminishes* her provision or her conjugal rights.⁶⁶ In Biblical law, a woman’s dowry was in her children. To deny her the right of procreation was an unacceptable form of abuse. That was why the woman and her children were kept together.⁶⁷ If she had no children, she might be a candidate for release.

We observe, then, that the essential ingredient to the notion of marriage as a binding relationship was the act of consummation. The lack thereof resulted in annulment. Hence, all masters were expected if not required to have sexual relations with their maidservants,⁶⁸ but were allowed to do so vicariously through their sons or menservants to avoid incest or other forbidden relationships.⁶⁹

The Jubilee

Similar laws are found in Leviticus 25:39-46 but with a different twist: the manservant and the children are released, not the woman (v. 41). Again, we must look carefully at the details to see if a different scenario is being described here. Otherwise, we end up with confusing contradictions.

We learn from the text that this manservant is “a brother who dwelleth by thee” (v. 39) who left *his* “family” (v. 41 *mishpachah*)⁷⁰ at a different estate (abbey) but has come to work with his children (born from a previous relationship) for this master, who is presumably a kinsman, but not of close

⁶⁶Biblical ethics assume procreation to be the primary, if not only, justification for sexual intercourse. A woman’s conjugal right in this scheme extended only so far as what was necessary to achieve offspring. Recreational sex is not what is in view here. See discussion on the sin of uncleanness in *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah* (textbook edition).

⁶⁷As children of the abbey, their inheritance was with the master.

⁶⁸The acquisition of a maidservant was referred to as a “betrothal” and the failure of consummation as a violation of an implied contract (Exodus 21:8).

⁶⁹For example, the maidservant designated for the man’s son was to be treated “after the manner of daughters.” Biblical law forbids sex with one’s daughter.

⁷⁰His “harem” – see earlier discussion (p. 66-69)

consanguinity. Now, he wants to return to the “possession of his fathers” (his father’s abbey) which is being restored in the imminent Jubilee.⁷¹ So evidently, his womenfolk were left at the abbey of a close relative in order to exempt them from sexual service.

The children have the right to return to the abbey of their ancestors, if that is their prerogative.⁷² We would presume the maidservants have been released from the other abbeys where they were staying and they all are arriving back at the family estate which has been restored.

The rationale for keeping the children under the scenarios described in Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 15, but not here in Leviticus 25, is security. Unlike this scenario, Exodus and Deuteronomy depict a manservant (or a maidservant) who has no where else to go, except to someone else’s abbey and to a different master. This creates an unstable environment for the children and thus, Biblical law requires that they remain with the first master. The maidservant stays as well, unless her status has been unfairly diminished in some way. The newly released manservant might be a drifter or might have issues with authority. There can be many reasons why the well-being of the children would be compromised if they were released with the manservant.

Annulments and the Abbey Covenant

Another burning controversy for moralists with the abbey covenant will be over the annulment and reassignment of married couples who join the abbey. Where is the Biblical justification for *that*?!

Again, it follows from the conditions which led to the change of status for the woman. By definition, a manservant cannot “marry” a maidservant because he is not a “master” or “lord” – a *baal*. He suffers what is called in jurisprudence a civic or conventional disability.⁷³ His antecedent vow of servitude precludes any further right to vow. If a man is a master but because

⁷¹This happened after the seventh sabbatical year in a fifty-year cycle.

⁷²That was why Israelite slaves had to be treated differently than foreign-born slaves: Israelites were permanent heirs to the land and all had a land parcel which was returned to them in the Jubilee. Foreign-born slaves had no permanent inheritance. Their status depended upon their relationship with an Israelite freeholder.

⁷³See *Black’s Law Dictionary* under the respective entries

of some change of circumstances (e.g. conviction of a crime, dereliction, or misfortune, etc.) now has become a manservant, then his wife's condition has changed, as well. She has been *diminished* (Exodus 21:11) and her status with her former "husband" is now dependent upon the authority and power of another.⁷⁴ She is no longer her "husband's" maidservant.⁷⁵ She has a new master, husband and lord. With whom she cohabitates now lies with the wisdom of her new master.⁷⁶ He must look after her best interests. He might decide that her former husband is entirely adequate and will recover his former condition . . . or perhaps not. That would be an important decision to make, requiring much wisdom. If he is a wise and righteous abbot, we should expect a wise and righteous decision. But in any case, it is his and his alone to make.⁷⁷

