



The D. James Kennedy

CENTER *for* CHRISTIAN  
STATESMANSHIP

## **God's Design for Humanity, Culture, and Government**

A Center for Christian Statesmanship Biblical Worldview Series

INFO@STATESMAN.ORG • STATESMAN.ORG  
504 C STREET NE #3, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002

### ABSTRACT

Approximately two millennia have passed since our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven to take his place at the right hand of the Father.<sup>1</sup> This whole time, Christ has been at work preparing a place for us in His Father's House.<sup>2</sup> Scripture tells us that Christ will "soon"<sup>3</sup> return to Earth to bring us to that prepared place. Until that day comes, all God's children are expected to pursue His unique purpose for them in advancing His Kingdom on Earth "as it is in Heaven."<sup>4</sup>

The Center for Christian Statesmanship believes that Christians do not need to assume formal titles in a Church hierarchy to advance God's Kingdom. God designed all of His children so that they may uniquely claim every arena of culture for His glory. For instance, Genesis tells us the following:

*"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."<sup>5</sup>*

Man has a divine mandate, a God-given mission; we are to subdue the Earth. But the work needed to take dominion over the seas and the fish therein involve skill sets distinct from those needed to take dominion over the birds of the air. The former requires engineers who design ships, innovators to craft compasses that guide those ships, captains to direct the course of the ships, crew members to oversee the ships' operations, competent fishermen to gather the fish, and others. The latter requires pilots, engineers, forecast and bird migration experts, and others. One man can't fulfill all these jobs. In this way, each member of the body of Christ will work to fill various aspects of culture so a nation is collectively oriented toward pursuing God's purpose. This is the lesson taught in 1 Corinthians 12.

In the past, some well-intended leaders have tried to limit the Church's role, narrowing its ministry to an evangelism divorced from the political or cultural arenas. They often cited Christ's Great Commission of the Apostles, which reads:

*"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"<sup>6</sup>*

Christ issues a bold proclamation of spiritual and *political* authority: authority over Heaven and Earth, which he gives to His apostles to carry out a mission of reclaiming the nations. It

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 3:22

<sup>2</sup> John 14: 1-4

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 22:20

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 6:10

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1: 27-28

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 28: 18-19



# GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

reiterates and elaborates on God's command to humanity in Genesis. To reclaim the lost nations, the apostles needed to engage cultures that worshiped false gods, including their political structures, in order to make disciples in those nations. In this cultural moment, God calls on His children willing to act with the authority He's commissioned them within American culture. That means embracing our design as "the Salt of the Earth" and "the Light of the World."

## INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of creation, God gave His children on Earth one command: to "fill the earth and subdue it." Even though God called the whole of His created order "Good," God's children were never supposed to idle in one place. Rather, their purpose was to cultivate the whole Earth just like the Garden of Eden, to oversee a created order fully subservient to its loving Creator.

Two thousand years ago, Christ reiterated this first biblical command during the sermon on the Mount; Christians are called to engage with the culture so that others can see the glory of God in them as temples of the Holy Spirit:

*"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.*

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.<sup>7</sup>*

Often overlooked in this passage, however, is what Christ says about our *identity, who we are according to God's design*. God's commands are predicated on *who we are, who He made us to be*: the salt of the Earth and the light of the world. God's children are designed to perform a three-fold function like salt: **(1) preservation, enhancement, and cultivation**. Each function fulfills God's cultural mandate for the Church, the body of Christ. **As the light of the world, we draw others to Christ, and we do so with authority.**

### I. "The Salt of the Earth"

**A. *Just as salt preserves food, the Church must preserve the Truth, God's Word, no matter our cultural or political circumstances.***

As many Christians know, Satan's first act to deceive humanity took place in the Garden of Eden. There, Satan tempted Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:

---

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5: 13-16



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

He said to the woman, "Did God *actually* say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."<sup>8</sup>

At the heart of Satan's deceit is a denial of the Truth. Eve responded to the serpent's initial question with an assertion rooted in Truth; humanity will surely die upon eating the fruit of this tree. The serpent countered Eve's assertion with a false promise, "You will gain *power over truth* itself." In other words, the Serpent tempted Eve to believe that it is not only God who calls something truly "good," just like He called His created order. Instead, humans can determine what is good and evil for themselves.

If humans can disagree about what is truly good, then truth is not objective. If the truth is not objective, humans can define good by their own will instead of God's will. Therefore, Satan, in his first act of deception, authored the philosophy of moral subjectivism: "Do what thou wilt." By Satan's first act of deception, he earned the title "the Father of Lies."<sup>9</sup>

America's current cultural malaise is rife with debate over what is "good" and "true." On many occasions, Americans with irreconcilable differences use the same words, words like "freedom" and "justice," to describe different moral positions. President Abraham Lincoln once [acknowledged](#) this phenomenon while fighting for the abolition of slavery and the preservation of the Union:

We all declare for liberty; *but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing.* With some, the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labor; while with others, the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men and the product of other men's labor. *Here are two not only different but incompatible things, called by the same name---liberty.* And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties, called by two different and incompatible names---liberty and tyranny.

**As children of the Most High God, we preserve Truth in the face of moral subjectivism.**

***B. Just like salt enhances flavor, the Church must enhance the lives of those in our culture.***

The philosopher Aristotle once observed that humans are naturally "social animals." According to Aristotle, our very nature compels us to form interpersonal relationships and friendships. Thousands of years before the Greek philosophers, Scripture declared that truth in Genesis, wherein God says, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for

---

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 3: 1-5

<sup>9</sup> John 8: 44



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

him.”<sup>10</sup> God designed mankind to be actively engaged with one another and calls that nature “good.”

Before Christ’s crucifixion, He prayed to the Father on behalf of all who believe in Him:

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.<sup>11</sup>

Christians sanctified in the truth are specially set apart, set free from the wages of sin by the finished work of the cross. *By demonstrating public faith, no matter the professional occupation or calling, we reside in the world while refusing to conform to the ways of the world. Christians demonstrate public faith by action, bearing good fruits of the Spirit, and by their words, publicly advocating for the Word of God as the source of truth and spiritual liberty.*

**America’s current cultural malaise requires that Christians engage in public faith.** Studies show that, as of 2022, [only 81%](#) of Americans believe God exists. Moreover, only 68% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 believe the same. What’s worse is that only 4 out of 10 Americans believe that God, if He even exists, is a God who “hears and intervenes” on our behalf.

Even when a culture forgets who God is, that culture does not lose the desire to worship. In fact, the very word “culture” is etymologically related to the word “cult.” As one [Christian commentator notes](#), “...a culture is defined by what it worships. A materialistic culture worships wealth; a licentious culture worships sex; a godly culture worships God.” At times, the ancient Israelites continued to worship false gods when they forgot about God.

Judges 8:33 describes one of those instances:

“As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god. *And the people of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side, and they did not show steadfast love to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.*”

Moreover, the term “war” derives from the [medieval Latin \*werra\*](#), which means “to bring into confusion” or “to confuse, perplex” in verb form. If these words are put together, then, based on their original meaning, Americans are confused about who or what they worship. **By demonstrating public faith, Christians appeal to Jesus Christ to heal the hearts of a confused culture.** In the words of [Saint Augustine of Hippo](#):

“Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.”

---

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 2: 18

<sup>11</sup> John 17: 15-19



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

However, Christians' attitudes when engaging in America's culture war matter. We cannot allow justified indignance to morph into wrath against an image-bearer of God. Christ calls his followers to show His love to the weary-hearted in our public faith.

An audience can truly appreciate the brilliance or profundity of music when performed with passion and care. In the same way, others will most appreciate the truth of God's word when we speak with love. After all, it is God's design that brings about human flourishing.

### ***C. Just as salt prevents weeds from growing, Christians cultivate the world by preventing evil from taking root in culture.***

Spiritual warfare is an inevitable reality of fighting to advance the Kingdom of God "on Earth as it is in Heaven." The Apostle Paul tells us that Christians "do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."<sup>12</sup>

**Scripture recounts instances where demonic actors fight to influence the geopolitical and cultural direction of nations.** The Book of Daniel [notes](#) how two demonic principalities, the Princes of Persia and Greece, battle against members of God's heavenly host, including the archangel Michael. Deuteronomy 32 further explains the cosmic geography of the nations following Babel, when God scattered human language.

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage."<sup>13</sup>

Recent biblical scholarship from the late Dr. Michael Heiser [notes](#) how God pronounced judgment on these "sons of God," members of Heavenly host, in Psalm 82 for governing wickedly:

God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? ... I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!"<sup>14</sup>

By the finished work of the cross, demonic powers have no claim of authority over any culture on Earth. Christ's statement in Matthew 28 that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to [him]" is a spiritual and political assertion. *The Church is given the mandate and authority in the name of Jesus Christ, as the King of Kings, to advance God's kingdom by proclaiming the good news of the gospel in every sphere of culture.*

---

<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 6:12

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 32: 8-9

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 82: 1-2, 6-8



# GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Nevertheless, scripture warns us that “[our] adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, we are instructed to “put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”<sup>16</sup>

## II. “The Light of the World”

Christians who proclaim God’s word in the culture form beacons of light for God’s glory. This is true no matter what sphere of culture they occupy – the arts and sciences, business and entrepreneurship, politics and economics, sports and competition, or marriage and family. The Center for Christian Statesmanship helps Christians navigate major cultural-political issues facing America today so that our nation can be, as President Ronald Reagan once declared, “a shining city upon a hill.”

### A. America’s Judeo-Christian Founding: Dangers of Rewriting our History

In this life, all humans will die. That is an unfortunate reality none of us can avoid; humans do, however, possess a unique ability to learn from the mistakes of those who come before us to increase the quality and longevity of the lives that come after us. To borrow the [words](#) of English scientist Isaac Newton, we can improve the lives yet to come because this generation “stands on the shoulders of giants.” In fact, the framers of the U.S. Constitution operated on this very premise.

In [Federalist 9](#), Alexander Hamilton drew upon examples of failed governments throughout history to argue for the Constitution in lieu of the failure of the Articles of the Confederation to secure the common good:

It is impossible to read the history of the petty republics of Greece and Italy without feeling sensations of horror and disgust at the distractions with which they were continually agitated, and at the rapid succession of revolutions by which they were kept in a state of perpetual vibration between the extremes of tyranny and anarchy. If they exhibit occasional calms, these only serve as short-lived contrast to the furious storms that are to succeed... From the disorders that disfigure the annals of those republics the advocates of despotism have drawn arguments, not only against the forms of republican government, but against the very principles of civil liberty.

Writing as Publius, Hamilton said that the “science of politics ... like most other sciences ... received great improvement” over time by the political discovery of the “distribution of power into distinct departments.” In the mind of the Federalists, the nature of American federal government, its separation of powers and system of checks and balances, would not exist but for

---

<sup>15</sup> 1 Peter 5: 8

<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 6: 13



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

the unique lessons of history. **American law was not inscribed onto a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate. It was produced by the circumstances of the time and informed by the reality of history.**

Imagine, for a moment, that the Constitution's framers despised this history so much that, instead of learning from it, they attempted to erase it from the minds of their people. At best, American political science would regress to ignorance, unaware of how to confront the issues of the past. At worst, new life could be breathed into the dark ages; barbarism and despotism could be justified as "novel" by virtue of an erased, rewritten history. **History is not exclusively filled with stories of virtue and goodness.** History records the actions of fallen people, whether they be wicked or the result of doing the best one can given the circumstances. Just as one cannot erase or re-write human nature, no one can truly erase history. Nevertheless, this truth doesn't stop people from trying.

In the summer of 2020, America witnessed national violence and civil unrest in reaction to the death of George Floyd, which major media outlets characterized as "[fiery but mostly peaceful](#)." Left-wing activists used the occasion to promote tearing down statues of [historical figures](#), including those commemorating President George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Ulysses S. Grant. Some significant political leaders agreed with this left-wing iconoclasm, even when it called for removing a statue of Abraham Lincoln as the "[great emancipator](#)." These left-wing calls to erase history did not end with defacing or removing statues of American figures. Eventually, the movement revealed its more sinister nature; their target was Jesus.

Activists [demanded](#) that statues of Christ be removed from churches because they represented "white supremacy;" mainstream television anchors justified those calls by [claiming](#) that Jesus "was not perfect when he was here on this Earth." It even caught the attention of then-President Donald Trump, who [pledged](#) that removing these statues was "not going to happen."

The turmoil of 2020 sparked many people to defend America's founding ideals, who largely argued that they remain important concepts for the nation to unite behind. Though these efforts were noble, they were all too often devoid of any conversation about religion, needlessly opening up their arguments to vulnerabilities. For instance, defenders of American history often cite the [Declaration of Independence](#) as an example of a unifying idea: "We hold these truths to be *self-evident*, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights...." As patriotic as this appeal may be, it doesn't answer the underlying questions that our culture is wrestling with—*are these truths really self-evident?* And if they are, are they worth unifying around?

