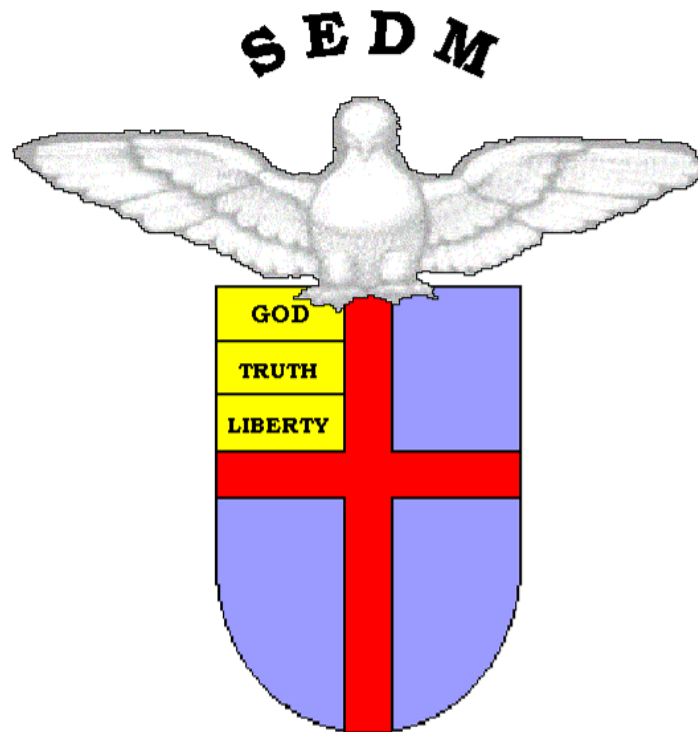


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“Christian Citizenship”
(The Role of a Christian in Society)

April , 2002

Revised and Expanded

Volume II

Class Sessions #1-#42

Instructor Detailed Notes

(Does not contain Student Outlines and Handouts)

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Volume II

Class Sessions #1-#42
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To the teacher: greetings in the Name of our Great Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The cover letter to Volume I of this set summarizes the intent of these lessons. In short, it is to equip believers to be effective Christian citizens in this land by engaging the culture on topics of interest and importance to all of us. It is not the intent to overshadow the gospel, or remove its primacy as our great and high calling in this world. The intent is only to equip Christians to fulfill their multi-faceted calling as salt and light

This Volume contains the detailed notes that an instructor will need in order to lead a student through the outlines and handouts provided in Volume I. It does not contain a copy of the material the student will have, since that would create a Volume too large and cumbersome to handle easily. I trust this approach does not cause excessive difficulties for any who wish to use this material in a teaching environment.

One word of caution, you may not agree with the approach or conclusions in some of these lessons. Don't let that prevent you from using what will be useful for you as you see fit. Virtually all of these topics are controversial and can easily create divisiveness if not handled in a gentle manner. As you work through the material, keep in mind that my approach is intended to exemplify Prov 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” If you have comments or suggestions for improvements, please feel free to let me know.

May God receive the glory in all that we do.

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Topical Outline & Syllabus For a Series on "Christian Citizenship"

(Subtitle: The Role of a Christian in Society)

Updated March, 2002

Part 1: Basics

1. Introduction (Matt 5:13-16)

"Overview of class purpose, content and assumptions. Are Christians responsible for the current state of affairs in this country? What does salt and light mean?"

2. Christian World View (Part 1) (2 Cor 10:3-5)

"What is a Christian worldview? Why do we not fight the fight and become involved in the issues of the day? What weapons does the Christian use? What does he use them against?"

3. Christian World View (Part 2) (1 Peter 4:7-11)

"We are living in the last days. Three eschatological views and their affect on our politics"

Part 2: Historical Overview

4. Brief Historical Perspective (The Blurring of Church and State)(Rom 15:4)

"Differences between Sacral nations, theocracies, and Christians in the spiritual kingdom of God. Short overview of church - state development from N.T. through Constantine, Catholic Church, Reformation, U.S. foundation, current Christian political movements"

5. Is this a Christian Country? (Part 1)(Foundational Period) (1 Cor 3:10-15)

"Why is it important to know whether this country was founded on Christian principles? Why would someone think this was a Christian country? Why not? The influence of Calvinist principles, Biblical commands, and Western thought. The Bible in the Declaration of Independence"

6. Is this a Christian Country? (Part 2)(Post Revolutionary War Period) (2 Cor 13:5)

"Is Christ the focus of this nation, or has it been in the past? The growth of Pietism, Darwinism, Humanism, Secularism, and the view of the Constitution"

Part 3: Roles

7. Role of Government (Rom 13:1-7)

"Where does authority come from? What is a Christians' role relative to government authority? What is government's role relative to it's citizens? "

8. Role of the Law (1 Tim 1:8-11)

"What is Biblical law? Is there a hierarchy to it? What is the purpose and rightful intent of Biblical law for the believer and unbeliever? What can we do relative to the laws of the land?"

9. Role of the Church (Eph 3:10-11)

"What are the church's general characteristics? What is it's role before spiritual and earthly powers? What is its role amongst believers, to the surrounding culture, and in equipping believers in society?"

10. Separation of Church and State (2 Cor 6:14-18)

"What does it mean to not be unequally yoked in a citizenship context? History of the 'Separation of Church and State' debate. What role can churches play in political activity?"

Part 4: Specific Issues

11. Welfare (Part 1)(1 Thess 5:14)

"What Biblical principles apply to this area? Historical perspective on American compassion. Historical observations from America's early years. Historical lessons learned. Tips when talking to non-believers"

12. Welfare (Part 2)(Prov 4:27)

"Biblical balance is needed. What happened in the United States - swerving to the right and the left. Modern trends in welfare and current status. What can we do?"