Abbeys formed by a mutual spiritual quest still must follow the Biblical pattern: "*thus, it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:15). Leaving pre-existing marriage structures intact might engender rival sovereignties and competing power blocks. Women tend to push their husbands "to take a stand" and "to protect their home." Unless every

⁷⁴In our modern age, such a change of condition frequently leads to divorce anyway. Obviously, the violated maidservant described in Leviticus 19:20 is not one "betrothed" to a manservant, but rather to a "husband." Likewise, the "divorced" woman forbidden in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is a maidservant exchanged between "baals" ("and married her": take note of the nomenclature in these texts), not one exchanged among the menservants (they cohabit; they do not marry): "The female slave was used promiscuously in her master's house" (*Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, v. 4, p. 386a).

⁷⁵What we are describing here are relationships formed through action of law and implied contract. The Genesis accounts of Abraham's encounters with Pharaoh and Abimelech in which Sarah was seized for service in the respective royal harems describe a violation of the customs of hospitality and sanctuary. She was taken without negotiation, as Abraham feared, "for there is no fear of God in this place" (Genesis 20:11). By modern standards, the narrative seems to diminish Abraham's integrity, but really, in the final analysis, it was his hosts who were in the wrong and punished by God.

⁷⁶It is a silly idea that the master/abbot would be having sex with all of the women. As noted earlier in this study, there are many reasons why it would be unwise, if not sinful, to have sexual relations with certain women. But the fact that he has the authority to assign her to a companion establishes him in her eyes as the guardian of her happiness, much like the father is to his daughter. The affection for a wise benefactor is the emotion we are trying to inculcate here, not the lust of a street gang.

⁷⁷Suppose, for example, that he finds the woman to be contentious or insubordinate. It should be obvious in such a case that the woman does not respect her husband enough to submit to him. She should be replaced or reassigned. Insubordination is considered an "uncleanness" in Biblical law and is grounds for divorce (see Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*). On the other hand, a manservant who leads his family in daily devotions, commands the respect of his wife, and is a hard worker - he is morally entitled to keep his wife during the time of his servitude. In fact, the master would be wise to find more maidservants to give him as wives.

woman in the abbey looks to the abbot as the true guardian of their well-being, there will be strife and schism. That can only be avoided if he is truly their husband and lord.⁷⁸

The Bible does not portray a sentimental and romantic view of the marital relationship. Silly commentators will twist out of context Biblical stories like Ruth and Esther or allegories like the Song of Solomon or analogies like Paul's Church/Bride doctrine and will try to fit them into the modern fantasies of teen-age girls, which is what our theo-pop preachers are trained to do these days. However, reality has caught up with our indulgent society. Our debt-based economy has run its course. Many millions of Westerners are about to experience the failure of our humanistic culture. They are about to experience the reality of debt-bondage. They will discover that these archaic Biblical laws to be much more practical than they thought. They will discover that the Old Testament God was a humanitarian after all. Let us hope they learn their lesson in time.

⁷⁸Healthy competition between women is not a bad thing. It nurtures incentive for excellence and progress. Leah and Rachel competed with each other, but together built the house of Israel (Ruth 4:11). Had they been married to different men – say Esau and Jacob – their competition could have become destructive. They experienced despair because their fallen natures wanted their husband exclusively (Genesis 3:16) and did not see God's providential hand in the arrangement.

Appendix D

Headship & the Sacraments

And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

- 2 Samuel 24:17

My purpose in this short exposition is not to restate studies done elsewhere on the kinsman-redeemer.⁷⁹ Known as the *ga'al*⁸⁰ in the Hebrew tongue, it refers to the responsibility of the next of kin to deliver his troubled kinsman from difficulty, whether it is economical, legal, or spiritual. Our interest here is the spiritual role of the kinsman-redeemer, specifically, to that of the sacraments.

Strangely, it never occurs to theologians that the clergy of the Christian church are a complete presumption. It required the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity to qualify as the sacrifice for the vicarious atonement of mankind. He had to become human flesh in order to become the deliverer of our race. Yet, in the same breath we are told that the Christian sacraments must be administered by men who do not share in the lineage of their respective congregations, who have no unity of blood, and that the attempt by fathers to do so for their families represents some wicked inversion of spiritual order.