"Evidence" is something that supports the truth of a conclusion. If an assertion is "self-evident," as our Declaration states, the assertion's truth is supported by its very existence, which is not quite the same as saying, "This truth is obvious." If one says "the day sky is blue," they are asserting an undeniable truth to anyone who is not blind. We know that this statement is true because we can look at the sky and verify that it is, in fact, blue. Our declaration not only claims that equality is objectively and eternally true (an assertion of a thing's existence and nature); it claims that humans can know it is true because it exists. That logic ostensibly leads to an impasse. Either we can agree with the sentiment of our declaration, that something is capable of being self-





## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

evident, or reject it, because a claim of truth must possess independent authority. **Knowledge of history empowers us to make an informed decision.**

Many people know that Thomas Jefferson, a founding father and the third president of the United States, was the one who penned the first draft of the Declaration. But what many don't know is that his draft did not call these truths "self-evident." Instead, Jefferson [wrote](#) the following:

*"We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable; that all men are created equal & independant, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent & inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, & liberty, & the pursuit of happiness"*

When Jefferson called the principles of the eventual Declaration "sacred and undeniable" rather than "self-evident," he presented the earliest formulation of American Christian political theory. Because all men are created *imago Dei* ("in the image of God"), they equally share a divine entitlement to certain forms of respect, including respect for one's God-given life and free will to pursue "happiness." The authority to his argument that all men were created equal, in other words, rested not only upon the faith that the Christian God exists but that principles aligning with God's word are special, distinct from and superior to all others. If these principles are "sacred," it is because they are divinely inspired, not because they prove themselves.

After Jefferson completed his first draft of the Declaration, he sent the document to Benjamin Franklin, among others, for feedback. Franklin [changed](#) Jefferson's proposed "sacred and undeniable" to "self-evident," which [historians understand](#) was likely influenced by Franklin's sympathy for Enlightenment rationalists who divorced "reason" from its religious tradition. The HBO series *John Adams*, a historical drama, even [portrays](#) that editing process in a scene with Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams. The depiction of this fictional conversation gets to the heart of the matter.

In the HBO series, after Franklin reads Jefferson's draft, he states that Jefferson's "sacred and undeniable" language "smacks of the pulpit," likening it to a religious message from a pastor. "These truths are self-evident, are they not?" Franklin asks. "Perhaps," Jefferson responds. "Self-evident, then," Franklin remarks before editing the document. "Every single word was precisely chosen. I assure you of that, Dr. Franklin," Jefferson then emphasizes. Franklin tells Jefferson that he shares his sentiments but that the change is necessary to avoid a situation where others "mangle" the meaning of the document. Despite Jefferson's insistence, the change is made, and Jefferson ends the discussion with one comment: "Well, it's what I believe."

**Historical context gives substantive meaning to the principles in the text of the declaration.** Even if Jefferson's proposed language had more specifically established the authority for the principles in the Declaration, the American people would still know the authoritative essence of the Declaration's "self-evident" language. In other words, the society for which the document was written would have understood its meaning in a Christian context.

Though historians largely understand [Jefferson](#) and [Franklin](#) to have been deists, a belief not expressly Christian like the faith of George Washington or John Adams, American society operated within a [Christian framework](#). Even if American colonial elites like Jefferson and



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Franklin were influenced by Enlightenment thinking, they arguably were equally influenced by the "[Great Awakening](#)" of the 18th century, which marked a revival and diversification of America's religious culture. The American people, for whom the founding fathers spoke, were overwhelmingly Christian, and their declaration was for them.

In this Christian context, the Constitution was born. John Adams [said](#) that "[o]ur constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." The same is true for our declaration. If one is to defend the principle that all men are created equal, one must have the courage to defend the axiom upon which that principle operates: the existence and authority of the God of the Bible justified the principles of both documents. **Their truths are only self-evident, and therefore unifying, to those who recognize the righteous authoritative reality of God over all things.**

If America forgets the historical context that justifies her system of self-government, then the principles of the declaration will fail to unify the nation. But if America preserves that history, the appropriate meaning for the declaration's assertion, our culture and country can prosper.

### *B. Cultural Marxism: Dangers of a godless society*

If someone were to search Google for a definition of "Cultural Marxism," they would find top results describing it as a politically-charged, anti-semitic conspiracy theory. For instance, as of 2024, Wikipedia [defines](#) "Cultural Marxism" as a "far-right *antisemitic* conspiracy theory which misrepresents the Frankfurt School as being responsible for modern progressive movements, identity politics, and political correctness." Among the voices responsible for propagating this allegedly antisemitic conspiracy theory is, according to Wikipedia, Ben Shapiro—an Orthodox Jew who co-founded the conservative news outlet Daily Wire.

One might understandably ask how it's possible for a conservative Orthodox Jew to be a leading cultural advocate for an antisemitic conspiracy theory, but they would not be met with a reasonable answer. In fact, modern, [left-wing](#) definitions of "Cultural Marxism" are often devoid of critical thought. Nevertheless, it is the task of Christians to engage lovingly in dialogue with others who have been misled about the theory of cultural Marxism.

Many people recognize the term "Marxism" for its name; it is a philosophy created by German writer Karl Marx and associated with his book [The Communist Manifesto](#), co-authored with Friedrich Engels. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx [posits](#) that history is driven by revolutionary economic change. According to Marx, economic tension ["class struggle"] between two classes of people, an oppressor and oppressed, fuels historical change. Societies move from ancient forms of economy to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, and then from capitalism to communism. When a society evolves to communism, history theoretically ends.

It would be a mistake, however, to characterize Marx's theory of history as merely descriptive or an empirical prediction. It is deeply philosophical, rooted in his personal upbringing and views on religion and culture. In fact, one could also argue that Marx's philosophy was predicted by [Aristotle](#): "Revolutions in democracies are generally caused by the intemperance of demagogues,



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

who either in their private capacity lay information against rich men until they compel them to combine (for a common danger unites even the bitterest enemies), or coming forward in public stir up the people against them.”

Marx's father, Heinrich (who changed his name from Hirschel), was a German Jew who converted to Lutheranism in order to [advance](#) his legal career. Heinrich had Karl [baptized](#) in the Lutheran Evangelical Church when he was six years old, a faith the young Marx ostensibly possessed during his teenage years. When he was only 17, Karl Marx wrote an [essay](#) called “*On the Union of the Faithful with Christ according to John XV.*” In that essay, Marx wrote that humanity's “heart, reason, intelligence, history all summon us with loud and convincing voice to the knowledge that union with [Christ] is absolutely necessary, that without Him we would be unable to fulfill our purpose, that without Him we would be rejected by God, and that only He can redeem us.”

Marx, however, was simultaneously eager to cut ties with his roots. Consider a [New York Times review](#) of British journalist Francis Wheen's biography of Marx, *Karl Marx, A Life*: “[Heinrich Marx] treated his brilliant, self-confident son as an intellectual equal. By the time Marx was a 19-year-old, beer-swilling, dueling university student and spendthrift, his father, then dying of tuberculosis, admitted: ‘I can only propose, advise. You have outgrown me.’ Marx returned the compliment by skipping his father's funeral a year later.” Eventually, Marx went on to study philosophy at the University of Berlin, where he was profoundly influenced by the thinking of two philosophers: [G.W.L. Hegel](#) and [Ludwig Feuerbach](#).

**Hegel** worked as the University of Berlin chair of philosophy years before Marx's attendance, establishing a legacy as a revered philosopher among students. The philosophical core of these students, who called themselves “Young Hegelians,” was Hegel's framework for understanding history: [the dialectic](#). The dialectic rejects traditional logical formulas like Aristotle's law of [non-contradiction](#), which holds that something cannot simultaneously be two things if those things are opposites. If something is bad, it cannot be good. If something is wrong, it cannot be right. If something is temporary, it cannot be forever.

Hegel believed that human history could be understood as a desire to resolve the tension between opposites. In Hegel's view, freedom was history's purpose or “end.” To achieve this end, history reconciled the tension between opposite ideas manifesting on the State level. Once history witnesses complete and total freedom, the dialectic of ideas will cease, and history will “end.” In 2024 (at the time of this publication), one can't help but be reminded of the last line of Thanos in the film *Avengers Endgame*: “I am inevitable.”

**Feuerbach** accepted his teacher's dialectical view of history but expressly rejected any future wherein humans worshiped the Christian God. To the Christian, Feuerbach's worldview can be fairly understood as Satanic Hegelianism.

[Feuerbach believed](#) philosophers must elevate the “sole sovereignty of reason” in the “Kingdom of the Idea” above the Christian God and His Kingdom. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy summarizes Feuerbachianism as follows:



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

“the individual thinker, in the act of thinking, *transcends his individuality and functions as an instrument or organ through which the Idea actualizes one of its moments*, which is later reproduced in the consciousness of the historian of philosophy... *In producing itself, the Idea does not pass from nonbeing into being, but rather from one state of being (being in itself) to another (being for itself)*. The Idea produces itself by determining itself, and human consciousness is the medium of its self-actualization.”

Reason is not man's ability to comprehend God's created order. Rather, it is the means by which humans may transcend their mortal shells to indwell a form of the "Idea," an abstract spirit that exists independent of our reason. The "tension" that reason must overcome, according to Feuerbach, was the notion that the Christian God created us in His image and promised to redeem us and save us from death. To Feuerbach, the "Idea" in man created God in man's image through the person of Jesus, the incarnate God.

In his work [Essence of Christianity](#), Feuerbach summarizes the lesson of John 3:16 as follows:

“Love determined God to the renunciation of his divinity... Love conquers God. It was love to which God sacrificed his divine majesty. And what sort of love was that? another than ours? than that to which we sacrifice life and fortune? Was it the love of himself? of himself as God? No! it was love to man... Who then is our Saviour and Redeemer? God or Love? Love; for God as God has not saved us, but Love, which transcends the difference between the divine and human personality. *As God has renounced himself out of love, so we, out of love, should renounce God; for if we do not sacrifice God to love, we sacrifice love to God, and, in spite of the predicate of love, we have the God – the evil being – of religious fanaticism.*

In more ways than one, Feuerbach attacks a false understanding of the Christian God and distorts fundamental Christian doctrine to accommodate his pantheistic, pagan theory. Nevertheless, he maintains that human "reason" is "sovereign," and the "Idea" is sovereign above us; because we created God, we can destroy him as an obstacle to history's purpose of total enlightenment. **Christians can recognize this theory for what it is: a repackaged version of Satan's offer to Christ in Matthew 4: 8-9, "Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 'If you bow down and worship me,' he said, 'I will give you all this.'"**

In this context, Marxism was born. Karl Marx combined Hegel's dialectical view of history (history progresses through the synthesis, or reconciliation, of two opposites) and Feuerbach's desire to invert the biblical created order. In his writing *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx says as follows:

“The foundation of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion*, religion does not make man. Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. But *man* is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the *world of man* – state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an *inverted consciousness of the world*, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. *Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness.*"

To Marx, God does not exist outside the mind of man. Rather, "God" is a man-made construct built to dull mankind's true sufferings. In order to achieve true happiness, man must collectively forget their belief in God in order to be cognizant of the true source of suffering – economic conflict fueled by private property ownership.

Entire books have been written on the *many* fatal flaws of classical Marxism. Indeed, according to the [research of scholars](#) studying the historical consequences of communism, the legacy of Marx's philosophy is a death toll of approximately 100 million lives. One would be hard-pressed to identify a philosophy responsible for as much human misery, bloodshed, and death as Karl Marx's brainchild. But, just as the philosophers Hegel and Feuerbach inspired Marxism, Marxism inspired others, including a philosophy widely known today as "*Cultural Marxism*."

In 1914, twenty years after Marx died, [Goethe University](#) was founded in Frankfurt, Germany. A few years later, the University opened a new Institute dedicated to preserving Marx's legacy – The Institute for Social Research. Goethe University itself [describes](#) the Institute as follows:

Founded in 1923 with funds from patrons Hermann and Felix Weil as an institute for academic Marxism, with Max Horkheimer the IfS became the central research centre for critical theory. In the spring of 1933, the institute was closed by the Gestapo because of 'subversive activities'. Via circuitous routes, it managed to move to Columbia University in New York and continue its work in exile. After the war, the institute's closest circle – Adorno, Horkheimer and Pollock – returned to Frankfurt, and in 1951 the IfS was re-established at its present location.

The Institute [describes](#) its "interdisciplinary program" as the "Frankfurt School," which "evolved away from orthodox Marxism toward social criticism grounded in social philosophy." Although the [Frankfurt School](#), as well as other neo-Marxist European institutions, were somewhat ideologically stratified, the term "Cultural Marxism" is *not* contrived by the theory's opponents.

