

# Dominion Theology/Kingdom Now/Reconstructionism

Dr. Johnson's Main Website at: <http://contendingfortruth.com/>

Alternate Site: <http://currenteventsandbiblestudy.blogspot.com/>

Email: [drjohnson@ix.netcom.com](mailto:drjohnson@ix.netcom.com)

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## Blessing or Curse?\*

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- There is a movement about that is casting a long shadow for its size. It is known as Reconstructionism, Kingdom Now theology, Theonomy, and/or Dominion theology, and it is a curious blend of Reformed/Calvinist theology and [Charismatic](#) influence. While there are relatively few who would call themselves reconstructionists, a number of the movement's ideas have infiltrated the thinking and actions of many professing believers, often without them knowing it. The movement is led by such theologians as Rousas J. Rushdoony; Gary North; Ray Sutton; Greg Bahnsen (deceased); David Chilton, and by Charismatic leaders such as Earl Paulk. But their ideas are often reflected by non-reconstructionists such as [Pat Robertson](#), [D. James Kennedy](#), John Whitehead, Franky Schaeffer, and [Jerry Falwell](#). [In spite of the fact that many Dominionists-Reconstructionists-Theonomists are hyper-Calvinists, yet at the same time they write and speak as if they believe that they must help God get things under control down here on earth, so that the kingdom (their version of it) can be set up in order that the King Himself can reign properly (through them, of course!).]

- Dominion theology (the belief-system behind the [Reconstructionist](#) movement) teaches that through the coming of Christ the believer has dominion over every area of life. We are now in the Kingdom of God (note the similar view of the Kingdom that the [Vineyard movement](#) takes, as well as the plethora of Christian songs being written implying that we are in the Kingdom at the present time), and as a result, we should be reigning with Christ over the earth (as Rev. 5:10 says). The question is **when** will we reign. If the Kingdom is on earth now, then we should have dominion now, so say the Dominionists. Many of us non-reconstructionists proclaim this same thought when we sing the popular Charismatic song "Majesty" (written by hyper-charismatic [Jack Hayford](#)), which invites us to "Come glorify Christ Jesus, the King" -- after all, "Kingdom authority flows from His throne unto His own." With this authority from the King, we are to reclaim the earth for Christ, not just spiritually, but socially, economically (it is no accident that one of the Reconstructionists' organizations is called "The Institute for Christian Economics"), and politically. The dominion of the earth is accomplished not only through prayer and evangelism, but through political process and social reformation. [The Dominion/Reconstructionist organization [Coalition on Revival \(COR\)](#) was established for this purpose.] Christ will not (and cannot) return to earth until the church has accomplished this task, so say the dominionists.

- Dominion theology is predicated upon three basic beliefs:

- (a) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve;
- (b) The Church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan; and
- (c) Jesus cannot or will not return until the Church has taken dominion by gaining control of the earth's governmental and social institutions.

More specifically, what does Dominion Theology (DT) teach? Here are the highlights:

(a) The Old Testament (OT) Law is our rule of life for today. Although DT teaches that keeping of the Law is not a condition for salvation, it *is* a condition for sanctification. (However, some of the COR's official statements appear to specifically condition salvation upon OT Law-keeping!);

(b) In addition, the OT Law is to govern over society as well. Since we are called to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28), DT teaches that God's Law should rule (or dominate) all aspects of society. This view is known as Theonomy (or God's law), and is described by Greg Bahnsen as: "The Christian is obligated to keep the whole law of God as a pattern for sanctification and that this law is to be enforced by the civil magistrate" (*Theonomy*, p. 34). This would mean that Christians would be obligated to keep the whole OT Law except in a case in which the New Testament (NT) explicitly cancels a command, such as the sacrificial system;

(c) A central piece of DT is its belief in covenant theology. As a result, it makes no distinction between the church and Israel (i.e., the church has become "spiritual Israel"). However, DT goes beyond traditional covenant theology and teaches that the church is to be governed by the same laws, is subject to the same curses, and is promised the same blessings as Israel;

(d) DT teaches a high level of social and political activism. If the Kingdom of God is to gradually take dominion over the earth, it only makes sense that Christians should be attempting to change society through the changing of laws and through social action;

(e) Followers of DT, like many charismatics, especially the Latter Rain Movement, look for a great end time [revival](#) in which the masses will turn to Christ. As a result, DT does not believe in the rapture of the church. According to DT, the world should be, and is becoming, a better place through the efforts of Christians (cf. 2 Thes. 2:1-12);

(f) As with many others who follow the teachings of George Ladd, DT believes that we are in the Kingdom age, but the Kingdom in another sense is yet to come. We are in the Kingdom, and have Kingdom authority, but on the other hand, we are ushering in the Kingdom through our efforts. "The Kingdom is now, but not yet," is a popular DT slogan;

(g) DT is postmillennial in its eschatology. It is believed that as a result of the reconstruction of society by Biblical principals, that the final aspect of the Kingdom of God will be established on earth. Christ *cannot* return until a certain amount of dominion is achieved by the church. It is believed that the curse will slowly be removed as the

world is won over. Even disease and death will be all but eliminated before Christ returns to the earth;

(h) DT is preterist in its interpretation of prophecy. This means that they teach that virtually all prophecies which most Christians believe are still future, have in fact been fulfilled already, mainly between the years A.D. 30 and 70. In David Chilton's book, *Days of Vengeance*, he says that the book of Revelation, "is not about the Second Coming of Christ. It is about the destruction of Israel and Christ's victory over His enemies [during the first century]" (p. 43); and

(i) DT uses an allegorical hermeneutic, especially in reference to prophecy. So we find that the Great Tribulation took place at the fall of Israel in A.D. 70; the Antichrist refers to the apostasy of the Church prior to the fall of Jerusalem; the Beast of Revelation was Nero and the Roman Empire, etc.;