⁷⁹ *The Kinsman-Redeemer* (2003); *The Ministry of the Firstborn* (2001)

⁸⁰ Or *go'el* among some scholars. Translated in some texts as “avenger of blood,” sometimes as merely “kinsman” and at other times “redeemer.”

Why the Redeemer had to be a Kinsman

One of his brethren may redeem him.

- Leviticus 25:48

This point is important [that the redeemer had to be a kinsman]. In economic exchanges the seller retains sovereignty over his property if it is not for sale. Just because I offer to buy your house, it does not mean you are required to sell it to me. Likewise in the Torah, if a man offered to buy a slave from his master and he was not the slave's relative, the offer could be rejected. But if the offer was made by the next-of-kin, the master had no other option but to agree to the transaction.⁸¹ When Jesus Christ offered His blood as ransom to Satan for the world, it was a transaction Satan was compelled to accept. Had Jesus not become a man, had He not been our kinsman according to the flesh, Satan would have retained sovereignty over the transaction for the souls of men. He could have rejected God's offer. But because of the Incarnation, because we have a kinsman to redeem us, Satan has lost all legal claims.

Of course, the slave must ask to be redeemed. This is what Old Testament law teaches us in the book of Ruth. Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, could not force it upon her. Ruth had to initiate the process. She had to make a legal claim to the right of redemption. So it is in the case of our eternal salvation. We must "plead the blood of Jesus"; we each must make our claim to a redeemer. Only then do Satan's claims come to naught. And this is why the proclamation of the Gospel is so important. Satan's hostages must be told that they have a redeemer. Left to their ignorance, they cannot attain their freedom.⁸²

⁸¹If he refused, it was a violation of Biblical terranomics, gave the servant the right of flight and risked a blood feud.

⁸²*The Kinsman-Redeemer*, Stivers (2003)

The Household Rite of Passover

The Holy Communion ceremony is said to be a conflation of 1) the Passover meal and sacrifice of the Exodus and 2) with the feeding of the Manna in the desert.⁸³ With Christ as the Passover lamb of the New Covenant (1 Corinthians 5:7 *et al*), the new Israel applies the blood of His sacrifice upon the doors of their hearts and eats the Eucharistic meal of His body (John 6:54).⁸⁴ Regardless of how one wants to interpret it in its particulars, the bottom line is that the Passover was a household sacrament administered by the leading male member to his family as their kinsman-redeemer. And as a priest to his household, it was efficacious in administering the blessings of the Covenant to them in a very literal sense: they were spared from the Destroyer and delivered from Egypt. So likewise is the New Testament Passover - the Holy Communion.

The Christian Sacrifice

In every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

- Malachi 1:11

And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

- Revelation 8:4

Even though the early Fathers of the Church viewed Communion as the Christian sacrifice and justified it from this text in Malachi, strictly speaking, it is not, but is rather a *commemoration* of the atoning sacrifice. Yet, it is important not to overlook what we mean by using the word “commemoration.” A “commemoration” implies the notion of a

⁸³We assert this from the words of institution spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper which was a Passover observance and compare with His sermon in John 6.

⁸⁴Clearly, Jesus was speaking metaphorically and not literally as He said in 6:63. “Drinking the cup” is an expression meaning “to come to know it,” as in martyrdom (Matthew 20:22) or the ordeal (Numbers 5:17, 18). In Grail doctrine, drinking the cup means to join the bloodline of the Covenant (John 1:13): to be “born of blood.” (cf. 1 John 5:8). See the Grail Trilogy.

reenactment. Obviously, it is not possible to perform a reenactment of the atonement in all of its details. But it is possible for our Communion to be a *recapitulation*.

“Recapitulate” simply means to “restore a head,” and in our discussion here on “Headship & the Sacraments,” it is a relevant term. Communion reasserts Christ as our Covenant head; it also establishes a representative of Christ in the person of the priest. In serving the sacraments the minister becomes your kinsman-redeemer. How many pastors are willing to assume that responsibility for you?

Thus, we can say that the purpose of the sacrament is to mediate the Atonement in the sense of executing the very act of deliverance to each household. It is a symbol of covenant unity with Christ, just as the eating of the Passover meal within the confines of the sheltered house created a unity of sanctuary and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt for the Israelites. The blessings of the Covenant flow out from there.