13. Homeless (Prov 21:13)

"God shows compassion for the homeless. Who are the poor? Who are the homeless? What Biblical principles govern a Christians' response to believing and non-believing homeless? Practical items"

14. Voting (Prov 11:14)

"The need for godly advice. What is a Christians' role? How should we select those to rule over us?"

15. Homosexuality (Part 1)(The Biblical View)(1 Cor 6:9-11)

"Can God redeem from this also? Is this sin any worse than any other? Biblical references and truths concerning homosexuality"

16. Homosexuality (Part 2)(Psalm 11:3)

"God's pattern for us. Is acceptance of homosexuality a sign of God's judgment? What tactics are employed by the gay community and what should our response be? What actions can we take?"

17. Animal Rights (Prov 12:10)

"Is this an important topic? What's our relationship to animals? Are animals important? Why were they created? Do animals have rights? Current animal rights theology. Will there be animals in heaven?"

18. Medical Ethics - Preliminaries (Psalm 139:14; Gen 1:26-27)

"God's truths are our sure source of answers. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our days are numbered. Sanctity of life. When does life begin? When does physical death occur?"

19. Euthanasia (Part 1)(Prov 31:6-7)

"Basic definitions. Selected statistics in this area. What secular reasons are given to justify euthanasia? What Biblical principles can be applied?"

20. Euthanasia (Part 2)(Prov 31:6-7)

"What is the difference between "ending life," "prolonging death," and "allowing to die?" What are "extraordinary methods?" What are some practical considerations about living wills?"

21. Taxes (Rom 13:6-7)

"What Biblical principles apply to taxation, tithes and freewill offerings? What principles should guide secular governments? Income tax history in the US. What can we do?"

22. Capital Punishment (Rom 13:2-4)

"Why this is a controversial subject? Common reasons to justify capital punishment. What Biblical principles apply? Some historical notes on the subject. What should Christians do?"

23. Gambling – Some Biblical Principles (Prov 28:20)

"Historical background. What constitutes gambling? Some statistics, current trends, and net effects. What Biblical principles apply and what fundamental issues are at stake. Is gambling a sin?"

24. Extraterrestrials (2 Cor 11:1-4; 2 Thess 2:9-10)

"Why this is an important topic? Explanations offered by the world. Biblical perspective, including why the universe is so large, the role of Satan, occult and "New Age" associations and our response"

25. Movies and TV (Psalm 119:37)

"What Biblical principles apply to these very influential forms of entertainment?" What hidden dangers should we be aware of? What positive aspects are there? What are some practical things we can do?"

26. New Genetics/Genetic Engineering (Gen 1:11-12; 24-25)

"What is rDNA and cloning? Are transgenic organisms here today? Should man create new species? What Biblical principles apply to this exploding area of technology? What should Christians do?"

27. Abortion (Gen 1:26a,27)

"The abortion issue frames clearly the way of Satan (death) and the way of Christ (life). When does human life begin? Is the Pro-Life movement new? Arguments & rebuttals. What can we do?"

28. Christian Financial Solicitations (2 Cor 10:3-5)

"Are Para-Church organizations justified? Do Christian organizations sometimes use the weapons the world uses in order to achieve their goals? How should we be good stewards of God's gifts to us?"

29. Environmentalism (Rom 8:20-21)

"What are the roots of today's environmental movement? Are Christians to blame for the current problems? What Biblical principles apply to contemporary issues? What, if anything should we do?"

30. Art (Phil 4:8)

"What is art? Does God condone or condemn it? What basic questions should we ask ourselves about art? What are the current controversies concerning government involvement in art?"

31. Justice (Prov 17:15; 24:23-25)

"Justice is the foundation of any society - what is our based upon? Biblical justice addresses at least three relationships. What has affected how justice is applied in this country? What impact can we have?"

32. Is There a Just War? (Eph 6:11-12)

"Will war ever cease? Have there ever been just wars? Are there any now? What does the N.T. say about war? How did "Just War" theory develop? Should Christians participate in wars, just or not?"

33. Creation/Evolution (Ex 20:11; 31:17)

"Are theories of origins provable? How many are there? Does Genesis 1 have to be read and interpreted literally? Can evolution and the creation account be reconciled? What is the big deal?"

34. Illegal Aliens (Prov 18:23)

"What is a proper Christian response to illegal aliens within this country? What responsibility do we have to help those from other countries that are less fortunate? What is the proper governmental role?"

35. Jury Duty (Prov 17:15)

"Should Christians be jurors? What is the Biblical approach to justice in this world? How did the jury develop into our present system? Is jury nullification a valid Biblical principle?"

36. Hate Crimes (Matt 22:37-39)

"Are Hate Crimes just PC, or is there a Biblical basis for them? What principles should govern the application of justice? What implications come from a Hate Crimes mentality? What do we do?"

37. Multi-Culturalism (Gal 3:27-28)

"What is the Multi-Cultural movement? Are all who oppose multi-culturalism racist? Are we becoming Balkanized? What're the implications of the multi-cultural movement and what is a Christian response?"

38. Gun Control (Eph 6:10-12)

"Biblically, can we defend ourselves with lethal force? What Biblical arguments are used to reject gun ownership? What should be a Christian's response to gun control legislation?"

39. Stem Cells (Rom 3:8)

"What exactly is a stem cell? Are frozen embryos human beings? Is the "in vitro" fertilization process justifiable? How do Biblical sanctity of life principles apply to this issue? What are we to do?"

40. Slavery (Eph 6:5-9)

"What does the Bible teach concerning slavery? Is the practice of slavery condoned or condemned in scripture? Does slavery still exist in the world? Why is this topic germane to us today?"