- One of the most important distinctives of DT is its belief in Theonomy. DT teaches that Christians are under the Law as a way of life, and are obligated to ultimately bring the world under that Law. This concept is based on several passages. First, Gen. 1:28 commands Adam to subdue the earth. Adam lost his ability to do so to Satan as a result of sin. The church should now be in the process of reclaiming from the devil what Adam lost. (You will note a hint of the [Spiritual Warfare](#) movement here.) Secondly, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) commands the followers of Christ to disciple all the nations, which we are told, goes beyond personal salvation and sanctification to the reformation of society;

Matt. 5:17-19 is the passage upon which the system hinges. DT claims that the word "fulfill" actually means "confirm." Thus, Christ did not in any sense fulfill, or complete, or do away with the Law, rather he *confirmed* it as our rule of life today. The normal and best translation of *plerosai* is "fulfill" not "confirm." Besides this, however, we have the weight of the NT teaching concerning the Law. The epistles clearly teach that believers are no longer under the Law of Moses (Rom. 6:14; 7:6; 8:2-4; Gal. 3:24,25; 5:18), having been set free from that bondage to serve under grace and the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2);

And besides, if the Christian is still under Law, why do we *not* keep the OT ceremonial laws? DT's answer is that the Law was divided into three sections: civil, moral, and ceremonial. The ceremonial law, it is claimed, has been fulfilled by Christ and is no longer incumbent upon the believer, but not so the moral and civil parts of the law. Therefore, we are to live under the moral law and seek to establish, in our society, the civil system of OT Israel. The problem with this view is that nowhere in the Bible is the Law broken into these three sections; this is something invented by men. Whenever the Law is mentioned, the Scriptures are speaking of the whole Law as a unit. The Jews were as obligated to keep the sacrificial system and commandments concerning food and dress (ceremonial law) as they were the Ten Commandments (moral law). If the NT says that Christ fulfilled the Law, and that as Christians we are no longer under the Law, it means the whole Law. Church age saints are no longer obligated to any aspect of the

OT Law. No one has the right to arbitrarily claim that we have been set free from some of the Law (the parts we don't like), but that the rest of the Law is obligatory. Either the believer has been released from the *whole* Law (Rom. 7:4,6) or none of it. [As Thomas Ice reminds us, "The Law of Moses was given to a specific people (Israel), to be followed in a specific location (the land of Israel), to deal with their specific situation. Therefore, the Law cannot simply be obeyed today by the Church, as was expected of Israel when it was given to that nation" (*Biblical Perspectives*, Vol. II, No. 6). On the positive side, Ice comments, "Paul teaches in Galatians 3 and 4 that Christ has set us free from the bondage of the Law, not so that we can be lawless as the Reconstructionists insist, instead, so that we can walk in the newness of the motivation of the Holy Spirit" (*Ibid.*, p. 2).]

- There are many negative effects that the teachings of DT are having on evangelical Christianity today. Four of these would be:

(a) Reconstructionists teach that the mission of the church goes beyond the spiritual transformation of individuals, to a mandate to change society, a "moral patriotism," if you will, in opposition to secular humanism. For Christ to be pleased with Christians, thereby, they must become political and social activists. We must change the laws of the land, gear up to elect Christians to office, and generally seek to take dominion over our world and bring it under the Law of Moses. We see the influence of this thinking even in those who may know little about DT -- [James Dobson](#), [Larry Burkett](#), the Christian Coalition, [Pat Robertson](#), [Promise Keepers](#), [Charles Colson](#) and the [Evangelicals and Catholics Together document \(ECT\)](#), and [Operation Rescue](#), are but a few of the evidences that reconstructionist thinking is beginning to dominate the so-called evangelical world;

(b) Motivation for godly living, based upon the blessed hope -- the return of Christ (Titus 2:13) -- is replaced with the task of restructuring society. This cultural mandate to restructure/restore society is a task that may take thousands of years, even by the DT's own admission (approximately 36,000 years, according to David Chilton);

(c) If we are in the Kingdom of God now, then the Charismatics are correct to teach that [health and prosperity](#) is the right of every believer today. This is why "Reconstruction" Calvinists and "Kingdom Now" Charismatics have formed at least a loose unity -- they both have the same world view. They are not looking for Christ to return and set up His Kingdom; they are attempting to set it up for Him; and

(d) A theological anti-Semitism exists in the Dominionist plan to replace of Old Testament Israel with the Church, often called the "New Israel" (i.e., "replacement theology" -- the church replaces the Jews as the new or true Israel, and Israel has no future as a distinct nation within God's plan). They believe that Israel does not have a future different from any other nation. Historically, replacement theology has been the theological foundation upon which anti-Semitism has been built within the confines of professing Christianity. While reconstructionists do believe that the individual Jews will be converted to Christ in mass in the future, almost none of them believe that national

Israel has a future, and thus, the Church has *completely* taken over the promises of national Israel. (Reconstructionist David Chilton said that "ethnic Israel was excommunicated for its apostasy and will never again be God's Kingdom. ... the Bible does not tell of any future plan for Israel as a *special* nation." Reconstructionists believe that the Church is now that new nation, which is why Christ destroyed the Jewish state. Reconstructionists DeMar and Leithart have said, "In destroying Israel, Christ transferred the blessings of the kingdom from Israel to a new people, the church."

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\* Unless otherwise indicated, some of the material in this and companion reports has been excerpted and/or adapted from three sources: (1) "Dominion Theology," Pastor Gary E. Gilley, *Southern View Chapel*, January, 1996; (2) *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?*, by Thomas Ice and H. Wayne House; and (3) *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church in Dominion*, by Albert James Dager.