For instance, one of the current leading scholars on cultural Marxism today is UCLA Professor Douglas Kellner, [acclaimed](#) for his research in [critical theory](#). In his essay *Cultural Marxism and Cultural Studies*, Kellner chronicles Marx's significant influence on Neo-Marxist scholars through the twentieth century. University of Arizona historian [Dennis Dworkin](#), who specializes in neo-Marxist cultural theory, published an entire [book](#) entitled "Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain." The synopsis of Dworkin's book argues that the postwar history of Britain is "one of a coherent intellectual tradition, a tradition that represents an implicit and explicit theoretical effort to resolve the crisis of the postwar British Left."



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Cultural Marxism is *an umbrella term* for a philosophy that is just as Godless and anti-human as classical Marxism, its predecessor. For instance, [Antonio Gramsci](#), an Italian neo-Marxist, developed a theory of “hegemony,” a word that derives from the Greek word “[hegemon](#),” meaning “sovereign.” Like Marx, Gramsci accepted history as a class struggle between an oppressor and an oppressed. However, Gramsci diverged from Marx’s call for violent revolution because of its inefficacy. Gramsci argued that neo-Marxists must first occupy major cultural institutions through a “[war of position](#)” to defeat the influence of capitalism and religion. In a 1916 article entitled [Audacia E Fede](#) for a socialist newspaper, Gramsci made clear that socialism must wage cultural war against its opposite, Christianity:

...socialism is precisely the religion that must kill Christianity. Religion in the sense that it too is a faith, that it has its mystics and its practitioners; religion, because it replaced the transcendent God of the Catholics in our consciences with the trust in man and his best efforts as the only spiritual reality. *Our gospel is a modern philosophy, dear friends of Savonarola, one that dispenses with the hypothesis of God in the vision of the universe, one that lays its foundations only in history, a history in which we are the creatures of the past and the creators of the future... Ours is not a doctrine of slaves in revolt, it is a doctrine of rulers who, in their daily toil, prepare their weapons for domination of the world.*

Some Cultural Marxists attacked Western civilization as “tyrannical” for its historical Christian and capitalist societal features. For example, Theodor Adorno, who is [described](#) as “one of the foremost continental philosophers of the twentieth century” by the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, blended Marxist historical theory with Freudian psychology. In his prominent book *The Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno argued that typical characteristics of tyrants include those who are capitalist, Christian, and conservative. Adorno also argued that tyrannical personalities are most frequently observed in societies that promote a traditional family structure, which he called “patriarchal,” and discourage licentiousness, which he called “sexual repression.”

A common principle later adopted by [Cultural Marxists](#) includes postmodernism, the denial of *absolute, objective truth*, such as the idea that “Jesus is King over Heaven and Earth.” For example, the French neo-Marxist philosopher Michel Foucault [believed](#) that claims of absolute truth were merely a pretext for tyrants to claim power. Eventually, the rejection of absolute, metaphysical truth laid the intellectual foundations for current cultural issues facing America, including debates over critical race theory and queer theory. Just as Gramsci hoped, Marx’s ideological progeny has, as of now, captured the apex of American culture.

Marxism was the proximate philosophical cause for insurrection, famine, persecution, and even the threat of nuclear war during the twentieth century. Its consequences were so disastrous that some Christian leaders rightly observed it as a form of spiritual warfare. The late evangelical pastor Billy Graham [called](#) the conflict a “battle to the death,” where either Christianity or Marxism would die. “The name of this present-day religion is Communism... The Devil is their god, Marx their prophet, Lenin their saint and Malenkov their high priest. Denying their faith in all ideologies, except their religion of revolution, these diabolically-inspired men seek in devious and various ways to convert a peaceful world to their doctrine of death and destruction.”



If Pastor Graham was correct about the spiritual reality of Marxism, then the stage for the next spiritual battle lies in the Western World, namely America. **If the American Church truly faces the threat of a newly awakened ideological leviathan, then it must revive its cultural opposition to Marxism and its progeny.**

### *C. Human Dignity: Origins of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*

America's [Declaration of Independence](#) boldly asserts one of the most recognizable political and moral messages in human history: "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Fans of political history may know that this sentiment was influenced by the Enlightenment philosopher [John Locke](#), who wrote about the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and property in his "Second Treatise of Government." But many may not know that the basis for Locke's arguments in his [First](#) and [Second](#) Treatises were scriptural refutations of a theory championed by the English monarchs of his time: the divine right of Kings. Locke appealed to the principle of the *imago dei* in Genesis 1, that "God created man in his own image," thus creating all humankind with *equal, intrinsic* value.

In his First Treatise, [Locke writes the following](#):

God makes [man] "in his own image, after his own likeness; makes him an intellectual creature, and so capable of dominion:" for wherein soever else the image of God consisted, the intellectual nature was certainly a part of it, and belonged to the whole species, and enabled them to have dominion over the inferior creatures; and therefore David says in the 8th Psalm above cited, "Thou hast made him little lower than the angels, thou hast made him to have dominion." It is not of Adam king David speaks here, for verse 4, it is plain it is of man, and the son of man, of the species of mankind.

Locke's [Second Treatise](#) adopts this argument as an axiom to argue that mankind's "state of nature," one he argues is "a state of perfect freedom [for mankind] to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature." Locke clarified, however, that this state of freedom does not mean a license for anarchy. He argued that this freedom is restrained by the laws of nature, observable through the lens of the reason God gave us. [Locke writes as follows](#):

The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions: for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure: and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us, that may authorize



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for our's

**This view rests on a biblical understanding of human dignity. It assumes that the God of the Bible is the author of the Creation and imbues us with a quality, reason, to make us superior from all other created beings on Earth.** But this view was not always prominent in the history of Western Civilization.

The word "dignity" stems from the Latin word *dignitatem*, what Ancient Romans called *dignitas*. In Ancient Rome, "dignity" was not seen as an immutable quality of the human person; it was earned. One scholar [describes](#) the "prevailing Roman view" of human dignity as "worthiness," or "the respect or honor due to someone on account of their office or rank." The dignity one earned made them comparatively superior, not equal.

Over time, Christianity triumphed in Western civilization and fundamentally altered its perception of human dignity. Hundreds of years after Christ's resurrection, the early Church fathers affirmed the biblical truth recognizable to modern American Christians. Gregory of Nyssa, an early Church father, [wrote](#): "the man that was manifested at the first creation of the world, and he that shall be after the consummation of all, are alike: they equally bear in themselves the Divine image."

Medieval Church figures accepted this basic principle of human dignity but also wrote about the dignity one could cultivate by aligning their will with the perfect will of Christ. Those teachings were not to negate the basic, universal dignity of all human beings. Rather, it was to praise the beauty of the Incarnation of God through Christ, Immanuel; Because Jesus was fully human and wholly righteous and sinless, He is our example. It is why Christians are encouraged, when navigating a social situation, to ask themselves: "What would Jesus do?" In the words of [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#), it is through the example of Jesus Christ "we are thereby taught how great is man's dignity, lest we should sully it with sin." To Aquinas, the practice of virtue elevates a person's dignity to what it *can* be. Many Christians thinkers built upon this concept. John Calvin, for instance, [wrote](#) that the Christian's union with Christ helps us see the "highest perfection of dignity."

But not all philosophers could understand the Christian understanding of human dignity. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, a critic of Christianity, saw ethics and morality through the prism of what he called the "will to power." To Nietzsche, morality and culture was whatever the powerful said it was, not because something was true; the motivation of "powerful religions" was the same to Nietzsche as powerful States. [In the Greek State, Nietzsche wrote](#), "we may compare the magnificent culture to a victor dripping with blood, who, in his triumphal procession, drags the vanquished along, chained to his carriage as slaves: the latter having been blinded by a charitable power so that, almost crushed by the wheels of the chariot, they still shout, 'dignity of work!', 'dignity of man!'" In this light, [Nietzsche concluded that mankind](#), "possesses neither dignity, nor rights, nor duties: only as a completely determined being, serving unconscious purposes, can man excuse his existence."





Nietzsche is fundamentally wrong. But a culture that does not value the God-given value of life, and our *intrinsic* dignity by extension, can deteriorate into paganism. **In our culture, the Church must stand for the dignity of all human life and champion the beauty of virtue through the example of Jesus Christ. A culture that recognizes our God-given intrinsic human dignity grows our love for one another; a culture that values virtue grows our capacity to be like the example of Jesus Christ.**

### *D. The Sanctity of Human Life*

Many prominent and historic documents throughout history have affirmed the right to life. Most notably to an American audience is the Declaration of Independence, yet in the aftermath of World War II, a conflict responsible for approximately [60 million deaths globally](#), the United Nations issued the "[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)." This document proclaimed that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." Among those rights recognized was the "right to life." Soon thereafter, the European Convention on Human Rights declared "[the right to life](#)" as the first fundamental human right, similarly arguing it is "the foundation of justice and peace in the world."

These global principles have root in basic moral intuition. Life is not a right merely because humans are "living" or "sentient" creatures. Such justifications would extend a moral right to life to animals or plants, lives which are routinely ended to satisfy mankind's natural inclination to sustain itself. **Rather, the right to life exists because of inherent human dignity, a right that must be protected by law.**

Scripture teaches us that human life is sacred beginning at the moment of conception. We are made in the image and likeness of our Creator, a grace that elevates our inherent value and personal relationship with God above all other creatures (Genesis 1:27). God knows our individual personalities before we are "formed" in the womb, a feature of personhood that God recognizes as distinct even when humans are incapable of knowing themselves (Psalm 139:13-16). In forming us, God gives us a uniquely divine purpose of serving him for the flourishing of this world in his will (Isaiah 49:1-5). These attributes of human life are intrinsically possessed by all men and women upon their conception. Thus, God explicitly forbids the practice of murder (Exodus 20:13).<sup>17</sup>

Murder, however, is not merely defined as "killing another person." Such a definition would be overinclusive, wrongly equating killing in self-defense or killing enemy combatants in the heat of a just war with an unjust, premeditated killing of another who committed no wrong. Moreover, practices like capital punishment, which God orders as a general rule of punishment for murder in Genesis 9:5-6 and Exodus 21, would be misconstrued as inexcusable in the eyes of God. **Killing**

---

<sup>17</sup> The King James Bible translates this verse from Hebrew to Old English as "thou shall not kill." However, most biblical scholars agree that this translation is flawed, failing to capture the contextual meaning of the original Hebrew text.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

**another person qualifies as murder when it is (i) intentional, (ii) unjustified, and (iii) performed by someone without authority to do so.<sup>18</sup>**

In the canon of scripture, the first act of murder is recorded in [Genesis 4](#). After Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden, they bore two sons: Cain and Abel. Both made offerings to the Lord, but each brought distinct items. Abel offered the “firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions,” which pleased the Lord, and Cain brought “an offering of the fruit of the ground,” for which God had “no regard.” Cain became enraged, but God nonetheless encouraged him. “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it,” God said.

Notably, God assured Cain that his failure to present an acceptable offering in that instance did not prevent him from presenting an offering later. But God makes clear that Cain’s offering must be presented out of love for Him, not out of hatred for his brother Abel. Otherwise, hatred would dictate his will and conduct. Cain ignored God’s words and let hatred for his brother dictate his actions. Cain brought Abel to a field, “rose up against his brother,” and killed him, expressing a clear *intent* to indulge his wrath through violence. Because Cain’s decision was purely driven by sin, his conduct was *unjustified*.

Cain also tacitly admitted his lack of authority to kill another human being in his subsequent conversation with God. After God asks Cain about the whereabouts of his brother, Cain replies: “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” In his *unrepentant* attitude, Cain disavows any guardianship role over his brother and tacitly *admits his lack of authority to control Abel*. For his actions and refusal to repent, God severely punished Cain by casting him out of the land of his family. Though *intent*, *justification*, and *authority* are only intuitively observed in the story of Cain and Abel, other biblical passages explicitly elucidate them as necessary elements.

For instance, the Mosaic law differentiated murder and manslaughter on the basis of *intent*. In the book of [Numbers](#), the Lord allowed Israelites who “kill[ed] any person without intent” to flee to “cities of refuge” in order to avoid the death penalty enacted by “avenger of blood.” Moreover, the Lord also provides several examples of intentional killings, such as striking another with an iron or stone tool, and unintentional killings, such as “push[ing]” someone “suddenly without enmity.”

*Justification*, whether one lacks moral reason to take another life, is also clearly expressed in scripture and a core component of modern American law. In [Exodus 22](#), the Lord says, “If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him, but if the sun has risen on him, there shall be bloodguilt for him.” Here, modern readers can identify a principle of lethal self-defense, but may be puzzled by the distinction between day and night. They may even be more surprised that it serves as a pillar of American law.