41. Prayer in Government Schools (Matt 6:9-13; 1 Thess 5:17-18)

"What are the arguments for and against prayer in government schools? What legal actions are being tried? What historical insights exist? What position should a Christian take on this issue?"

42. Near Death Experiences (2 Cor 12:2-5)

"Are NDE's something Christians should be knowledgeable about, or just write off as New Age? Are there Biblical examples of NDE? Is an NDE validated if it results in a person coming to Christ?"

Session #1: Introduction (Detailed Notes)

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men"
(Matt 5:13; also Mk 9:50 & Luke 14:34,35)*

*"You are the light of the world. A city on the hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"
(Matt 5:14-16)*

Purpose of this Session: Overview the purpose of this class, the general assumptions in it and how citizenship relates to being Salt and Light in this Nation

- o Warnings (this can be a controversial class)
- o General outline of all sessions
- o Basic class assumptions
- o Understanding salt and light in the context of this class
- o Homework assignments
- o **Q: What are your expectations from this class? (Why are you here?)**
- o **Q: Is the moral condition of the nation getting worse, better, or staying the same? Why?**
 - o Are we reaping the punishment for prior sins of the church?
 - o Is God shaming His people into action (evangelism; equipping own families; sense of urgency; uphold God's standard of righteousness; break out of a "holy huddle")?
 - o Is God preparing this country as He did Nineveh in the O.T. (How about Jonah)?

1. Introduction: Are Christians responsible for the current state of affairs in this country?

- o Answer is both "yes" and "no"
 - o Christians are not personally to blame for evil gaining a stranglehold on this country
 - o Everything that happens is within God's sovereign will;
but
 - o A weak church withdraws from society and the giving of a clear proclamation of the gospel, or identifies with the society and becomes of no effect
also
 - o Just as David's sons became rebellious through lack of restraint placed on them, so removing Biblical truths, examples and principles from the marketplace allows evil to flourish more readily with consequences for all of us (Also Samuel's sons)
- o I believe we have dual citizenship (God's kingdom; this nation), and as such we have both vertical and horizontal citizenship duties and responsibilities. The question is how to do this?

2. Fundamental question in this class: How to equip each other to be godly citizens (salt and light); and to live with dual citizenship in this world?(horizontal - citizen of this nation; vertical - citizen of heaven)

- o How do we as a church equip people to be missionaries and to evangelize?
 - o Teach classes
 - o Prayer
 - o Giving examples
 - o Prepare the person
 - o Manuals
 - o Become bold
 - o Study culture
 - o Friendship; opportunity; cold; bridge; hospitality;...(evangelism techniques)
 - o **What do we do to equip each other to be godly citizens?**
 - o Preaching message
 - o Encouraging others to do so
 - o Test in the field
 - o Books
 - o Detailed Bible study
 - o Develop the correct attitude
 - o Raise finances
 - o Films
 - o Videos
 - o Reasoning skills
 - o Communication skills
 - o Learn apologetics
 - o Study language
 - o Detailed plans

- o To be equipped we must know what we are trying to do any why
 - o What is the Biblical mandate to be an active citizen in this land?
 - o If there's a Biblical mandate, how do we accomplish what God would want us to do?
 - o "Citizenship" entails the conduct of a citizen of a nation (or kingdom), and the duties, rights and privileges associated with this status. "Christian" citizenship involves the active exercise of these duties, rights and privileges from a Biblical worldview
 - o Duties: Obey God Obey the law
 - o Rights: Freedom in Christ Freedom of speech, vote, press, etc.
 - o Privileges: Serve God Serve others
 - o There are three types of people in the land: elect (and know it); non-elect (hate the elect); and elect (don't know it yet) (See **Handout: The World in Three Groups (Diagram)**)
- o In general, we will address how to:
 - o Develop a common, consistent Christian worldview to guide our activities
 - o Assist government in its God ordained role (maintain peace, punish evil, commend good)
 - o Assist in restraining evil that is so prevalent and preserve justice
 - o Chose godly leaders for positions of authority over us (rare privilege in this world and history)
 - o Hold leaders to a godly standard of accountability
 - o Hold up God's standard in the public arena to bring conviction to man's conscience to choose good and not evil (God's common grace; **Rom 2:14-15**)
 - o Pray for this nation (**Jer 29:7**) and its leaders (**1 Tim 2:1-4**)
 - o Encourage the free spread and application of the gospel message
 - o Do the good we know we ought to do for God's glory (**James 4:17**) in society
 - o Reason with this secular society to convince them that evil leads to destruction
 - o Expose wickedness (**Eph 5:11**)
 - o Equip each other to be good citizens in this land
- o In going about this we know this can be a controversial class:
 - o Many Christians do not believe this is a pertinent subject to address (there are other classes!)
 - o The range of interest in citizenship runs from total Apathy to very vigorous Activism
 - o This will not be a sequential expository teaching or preaching of a book of the Bible (topical)
 - o This will not be a detailed, in depth theological treatment of selected portions of scripture
 - o There is no intention to offend or create major arguments (though you will be challenged)
 - o We will not create a Political Action Committee (PAC) (though you may form one)
 - o Many of the personal implications may be controversial, with strong differences of opinion!
 - o No man knows all the answers, but God does
 - o Everyone has "hobby horses" - be careful in addressing them (**Rom 14**)
 - o This is not to make you feel guilty that you are not doing enough
 - o This is not to discourage you - problems/issues can become overwhelming if we let them
- o Many of the issues addressed will be wisdom issues and not detailed Biblical mandates!