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## Notes on Reconstructionism\*

### Roots of a New "Christian" Inquisition?

- During the 1960s, a new movement began within the sphere of Reformed or Covenant Theology, primarily out of conservative Presbyterianism (Reformed and Orthodox). That movement has been called by three different names: *Reconstructionism* (because it advocates the reconstruction of society), [\*Dominion Theology\*](#) (because its theology teaches that Biblical Christianity is to rule every sphere of society), and *Theonomy* (a combination of two Greek words -- *theos* [God] and *nomos* [law] -- because it asserts that all of society is to be brought into the obedience to the Mosaic Law). It should be noted that this movement is not advocated by everyone within the realm of Reformed or Covenant Theology (12/90, *Israel My Glory*). "The Reconstructionist movement and its allies and offshoots, by substituting political and cultural action for the proclamation of the Gospel, by substituting eschatology for soteriology, and by mangling the Gospel itself, have become tools of Romanist political action" (3/02, *The Trinity Review*).

"Theonomy involves the application of the law of God, and the biblical law particularly, to all of life. It also requires that one appeal to the whole law of God -- including the civil law of the Old Testament -- as a necessary supplement to being saved by grace through faith. Some of Rushdoony's followers prefer the term "reconstructionist," because they believe it does a better job of conveying their positive outlook on life.

Indeed, their view of the future could be described as postmillennial, since they tend to believe that God's Kingdom will eventually be established on earth through the faithful preaching of the gospel and the faithful application of God's law to society. The result will be a Christian civilization and a thousand year reign of Jesus Christ." (Emphasis added.) (Source: William Edgar, "The Passing of R.J. Rushdoony," *First Things*, August/September 2001, pp. 24-25.)

- Reconstructionism has adopted "covenantalism," the theological doctrine that Biblical "covenants" exist between God and man, God and nations, God and families, and that they make up the binding, incorporating doctrine that makes sense of everything. Specifically, there is a series of covenant "structures" that make up a Biblical blueprint for society's institutions. Reconstructionists believe that God "judges" a whole society according to how it keeps these covenantal laws, and provides signs of that judgment.

The significance of the Reconstructionist movement is not its numbers, but the power of its ideas and their surprisingly rapid acceptance. Many on the Christian Right are unaware that they hold Reconstructionist ideas. Because as a theology it is controversial, even among evangelicals, many who are consciously influenced by it avoid the label. This furtiveness is not, however, as significant as the potency of the ideology itself. Generally, Reconstructionism seeks to replace democracy with a theocratic elite that would govern by imposing their interpretation of "Biblical Law." Reconstructionism would eliminate not only democracy but many of its manifestations, such as labor unions, civil rights laws, and public schools. Insufficiently Christian men would be denied citizenship, perhaps executed. So severe is this theocracy that it would extend capital punishment beyond such crimes as kidnapping, rape, and murder to include, among other things, blasphemy, heresy, adultery, and homosexuality ("Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence: Part 1 -- Overview and Roots," by Frederick Clarkson, 3/94 *The Public Eye*).

- The "Christian" Reconstruction movement (CRM) claims that believers possess a cultural mandate from God to reclaim in this age dominion over human society -- a dominion forfeited by the fall, but supposedly regained for immediate claim with the [New Birth](#) experience. As believers obey this mandate, gradually gaining dominion over earthly society, this present world will supposedly become "Christianized," inaugurating the Millennium. In reality, if effected, the entire earthly society would be placed under an O.T. "Theonomy" law system, rather than the N.T. teaching of believers as a group of "called out" saints from the world. They want to apply Old Testament law to today's society. This includes slavery as an alternative to prisons and capital punishment for a variety of offenses (murder, homosexuality, etc.). This view advocates the reconstruction of society as a theocracy and is heavily postmillennial.

- In Reconstructionism, the main thrust shifts from the salvaging of lost souls in a doomed society to the reconstruction of a Christian world. The Great Commission is thus either lowered to the status of a co-equal with the cultural mandate or merged with it, confusing its real identity. "Christian" Reconstructionism is a religious kin to the "two" gospel theory (spiritual gospel/social gospel) promoted by [new-evangelicals](#), and has

links to the secular gospel (social gospel) promulgated by the religious apostates. [God's mandate for believers in this age, however, is not the restoration of cultural dominion over the earth, but the carrying out of the Great Commission. The Scriptures predict great spiritual and moral decline, not the reverse, for the "latter days" and "last times" of this dispensation (I Timothy 4:1-2, II Timothy 3:1-6). The Biblical course of action is the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) (Sep-Oct '93, *Fundamentalist Digest*).]

- The following is from a brochure announcing the 12th Annual Northwest Conference for Christian Reconstruction. Does this not sound like a different gospel?: (All emphases added.)

"The Christian Reconstruction movement believes that the Bible contains not only a message of personal salvation through the blood of Christ shed on the cross, but also a comprehensive law structure which is alone able to provide a just basis for society. It is committed to the view that sovereignty and thus government belong to God, and that all delegated government, whether to family, church or state (civil government), is to be exercised in obedience to the law of God's covenant. Furthermore, salvation involves every aspect of man's life and thus also the relationships he sustains to the world around him. The exercise of dominion in accordance with the terms of God's covenant is therefore basic and vital to the Christian faith. To neglect this is to deprecate the extent of Christ's victory at Calvary."

- The three basic points underlying Reconstructionist philosophy are presuppositional apologetics, theonomy, and postmillennialism. Also, Kingdom Theology teaching underscores the doctrine of CRM. CRM holds that man forfeited dominion over the earth at the fall of Adam and Eve. Their fall allowed Satan to gain control of the earth. God, through His Son Jesus, will regain control of the earth with human overcomers who will reign and rule with Christ. The chief Biblical error of the Kingdom concept pertains to the timing of the appearance of the Millennium and the means by which it will be installed. CRM preaches that the Kingdom is NOW.