---

<sup>18</sup> This definition exclusively applies to *murder* as punishable by law and does not define *other* sinful, punishable forms of killing, such as manslaughter. Moreover, Jesus teaches in Matthew 5 that a person can commit “murder” in their hearts by hating their brother. This definition, however, is correct for the purpose of addressing issues of public faith discussed in these policy papers through cultural and policy engagement.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

When the U.S. Constitution was ratified, every state in the Union, [except Louisiana](#), inherited and adopted the English common law. The common law of England enshrined a custom known as the "[Castle Doctrine](#)," which permitted the use of deadly, defensive force *only* in the sanctity of one's home. Otherwise, the English law imposed [a duty to retreat from a violent situation](#) before using self-defense. Sir Edward Coke, the English jurist, summarized the rationale for this distinction in the 1604 *Semayne's Case*: "the house of everyone is to him as his castle and fortress, as well for his defence against injury and violence, as for his repose ... the reason of all this is because domus sua cuique est tutissimum refugium [his own house is the safest place of refuge]."

Both the English common law and Mosaic law emphasize the inviolability of one's home, particularly in the darkness of night. If a burglar were to attempt violence or burglarize another in this setting, a situation ancient people would recognize as shocking and grossly offensive, then deadly self-defense was justified. That said, the English common law and Mosaic law do not bind Christians to these exact standards. Other moral and legal justifications exist for killing, such as the defense of others in life threatening situations, and "self-defense" can apply in places outside one's home. Nonetheless, this passage emphasizes how a person *may* be justified in taking the life of another in certain circumstances, and thus not guilty of murder.

The third element of murder, *authority*, is hotly debated today with respect to capital punishment, even among Christians. In fact, approximately 66% of Protestants and 58% of Catholics support the death penalty for those convicted of murder according to a [2021 Pew Research Survey](#). In other words, just over one-third of Protestants and 40% of Catholics believe the death penalty is unwarranted even in the most severe cases. Scripture does, however, emphasize *authority* as a factor separating "murder" from lawful killing.

In [Genesis 9](#), God established capital punishment for the crime of murder in His covenant with Noah: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his image." **Put another way, humans cannot take the life of another except as a just punishment for the crime of murder administered by a party sanctioned by God to do so.** The Mosaic law continued the tradition of capital punishment as the maximum punishment for a variety of crimes. However, it was [not a mandatory punishment](#) for any crime except for murder and could only be administered by the "avenger of blood."

The apostle Paul alludes to this Old Testament "avenger" title in [Romans 13](#), but identifies a new *authority* authorized to carry out punishment: the civil authority. "For [[government](#)] is the servant of God, an *avenger* who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."

However, this doesn't mean that capital punishment is *always* good. Just as any tool for good can be corrupted in our fallen world, so too can the death penalty be abused, even to the point where the practice should be banned. But it is also possible that political entities can dedicate the tool toward its permissible, lawful end by ensuring it is not used against *innocent parties*.

Nonetheless, scripture is clear that governments are ordained by God, divinely imbued with the authority to bear the sword to punish evil and promote what is good (Romans 13:1-7). Life itself



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

is one such basic good. In the words of [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#), “inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law.” **If the government takes no action to secure this basic good, it becomes guilty of dereliction of duty. That duty includes protecting the sanctity of unborn human life from abortion, an intentional, unjustified killing of an innocent child. Life belongs to God. Only He, or those He so sanctions, may take the life of another according to his Perfect will.**

The Christian desires God’s perfect will, a world where a culture of life and respect for human dignity triumphs and where abortion is completely and permanently nonexistent. In light of this, any policy framework designed to advance or promote abortion, whether as an end in and of itself or as the means for selfish political ambition, contravenes God’s moral law. **It is not acceptable under any Christian framework to argue that the government has no business in prohibiting the practice of abortion, whether that argument stems from political self-interest, modern libertarian sensibilities, or sheer apathy toward the unborn.**

### *E. Immigration & National Security*

Very few cultural debates stir Americans’ hearts today like the topic of immigration. It requires participants in those debates to confront issues about national sovereignty, national identity, ethics, law, and belonging. Two guiding principles, however, can help Christians navigate this divisive topic, much like two guardrails help direct a vehicle down a winding mountain road. Those principles are (1) the wisdom of scripture and (2) a brief understanding of history.

It should be said from the outset that the history of national sovereignty is a deeply complex one. But one can reasonably aim to understand a basic historical framework from which Christians can further develop their personal views on the subject.

Long before the days of Moses and God’s liberation of the Israelites from Egypt, God spoke to Abraham, [promising him that He](#) “will make of [him] a great *nation*.” In [Genesis 18](#), the Lord repeats His promise to Abraham after visiting him in person but before His judgment of the land of Sodom: “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty *nation*, and all the *nations* of the earth shall be blessed in him?”

From Abraham came Isaac, from Isaac came Jacob, and from Jacob, whom the Lord would rename “[Israel](#),” came twelve sons, all of whom would become the basis for the [Twelve Tribes of Israel](#). Joseph, the son of Jacob who rose to serve as the penultimate authority of Egypt, invited the Israelites from Canaan into Egypt during seven years of famine. But the Israelites did not leave Egypt after the famine. Instead, [Exodus 1 says](#) the Israelites “were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.” But a new Pharaoh emerged to view the Israelites as a threat, [ordering the death of numerous children and enslaving them for 400 years](#).

Eventually, God used Moses to liberate the Israelites from Egypt, provide to them a new law, [beginning with the Ten Commandments](#), and guide them to the “[Promised Land](#)” known as



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Canaan. According to [Numbers 13](#), the Promised Land flowed with milk and honey but was occupied by the “Nephilim,” or giants, [a people](#) who engaged in wicked behavior and worshiped false gods. Joshua, Moses’ successor, led the Israelites to conquer Canaan and [succeeded with the Lord’s favor](#). Eventually, one people were united in the land promised by the Lord to Abraham.

Throughout this story, Israel is repeatedly referenced as a “nation,” a concept that the [Cambridge dictionary](#) describes as “a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people living in one area with their own government, language, traditions, etc.” In fact, the Old Testament describes other peoples as “nations” as well. Deuteronomy 32:8 says that “the Most High apportioned the nations” and “fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods.” That apportionment of national boundaries describes an event in Genesis with which many Christians are familiar: [Babel](#). All nations had spiritual rulers, or “princes,” over them. In [Daniel 10:20](#), we find the angel Gabriel referring to the “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Javen [Greece].”

Ancient Greece was not a “country” as we understand the term today. They were not united under one political state. Rather, they were a [civilization](#), a nation united by a common religion, language, and culture. Each city-state within Greece worshiped all gods in their pantheons, but designated one “patron” god above others. For instance, the city of “[Athens](#)” worshiped the goddess Athena, while the city of [Corinth](#) worshiped Poseidon.

The same pattern is observed in the ancient middle-east. The ancient [Sumerians](#) in [Mesopotamia](#) were not unified under one political state. As one scholar explains, [Sumer](#) was “a region of city-states each with its own king.” Before Sumer’s city-state regime, the Sumer civilization consisted of “[temple towns](#),” which were “built around the temple of the local god.” In this same region lies [Babylon](#), a city that scripture uses as a [representation of great evil](#).

Israel, however, was set apart from these other nations. Arguably, Israel was the first example of a “nation-state,” [defined as](#) “an independent country, especially when thought of as consisting of a single large group of people all sharing the same language, traditions, and history.” Not only did Israel share a history, tradition, and language as people, they were an independent state operating under the Mosaic law. In other words, “Israelite” was both a cultural identification *and* a political identification. But ancient Israel existed during an age of empires and conquest, phenomena that contradict the modern idea of “national sovereignty.”

Historians generally regard the “[Peace of Westphalia](#)” in 1648 as the event that transformed international politics into a “[sovereignty-based international system](#).” Before then, different lands under the Holy Roman Empire did not regard themselves as “nation-states.” Instead, they were “[Imperial Estates](#),” private property that a reigning king was entitled to by royal birthright. The term “estate” is something many of us are familiar with in America, just not at the scale of territories within the Holy Roman Empire. Estates consist of the personal property of individuals and are transferred through a process called “[probate](#).” After someone dies, the probate process transfers a person’s property to their heirs or descendants. Imperial Estates were similar, transferred from King to son through the inheritance of the royal crown.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

This model of international relations produced great conflict, including bloody religious battles like the [Thirty Years' War](#). Westphalia was the West's solution; it is the reason why terms like "international" make sense. From a historical perspective, **to believe in the concept of "national sovereignty" is to believe that borders serve as markers for independent places of belonging, a home where people decide their own politics and affairs.** "National sovereignty," and international respect for borders by extension, serves the positive good of global peace and makes possible an American system of self-government.

The advent of national sovereignty raised questions about migration; ancient peoples were periodically forced under one authority through the conquest of empires, much like Israel and Rome. In the words of one [political scientist](#), "since the Peace of Westphalia established the current system of territorial nation-states, control over immigration has been almost universally acknowledged as a principal component of state sovereignty." [Our Constitution recognizes this authority](#), at least in part, by granting Congress the power "to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization."

If national sovereignty is a positive good, and all nation-states possess a corresponding authority to control the flow of immigration into its borders, then one more question emerges: what should those policies be? Scripture gives Christians some guidance.

In Leviticus 19, the Lord tells the [Israelites the following](#): "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." God commands that Israel treat the "sojourner," a foreigner who passes through Israel temporarily, with kindness and even likens the foreigner's status with the Israelites while in Egypt.

The closest analogy to this situation in ancient Israel would be those cases of persecuted foreigners seeking refuge in the United States. As descendants of Abraham, Christians should be hospitable to the refugee and seek to align the law of their nation with the will of God. The City upon a Hill welcomes the refugee in the name of Christ; it does not exploit them or dehumanize them.

But just as Christians have an obligation to treat refugees with love and dignity, they cannot blind themselves to the consequences a rule has on their fellow countrymen. For instance, the book of [Nehemiah](#) describes how Israel rebuilt the walls once surrounding it after they were destroyed by a brutal Babylonian invasion. By the grace of God, America does not face the threat that Israel once faced. Nonetheless, current geo-political tensions, including Russia's goal to take over Ukraine and Hamas's invasion of Israel remind us that tyrants and barbarians still exist.

The Old Testament also provides an example on how the United States can orient its immigration policies toward the common-good and the flourishing of citizens and immigrants alike. God instructs the Israelites to have compassion for the foreigner seeking temporary refuge, but commands them to bring foreigners seeking a permanent abode into the fullness of the Mosaic law. [Exodus 12 says](#) the following:



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

“If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. **There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.**”

At first glance, this looks like the modern process of assimilation, but that is only partly true. By itself, assimilation is morally neutral. It can be evil, just as invading peoples tried to change the religious order of the ancient Israelites. But it also can also be beautiful, just as this verse indicates.

In order for foreigners to break bread with the Israelites in the sacred tradition of Passover, they were obliged to accept all of God's commandments. No matter where you come from, any foreigner who accepts the fullness of God's law is viewed equally in the eyes of God. Today, the Christian can see themselves in the foreigner. As Paul says in [Galatians](#), “[t]here is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave[a] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The laws of the United States must be designed to secure the common-good, and the Church should advocate for those laws to align with the moral example of God's law as fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ. Given that national sovereignty is a proven good, and that immigration with assimilation is biblical, defined and enforced borders support the essential governmental ends of peace, security, and justice.

### *F. Race and Justice*

In a May 2023 speech to graduates from a historically black college, President Joe Biden said that “[white supremacy](#)” is “the single most dangerous terrorist threat” to America. But Biden assured students that he hoped to see a future of “fearless progress toward justice,” where the “*strength* of [America's] diversity” is “the center of American life.” Though President Biden is far from being the only person to hold this view in American political discourse, it reflects a peculiar neo-pagan impulse. If one views *race* as the “strength” of a society, and “strength” is presumably a kind of moral good, then *race/strength/power* is to be assumed the fundamental building block of a society's ethics. In other words, following President Biden's remarks on the topic, race is to justice what power (or strength) is to moral goodness: the heart of ethics. Of course, Scripture speaks to ethics and this view is antithetical to the Word of God.