3. General outline of the entire class (five sections)(see Handout: Syllabus)

- o Section 1: Introduction, basic assumptions, aspects of a Christian worldview (3)
- o Section 2: Historical overviews (world and specifically this nation - civics class)(3)
- o Section 3: Role of government, law, the church and their implications (4)
- o Section 4: Specific societal and national issues individually addressed (~20; more if desired)
 - o Frame the issue
 - o Bring a Biblical perspective and principles to the issue
 - o Typically will identify a number of relevant facts associated with the issue
 - o What is our responsibility, and what can we do (opinion)
- o Section 5: Summary of basic principles, implications and possible actions (2)
- o Also: Questions and discussion & Homework assignments (if appropriate)

4. Basic Assumptions governing the Approach to this class and the Reason for it

- a. The Bible provides the one sure source of truth to govern our practice in exercising our faith.
 - o Direct commands ("Thou shalt or shalt not") and fundamental principles of scripture (Wisdom in dealing with everyday affairs)

- o Jesus addressed several of the issues of the day, he was not a-political!
 - o Divorce (**Matt 19:1-12**)
 - o Taxes (**Matt 22:15-22**)
 - o Authority of the Roman Empire (**John 19:8-11**)
 - o Public assessment of the character of Herod ("...that fox"; **Luke 13:32**)
- o John the Baptist also talked to several issues current at the time (still current):
 - o Soldier's pay (**Luke 3:14**)
 - o Sin of a public figure (Herod the tetrarch)(**Matt 14:1-11**)
- o Must be careful when "opinion" is being conveyed vice clear Biblical mandate and instruction
- o **Warning:** I will express my opinion; I will try to indicate when that is the case (hold me to it!)
- b. There are two distinct world views: Christ centered and man centered
 - o World (human politics) tries to change man by changing society
 - o God centered view: man's heart must be changed in order to truly change society
 - o Change of eternal value comes through convicted, changed redeemed hearts
 - o Conventional wisdom: No amount of activism to restore order to this country will replace personal salvation through Christ
 - o I agree relative to salvation - but not relative to having an impact upon the common good of our neighbors and the resultant effect upon our lives
- c. Though unregenerate man is unable to please God - the manifestation of his sinfulness and depravity has not yet reached full expression
 - o Make no mistake - there is spiritual warfare going on (**Eph 6:10-13**)
 - o We cannot force men to salvation, but we can demonstrate it in our lives, words and actions
 - o God's word, truths, principles, bring conviction to people's hearts (**Rom 2:12-14**)
 - o We raise our children not knowing if they are elect - but we equip them with truth to rule them
- d. We don't live in a theocracy (O.T. Israel) (Later session) and we are not to try and create one!
 - o God does not directly rule as the recognized authority in the affairs of man
 - o We do live in a pluralistic society (like Israel)
 - o Our nation's laws are generally structured on a Biblical moral legacy of right and wrong
 - o If believers don't affect the laws, and ensure their enforcement, government will create laws inconsistent with Biblical truths/principles (relativism)
- e. God alone knows the future
 - o No one can promise if all Christians applied Biblical principles correctly, that America would be restored to a level of righteousness far above its present state (**Eccl. 7:10,14**)
- f. Change can occur:
 - o In our own personal lives (as a believer)(**Jer 29:7; 1 Tim 2:1-4; James 5:16**)
 - o Not just listening to the word, but doing what it says in all aspects of our lives (**James 1:22-25**)
 - o In our family by maintaining order consistent with God's standard
 - o At work and at school - by our influence on the actions of others
 - o By being careful not to trivialize the problems we encounter in society
 - o By answering for the hope that is in us and warning of the dangers of evil
 - o In the laws of the country by upholding the standard of expectation, enforcing those standards, and restraining evil (**1 Tim 1:8-11; Rom 13:1-4**; Paul would not have known what sin was except by the law; David's sons became rebellious and unrighteous through benign neglect - may that not be the case with us (Pastor's Kids also))
 - o By influencing those in authority above us:
 - o Those that are believers to not compromise in their decisions
 - o Those that are not believers to be aware of their accountability to an almighty God and their responsibility to represent us accurately
 - o By using the abilities and talents God has given us
 - o All believers are called to present the gospel, yet only some have the gift of evangelism (**Eph 4:11**)
 - o We are all called to affect society around us, only some are gifted to pursue vigorously (over 18 you can at least vote)(The Bible doesn't speak to gift of Politician, however)