- At the heart of Reconstructionism's system of belief is a postmillennial view of eschatology. Postmillennialists believe that Christ will return to earth in His Second Coming *after* the Millennium. Reconstructionism asserts that at creation God issued to Adam a cultural or dominion mandate to subdue the earth on behalf of God and thereby establish the Kingdom of God on earth (Gen. 1:28). This mandate was an eternally binding covenant upon Adam and his descendents. Israel and the Gentiles failed to keep the covenant mandate, just as Adam did. According to the Reconstructionists (Matt 5:17-19), during His first coming Jesus "established and restored" the Mosaic Law "to full measure as the rule of life for believers as well as society."

Through His atoning death, resurrection, and ascension, Christ defeated and bound Satan and his demons in a definitive way, thereby causing them to lose their stranglehold on the world. Although they remain active in the world, their activity is restricted. When every sphere of society, every nation, and the entire earth have been

subjected to the rule of Christ by the end of history, the Kingdom of God will have been established fully and finally on earth, and Christ will return in His Second Coming on the last day to receive His Kingdom. God permanently excommunicated the nation of Israel from its covenant position. Israel as a nation will never be restored to its former covenant status; God has no special program for Israel in the future. God replaced Israel with a new group as His covenant people. That new group is the Church; the Church is the new *spiritual* Israel. The Church also owns all of God's future promises made to national Israel.

The Church is destined to fulfill the covenant mandate given at creation because it is empowered by the Holy Spirit. The goal of the Church could be stated in the following ways: the "Cultural Christianization" of the world; "to conquer the whole world for Jesus Christ"; "to work toward the creation of a one-world Christian order"; "the complete social transformation of the entire world"; "world dominion under Christ's lordship, a 'world takeover'"; "to impress heaven's pattern on earth"; to "take authority over the nations with the applied rule of Christ Jesus"; and to establish a "*Christocracy*."

- The Christianization of culture involves the transformation of every nation into a Christian nation; every national government must be converted to an alliance with Christ -- a theocratic republic -- through the subjection of its structures to Christ's rule. Every other sphere of society ("self, family, institutional church, business/vocations, private associations") must be conformed to the rule of Christ. According to Reconstructionism, in order for the dominion mandate, or Great Commission, to be fulfilled, three things must happen:

(a) the vast majority of people must experience true Christian conversion;

(b) Christians must take over the rule of every sphere of society; this means that Christians must be political and social activists; and

(c) as Christians take over the rule of the world, they must subject every sphere of society to the Biblical law found in the Old Testament, especially all the moral and civil aspects of the Mosaic Law that God gave to Israel at Mount Sinai.

This enforcement of the Mosaic Law will involve the application of the death penalty for such capital crimes as murder, rape, kidnapping, bestiality, incest, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, idolatry, witchcraft, the offering of human sacrifice, unchangeable rebellion in adolescent children, flagrant negligence resulting in the death of another person, blasphemy, apostasy, the spreading of false doctrines, and perhaps Sabbath breaking. The reconstructed society will regard dissenters and heretics as treasonous criminals at war with the law and society. The reconstructed society will also be characterized by the rights of private property, a free market economy bordering on libertarianism, tight limitations on debt, the abolition of 30-year mortgages, a monetary system based on the gold standard, the tithe rather than public taxes financing most social welfare, restitution of wrong rather than imprisonment for many criminals, and voluntary slavery for purposes such as the restitution of a wrong or the desire for

financial security. (Excerpted and/or adapted from the 12/90 & 1/91 issues of *Israel My Glory*.)

- Who are the "Players" in Christian Reconstructionism?:

(a) Dr. Rousas J. **Rushdoony** (1917-2001) is considered the patriarch of CRM. (Cornelius Van Til, a Princeton University theologian, is credited as being the "father of Reconstructionism," even though Van Til himself never became a Reconstructionist.) Rushdoony was a prolific writer of books and the founder (in 1965) of the Chalcedon Foundation in Vallecito, California (a think tank organization named after the Council of Chalcedon, held in A.D. 451). This organization publishes *Chalcedon* and *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*. Rushdoony's massive two-volume *Institutes of Biblical Law* is an extensive study (1,600 pages) of how the Ten Commandments could be applied to modern society, followed by detailed treatments of taxation, government, virtue, oaths, penal sanctions, property, and nearly every domain of jurisprudence. It is the "Bible" of Reconstructionist philosophy. Rushdoony, in a 3/88 letter said: "[Our objective is] nothing less than the re-Christianizing of America." At the time of his death, Rushdoony believed as many as twenty million [charismatics](#) worldwide were part of the Reconstruction movement (even though he was not as fond of charismatics as is Gary North). Reconstructionists would deny that they believe or teach salvation by works. Yet their spiritual father, Rushdoony, believed a Christian had denied God if he did not actively work to transform society: "A godly law order will work to disinherit, execute, and supplant the ungodly and to confirm the godly in their inheritance. For Christians to work for anything less is to deny God." [If the latter statement were true, all the Apostles, and Jesus Himself, would have to be counted as denying God!!]