The Jubilee: The Sacramental Blessing

The proclamation of the “acceptable year of the LORD” (Luke 4) – the Jubilee – becomes a tangible result of redemption. After having been made free according to the spirit through the work of the Holy Spirit, so likewise, we are made free according to the flesh by a release from debt and a restoration to the land. The kinsman-redeemer seeks to accomplish that restoration for his kinsmen, who because of his position, can initiate a Jubilee – a redemption - at any time, irrespective of the 50-year cycle.

A “house” represented a jurisdiction and to be a member of a household meant to be under the authority of the householder. What makes the house a sanctuary is the sign and seal of the Covenant: the blood upon the posts and the sacrificial meal inside. It makes sense, if we follow the Passover analogy, that every home should be the setting of the sacraments; for in these observances, such dwellings are hallowed and become sanctuaries. Without them, the dwelling becomes profane.

The Sacrament as Curse

We see what form this redemption takes on the practical, day-to-day level, as an ever-present Jubilee. We understand that redemption for our

eternal salvation has been secured by the Atonement of Christ and mediated to the temporal world by His representatives. But are there any negative sanctions?

Although it is not entirely clear what the sanctions might be for the presumption of the clergy to administer Communion to their congregations when they are not in fact their kinsman-redeemer, the Apostle Paul declares that a failure to “discern the Lord’s body” in his day led to sickness and the death of the offending recipients (1 Corinthians 11:23-33). We are to understand that these sanctions were meant to be disciplinary, not eternal, “that we be not condemned with the world” (v. 32). It seems impossible for a churchist receiving the sacrament from a professional clergyman (a hireling) to have a proper understanding and witness to the “body of Christ,” nor of a union with the bloodline of Christ as commemorated by the Cup of the Covenant. The Apostle warns that “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s Table and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” (1 Corinthians 10:21-22).⁸⁵

The Place of Footwashing

At this juncture in our discussion, we must address the covenantal implications of the ordinance of footwashing in relation to the Communion. Elsewhere, it has been argued that footwashing is a foot baptism, an on-going baptism that is a part of the Communion meal. While its aspects relating to the dominion covenant have been developed extensively in previous studies, its relationship to the kinsman-redeemer has not been addressed,⁸⁶ but I do so here.

First, it was immediately after the footwashing that Judas left the upper room to betray Jesus (John 13). Thus, footwashing has the effect of identifying and separating false brethren. They will either refuse to participate, or if they do participate, will soon leave afterwards.

Second, it identifies both kinship and the kinsman-redeemer. Biblical law provides that the failure of the kinsman-redeemer to perform the levirate

⁸⁵ Some scholars tie this apostolic exposition with the Ordeal of Jealousy in Numbers 5.

⁸⁶ *The Kingdom Come: The Ordinance of Footwashing*, Stivers, 2000

custom⁸⁷ resulted in the bereaved widow removing his shoe, spitting in his face, and declaring:

So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

- Deuteronomy 25:9-10

This strange custom is revisited in the book of Ruth, but not so harshly enforced (Ruth 4:5-10):

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel.

Obviously, the removal of the shoe is required to perform the rite of footwashing. In the case of redemption and the levirate custom, it represented at once the surrender of title and of marital rights. Thus, when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He was performing a spiritual work with meaning at several levels: He was teaching His disciples humility; He was instituting a rite which conflated into one ritual the various priestly washings of the Old Testament and of baptism; and He created a ceremony by which His disciples symbolically surrendered personal sovereignty.

The disciples did not understand this but He told them:

What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

- John 13:7

Of course, what followed were the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. We learn then that Jesus became the great kinsman-redeemer through His atonement. They had to surrender their personal sovereignty to Him by removing their shoes and being cleansed by His hand. As the rite is administered today, it is used to teach the equality among brethren.⁸⁸ But

⁸⁷ The custom of a brother marrying his deceased brother's widow.

⁸⁸ It no doubt influenced the decision by many in Acts 2:44-46 to hold their properties in common.

according to Biblical law, it should be also an affirmation of the spiritual head of a Christian community as the kinsman-redeemer for that body.⁸⁹

Third, it establishes the home as the proper place for Communion and footwashing. Jesus observed both of them in a home, not in the temple. It is not enough that a home might be the setting of prayer, or devotions, or Bible studies. It must be a place of the sacraments: of baptism when appropriate, but more importantly, of Communion and the footwashing.