For many millennia, most human societies organized themselves around an ancient tribal principle: an [ethnos](#), the root of the English word “ethnicity.” Etymologically, the Greek term “ethno” meant a “people, nation, class, caste, tribe,” language that scripture also uses. [Many passages](#) of the New Testament use the phrase *panta ta ethne*, meaning “all the nations.” For instance, when Christ told His apostles in [Matthew 28:19](#) to “[g]o therefore and make disciples of all nations,” scripture recorded Christ's command with the language “panta ta ethne.” Christ is not endorsing ethnocentrism. Rather, he is reversing the old order familiar to Israelites in the days of the prophets confronting a pagan world. [Biblical scholar Dr. Michael Heiser](#) explains that view through the concept of “cosmic geography” as follows:



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Israel, as Yahweh's inheritance, was holy ground. Similarly, the territory of other nations, according to Yahweh's decree, belonged to other [false] gods [sic]. But in the course of Old Testament history, Israel had become enslaved to the Egyptians and required supernatural deliverance from Egypt and its gods. To subsequently inherit the promised land – now occupied by nations who worshiped other gods – Israel would have to reclaim its landed inheritance by holy war. Thus, once in the land, Israelites still believed that their land belonged exclusively to Yahweh and was His sacred domain: other nations, even if they were in Israel, were under the dominion of evil, lesser gods.

But this radical reversion of the old order wasn't readily accepted in Europe; it was an affront to ethnic [kinship](#), familial bonds. As one scholar [puts it](#), "This family connection extended not only horizontally, between citizens of the [Greco-Roman] polis; it also extended vertically, between heaven and earth. Greek and Roman gods were known to have taken human sexual partners, from whose progeny whole human populations might descend. Sometimes the fruit of these unions might be the founder of a city." Even in an ethnically diverse and expansive Roman Empire, there was an ethnic hierarchy. The Romans subdued all other lands and peoples within their borders; their pantheon head ["Jupiter"] was supreme to all other gods. Yahweh, though He was and is the Most High God, was no exception.

[In claiming authority over all the Earth](#), Jesus made all who believe in Him part of His body. In the words of Paul in the letter to the [Galatians](#): "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The Kingdom of Heaven is the literal, Supreme political entity over the Earth. No longer do demonic powers have a possession right to any lands on the Earth. They merely hold a license to the cosmic geography of the past so that God may liberate us just as He liberated the Israelites from Egypt—to demonstrate His Supreme authority.

Though many ancient peoples identified themselves based on their tribal *ethnos*, ethnic identity was not based on "race," a word that categorizes individuals based on skin color. Rather, the early English use of the term "ethnicity" was cultural and religious. [Dictionary.com](#) summarizes this etymology as follows: "The earliest use of ethnic in English ... was as a noun for a 'heathen' or 'pagan.' At that time, ethnic was also used colloquially to refer to those who originated from nations that weren't Christian or Jewish. It wasn't until the early 1900s that ethnicity was used to refer to social groups of a common ancestry and shared culture."

By contrast, "race" is a relatively novel method of identification in the historical record, but was nevertheless conflated with "ethnicity" by some of America's most liberal founding fathers. In a 1755 essay titled "[Observations Concerning the Increasing of Mankind, Peopling of Countries](#)," Benjamin Franklin defined the category of "white people" as only those of Anglo-Saxon ethnic heritage, excluding Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians, and Germans because, in his view, they possessed a "swarthy complexion." Franklin wrote as follows: "[T]he Saxons only excepted, who with the English, make the principal Body of White People on the Face of the Earth. I could wish their Numbers were increased. And while we are, as I may call it, Scouring our Planet, by clearing America of Woods, and so making this Side of our Globe reflect a brighter Light to the Eyes of Inhabitants in mars or Venus, why should we in the Sight of Superior Beings, darken its People?"





## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

... But perhaps I am partial to the complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind."

Thomas Jefferson held an even more radical view than Franklin, and was arguably the foundation for eugenics. Not only did Jefferson conflate the classical understanding of ethnicity with race, he argued that race could be the vehicle to understand human anthropology. In his book *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson writes as follows:

I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, *whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.* It is not against experience to suppose, that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications. Will not a lover of natural history then, one who views the gradations in all the races of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the department of man as distinct as nature has formed them? *This unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people.* Many of their advocates, while they wish to vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious also to preserve its dignity and beauty. Some of these, embarrassed by the question 'What further is to be done with them?' join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only. Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.

Today, American Christians would recognize these views as repugnant to biblical teaching, a denial of the *imago dei* and a departure from the objective truth that all men are created equal. However, the mistakes of these great men in American history underscore a truth first penned by [French classical author Francois duc de La Rochefoucauld](#): "Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue." In recognizing certain actions as "sinful" or "wrong," one recognizes the converse, an objective standard of "righteous" or "right." Societies that recognize objective, eternal moral goods also recognize sin as substandard, that which falls short of the good.

Racism, hatred for another based on their skin color or the denial of their God-given dignity based on skin color, is the successor sin to the ancient pagan sin of ethnic hatred. In light of this, racism must be understood as "neo-pagan," a new form of an ancient impulse to arrange human society in a pagan, hierarchical manner in opposition to God's moral law. But societies that are not guided by objective standards of truth and goodness cannot coherently explain *why* racism and ethnic hatred are sins. Even worse, those societies that reject objective standards of truth and goodness may even embrace a form of ethnocentrism or racism.

Since the 20th century, neo-pagan philosophy has grown to become a powerful "scholarly" opponent to traditional Christian philosophy. A clear example of this is the emergence and development of Critical Race Theory, popularized by Ivy League legal scholar Derrick Bell.

Nowadays, Critical Race Theory ["CRT"] is commonly construed to mean "opposition to cultural or systemic racism." The Anti-Defamation League, for example, [defines](#) it as a theory which



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

explains how “racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is embedded in laws, policies and institutions that uphold and reproduce racial inequalities.” But this definition is underinclusive such that it misleads people about the philosophical essence of CRT.

Before CRT, there was “[Critical Theory](#),”<sup>19</sup> advanced by the legal academy to argue that law was not a set of rules to advance objective principles of the good. Rather, critical theorists posited that law was a device of power; specifically, a tool used by the powerful to organize societal hierarchies that most benefited them. Critical Race Theory was an outgrowth of critical theory, arguing that race was the *raison d'être* for law. Indeed, the [Stanford Encyclopedia for Philosophy](#) describes CRT as “itself influenced by Marxist theories of the state and the law – namely, the aim of debunking the idea that the law and the state are neutral institutions that secure the common good and the rights of all as an ideology masking their character as instruments of racial (and class) oppression.”

Critical Race Theory is observably incoherent. It relies on the premise that the natural law correctly identifies good and evil, justice versus oppression, but argues the natural law is merely a pretext to justify the evil of white supremacy. Because it is a tool of white supremacy, the Critical Race Theorist believes the principles of the natural law must be abandoned to guarantee a desired racial power structure oriented toward “racial equity.”

CRT’s goal of “racial equity,” however, would seem to contradict its own principles. “[Equity](#)” is a Judeo-Christian western belief that emphasizes the need for fairness when the law is inadequate. Indeed, Saint Thomas Aquinas explains the principles of equity in the [Summa Theologica](#) as follows:

[S]ince human actions, with which laws are concerned, are composed of contingent singulars and are innumerable in their diversity, it was not possible to lay down rules of law that would apply to every single case. Legislators in framing laws attend to what commonly happens: although if the law be applied to certain cases it will frustrate the equality of justice and be injurious to the common good, which the law has in view. Thus the law requires deposits to be restored, because in the majority of cases this is just. Yet it happens sometimes to be injurious – for instance, if a madman were to put his sword in deposit, and demand its delivery while in a state of madness, or if a man were to seek the return of his deposit in order to fight against his country. *On these and like cases it is bad to follow the law, and it is good to set aside the letter of the law and to follow the dictates of justice and the common good. This is the object of "epikeia" which we call equity.* Therefore it is evident that "epikeia" is a virtue.

If CRT were to truly and consistently uproot all Judeo-Christian, Western values from American law, then that must include *the concept of equity itself*. In its place would not be a system guided by principles of fairness as dictated by natural justice. Rather, it would be principles dictated by the will of the stronger, much like the old pagan world.

---

<sup>19</sup> See “Cultural Marxism: Dangers of a godless society,” CCS Papers, Section E



The Christian believes that natural justice is objectively intertwined with God's perfect, eternal moral law. As such, the Church must advocate for *unqualified* natural justice, that which secures the common good and promotes human flourishing regardless of one's ethnic or racial identity.

### *G. Gender & Sexuality*

In recent years, one cultural debate has emerged as an apparent frontrunner for the most controversial in America, and it involves the topic of gender and sexuality. Unlike many social issues, discussions about sexuality and gender raise personal and fundamental questions about human identity: *Who am I? How was I created to be?*

Christians may find themselves in particularly delicate situations where a family member or loved one is struggling with their identity. As difficult as these conversations may be, the Church cannot shy away. The body of Christ must directly engage in conversations about gender and sexuality to remind our culture of the immeasurable love the Creator has for us, and the spiritual liberty God's word provides. But before doing so, it is imperative that Christians equip themselves with the knowledge to understand the philosophies that compete with the truth of God's word.

Commentators usually discuss issues of gender and sexuality as falling under an umbrella category called "LGBTQ+ issues," shorthand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. Proponents of "queer theory" or "trans" ideology use the plus sign to signify a core feature of "LGBTQ+" ideology, that feature being that any omitted letters are not to be construed as exclusions.

"Queer theory" and trans ideology are commonly taught at the collegiate level, funded and advanced by university systems. This does not mean, however, that Christians should be intimidated from debates with those who call themselves "experts" or "scholars" on these subjects. In fact, Christians should be encouraged by the fact that both "queer theory" and trans ideology are simply understood.<sup>20</sup>

"Queer theory" makes two basic claims: First, traditional sexual ethics and gender "roles" that encourage self-restraint or self-discipline only serve to shackle people from reaching true freedom, from fully expressing their sexual identity. Second, full sexual liberation requires that society accept all aberrant forms of sexual behavior to which a person assents.

Trans ideology divorces gender from sex. It argues that gender is a "social construct" based on societal expectations of a person based on their biology. Resting upon the belief that gender is a social construct, trans ideology rejects the idea that gender is "[binary](#)," composed of two kinds.

---

<sup>20</sup> For a more detailed explanation of queer theory, See Ryan T. Anderson, *Transgender Ideology Is Riddled With Contradictions. Here Are the Big Ones.*, The Heritage Foundation (Feb. 9, 2018) (available at <https://www.heritage.org/gender/commentary/transgender-ideology-riddled-contradictions-here-are-the-big-ones>). See also Christopher Rufo, *A Parent's Guide to Radical Queer Theory* (available at [https://christopherrufo.com/content/uploads/2022/09/Chris-Rufo\\_Radical-Gender-Guide-v2.pdf](https://christopherrufo.com/content/uploads/2022/09/Chris-Rufo_Radical-Gender-Guide-v2.pdf))



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Instead, they argue gender is a “spectrum” of many identities. Thus, those who feel a psychological discordance between their biology and “gender” are transgender.

Contrary to popular myth, “transgender” theory is not new. Rather, it is simply the *newest* iteration of **dissociative liberation theory**, which argues that freedom is an individual transcendent state that results from separating the “material” from the “spiritual” (the body from the spirit). The first of these historically heretical theories was gnosticism.

As a general belief system, however, gnosticism’s origins are uncertain. [Some historians believe that it emerged before the birth of Christ as an](#) “aberrant form of Judaism, combined with certain ideas about divine reality drawn from the Platonism of the time (which had developed beyond the philosophical ideas of Plato).”

If one were to ask, “what is real,” they would be asking a question about the nature of existence or being. In philosophy, questions like this are the foundation of ontology, the study of being, or more specifically “what *exists*.” [According to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato](#), *existence* is divided into two realms: the realms of “Being” and “Becoming.” The key difference between these two realms is that the former contains *eternal, unchanging, abstract ideals* while the latter contains the perceived instantiations of the ideal, which do change.

In the realm of “Being” exists the “Forms,” which, [according to Plato](#), are abstractions that are unchanging, such as Truth, Justice, or Beauty. Humans cannot fully observe these “Forms” because all things in our physical universe will eventually decay, which is contrary to the nature of the Forms. Nevertheless, we can observe instantiations of these abstractions in the realm of “Becoming,” our changing universe. Take, for example, if one were to climb to the top of a mountain, observe thousands of miles of nature beneath them, and declare, “nature is beautiful!” According to Plato, those words acknowledge how the presently observable nature of the Earth resembles the “Form” of Beauty, even though the “nature” of the Earth is subject to change by natural phenomenon.

One might ask, “where did the Forms come from?” According to [Plato](#), the source of the Forms is something called “the Good.” In *The Republic*, Plato writes as follows: “the sun is only the author of visibility in all visible things, but of generation and nourishment and growth, though he himself is not generation ... in like manner *the good* may be said to be not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence, and yet the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power.”

In plain language, Plato views “The Good” like the sun. Just as the sun’s light makes everything around us perceivable and intelligible, so too does “the Good” make all other “Forms” intelligible. Even more, the essence of “the Forms” emanates from “the Good.”