(b) Gary **North** is the son-in-law of Rushdoony, and the founder of the Institute for Christian Economics (in Tyler, Texas) and Dominion Press, and is one of the most militant Reconstructionists. (Rushdoony and North did not speak to each other for years -- Rushdoony looked at North as a heretic, because North teaches that the menstrual blood of a virgin bride is a type of Jesus' blood shed on the cross. North also broke with Rushdoony over the issue of "[Christian America](#)" -- North holding that Article VI of the Constitution is proof of the establishment of a non-religious republic.) He publishes a number of "gloom & doom" investment newsletters, all of which are long on verbosity and short on useful investment advice. With an earned doctorate in economics, North would seem to be an unlikely candidate as the single most influential spokesman for a modern socio-theological movement. Nevertheless, through his enormous and diverse literary output (via Spurgeon Press, Geneva Ministries, Dominion Press, Institute for Christian Economics, and Reconstruction Press) he has become the primary shaker-and-mover of the Christian Reconstruction position today. Like his late father-in-law and mentor, Rousas Rushdoony, North's forte is rhetoric, not exegesis. Consequently, his approach is characterized more by logical/theological arguments occasionally punctuated with Scripture than by hard reasoning derived from careful exegetical analysis of Scripture. (According to North, women who have abortions should be publicly executed, "along with those who advised them to abort their children." As the means of execution, North prefers stoning because, among other things, stones are

cheap, plentiful, and convenient.) North claims that "the ideas of the Reconstructionists have penetrated into Protestant circles that for the most part are unaware of the original source of the theological ideas that are beginning to transform them." North describes the "three major legs of the Reconstructionist movement" as "the Presbyterian oriented educators, the Baptist school headmasters and pastors, and the charismatic telecommunications system."

(c) Kenneth **Gentry** is an author and speaker; *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, is a 500-plus-page book extolling the Reconstructionist view of the end times.

(d) David **Chilton** is a pastor in Placerville, California, and represents the prophetic arm of Reconstructionism. He regards Matthew 5:13-16 as "... nothing less than a mandate for the complete social transformation of the entire world." One point Chilton makes over and over again is that literalism must be considered secondary to consistent Biblical imagery (that is, consistent with Reconstructionist theology).

(e) Greg **Bahnsen** (deceased) was a radical religious totalitarian who believed the codified Law of Moses must be applied directly to American society. His controversial book, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, argues that the Mosaic penal code should be applied to American civil law. (Bahnsen believed that there are fifteen crimes that merit capital punishment in a Reconstructed society, including murder, rape, sodomy, apostasy, witchcraft, Sabbath breaking, blasphemy, and incorrigibility in children. Bahnsen considered an insolent teen or one who becomes repeatedly drunk, is a glutton, or who breaks a civil law, as one who must die for his sin.)

(f) Gary **DeMar** is president of American Vision in Atlanta. He says: "Dominion Theology teaches that we can, do and will have a kingdom of God on earth without Jesus' physical presence in Jerusalem" (*The Reduction of Christianity*, Foreword, p. xii). DeMar edits *The Biblical Worldview*, a monthly newsletter published by American Vision. This and other kinds of literature put out by Reconstructionists have made significant in-roads into the curricula of Church-affiliated Christian schools and home schools. Theonomist books, such as DeMar's *God and Government*, are often used as texts.

(g) Dr. James **Jordan** is the pastor of the Reconstructionist Church in Tyler, Texas. Jordan is unabashedly harsh and violent in calling for blood vengeance and maledictions (curses) on sinners. In fact, Jordan says, "I suggest that in a Christian society ... the death penalty is still appropriate for the crime of worshipping another god on the Lord's Day" (*The Geneva Papers*, July, 1982). Jordan says it is a "myth" that society can be transformed from the bottom up. He also espouses the ideology of the ecumenical movement, putting the organization, the visible church, first and theology second. This clearly demonstrates the preference Reconstructionists have for power (dominion) over truth. (God, however, grants primacy, not to the visible church, but to His doctrine. God's idea of unity is unity of mind/doctrine/theology, not unity of organization [John 17:11, 21-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 1:27; 1 Pe 3:8]. God

gave one theology in many churches; the Reconstructionists want many theologies in one church.)

(h) Dennis **Peacocke** is a former Marxist who was tightly aligned with the Shepherding Movement.

(i) Joseph C. **Morecraft III** is the pastor of the Chalcedon Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Following a 1987 Reconstructionist/Pentecostal theological meeting, Morecraft exclaimed: "God is blending Presbyterian theology with charismatic zeal into a force that cannot be stopped!"

(j) Ray **Sutton** is considered the expert in interpreting the CRM view of the Biblical covenants. He is pastor of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Tyler, Texas, and author of *That You May Prosper*, a book that is highly regarded within the movement as an exceptional work on covenants.

(k) Joseph **Kickasola** is a professor of international affairs at Regent University.

(l) Earl **Paulk** is the founding pastor of mega-church, Chapel Hill Harvester Church near Atlanta. He believes that Christ cannot return until the church has taken dominion over the earth.

(m) Dr. Jay **Grimstead** is the founder of the [Coalition on Revival](#) (COR). His chief mission is obtaining the signatures/endorsement of pastors and Christian leaders in America to the COR Manifesto.

(n) Robert G. **Grant** is an influential Washington, D.C. based political/social activist. He has ties to the [Unification Church](#) (the Moonies).

(o) [Pat Robertson](#) is the founder and President of Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN). He maintains a low profile among the more militant Reconstructionists, although Rushdoony and North have appeared a number of times on Robertson's *700 Club* television program. Also, professing Reconstructionist Joseph Kickasola teaches in (Robertson-founded) Regent University's School of Public Policy; the dean of the Schools of Law and Public Policy was Herbert Titus, though not a Reconstructionist himself, has said the school used six or seven Rushdoony and North titles for textbooks; and Regent University board chair Mrs. Dee Jepson is a longtime COR (an organization with a Reconstructionist agenda) Steering Committee member. In turn, Reconstructionists cite Robertson's creation of a television network and Regent University as a model of effective Christian organization.