- o Remember: Sodom and Gomorrah would not have been destroyed if 10 righteous were there
- 5. What does it mean to be Light? (Matt 5:13-16; Mk 9:50; Luke 14:34-35)**
- o Light in the Bible represents:
 - o Jesus Christ Himself (Rev 21:11); and as the illuminator of men (John 1:4,5,9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35;36,46; Acts 13:47)
 - o God's truth (Psalm 119:105); and the illuminator of His people (Isa 60:19,20); the judgments and commandments of God (Isa 51:4; Prov 6:23)
 - o The guidance of God (Job 29:3; Psalm 112:4; Isa 58:10)
 - o The guidance of men (Rom 2:19)
 - o Salvation itself (1 Peter 2;9)
 - o Righteousness (Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 11:14;15; 1 John 2:9,10)
 - o Witness for God (Matt 5:14;16; John 5:35)
 - o Prosperity and general well-being (Esther 8:16; Job 18:18; Isa 58:8-10)
 - o God's very nature (1 John 1:5)
 - o Believers as "sons of light" (Luke 16:8), received God's truths but also have the spiritual capacity for it; and figuratively as shining in the spiritual darkness of the world (Phil 2:15)
 - o The glory of God's dwelling place (1 Tim 6:16)
 - o The impartiality of God (James 1:17)
 - o The favor of God (Psalm 4:6); the king (Prov 16:15); an influential man (Job 29:24)
 - o The light of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4)
 - o The knowledge of the glory of God (2 Cor 4:6)
 - o "To Light" represents:
 - o Walking in the presence of the light of a superior (Prov 16:15; Psalm 89:15) and the resulting joyful, blessed life that is enhanced from it
 - o We are assured of God's light even in times of difficulty (Mic 7:7; Psalm 23:4)
 - o Life over death (the light of life)(Psalm 56:13)
 - o Light illuminates everything - dispensing darkness; useful only when eyes can see (1 Cor 2:14)
 - o Light provides warmth and gives the necessary conditions to perform any activity
 - o These features speak directly to our influence in this society presenting His truth (light) to others:
 - o Sharing the gospel, but also:
 - o There is a right and wrong; appeal to man's conscience (Rom 2:14-15)
 - o There are consequences to sin (doing evil; doing what is known to be wrong to others)
 - o Without a clear exposition of God's word - a Christian has little to offer but opinion
 - o What good is "light" (truth) if it is hidden?
- 6. What does it mean to be Salt? (Matt 5:13-16; Mk 9:50; Luke 14:34-35)**
- o Salt is a simple substance, but profound in meaning
 - o Sodium and Chloride - two very caustic elements; but together, amazing properties
 - o Roman times very valuable - payed soldiers in salt ("He's worth his salt")
 - o Biblically salt is symbolic of:
 - o Covenant between God & His people (Num 18:19; Chron 13:5; Lev 2:13; Ezra 6:9)
 - o Brotherly peace amongst believers (Mark 9:50)
 - o Spiritual health and vigor essential to the Christian life (Math 5:13)
 - o Believers character and condition (Mark 9:50)
 - o Wisdom exhibited in believers speech (Col 4:6; "seasoned with salt")
 - o Healing - used by Elisha to heal bad spring (2 Kings 2:20)
 - o God's judgment in the case of Lot's wife (Gen 20:26)
 - o Other properties of salt:
 - o White - symbolizes purity ("He's the salt of the earth")
 - o Emblematic of fidelity and friendship in eastern nations
 - o A preservative, keeping food from rotting or spoiling (Sodom and Gomorrah - when godly presence removed, cities were destroyed)
 - o Used to fertilize the soil (Luke 14:35) when in small amounts
 - o Used as a seasoning, to enhance flavors

- o An antiseptic that cleanses infection (stings the eyes and open wounds)
- o In large amounts sterilizes and destroys fields (**Deut 29:23; Judges 9:45; Jer 17:6; Zeph 2:9**)
- o Not useful until used; until it interacts with something else; otherwise it serves no purpose
- o It makes one thirsty - but for what? (Water; living water)(salt and water will melt through iron)
- o If it loses its saltiness, it serves no purpose. It speaks to backslided nature - one that cannot be returned to its previous benefit and influence (e.g. - godly men who have fallen to sexual sin)
- o Illustration for our lives:
 - o If we do not live out the truths we hold to and set the example we are called to, we deserve to be trampled by men since we testify to the hollowness of our lives (our influence as a preservative, savor, or enhancement of fields is dead)
 - o Is this the general state of the church in this land today?
 - o Faith without works is dead (**James 2:17**)
 - o We are called to engage the society we are in: evangelize; but also preserve it; pray for it; do good to it (**Jer 29:17**); educate it; warn it - not remove ourselves!
- o These characteristics speak directly to our influence in this society being salt (preservative) to others:
 - o Preserve, heal, and cleanse the land, help bring about peace (**Jer 29:7**)
 - o Demand justice, godly leadership (**Rom 13:1-7**)
 - o Become knowledgeable about the issues around us and engage the society in them (evidence abounds that sin is deadly!)
 - o Be the good Samaritan to our neighbor
 - o Be an influence for good

7. Bottom Line: Most people try to do right (know what is right and wrong), but the standard is being removed which allows evil to run rampant. Part of being salt and light is to hold up the standard again

- o Primary: evangelize (light)
- o Secondary: influence for good (salt)

8. Conclusion: Challenge to you today - are we like "...men of Issachar" (1 Chron 12:32): "who understood the times and knew what Israel should do"

- o Dynamic events going on when David became king - men of Israel rallied about him
- o These men saw the events, could read their meaning, the implications of them, and could see clearly what needed to be done
- o Is this our desire, to understand the times and determine what we must do?
- o That is my prayer for all of us

9. Homework:

- o Fill out form on the most common sources of information you use to be informed
- o Review the "Basic Presuppositions" and see if you agree or not
- o Take a crack at "Commonly Asked Questions" between yourselves

Session #2: Christian World View (Part 1)
(Detailed Notes)

*"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."
(2 Cor 10:3-5)*

Purpose of this Session: To Discuss the importance of having a Christian Worldview and define who our Enemy is

- o Define what a Christian worldview is
- o Describe the spiritual and earthly battlegrounds
- o Describe the weapons we have available

1. From a Christian Citizenship standpoint, there are three general types of People in the World and two types of Battles raging

- o In general, the three groups of people in the world are:
 - o Sincere, Christ professing sheep (the elect throughout time and place)
 - o Strong anti-Christian goats
 - o They know they are goats, and they know they hate sheep
 - o Does not mean they could not become sheep-like
 - o Rest (non-elect and elect that are not believers yet)
 - o These have some moral foundation typically
 - o These tend to obey the laws, try to live a "decent" life
- o In general, there is a two pronged approach to attack this world:
 - o Share the gospel directly (evangelize)(Matt 28:19; Mark 13:10; Rom 10:14-15; 1 Peter 3:15)
 - o Engage the spiritual battle for a man's soul
 - o Variety of techniques used (friendship; help; confrontation; "chance"; etc.)
 - o Influence society for both ours and their good (1 Peter 3:15; Matt 5:13-18; Eph 5:11; Luke 10:25-37; Jer 29:7; Prov 14:34)
 - o Demonstrates the relevance of Biblical truths to societies problems
 - o Lays the foundation of credibility and integrity with which to bring gospel
 - o God's truths and principles become an attractive influence to govern life, etc.
 - o Engages the physical realm, but with divine power