Finally, footwashing completes the sacramental meal that was instituted by Jesus, who said, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (John 13:8).

The False Sacrament

In failing to observe Communion as a family ceremony, the Church gives witness to a Gnostic Christ, a Christ without a completed Incarnation. Thus, to revisit the question of sanctions, it can be argued that the entire experience of the historic Church these past two millennia has been one of blessing mingled with cursing: *blessing* in that we are still recipients of eternal salvation, yet *cursing* in our lack of Christian dominion upon the earth. Can we not see here then, the cause of the Age of Martyrs and the various persecutions since then? Lacking a correct doctrine of dominion in our sacramental worship, the Kingdom has not come.

The kinsman-redeemer is an office which still stands as an institution of justice in God’s Kingdom. Christ is our kinsman-redeemer in the universal and cosmic sense as our representative before the Throne of God. But on Earth, each family has its own kinsman-redeemer, and it is that person who we expect to be the family priest. He does not offer his own blood as sacrifice, but he does offer the blood of Christ in the commemorative act of Communion.

⁸⁹ In the Roman Catholic tradition, the Pope washes the feet of the church’s cardinals on Maundy Thursday. Respectively, we would expect that an abbot would wash the feet of his menservants and sons on that day, as well.

Headship & the True Shepherd

But I would have you know, that the head of the man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

- 1 Corinthians 11:3

Touch not mine anointed [Christs] and do my prophets no harm.

- Psalm 105:15

Typical to the inversion of historic Christian doctrine, theologians often misunderstand how the names of “Jesus” and “Christ” relate to his Incarnation. They ascribe the name of “Christ” to His Divine nature, while “Jesus” is associated with His humanity.

The opposite is the case. “Jesus” is a name which contains the name of the deity – Yahweh – and means “Yahweh is the Savior.” “Christ,” however, is a title of a human office and means “an anointed one.” There were many “Christs” in the Old Testament. The kings and priests of Israel were “anointed ones.”⁹⁰

Thus, King David was “David *Christ*” and Abraham was “Abraham *Christ*” (Psalm 105:15). Although “Christ” was a term that could refer to a chosen man who was an *adopted* “son of God”⁹¹ and one allowed access to the Divine Council, it never refers to the Deity or to the Divine nature of Jesus. The invocation of the Divine name, YAH, is what identifies the name of “Jesus” in His Divine nature. Only Yahweh in His Deity can save mankind from eternal damnation; a mere man cannot. We pray in the “name of Jesus,” not in the name of “Christ.”

Consequently, interpreters fail to see how the Apostle Paul is using the name “Christ” in the above text in Corinthians. By referring to “God” as the “head of Christ,” he is alerting us to the fact that he is not using “Christ” as a name to describe the Divine office. Since Jesus is also “God,” we are

⁹⁰This explains why Ignatius taught that Christianity preceded Judaism.

⁹¹2 Samuel 7:14

directed to understand this text to refer to the human office of “an anointed one.”

Grail doctrine teaches that this sacred office has continued in the descendants of Jesus Christ in a succession known only to God. Sometimes called “the Desposyni,” they were known to the early Christians as the Lord’s kinsmen (those who were “*with* the Lord”) such as James the Just, the brother of Jesus introduced in Acts 15, who was the true leader of the Church. But less known were those who were “*of* the Lord,” His actual descendants, such as Stephen, His firstborn.⁹²

Thus, in a derivative sense and from the operation of Biblical law, all landholders are “Christs” if they have built altars to the worship of the true God. Title to the land is evidence of election which has been described elsewhere as a feature of the dominion covenant and a sign of Divine approval.⁹³

David as Shepherd and Covenant Head

In the opening text above from 2 Samuel 24, King David acknowledges his role as the shepherd of the people - their covenant head - and that as his sheep, they were suffering for his sins. As the figurehead for collective action, he was responsible for the collective punishment coming upon the people.

We do not think that the people who died in the pestilence suffered eternal damnation. Even though there is a certain finality to physical death, the people who died suffered the temporal sanctions against the sin of the ruler, just like men who die in battle. Soldiers die on both sides of a conflict. The justness of the war does not mitigate its bloody consequences. Christians have fought each other in such unfortunate wars; we like to believe that it does not affect their eternal destinies.