(p) Rushdoony and North have also been repeat guests on [D. James Kennedy's](#) television program, which often calls America to return to its "Christian base." Kennedy has denied that he is "a Theonomist as such," because, "It would be impractical for every nation to go theonomic. But would that be desirable."

CRM leaders believe an Old Testament-based government will replace democracy. The Theonomy that details the laws will make America as strict as the most orthodox Muslim society. "True to the letter of Old Testament Law, homosexuals, incorrigible children, adulterers, blasphemers, astrologers and others will be executed," says Rodney Clapp (*Christianity Today*, 1987). CRM leaders have shaped their political, judicial, and economic programs by relying totally on Old Testament Law.

For the most part, these Reconstructionist leaders attempt to portray their strong supporters as brilliant scholars. Negatively, they generally attempt to portray their opponents as ignorant or dishonest, usually both. Often they do not even make a reasonable attempt to answer the objections of their opponents, but instead they try to make fun or ridicule them. They usually try to display themselves as being of very high moral standards and superior conduct, ideals, and ethics, while attempting to insinuate that opponents are "antinomians" or unethical in some form or other. If one attempts to talk to them, or pin them down on any single point, one of their favorite defenses is to pretend that we just "didn't understand what they wrote" or that they "didn't really say what we say they said."

- The Christian "home schooling" movement is part of the long-term revolutionary strategy of Reconstructionism. One of the principal home schooling curricula is provided by Reconstructionist Paul Lindstrom of Christian Liberty Academy (CLA) in Arlington Heights, Illinois. CLA claims that it serves about 20,000 families. Its 1994 curriculum included a book on "Biblical Economics" by Gary North. Home schooling advocate Christopher Klicka, who has been deeply influenced by R. J. Rushdoony, writes: "Sending our children to the public school violates nearly every Biblical principle. ... It is tantamount to sending our children to be trained by the enemy." He claims that the public schools are Satan's choice. Klicka also advocates religious self-segregation and advises Christians not to affiliate with non-Christian home schoolers in any way. "The differences I am talking about," declares Klicka, "have resulted in wars and martyrdom in the not too distant past." According to Klicka, who is an attorney with the Home School Legal Defense Association, "as an organization, and as individuals, we are committed to promote the cause of Christ and His Kingdom." ("Christian Reconstructionism: Theocratic Dominionism Gains Influence: Part 3 -- No Longer Without Sheep," by Frederick Clarkson, 6/94 *The Public Eye*).

- Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law* consciously echoes a major work of the Protestant Reformation, John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In fact, Reconstructionists see themselves as the theological and political heirs of Calvin. The theocracy Calvin created in Geneva, Switzerland in the 1500s is one of the political models Reconstructionists look to, along with Old Testament Israel and the Calvinist Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In fact, the [Puritans](#) were the direct forerunners of today's [Kingdom/Dominion/Reconstructionist](#) heresy. The Puritans believed that they were carrying to America true Christianity as decreed by God, especially as written in the Old Testament. They believed too that they were on a divine mission to America, a place

specially appointed by God to be the "New Israel," a theocratic "city upon a hill." The Puritans viewed themselves as God's special people, replacing national Israel, and that the American Indians were the "new Canaanites." The fruit of the Puritan's theology was brutal. They saw their mission as convert these "Canaanites" to Christianity, or slaughter them in the name of Christ. For example, the Puritan massacres of the Pequot Indian tribe on May 26, 1637, and again on July 14, 1637, were deemed by the Puritans to be directed by God -- Captain John Mason declared, "God laughed his enemies and the enemies of his people to scorn, making them as a fiery oven ... Thus did the Lord judge among the heathen, filling the place with dead bodies" (Segal and Stinenback, *Puritans, Indians, and Manifest Destiny*, pp. 111-112, 134-135). Converting the pagans for God was acceptable to the Puritans, but killing the pagans for the Lord was also acceptable!

Nearly three and a half centuries later, the "New Puritans," called Reconstructionists, want to do what the earlier ones could not. Believing they have a mandate from God to reconstruct American society, they want to establish a theocracy or Theonomy (God's law) by instituting the civil code of the Law of Moses under which all Americans, and eventually all the world must live. They propose to eradicate democracy and reinstate a form of slavery. (Most Reconstructionists are also anti-Semitic and racist, views deeply seeded in the old Identity Movement that purported to be Christian.) Reconstructionism has married politics and attached its agenda to that arena. Under the cover of fighting abortion, homosexuality, witchcraft, pornography, secular public education, and other anathemas to Christianity, it has made enormous strides in religious and political affairs.

- Christian Reconstructionism was a limited aberrant movement until the early-1980s when it invaded the [Charismatic churches](#). It began when Robert Tilton's wife read Gary DeMar's book *God and Government* in late 1983, and then persuaded her husband to invite a group of Reconstructionists to speak before 1,000 "[positive confession](#)" pastors and their wives at a January 1984 rally sponsored by Tilton's Church. The all-day panel was very well received. Gary DeMar subsequently taught a course on the Christian basis of civil government on Tilton's satellite network.

One writer says, concerning this phenomenon: "Although they are not charismatics, Reconstructionists are working with such groups because charismatic television and radio networks provide an effective means of propagating related Reconstructionist beliefs. Gary North has openly acknowledged using the charismatics to this end. On their part, the charismatics are apparently happy with their new partners because the Reconstructionists provide the intellectual and academic credibility that has [more often than not] been in short supply within the [experience-laden] charismatic movement. Gary North is convinced that a Reconstructionist partnership with the ... charismatics' telecommunication system will transform the whole shape of American religious life ... He (North) goes on to say: 'the growing alliance between charismatics and Reconstructionists has (caused) ... critics (to) worry about the fact that ... (the charismatic) infantry is at last being armed with Reconstructionism's field artillery. They should be worried. This represents one of the most fundamental realignments in U.S. Protestant Church history'."