2. Before Addressing Specific Issues, it is Necessary to lay a Solid Foundation from Which to Base all that Follows

- o Biblical foundation must undergird all problem sets (see course outline for topics)
- o The Bible provides basic principles that address our role as Christian citizens (1 Tim 3:16-17)
- o Diverging from the righteous path and God ordained purposes for mankind will result in severe consequences
- o Lessons from history will help us understand the times we are in currently
- o Many of the subjects covered are ones I have a personal interest in (if you have others - let me know)
- o There are a large number of ways this class could be addressed - this is but one of them!

3. A Christian Worldview is the correct Biblical view of, or outlook on, the world, its Institutions and people in light of God's truth

- o Dictionary (worldview): *"a comprehensive, especially personal, philosophy or conception of the world and of human life"*
- o The lens or window that we use to assess events, issues, conditions around us

- o The approach a Christian takes to address the issues, problems, activities, we face (private or public)
- o The set of principles (or presuppositions) governing our actions and decisions
- o The correct understanding of our role and purpose in life
- o David Noebel's "*Understanding the Times*"; Worldview: Any set of ideas that speaks to the following disciplines:
 - o Theology
 - o Philosophy
 - o Ethics
 - o Biology
 - o Psychology
 - o Sociology
 - o Law
 - o Politics
 - o Economics
 - o History
- o The predominant world views that exist include the following:
 - o Secular Humanism
 - o Marxism/Leninism
 - o Cosmic Humanism
 - o Post Modernism
 - o Biblical Christianity
- o Ultimate clashes in world views comes down to Christianity vs All Else:
 - o Meaning & significance (**Ecc 12:13**) vs meaninglessness (**Ecc 1:2**)!
 - o Absolute standards vs relativism!(post-modernism)
 - o Hope, love and life vs despair, hatred and death!
- o Why is it important to understand world views?
 - o They are the basis upon which we perceive, interpret and act upon everything around us
 - o Everyone has them - whether they are consistent in acting upon them or not
 - o Example: Is man's nature basically evil or good? (Role of education, government, and law is radically affected)
 - o Our worldview will:
 - o Affect our understanding of our role in this life
 - o Drive our approach in facing the issues in our own lives and in this society
 - o Have us withdraw from, or engage the enemy at a number of levels
 - o **1 Peter 1:13** "Therefore, prepare your minds for action..."
 - o Remember when you first believed? New nature, everything viewed differently, needed God's standard to teach us (**Matt 28:20**); Why does public school want to remove all reference to the Christian God? (Secular humanism remains - worldview - man centered)

4. Paul writes in 2 Cor 10:3-5 That we have Two Battlefields Ragging Around us: Both a Spiritual one and a Physical one

- o What does scripture say to do? Partly revealed in **2 Cor 10:3-5**
 - o Paul is defending his ministry to the Corinthians
 - o Superficially he appeared to be doing the same sort of things that the world did (**2 Cor 10:7a**) (for own benefit; Caesar's household...)
 - o Paul explained the ultimate differences between the two warring sides - one has divine power behind it! (**Rom 8:31ff**)
- o "*For though we live in the world*"
 - o We are part of the creation, we are creatures
 - o We interact with the world (**1 Cor 5:9-10**) and have dealings with it (**2 Cor 6:14**)
 - o Everything is permissible - but not everything is beneficial (**1 Cor 10:23; 6:12**)
- o "*we do not wage war as the world does*"
 - o How does the world wage war (tactics)?
 - o It uses its own wisdom, which is foolishness before God (**1 Cor 1:20-25**)
 - o It wages physical war and destruction to bring about its goals (brute force)
 - o It punishes, denigrates, persecutes, ridicules, lies, discredit, character assassination, half truths, misleads, unscientific claims, false association, intimidation, name-calling, harassment, selective education, publicity, questioning the authority of scripture, or can be apathetic, recruits as many others as possible (**Rom 1:32**), etc.
 - o It devises hollow and deceptive philosophies which sound good, but are based upon human reasoning and not truth (traditions also)(**Col 2:8**)
 - o These tactics are consistent with the strategic goal of Satan - to destroy the church, denigrate God's kingdom, and devour God's elect (**1 Peter 5:8; John 8:44**)

- o These are not the tactics we use - ours is the light of truth: *"Truth never runs away from error - but error will run away from truth!"*
- o What does it mean that we "wage war"?
 - o A spiritual war is deadlier than any other - it has eternal consequences!
 - o "...wage war" implies involvement, planning, engaging the enemy, countering the enemies effects, being aware of his schemes (2 Cor 2:11)(not monks or aesthetics - Col 2:20-23)
 - o We use a different approach, the means God has provided and for His purposes
- o *"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of this world"*
 - o We are in a war, but our tools are different
 - o Carnal weapons of this world include: human wisdom; philosophy; secular entertainment; massive organization, overwhelming physical power, taxation, isolation, etc...
 - o Satanic forces are not forces of flesh and blood, therefore weapons of this world are useless against him directly; only spiritual (divine) weapons will be effective
 - o We have One who is our advocate, provides our strength, and works out all things for the good of those who love God (Rom 8:28)
 - o Though we do not fight like the world fights, we do engage the enemy, we do not run away or hide, or rely upon our own devices or strength (go the extra mile (Rom 12:17-21))
 - o Must realize who our true enemy is - Satan and his minions
 - o This is spiritual warfare (Eph 6:10-13) but it is fought at several levels
 - o Two realms: the spiritual and physical realms - must not forget that God is sovereign over both

What about the Spiritual Realm?