The philosophy of Plato was guided by a belief that an objective truth *truly* exists, and that we can come to know these objective truths better through our use of reason. The German philosopher [Friedrich Nietzsche likened Plato’s belief](#), as well as the belief of other philosophers, to the Christian concept of faith: “Even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine.”

Properly interpreted, Plato’s theory of the Forms is remarkably similar to the beginning of the [Nicene Creed](#): “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, *of all things visible and invisible*.” In this light, platonic philosophy is *not* fundamentally opposed to Christian belief, albeit elements are equally obnoxious to Judeo-Christian principles. But, in the early days of Christianity, the “Gnostics” merged features of platonic thought [such as the idea of the two realms] with Christianity to propose a mythology and narrative of human salvation entirely different from scripture. **The Church Father Irenaeus, who was the [disciple of Polycarp](#) (the disciple of the Apostle John), confronted the anti-biblical beliefs of Gnosticism in his multi-volume work titled [Against Heresies](#), summarizing them as follows:**

Their [the Gnostics] manner of acting is just as if one, when a beautiful image of a king has been constructed by some skilful artist out of precious jewels, should then take this likeness of the man all to pieces, should rearrange the gems, and so fit them together as to make them into the form of a dog or of a fox, and even that but poorly executed; and should then maintain and declare that this was the beautiful image of the king which the skilful artist constructed, pointing to the jewels which had been admirably fitted together by the first artist to form the image of the king, but have been with bad effect transferred by the latter one to the shape of a dog, and by thus exhibiting the jewels, should deceive the ignorant who had no conception what a king's form was like, and persuade them that that miserable likeness of the fox was, in fact, the beautiful image of the king.

The term “gnostic” etymologically derives from the Greek term “gnōstikos,” [meaning](#) “knowing, able to discern, good at knowing.” As a historic heresy, Gnostics believed that the God of the Israelites, whom they referred to as the “[Demiurge](#)” was *evil*, the true Satan. Though the gnostics believed this “evil” god created the material universe, they believed the demiurge was inferior to a supreme god called “[the Ineffable](#).” Jesus, [according to the Gnostics](#), was not the incarnate God; rather, Jesus was a spiritual messenger sent by the Ineffable to free humanity from the enslavement of the Demiurge and the corruption of the world. As such, the [gnostics believed that](#) “[s]alvation belongs to the soul alone, for the body is by nature subject to corruption.” **In other words, salvation is intrinsic through knowledge fully realized in the mind of man, not a grace freely given by God to save us from our sin. Where there is knowledge, there is power, a power that humans can use to liberate our true selves from the corruption of the body.**

[One scholar summarizes Gnostic theology](#) as follows: “Gnosticism is the belief that human beings contain a piece of God (the highest good or a divine spark) within themselves, which has fallen from the immaterial world into the bodies of humans. All physical matter is subject to decay, rotting, and death. Those bodies and the material world, created by an inferior being, are therefore evil. Trapped in the material world, but ignorant of its status, the pieces of God require knowledge (gnosis) to inform them of their true status. That knowledge must come from outside the material world, and the agent who brings it is the savior or redeemer.”

By the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Church defeated this ancient heresy and eventually affirmed the true, biblical nature of God in the Nicene Creed: the Trinity. God is the unity of three



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That nature is revealed to us in scripture through the *person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God the Son*. Similarly, the nature of salvation is revealed through Jesus's identity as the [perfect lamb of God](#): "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

The blood and bodily sacrifice of Jesus, as the perfect lamb, reconciles us to the Father, and his resurrection and gift of the Holy Spirit transforms our bodies His Temples (1 Corinthians 6:19). And [Philippians 3:20-21](#) teaches that God will one day "transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." **In other words, through the power of His blood, Jesus transforms our bodies as sacred dwelling places for the Holy Spirit and will, one day, regenerate them to be as glorious and perfect as Him.**

**In the twentieth century, a new movement in sociology and psychology gave rise to another strain of dissociative liberation theory in the West: the sexual revolution.** In the early 1900s, Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud rose to prominence for his study on [sexual "repression"](#)—the primitive erotic impulses that Freud believed humans suppressed while operating in civil society. Freud believed that failing to address suppressed sexual desires would cause anxiety; so he developed a theory called "[psychoanalysis](#)," a method of discourse between himself and patients. [According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), "the object of psychoanalytic treatment may be said to be a form of self-understanding—once this is acquired it is largely up to the patient, in consultation with the analyst, to determine how he shall handle this newly-acquired understanding of the unconscious forces which motivate him." Once deeply repressed sexual desires were unearthed, Freud believed he could prescribe a cure for their release.

Many leading twentieth-century academics agreed with Freud's basic conclusion about sexual repression. However, the sexual revolutionaries decried the need for a "cure," in part because of the research by academics like Dr. Alfred E. Kinsey of Indiana University, whose work earned him the title of "father of the sexual revolution, according to the [Kinsey Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University](#).

In 1948, Kinsey published a work titled *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, wherein Kinsey introduced the concept of a [sexual spectrum](#): "Males do not represent two discrete populations, homosexual and heterosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. Not all things are black nor all things white. Only the human mind invents categories to force facts into separate pigeonholes." [Kinsey's research](#) is [widely criticized today](#), but it nonetheless formed the basis for his social views. According to the historian and biographer [James H. Jones](#), Kinsey "was determined to use science to strip human sexuality of its guilt and repression. He wanted to undermine traditional morality, to soften the rules of restraint, and to help people develop positive attitudes toward their sexual needs and desires." Jones adds that Kinsey "spent his every waking hour attempting to change the sexual mores and sex offender laws of the United States."

The degenerate work of Kinsey profoundly influenced the likes of [Hugh Hefner](#), the now deceased founder of Playboy Magazine and the first mass-progenitor of pornography in America. Indeed, even the [Washington Post](#) described Hefner an "advocate for the sexual revolution" and a



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

key backer of the “Kinsey Institute’s research into sex, reproductive rights and the Equal Rights Amendment for women.” Hefner was the cultural propagandist for a pseudoscience that fundamentally altered America’s ideas about liberty.

Eventually the sexual revolution made its way into American constitutional law, beginning with the notorious [1963 case known as \*Griswold v. Connecticut\*](#), one of the most poorly reasoned cases in Supreme Court history. In *Griswold*, the Court not only criticized a state policy prohibiting contraception, engaging in a kind of commentary that falls beyond the purview of the judiciary, they declared it unconstitutional. The Court justified their decision with the following reasoning: “specific guarantees in the Bill of Rights have penumbras, formed by emanations from those guarantees that help give them life and substance.” In other words, the Constitution is not the source of this contrived right. Rather, its source was a modern, inchoate, and ostensibly unrestrained view of liberty endorsed by sexual revolutionaries. The Supreme Court went on to apply this revolutionary view of liberty to nationalize legal abortion (*Roe v. Wade*), eliminate marriage as the union between a man and woman (*Obergefell v. Hodges*), and end state laws prohibiting the practice of sodomy (*Lawrence v. Texas*). Among all these cases, [one line written by Justice Anthony Kennedy](#) stands out as remarkably similar to promises of the serpent in the Garden of Eden: “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

**Freedom, according to the sexual revolutionaries, essentially separates man’s spirit from his body.** Kinsey, and others like him, rejected the idea that the body was a sacred dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. To the sexual revolutionaries, sex wasn’t the means to procreate and further mankind. Rather, it was a universal impulse shared by all animals, which would be unnatural to fight. Accordingly, freedom to the sexual revolutionaries meant the freedom to choose how to act upon erotic, animalistic desires.

**In the Christian context, this definition of “freedom” is equivalent to disorientation, the state of being lost without a sense of direction. In the Christian tradition, sex has a *design* and a *purpose*. It is a gift.**

Contrary to popular myth, scripture teaches that God designed sex to bring joy to men and women, not shame and guilt. See, for instance, the instruction Solomon gives to his sons in [Proverbs 5](#):

Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Here, Solomon likens a spouse to a “cistern” and sexual desire to “water.” Of course, this implies that sexual desire is quite natural, much like water. In fact, other passages like Solomon 7 even teach how sexual attraction can be good because sexual attraction is oriented toward the objective beauty of a beloved.

But without proper structure, scripture teaches that sexual desire can cause disorder, much like water if allowed to flow out of a well and into the streets. Solomon was well aware that this disorder could produce angst, or even lead another “astray.” So he informs his sons that God created the monogamous marital union for our good, to maximize the joy that comes from sex and prevent any guilt, shame, or angst. [One biblical commentator writes as follows](#): “[T]rue freedom does not come by someone’s being liberated from marriage. **The truth is that genuine liberation comes in marriage. Marriage is a secure hedge that protects love as it grows. As love is nurtured, it produces freedom and fulfillment.**”

**But sexuality does not dictate our identity, nor does it dictate our ultimate calling. Scripture teaches that the identity of man, and the ultimate object of our desires, should be the way of God for our glorification.** “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:1-3).

**God’s purpose for sex, like anything else, is to be used in devotion to him. Its purpose is not to make us confused, or resolve ourselves to act as animals chasing instinct.** Indeed, [Paul says](#): “*I want you to be free from anxieties.* The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.”

Sexual confusion is not the only fruit of social disorder produced by the sexual revolution. Indeed, other scholars applied the degeneracy of Kinsey to gender, such as [Dr. John William Money](#), a Harvard University professor and the founder of the Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins University established in 1966. In a 2006 commemoration, the [New York Times](#) described Money as “an early proponent of sex reassignment surgery for men and women who believed that their biologically given sex was at odds with their sexual identity.” Money, the first to coin phrases like “gender identity,” endorsed methods that drove one patient [to suicide](#).

Transgender theory, or any dogma that views gender as an identity discovered on a spectrum for that matter, denies the Christian nature of man, the hylomorphic unity of body and spirit. Much like gnosticism, transgender theory sees the body as an impediment to be overcome so that an individual can embrace their “true” identity. But unlike gnostics, transgender theorists believe the body can be “fixed.” The body can be like an idol, an object shaped and tailored to the spiritual entity that inhabits it. Where the body is not “fixed,” others must simply be compelled to deny the body as governing another’s identity.





**The Church's approach to gender confusion should be two-fold. First,** it must root itself in the truth of our identity as humans; we are unique image-bearers of God. In the image of God, we are all equal in value. But God also created objective differences in humans to reflect His beautiful order, including the difference between men and women. This sexual difference is not *merely* a reflection of biology; it is also a reflection of spiritual identity. A "man" is not simply a "biological male." A "woman" is not simply a "biological female." Men and women are different in function, and possess unique callings based on their sexual difference.

Nonetheless, it can be difficult for Christians to communicate with others who struggle with a disordered view of their gender, and thus their own identity. The Church cannot help those who struggle in this way by affirming a false sense of gender identity. That affirmation only encourages confusion. Rather, Christians should think of themselves as compasses that God uses to direct those who are lost to true freedom. God allows all of us to suffer just as the Father allowed his Son to bear the cross. God uses suffering to perfect our character, making us more like Jesus with each day that passes. But Christians can fill a role like Joseph of Arimathea once did for Jesus during his suffering, reminding those who struggle with issues of identity that they do not bear their cross alone. The Church supports one another in our respective paths to follow God's calling in our lives. All of us, in some way, need encouragement, and that can be as simple as reminding others about the ultimate end God has in store for them—their glory.

### *H. Marriage & Family*

One of the biggest cultural myths in modern America is that the individual is the foundational building block of society. This, however, is fundamentally incorrect; erroneously begotten from a philosophy that elevates the will of man to a higher place than where God's word commands. **In fact, the fundamental building block of society is the family.**

"Society," as we know it, could never even exist if the individual were its foundation. At the dawn of creation, God said it is "not good for [Adam] to be alone."<sup>21</sup> Thus, he made Eve, from whom came the ancestors of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. No society would exist but for the union of Adam and Eve. In other words, "society" exists because humans are instinctively fruitful within the bonds of marriage, creating family; we multiply, just as God commanded us in Genesis 1.<sup>22</sup> **Without family as a culture's foundation, there can be no society.**

For thousands of years, philosophers have affirmed the truth of Scripture, including those without an expressly Christian background. For instance, the Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that a "[society](#)" was not simply an aggregate of individuals. Rather, Aristotle viewed "society" like an organism, a thing unified into a whole for the common good and flourishing of all who are part of the whole. Aristotle's view isn't an esoteric understanding; it's grounded in basic logic. **It is rooted in the principle that one should never "[miss the forest for the trees.](#)"**

---

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 2: 18

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 1: 27-28



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Given that society cannot exist without family as its foundation, Christians must confront a question that is highly controversial in modern America, but remains profoundly important: What is “family”?