- Why would a movement that seems so good be so dangerous? First, it rests on unbiblical underpinnings. Secondly, it is seeking to accomplish in a pluralistic country and world a Mosaic government, something that will not happen. Lastly, though it will ultimately fail, its militancy will mean severe persecution for all Christians, and worse, it will set in place the theocratic structure Antichrist will assume.

- Reconstructionists represent extremist views. Their intent is to create a theocracy based on God's "New Covenant." Their chief Biblical error is the assumption that the 1000-year kingdom of Christ on earth is now. But if that is so, why isn't Christ physically ruling from Jerusalem? Where are the resurrected saints who rule with Him? When did the Lord and His armies (resurrected saints and angels) destroy Antichrist and the False Prophet, and when was Satan bound? Moreover, their rhetoric is rancorous anti-Semitism and smacks of racism. They are planning a U.S. "Christian Government" based on Old Testament law, and their interpretation of Scriptures. Most Reconstructionists pride themselves on Biblical knowledge. Yet, Al Dager says, "Of all the dominionist' materials I've read I have yet to see a single, *accurately exegeted Scripture reference* that substantiates the dominionist mandate for subduing the nations and/or ruling the world prior to Jesus' return. They either spiritualize, allegorize, or erroneously apply the Scriptures in their attempts to justify an otherwise untenable position."

Not only will a man-made theocracy fail because it is not Biblical, it will result in massive persecution of Christians who refuse to participate. If it succeeds, chances are it will mesh with the governmental structure of Antichrist. Its premises are not scriptural. The kingdom of Christ on earth is yet to come. Some Reconstructionists believe the Kingdom of God on earth is being established now by Christians and will be presented to Christ when He returns. Politicians have always "used" religion as part of their programs to restore nationalism. The results have always led to dictatorship, savagery, and death. Scripture tells us that when Jesus returns the nations will be allied *against* Him; they will not be waiting to welcome Him (Revelation 16:14; 19:19). Whether Antichrist is a man or -- as stated by many dominionists -- a system, the fact remains that, when Jesus returns, at least a vastly major portion of the world will be under the rule of Antichrist, not under the rule of the Church.

- The concepts of the United States as a chosen country or a "Christian nation" is a basic teaching of the "Dominionist", "Reconstructionists", "Kingdom Now" or "Replacement Theology" movements. There is a form of elitism among these groups, because they see themselves as the heirs to all the promises made to Israel. In the book of Romans, it is clear that the Gentiles (us) were made partakers of Israel's spiritual promises -- not the land (cf. Rom. 15:27; Acts 13). When you combine the concept of a "Chosen Christian America" and the "Chosen Church," this results in "superior people" mentality, and this combination becomes political action. The "Chosen Church" merges their identities and ideas with political action leaders, who are skilled in whipping up group passions and fears to form the political army.

The rallying cry used to evoke emotional involvement is: "We must return America to the values and lifestyles upon which it was founded"; this stirs the passions of the "Chosen Church" into action, resulting in the Gospel of moralism and an alliance with cultic religions based upon issues, not doctrine. Misled Christians see their patriotic and religious duty as a mandate to change society, and to ensure outward conformity to their concept of American culture "legal rights." They feel they must rid society of "God haters," "evil doers," "God's enemies," "secular humanists," "Pagans," and ultra-liberal heathens, who have subverted the "Christian American" culture and ethics (4/93, *Bold Truth News*, p. 9).

- We must not force the graceless, majority culture to live like Christians. A major problem of past sacralistic societies is that they produce an outward (hypocritical) adherence to prescribed religious standards. Our evangelistic goal is to pray for a tranquil environment in which men can carry out their cultural functions. The time has come for us to acknowledge that any "Christianity" that needs a sword to ensure its permanence, and that promises peace only when the "good guys" have the artillery, is not Christianity. Further, it is critical that the church recognize the errors of sacralism in order that she may shed her old covenant orientation, and act responsibly as a Christ-informed counter-culture.

- "Dominion" in Reconstructionist' literature means rigorous political rule. In fact, the Reconstructionists identify their so-called cultural mandate with the Great Commission. Yet Christ himself condemned dominion theology: "You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you" (Mat 20:25-26). Dominion over men is an anti-Christian notion. In Genesis 1, dominion is given to man over the whole non-human creation (angels excepted): the fish, the fowl, the cattle, all the earth. No dominion over men is given. The Great Commission, as opposed to the so-called cultural mandate, is addressed only to Christians, not to all men, and it is a command to preach, baptize, and teach through peaceful persuasion; it is not a command to exercise dominion. Christ's servants do not fight, precisely because his kingdom is not of this world. His method of establishing His kingdom, preaching, and teaching, is foolishness to the world, and apparently to some Reconstructionists as well (2/24/92, *Christian News*).

- The Reconstructionist' postmillennial view of history has prompted the adoption of some interesting beliefs and interpretations of the Scriptures (excerpted and/or adapted from the 2/91 & 3/91 issues of *Israel My Glory*):

(1) Authority -- Some Reconstructionists imply that the Scriptures by themselves are not sufficient as final authority for faith and practice. One individual indicates that there is a twofold authority, namely, the Bible and theology.