- o Much of our concentration is on the spiritual battles that are ongoing
 - o Addressing the sin in ours and other believers lives (sanctification)
 - o Convincing non-believers of their own sinfulness (evangelism)
- o *"On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds"*
 - o What does it mean to demolish strongholds?
 - o Penetrate unbelief by presenting the gospel
 - o Convict people of their blindness to their own sin by presenting God's truths
 - o To overcome on the earthly plane what would appear to be insurmountable odds
 - o Attacking the source of the strength of the foe, what is his base? (Prov 21:22)
 - o The gates of hell will not overcome them (Matt 16:18)
 - o Resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7)
 - o God will defeat all foes, if He be for us, who can be against us (Rom 8:31)
 - o We know that through Christ all thrones, powers, rulers and authorities were created - by him and for him (Col 1:15-16)
 - o We also know ultimately that the bondage of sin and the sinful nature (powers and authorities - Col 2:15) was broken by Christ on the cross
- o What Weapons did the Lord Gives Us to Engage the Spiritual Battle?
 - o Clear conscience in knowing we are doing the Lord's bidding (1 Tim 1:18-19)
 - o We who are born again, who have faith, have overcome the world (1 John 5:3-5)
 - o Endurance, knowing the Lord will win the day (2 Tim 2:3; Heb 10:32; James 4:7)
 - o Gentle instruction vice intimidation (2 Tim 2:23-26)
 - o Ready answers to other people's questions (Col 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15)
 - o Discernment to know right from wrong (Matt 7:6; 1 John 4:2-3)
 - o The gospel and the power of God's word (1 Cor 1:20-25)*
 - o The words the Holy Spirit gives (Luke 12:11,12; 21:15)
 - o Godly wisdom to confound the adversary (James 1:2-8)
 - o Love, which heaps burning coals on our enemies (Rom 12:17-21)

What weapons does the Lord give us to Defend Ourselves?

Eph 6:13-19 (the *panoply* of God = a complete suit of armor; both offensive and defensive)

- o **Belt of truth** buckled around the waist (6:14; **Matt 16:18**)
 - o The belt held all other parts of the armor in place, the foundation
 - o The foundation is God's word - His eternal truths
 - o Give firmness and consistency to our conduct (prevents laxness)
- o **Breastplate** of righteousness (6:14)
 - o Armor that covered the body from the neck to the thighs (**1 Kings 22:34**)
 - o Defended the vital parts of the body (integrity, holiness, purity of life, piety)
 - o Righteousness of Jesus Christ the true source of protection against Satan
- o **Feet** fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (6:15)
 - o Sandals protected feet, may have spikes to make them secure in the ground
 - o Ever ready to go forth and preach the gospel, on a firm footing
- o **Shield** of faith (6:16; **1 Tim 1:18-19**)
 - o The shield provided protection from any quarter for every part of the body
 - o Faith protects us from any attack to any part of our being - Satan may attack as a fiery dart (quick, unexpectedly, piercing, setting soul on fire) but our faith in God protects us (confidence in Him, relying upon His promises)
- o **Helmet** of salvation (6:17; **1 Thess 5:8**)
 - o Protects the vital head from injury
 - o Likewise, our hope of salvation sustains us in our conflicts and battles
- o **Sword** of the Spirit (6:17)
 - o A weapon to be used against the foe - which is the word of God
 - o The word of God is powerful (**Matt 4; Heb 4:12,13; 2 Cor 10:4-5**)
 - o Pray in the Spirit (6:18; **James 5:16**)
- o The most powerful weapon of all (**James 5:16; 1 John 5:14-15**)

Remember: Even if we are physically destroyed - we go to a far better place! (**2 Cor 5:8**)

What About The Physical Realm?

- o "*We demolish every argument and pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God*"
 - o "Argument" implies actions of the intellect, while "pretension" implies the will of man, thus his entire nature (force of will and reason) cannot overcome God (**1 Cor 1:20-25**)
 - o This cannot mean that each man will come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, it must be referring to arguments that unregenerate man uses to justify his sin
 - o Hollow and deceptive philosophies and human tradition cannot overcome the knowledge and truths of God, whether in the marketplace (public square) or one on one (**Col 2:8**)
 - o To convict men of their own faulty reasoning and rationalization
 - o We are to be prepared to give an answer for the truth that lies within us (Paul's example in the synagogues (**Acts 17:17**) and the public square (**Acts 17:19-34**)(**1 Peter 3:15, Col 4:5-6**)
 - o As loving neighbors we are to point out the consequences of sin (**Ezek 3:16-21; 33:7-9; Deut 28:1-68; Eph 5:11**)
 - o Secular data itself shows that the consequences of sin are devastating, and a life consistent with a godly standard reaps rich blessings
- o "*and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*"
 - o We are to love our Lord with all of our heart, mind and soul (**Matt 22:37**)

- o We are to be kingdom oriented, not worldly oriented (**Matt 6:33**)
- o We are to set our minds on things above (**Col 3:2**)
- o We are to fix our thoughts upon Christ (**Heb 3:1**)
- o We are to prepare our minds for action (**1 Peter 1:13**)
- o We are not to use the tactics of the world but to speak truth in love to others (**Eph 4:15**)