Family, like all things created by God, is given a design by its Creator. God does not view humans as pets or puppets; the Bible tells us that we are *his children, his family*. The apostle John communicates this clearly: “But to all who did receive him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”<sup>23</sup> By the finished work of the cross, our Father in Heaven sees us just like His one and only Son Jesus Christ.

If Christians are called “children of God,” thus grafted into God’s family, then inherent to God’s design for “family” is its procreative feature. Procreation, in the biblical context, follows the union between husband and wife in marriage; and the essence of that relationship on earth is no different in its spiritual context. The apostle Paul explains this truth in his letter to the Ephesians.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*<sup>24</sup>

Too often, actors hostile to Christianity invoke this verse to accuse the Church of upholding a “patriarchal” or “sexist” belief system which subordinates women to men. This could not be a more incorrect interpretation of Paul’s analogy likening the relationship between a husband and a wife to Christ and His church.

In Ephesians, the Bible describes the Church in two ways with respect to marriage: (1) The bride to the Lord Jesus Christ and (2) “*the body*” of Christ.<sup>25</sup> The love Christ shows His bride, the Church, is how He treats “His body.” It is a manner of love that transcends even the golden rule. Not only does Christ treat us as we ought to be treated; He treats us better than we deserve; He shows His faithful Church a love that befits Himself. That is why the book of Revelation describes the faithful as follows: “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also

---

<sup>23</sup> John 1: 12-13

<sup>24</sup> See Ephesians 5: 22-33.

<sup>25</sup> See Ephesians 1: 22-23.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne." Those faithful to Christ, as part of "his body" and bride, rule with Him in Heaven.

In 1 Corinthians 6:17, Paul makes this point in another way: "But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him." The faithful Church, as the bride to the perfect Lamb of God, becomes one spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ because He grants them the right to rule with Him. **By the finished work of the cross, Christ will restore His created order so that He will rule with his family.**

Just as Christ and His Church become one in spirit, a husband and wife become one flesh:

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become *one flesh*. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.<sup>26</sup>

The marital union between husband and wife is the basis for the family because of its procreative capacity, both materially and spiritually.

Today, America's cultural elites attempt to redefine marriage, and the family by extension, with a vacuous tautology: "love is love." This tautology can be applied to justify nearly anything depending on the context in which the statement is made; to "love" pancakes or to "love" reading classical literature is not the same as to "love" your spouse. The first two denote satisfaction. Pancakes satisfy our hunger as a base appetite; reading classical literature satisfies a higher hunger for knowledge as a good.

Loving your spouse, unlike loving food or literature, is to provide and care for the other regardless of your appetites or desires. To love your spouse is to subordinate your own desires, whether they be rooted in base or higher appetites, for their well-being. This love is deeply sacrificial. **Even when love is properly understood in this way, it is still not sufficient to constitute "marriage."** A mother, for instance, can "love" her sister, brother, or child in the fullest sense of "love." But it would corrode the unique composition of the family to suggest that this love single-handedly justifies a marriage between any one of them. **Love is necessary, but not sufficient for marriage.**

The whole of society rests upon the building block of family, and family begins with marriage. **God's design for marriage is inextricably linked to its spiritual and material procreative capacity between man and a woman.** Even when a wife and husband cannot themselves procreate, their union remains the basis for the growth of God's family. While adopting children and loving one another as Christ loves His Church, the two can grow God's family.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon bemoans that the fruits of his labor have no real permanence, leaving no lasting legacy. As such, Solomon expresses a profound but harrowing realization about the responsibility of parents. He questioned, how are we to cultivate the world successfully from one generation to the next if all the work we do must be "[left] to the man who comes after me, and

---

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 19: 5-6



# GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

who knows whether he will be wise or a fool?" The answer: the direction our children go will determine the direction of the world.

This deepens the profound responsibility of the parent and the role of the family. Parents can foster a home that's like the first garden, where a weak Adam failed to protect his family and a deceived Eve allowed worldly lies to poison her mind and the mind of her family. But parents can also craft a home as God intended it to be—an outpost of God's kingdom, where the family worships God together and children are cultivated by attentive parents to become like "tree[s] planted by streams of water, that [yield] fruit in its season" (Psa. 1:3).

No good can be created in isolation; we are designed by God as social beings. We are best nurtured in the confines of a loving family. From there, society can be built and can flourish.

## I. Parental Rights

In common parlance, "rights" can be understood to describe all kinds of legal protections afforded to individuals. "Rights" can mean political participation in democratic governance, i.e. "voting rights." "Rights" can also mean protections granted by positive law to citizens because of their equal status under the law, i.e. "[civil rights](#)." But sometimes, "rights" are based on higher, more authoritative philosophical considerations, i.e. "inalienable rights."

For instance, the philosopher John Locke [argued](#) that "property rights" must be recognized by the government because just claims of land ownership are inherent in the laws of nature. Shelter is essential to survival, and the ability of the individual to freely tender their land and develop their abode is essential to human flourishing.

"Parental rights" are different. They do not belong to all individuals by virtue of their status as individuals. Rather, parental rights are only active in certain conditions and result from an *authority* granted by a superior. In the [Book of Exodus](#), God inscribes the authority of parents to direct the upbringing of their children in the Ten Commandments: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." Moreover, [Proverbs 22:6](#) instructs parents to "[t]rain up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." The New Testament affirms parental authority in the apostle Paul's letter to the [Ephesians](#): "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Scripture speaks strongly about parents who abuse or neglect their authority as the caretakers of their children in [1 Timothy](#): "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." **Parents have the right to direct their children's upbringing because of the authority granted to them by God. However, Scripture is clear that parents who neglect or abuse their authority deny their faith.**

Because Scripture makes clear that parents possess the **authority** to raise their children, and thus the right to direct their child's upbringing in accordance with Scripture, the State ultimately lacks that same authority. The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed that authority on numerous occasions.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

In the 1972 case *Stanley v. Illinois*, the Court [held](#) that “the custody, care and nurture of the child reside first in the parents, whose primary function and freedom include preparation for obligations the state can neither supply nor hinder.” That principle only reaffirmed what the Court ruled fifty years prior in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*: “The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. **The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.**”

At a basic level, this means that parents must be empowered with “school choice,” the right to choose alternative education for their children over public education. This includes homeschooling, private school, religious schooling, and the like. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court has [made clear](#) that affording this choice to non-religious parents while denying it to others solely because of their religion violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

Parental authority does not only encompass where and how they choose to educate their children. Today, public schools are enacting policies to [hide information from parents](#) about their children’s schooling, including teachings associated with critical theory and gender identity politics. Perhaps even most shocking, some school district policies include shielding information about a child’s “chosen gender identity” from parents. These policies and programs fly in the face of scripture’s grant of parental authority. Indeed, in the words of [ADF Ministry Alliance](#), “parents have a God-given and constitutionally-protected right to know this information as they seek to direct the upbringing of their children.”

As parents become more aware of the sinister overreach of government authority in the realm of the instruction and upbringing of their children, some are speaking out in an effort to “reclaim” their parental rights. As a result, local law enforcement has allegedly [used its authority to target Christians and parents attending school board meetings](#). This begs the question, where are the checks and balances to limit government’s encroachment on the God-given authority parents have over the nurture and admonition of their own offspring?

**As we think critically about the created order, parental authority must be maintained in order to preserve America’s scheme of ordered liberty, not only because it is the moral prerequisite to our nation’s system of self-government, but because we are commanded to build the Earth in accordance with God’s design.**

### *J. Economy*

Since the 1992 presidential campaign, commentators have almost always summarized the most important election issue as follows: “[It’s the economy, stupid!](#)” But this phrase only seeks to explain *what* is on Americans’ minds; it does not explain the question of *why* the economy is so important. The answer to *why* cannot simply be measured by whether Americans can survive. That would be the equivalent of judging a person’s happiness solely on their physical ability to breathe. Instead, it is measured by whether or not Americans can flourish. How one *flourishes* and



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

what role the economy has in that process are moral questions; ones that biblical principles can answer.

**At a most fundamental level, Christians believe that the Earth belongs to God.** As the Lord said in the days of [Job](#), “[w]hatever is under the whole heaven is mine.” This proclamation isn’t a metaphor. It is a literal, righteous declaration of God’s ownership and authoritative control over everything we label with price tags. As [Haggai 2:8](#) says, “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts.” To this day, God provides for his creation. [James 1:17](#) tells us that “[e]very good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Whether it be in the Lord’s perfect or permissive will, the material bounties of nations and individual persons exist because of Him. One anonymous writer summarized all these verses the following way: “Everything one has is on loan from God.”

In this light, our relationship to God’s created order on Earth resembles the relationship of a [legal trust](#). Christians are the “stewards” of the Earth and everything within it for God’s glory, not its owners. As Jesus explains in the parable of the Talents, those who cultivate what God gives him are the “[good and faithful servants](#)” whom He gives the right to “[e]nter into the joy of [our] master,” the kingdom of Heaven.

When this principle is combined with the understanding that the Kingdom of Heaven is one family in Christ, then the Church should advocate for an economic culture for the flourishing of families. If families thrive, then humanity grows as God commanded in Genesis. If humanity grows, then humanity positions itself to subdue the Earth for God’s glory.

In fact, this economic approach is supported by the very word “economy,” which derives from two [Greek words](#): “oikos,” meaning “household,” and “nemein,” meaning “management.” When combined, these terms form the root word of economy: “oikonomia,” meaning the management of households. The Greek conception of “[economy](#)” developed from its understanding of political communities [“*polis*”], or city-states. In the [Aristotelian tradition](#), societies grew and flourished much like an organism – when its “cells” were well-ordered. Economics was the means by which the “cells” of a society – households – flourished. When those cells thrive, so too does the organism or society as a whole. The Greeks described this state of flourishing as “[eudaimonia](#),” true happiness.

As one political scientist notes, the ancient Greek philosophy believed that “the main task of economic rationality is to advance the good life.” The closest modern American analog to the Greek conception of “household” is the family as God designed. The main task of the Church is to advance the Kingdom of Heaven, to declare the good news of the gospel that there is *eternal* life with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, this is not the uniform view of cultural elites in American culture. For instance, in 2023, the multinational technology company Apple announced its “2030” environmental plan with a video titled, “[Mother Nature](#).” In it, Apple’s “board” awaits a meeting with “Mother Nature,” a nature spirit that travels to the company’s headquarters in the wind and leaves. After sitting herself at the head of the board table, Mother Nature says, “This is my third corporate



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

responsibility gig today. So, who wants to disappoint me first?" Employees repeatedly list several acts of devotion to earn her favor—or more specifically to be spared from her wrath—but are chided for speaking out of turn. Minutes go by, and CEO Tim Cook finally pledges that all the company's products will have a net zero climate impact by 2030. "They better," Mother Nature says while staring down Cook. "They will," he responds. To that, Mother Nature spares her wrath, but warns, "Don't disappoint your mother."

As well-intentioned as the plan may be, this worldview does not place humanity in the role of steward. It places us in the role of servant whose object of devotion is a false god, one only satisfied by the adequacy of our conduct, not by a heart of love and the fruits thereof. We are God's servant; we do not belong to the world, but to Him. This is why [Christ says](#), "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Generosity and charity are the fruits of the faithful who love God, not items within a checklist to perfect ourselves so as to avoid the wrath of a false god. For the Christian virtue of charity to be truly observed, the government must, at times, abstain from using its coercive powers. If on every matter the government compelled charity, then charity would devolve into taxation. In fact, compelled charity is not so charitable at all!

**Scripture also speaks to another economic subject—a balanced budget.** As an ethical matter, balanced budgets cannot be justified by the mere desire to accumulate money. As the apostle Paul writes in [1 Timothy](#), "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils." This verse, often misquoted as "money is the root of all evil" has led to a poor theology of money and wealth. No, it is not the currency in and of itself that is evil. It is the love of money, the idolatry of money, which is admonished by the Scripture.

The pursuit of money for its own sake is to serve [mammon](#), and Christ [makes clear](#) that "[n]o one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

The Christian conception of balanced budgets is rooted in the spiritual gift of [wisdom](#). In [Ephesians 5](#), the apostle Paul writes, "[l]ook carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." On an individual level, "wisdom" encompasses the gift of discernment, an understanding to know what is good. [Stoic philosophers](#) viewed wisdom as one of the four cardinal virtues, along with justice, courage, and temperance. The Roman statesman [Cicero](#) believed wisdom was "the foremost of all virtues ... for by [it] ... we understand ... the practical knowledge of things to be sought for and of things to be avoided." Cicero [even believed](#) wisdom was a spiritual "knowledge of things human and divine, which is concerned also with the bonds of union between gods and men and the relations of man to man."