(2) Eschatology -- Reconstructionism is strongly opposed to Dispensationalism. Reconstructionism asserts that God intends the Mosaic Law to be in effect throughout history. By contrast, Dispensationalism teaches that the Mosaic Law was abolished when Christ died. Reconstructionism accuses Premillennialism of defeatism (seeing no

victorious end to history), of regarding the history of the Church as irrelevant, of draining believers of the motivation to develop the Kingdom of God on earth, and of being a product of paganism. Reconstructionism rejects the idea that the Rapture and the Second Coming will be two separate events at different times. It insists that the Church will be raptured to meet Christ in the air while He is descending to earth in His glorious Second Coming on the last day of world history. Reconstructionists are convinced that the great majority of New Testament prophecies, including most of the Book of Revelation, have already been fulfilled. In fact, they believe that most of these prophecies were fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Reconstructionists teach that Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation are not about the Second Coming of Christ. Instead, they are prophecies about the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem and Israel as a national entity. Reconstructionism declares that the world *coming* in Revelation never refers to the physical return of Christ to the earth at His Second Coming; it insists that most Biblical references to Christ's coming are to periodic comings of divine judgment upon people and nations during this present age.

(3) Economics -- Reconstructionists are convinced of the eventual collapse of the American economy and the social breakdown of the American republic. They believe that when this collapse of the present apostate civilization takes place, the Kingdom of God can be developed in the world by the remnant that survives the collapse through the adoption of a medieval, feudalistic type of economy and lifestyle.

(4) Democracy -- Reconstructionists assert that a democracy in which ultimate authority resides in the whim of the people is the inevitable enemy of divinely revealed Christianity.

(5) Humanism and Public Education -- Reconstructionists believe that humanism and God's law are irreconcilable enemies. The modern state is dominated primarily by humanists, who use the state to enforce satanic control over other spheres of life.

(6) The Mosaic Law and Sanctification -- Reconstructionists strongly reject the idea that the Mosaic Law was abolished when Christ died. Instead of Christ's death abolishing the Law, it enabled man to keep the Law. They insist that God requires all nations, institutions, cultures, and individuals to be subject to the civil and moral aspects of the Mosaic Law. Reconstructionists are convinced that there are only two alternatives open to nations, institutions, cultures, and individuals -- obedience to the Mosaic Law or humanistic self-rule and lawlessness. According to Reconstructionists, Christians are dead to the Mosaic Law as the means of justification, but they are not dead to it as a rule of life. For the Christian, obedience to the Mosaic Law is required for practical living; keeping the Law is the Christian's means of sanctification.

(7) Evangelism and the Gospel -- Reconstructionists propose that personal redemption is not the do-all and end-all of the Great Commission, but our evangelism must include sociology as well as salvation; it must include reform and redemption, culture and conversion, a new social order as well as a new birth, a revolution as well as a regeneration. This is a false gospel (cf. Gal. 1:8-10).

- From the mouths of the Reconstructions themselves (7/94, *Chalcedon Report*):

"Since we are Calvinists, we believe the Christian Faith applies to all of life."

"Reconstructionists are dominionists, not priests. We hold that to limit God's authority over all of life is to deny His sovereignty ... We believe we are called like the first Adam and mainly in the strength of the second Adam, our Lord, to exercise dominion in His name throughout the earth."

"Reconstructionists are Theonomists. Theonomy just means the law of God. It equals the requirements found in His written Word."

"The law is the standard of sanctification. It is true that Christ merited salvation for His people by keeping the law, and thus released us from its penalty and condemnation. But God never intended to replace the law as a reflection of His character. The law cannot save us, but it will forever remain a perfect reflection of God's character. For that reason, we strive to keep the law, not as a means of justification, but as the standard of sanctification. The Spirit has been given to us to assist us in keeping the law."

"Theonomists believe God's law governs all of life. It must govern society no less than it governs our individual lives, families, and churches."

"Reconstructionists are postmillennialists. We believe that Christ established His mediatorial kingdom at His first coming."

"We believe ... that the main reason God gave the Holy Spirit to the church in a special empowering was so the church could do even greater works than Christ did while He was on earth, so it can fulfill the commission given to it, bringing all nations and peoples under the authority of Christ and his gospel and word. ... We believe our calling as individuals and families and churches and civil governments is to take godly dominion in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"We Reconstructionists are God-centered not church-centered. We believe the church is but one (though an important) institution among others."

"We fervently support the separations of church and state. but we do not believe in the separation of the state (or any other institution) from God. God by His law must govern the state just as He governs the individual, family, and church."

"Some critics say our views would destroy the freedoms we Americans have. Some say we want to replace the Constitution. That is utter nonsense. It is true that the Constitution -- like everything else -- must be subordinate to God's word, but we have never advocated replacing the Constitution."

And other sources:

"In winning a nation to the gospel, the sword as well as the pen must be used" (Gary North, *Christian Reconstructionism*, 6:1, p. 198).

"The divorce problem will be solved in a society under God's law because any spouse guilty of capital crimes (adultery, homosexuality, Sabbath desecration, etc.) would be swiftly executed, thus freeing the other part to remarry" (Mark Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* #252, 1986).

"Parents would be required to bring their incorrigible children before the judge and, if convicted, have them stoned to death" (Mark Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* #252, 1986).

"A godly nation must keep the Sabbath to have God's blessing, embracing not only a weekly observance, but the observance of the sabbatical year of rest ... This is a legal national duty and requirement ... For the nation to deny the Sabbath is to deny God" (R. J. Rushdoony, *Chalcedon Report* #20).

"In a Christian society the death penalty is still appropriate for the crime of worshipping another god on the Lord's day" (James Jordan, *The Green Papers*, July, 1982). [I guess that means that Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus should be put to death.]

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\* Unless otherwise indicated, some of the material in this and companion reports has been excerpted and/or adapted from three sources: (1) "Dominion Theology," Pastor Gary E. Gilley, *Southern View Chapel*, January, 1996; (2) *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?*, by Thomas Ice and Wayne House; and (3) *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church in Dominion*, by Albert James Dager.

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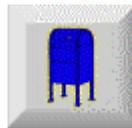
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