In calling down God’s wrath upon his own head, and upon the house of his father, he was invoking the law of the kinsman-redeemer. David was the king, but he still had a *ga’al* as a member of his father’s household, which probably explains why, in many places, Messianic prophecies refer to the

⁹² See the Grail Trilogy

⁹³ *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah*, op cit.

lineage of Jesse, and not just David. By operation of law, Jesse was David's kinsman-redeemer.

Ownership & Property in Persons

The role of the shepherd is a likeness of the kinsman-redeemer, and the parable of Christ concerning the "good shepherd" who lays down his life for the sheep figures prominently in our discussion here (John 10). Jesus drew a distinction between shepherds and hirelings: that the **principle of ownership** is what separates a good shepherd from a bad one. This is important and calls into question much of our modern social theory.

Jesus taught that ownership engenders care, sacrifice, and affection for one's property. People usually take better care of their property than they do for the property of others. We see this with renters all the time, for example, in our modern society. We understand that someone who injures or damages his own property is really harming himself. This is especially true of those who must work to obtain property. We sometimes see exceptions in people who squander an inheritance because they do not appreciate the labor and diligence that was necessary to acquire it.

Modern feminists chafe under the old custom of treating women and children as "chattel" – a hyperbolic term. They think that associating the notion of property with human relationships somehow diminishes the emotion of love, when human experience ought to tell us the opposite. If your wife is stranded on the highway with a broken car, she does not call a stranger because he has no moral obligation to assist her. She calls you because she has the right to expect a response from her husband. You have property interests in her care and if you are not an idiot, you will come to her aid.

Likewise with spiritual matters, the notion of the modern pastor as a shepherd is a ridiculous analogy that does not conform to what Jesus taught here. Pastors do not own their congregations; they do not own the church building; nor usually are they related to the people by blood. What separates an abbot from a so-called pastor is simply the principle of ownership. The modern pastor is a hireling. Abbots, in contrast, have a proprietary interest in their parish.

Therefore, for an abbey to work, this principle must be incorporated into the structure of its relationships. The abbot, acting in his official capacity, must have property rights in each person who lives at the abbey, either by blood, by marriage (cohabitation), or by contract. In Western society, the concept of ownership has been compromised by the pervasiveness of the state. So, these relationships are no longer created by the natural process of custom. They must be defined by contract.

It does not mean slavery which is illegal in our society and which never existed in Biblical law, anyway.⁹⁴ But there is a big difference between slavery and property rights in persons. The institution of slavery denies that the slave has any property rights in his own person given to him by God. It posits all property rights in the slave owner, even over the question of life and death. In contrast, Biblical law acknowledges God as the supreme master and owner of the race, and doubly so because mankind has been redeemed by the Atonement. The condition of servitude comes from the enforcement of contractual obligations, either declared or implied. A master possesses certain rights of performance from his servant and that is what is meant by “ownership.” In the abbey system, ownership defines the limits of the parish.

Possession as Title

The question comes to mind, then, “How does a man become a master and not a manservant?” Usually, it is title to the land, but not always. Even though Abraham did not own land, he did so by faith and exhibited that faith by the building of altars. He was self-sufficient and operated on the fringes of Canaanite society in zones of freedom in which he was largely left alone. Those who joined themselves to him did so because his tribe was an economic and spiritual unit. They paid a double tithe.⁹⁵

If we return to the notion of the meaning of the word for “husband” (baal), we remember that it means “possessor,” “owner,” and “lord.” A master may or may not be an owner because he may be given authority by another. Considering that nine tenths of the law is possession (certainly in common law), we can see then that a man takes “possession” of the land by

⁹⁴A fleeing slave was guaranteed sanctuary (Deuteronomy 23:15). Thus, the infamous “Fugitive Slave Laws” of America’s antebellum period violated this Biblical provision.

⁹⁵We infer this from the standard imposed upon the Egyptians by Joseph, his great grandson. It was a tribal custom of the Hebrews from which he was finding guidance.

occupying it (building an altar and living on it), cultivating it, and sowing it. He takes possession of a woman by sexual intercourse. He takes possession of a man by accepting the double tithe. He takes possession of the children by instructing them and commanding them. And for all of them, as their kinsman-redeemer, he administers the sacraments of the New Covenant.