Biblical wisdom is far superior to even the Stoic and Roman conceptions. [As Jesus said to his apostles](#) forewarning of the persecution and interrogations they would face, "settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for **I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.**"



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Proverbs 9:10-12 states “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.”

On the national level, this includes operating as good stewards within the bounds of money gained through taxation. If the government spends more than what is collected through just taxation, then it either risks the detriment and suffering of its constituents or a national debt to foreign lenders. Although God may use a state of debt to strengthen the nation, it should not be construed as a good in and of itself. Otherwise, the will of temporary regimes can be elevated above the *raison d'être* for the [American Republic](#)—“to establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

A nation operating with biblical wisdom in the sphere of economics and finance leads to many years and great reward as alluded to in Proverbs. Operating without, makes the nation a slave and debtor.

### *K. Good Government & Religious Freedom*

The [First Amendment](#) to the Constitution, though only containing forty-five words, is often cited as a pillar for protecting Americans' most fundamental freedoms. In its own words, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” It is not an understatement to say that the First Amendment’s ratification in 1791 marked a revolutionary departure from the practices of history, especially those that dominated Western civilization before Christianity.

But in the span of America’s existence, this amendment’s true meaning and significance have been forgotten, replaced with a myth begotten from secular classical liberalism. Modern dogmas like “the Separation of Church and State” and “Free Speech Absolutism” deconstruct the profound moral canvas upon which the First Amendment is written, perverting its original intent and morphing its words to be outright antagonistic to Christianity.

#### **A. Christ gave the Apostles the spiritual authority of “the Keys” to the Kingdom of Heaven. God also gave civil authorities the power to bear the “Sword.” When government attempts to claim both authorities, religious freedom is threatened.**

According to a [2021 Pew Research Survey](#), at least a majority of Americans support the “separation of Church and State.” This phrase never appears in the Constitution, but proponents of the “separationist” doctrine still argue that their principle can be derived from Thomas Jefferson’s historical letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. Before reading the text of the letter, it's important to understand the historical context behind the letter, just as a modern person would follow the news of the day before submitting an article for publication in a newspaper. Context is key.





## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Virginia, Jefferson's home state, was first founded as an English colony in 1607, chartered by the then-reigning Stuart monarch [King James I](#) and operated by the Virginia Company. During this time, the English Kings claimed powers unlike any other King in the Western World, beginning first with [King Henry VIII](#) in the sixteenth century. Because he was unable to produce a male heir with his first wife Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII asked then Pope Clement VII to annul his marriage so he could marry another lover – Anne Boleyn. The Pope [denied](#) the request, but Henry VIII was determined to end his marriage. To that end, Henry defied the Church's authority on the matter, ending England's connection with the Church. Shortly thereafter, the English Parliament passed the "[Act of Supremacy](#)" in 1534, proclaiming Henry VIII "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England."

Henry VIII's claim was not only unprecedented in the history of Christendom, it was antithetical to the teaching of Jesus Christ. In [Mark 12](#), Christ says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." In no uncertain terms, Jesus teaches us that the State and the Church are two distinct and different authorities. The apostle Paul later elaborates on this difference in [Romans 13](#), explaining that government is "the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer." To do so, God gives government the power of the "**sword**." By contrast, Christ gives a profoundly different authority to His apostles while addressing Peter: "I will give you the **keys** of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed[d] in heaven."

By declaring himself the head of the Church of England, King Henry VIII claimed to wear a crown that vested him both the powers of **the sword** and **the keys**. No longer did the Church and the State occupy different roles, according to Henry VIII. He, and his heirs, possessed all temporal and spiritual authority – that is until his family line, the House of Tudor, ended less than sixty years after his death.

In 1603, the English Crown then passed on to King James VI of Scotland, the head of the House of Stuart, giving him the title of [King James I of England](#). Three years after Virginia was founded as an English colony, James I delivered a [speech](#) to Parliament that claimed absolute authority to rule by divine right: "The State of Monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth: For Kings are not only God's Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods."

Over time, James I grew dissatisfied with the Virginia Company's operation of the colony and eventually decided to [revoke](#) its charter in 1624. The territory became a complete royal colony and [maintained the established Church of England](#), the Episcopal Church, through the lifetime of Thomas Jefferson. The established Church's authority, and the King's authority by extension, was threatened during the "[Great Awakening](#)," a period of religious revival in the colonies among many denominations between the 1720s and 1740s. Royal officials [arrested](#) many non-Episcopal pastors in Virginia on charges of preaching without a license.

Jefferson, a scholar who founded the University of Virginia, understood the old English conception of "Church" brought about by Henry VIII and led the [charge to end it](#). His record on religious liberty earned him praise from many, including religious minorities like the Connecticut



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Danbury Baptist Association. After Jefferson's victory in the presidential election of 1800, the Danbury Baptists wrote him a letter, asking that he publicly denounce Connecticut's state constitution for its failure to fully protect their religious practices.

"[W]hat religious privileges we enjoy (as a minor part of the State) we enjoy as favors granted, and not as inalienable rights: and these favors we receive at the expense of such degrading acknowledgements as are inconsistent with the rights of freemen," they [wrote](#). "Sir, we are sensible that the President of the united States, is not the national Legislator, & also sensible that the national government cannot destroy the Laws of each State; but our hopes are strong that the sentiments of our beloved President, which have had such genial Effect already, like the radiant beams of the Sun, will shine & prevail through all these States and all the world till Hierarchy and tyranny be destroyed from the Earth."

According to a [report](#) from a Library of Congress exhibition curator, Jefferson "labored" over his response. He sent a proposed draft to two political figures in his Cabinet, a Connecticut Postmaster General, and Massachusetts Attorney General Levi Lincoln. Jefferson attached a cover letter alongside his draft to Lincoln to explain his reasons for responding to the religious group, reasons that included political objectives. The letter was a way for Jefferson to [state](#) "why [he] did not proclaim fastings & thanksgivings, as my predecessors did."

Unlike George Washington and John Adams, Jefferson declined to issue any presidential proclamations to declare a day of "Thanksgiving." In his own [words](#), Jefferson said he "refrained from prescribing even those occasional performances of devotion" because they were "religious exercises" authorized "[by the Executive of another nation as the legal head of its church](#)," an obvious implication to the British crown.

One historian [writes](#) that Jefferson's draft to the Danbury Baptist Association makes clear his "refus[al] to continue a *British* practice that was an offense to republicanism." Indeed, Jefferson's unedited draft uses language to contrast the distinct authorities possessed by the Church and the government, the biblical teaching known throughout Christendom before King Henry VIII. "[C]onfining myself therefore to the duties of my station, which are merely **temporal**, be assured that your religious rights shall never be infringed by any act of mine and that," Jefferson wrote.

Jefferson ultimately limited the letter's scope to avoid political controversy, eliminating any discussion of prayer and thanksgiving. Instead, Jefferson settled with the following language:

"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the *legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions*, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State."

Read in the proper historical context, Jefferson's view on the Establishment Clause abhors King Henry VIII's fusion of church and governmental authority in his crown, a position that defied



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

Scripture and the standard of Christendom. **The “keys” belong to the Church, the bride to the Lord Jesus Christ; the “sword” belongs to the government, a servant to God.**

Despite this history, many leading cultural figures insist that the First Amendment simply enshrines a form of modern, secular liberalism. Carl Sagan [summarizes](#) this approach in the following way: “Christianity may be good and Satanism evil. Under the Constitution, however, both are neutral. This is an important, but difficult, concept for many law enforcement officers to accept. They are paid to uphold the penal code, not the Ten Commandments.”

Sagan’s argument is wrong for many reasons. As a historical matter, the penal code of all fifty states criminalize several prohibitions within the Ten Commandments to this day, including murder, theft, and perjury. As late as 2014, over [twenty States](#) in the Union criminalized adultery. The U.S. Supreme Court also affirmed the constitutionality of State Sabbath statutes in [McGowan v. Maryland](#), laws that require businesses to cease all business operations. Although the Court acknowledged the religious roots of these laws, it nonetheless reasoned that their secular benefits and purposes were too great to offend the Establishment Clause. Moreover, many States, including those with no established Church, even [criminally prohibited blasphemy](#).

The secular liberal might be willing to concede all this history and still normatively argue that the First Amendment ought to be construed to promote secular liberalism. In other words, some may argue that, as a moral principle, it is better to have American society freed from any religious influence. **In that case, the Church must boldly declare that God’s will as revealed in Scripture to be morally and authoritatively superior to the will of secular liberalism. If the latter conflicts with God’s perfect moral law, then we must echo the words of Christ’s apostles in [Acts 5](#): “We must obey God rather than men.”**

**Today, the Church must use its standing in American culture to restore the confidence of all God’s faithful to joyfully proclaim the perfect love of our Father in Heaven. Religious freedom is a means to an end—that end is to building the Kingdom of God.** It is not a secular liberal dogma to “equalize” evil with good. It is the means by which God’s faithful have the right to spread the good news of the gospel. It is a vehicle through which we commune together to remember the finished work of the cross. Religious freedom is the mechanism by which the light of God’s Truth conquers darkness.

**B. Free Speech is the mechanism by which Americans can realize and discuss the good, true, and beautiful according to God’s perfect will. Governments become tyrannical when they suppress free speech as the means for this biblical end.**

The freedom of speech, which includes [protections for the press](#), is one of the most recognizable liberties secured by the First Amendment. According to a [2022 survey](#), approximately 90% of Americans believe that “protecting free speech is an important part of American democracy” and that “people should be allowed to express unpopular opinions.” Beyond that, however, Americans sharply disagree about how the freedom of speech applies to modern cultural issues. How the freedom of speech *should* be understood and applied are ethical issues that the Church must confront.



## GOD'S DESIGN FOR HUMANITY, CULTURE, AND GOVERNMENT

A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW SERIES

First, Christians believe that God created human beings with free will. Saint Augustine, a Church Father, [explained that humanity's "free will" is realized by the nature of God's moral law](#):

Now wherever it is said, "Do not do this," and "Do not do that," and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. **No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself.** Nor does it detract at all from a man's own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly; then, too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, He shall reward every man according to his works. ' Matthew 16:27'

Human beings, possessing a free will, can choose to use their speech for good or for evil. Given this principle, Scripture consistently elevates the moral content of speech over the freedom one has to speak. The apostle Paul explains the distinction in [1 Corinthians](#): "'I have the right to do anything,' you say – but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything' – but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others."

**In short, biblical principle does not endorse the freedom of speech as a positive good in and of itself.** In fact, even Enlightenment philosophers who believed the freedom of speech to be a good in and of itself imposed significant limitations on this freedom. For instance, the English philosopher John Locke, who historians largely recognize as a [major influential figure](#) on America's founding fathers, [argued](#) that atheists should not possess this freedom. In his "[Letter Concerning Toleration](#)," Locke wrote that, "[p]romises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all; besides also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion, can have no pretense of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a toleration."

**Without limitations, freedom breeds chaos.** Biblical principles cannot coexist within a culture that, for example, were to adopt the standards of Enlightenment philosopher [Denis Diderot](#), who argued that freedom means the destruction of Church and governmental authority: "If mankind dared but to listen to the voice of his heart ... He would say to us ... I seek neither to rule nor to serve. And his hands would weave the entrails of the priest, for the lack of a cord with which to strangle kings," Diderot wrote. That worldview is strikingly similar to the words of Satan in John Milton's [Paradise Lost](#): "Better to reign in hell than serve in Heaven."

In the proper Christian context, "[free speech](#)" means that "Americans have the freedom to [say] what is good," true, or beautiful. When the government uses its powers of the sword to prevent Americans from speaking in this way, it becomes tyrannical. **Free speech is the means by which Americans can realize the truth of God's Word and moral law through our speech. But in order for someone to fully realize the truth of the Bible, the Church must advocate for mercy – prudential toleration of certain bad ideas so that the heart of our culture more closely aligns to God's will.**



### CONCLUSION

These expressed positions from the Center for Christian Statesmanship are *not* offered simply because they are preferable, or even because we believe them to be correct. Yes, we believe in the fundamental and unchanging truth of the gospel and posit that our positions—insofar as they accord with Scripture—are unchanging and forever true due to the inerrancy and supremacy of Scripture. However, our commitment to these positions carries a far greater purpose.

Everything “seen and unseen,” as the Nicene Creed puts it, has been designed according to the purpose of God. If something is designed, this means it was constructed to fulfill a purpose. By living within God’s design for us, and by extension, shaping the world around us to function within God’s purpose for his full creation, we may bring about human flourishing.

This means the most loving thing we can do for our fellow man and the most constructive thing we can do for our community is to advocate for God’s design in all things. These positions are expressed in a commitment to Christ as Lord of all, with a heart for all people designed in God’s image. May we seek to serve the common good and promote justice and righteousness, always guided by faith in Jesus Christ.