5. Why don't we fight the fight and become involved in the issues of the day? Is it because:

- o We don't see any direct Biblical mandate to be involved? What about:
 - o Being salt and light (spread truth; disinfect; set an example)? (**Matt 5:13-16**)
 - o Pointing out the sin in the land (**Eph 5:11**)
 - o Holding captive every thought in every area of endeavor? (**2 Cor 10:5**)
 - o Praying for peace and prosperity in the land (**Jer 29:7**)
 - o Being prepared to answer for the hope that is in us (**1 Peter 3:15**)
- o We may have to compromise on an issue if we start to take a stance?
 - o Is it better to do nothing?
 - o We must determine what principles we are not willing to compromise under any circumstances
 - o We must be careful of our motives at all times
 - o Is limiting some types of abortion better than no limitations at all? Is this compromising on a foundational principle?
- o We don't think we have enough information or knowledge to be effective (ignorant)?
 - o How do you correct this?
 - o Common sense shows what should be done many times
 - o God's common grace gives man a conscience to understand at least a shadow of what is good and bad, independent of the facts (consequences); armed with data it is even more powerful
- o We don't want to throw pearls before swine?
 - o Do not argue or be divisive (**Matt 7:6; Acts 18:6** example)
 - o Not all unbelievers are swine or will be abusive
 - o Is this an excuse to not engage the enemy at all?
- o We aren't equipped or taught to?
 - o What should you do then?
 - o Support those that are gifted in these areas
- o We aren't directly affected by the issues of the day?
 - o Not at this time, but what about your children?
 - o Is darkness satisfied with the status quo?
 - o Is this showing love to our neighbor - and a concern for his well being?
- o We believe it is inappropriate to impose our views on others?
 - o We cannot force another to believe a certain way, but we may convince them of their folly (AA; some human psychology; self help courses show that some "improvement" can occur)
 - o Governments role is to punish the evil doer - who defines what is evil
- o We do not think we can make any difference?
 - o How many apostles were there?
 - o Who is in charge? God! We can't, but God can!
 - o We are not called to guarantee the results, we are only called to be faithful to the Lord
- o We are afraid of the impacts upon ourselves or our families from engaging the enemy?
 - o Is this rationalization?
 - o We are not called to fear man (**Prov 29:25**)
 - o We are not called to imagine false enemies to get out of doing what is right (**Prov 22:13**)
 - o We must be wise where we decide to take our fight, but fight we must
- o We don't have the time?
 - o Do we have time for any TV, radio, hobbies, vacations, naps, etc?
 - o Is this an excuse to do virtually nothing in this area?
- o Others?

Are any of these reasons justified? If so, How?
 (Count the cost - **Matt 10:34-39; 16:24; Luke 9:23-25**)

6. What does a Christian use his weapons against (another view)?

- a. The false philosophies and arguments of the world. One set of general groupings:
 - o **Humanism:** Man is the measure of all things; man is the standard; man is the ultimate being, ultimate authority and reality (anthropocentric); denial of the supernatural (humanism (denying the supernatural) combined with Christianity is liberalism!); change the world through education; social gospel; preferences vice principles
 - o **Existentialism:** Individual existence takes precedence over abstract, conceptual essence; the individual counts, not the group; conclusions come from one's own experiences; no absolutes (therefore freedom and autonomy); Life is meaningless
 - o **Positivism:** Knowledge is based solely upon data of sense experience; observable scientific facts and their relations to each other; truth must be verified empirically (by the senses); since God cannot be tested and verified - the word God is meaningless; mankind has matured to the scientific stage
 - o **Hedonism:** Pleasure is the principle good and the proper aim of action; good and true are defined in terms of pleasure (try to increase) and pain (try to decrease); feelings dictate response; induce feelings artificially with drugs; feeling instead of thinking; entertainment instead of literature
 - o **Pluralism/Relativism:** Particulars but no universals; relative but not absolute; there is no unity to life; key philosophy of the 20th century; if everything is relative, then nothing is ultimately true; there is no fixed reference point with which to judge (chaos results); morality becomes relative; all views are tolerable except Christianity; instead of E Pluribus Unum (out of many - one) - E Pluribus Pluribus (out of the many - many); morality is relative in a pluralistic society
 - o **Pragmatism:** Meaning and truth of all concepts are determined by their practical consequences; spirit of problem-solving (the American way, Yankee ingenuity); skeptical or agnostic about ability to discover ultimate truths; looks at life from a naturalistic bent (no supernatural); predominantly subjective; conflict between what is "right" and what is expedient; good is what works
- b. Bottom lines for the world's world views:
 - o All are contained in the term Secularism: Doctrines and practices that disregard or rejects any form of religious faith and worship.
 - o There are no eternal absolute truths, nothing outside of this existence, no transcendent being or purpose to life, nothing of eternal value
 - o Ultimately there is no hope since this life is all that there is ("You only go around once, so grab all the gusto you can"; "He who dies with the most toys wins"; "You only live once"; "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die")
 - o If secularism is true - all we can do is minimize our suffering for as long as we can, but our lives will be futile and without purpose (Eccl); life ends in despair
- c. Bottom lines Christian world view (See **Handout: Is This Class Applicable to Other Countries?**)
 - o There is a transcendent God that gives ultimate purpose to life and the created order
 - o Everything that we do has eternal implications
 - o God's truths are sufficient for all matters of faith and practice
 - o The Bible addresses virtually every aspect of life; providing standard of right & wrong
 - o Our view of the world and human life must be through the grid of Biblical truths
 - o Unified view (our understanding may be flawed and imperfect however)
 - o The principles are absolute - they do not change over time or circumstances
 - o When applied in a reasonably consistent fashion, they will produce positive results
 - o On macro scale, Biblical truths distinguish western from eastern nations
 - o We are to think in terms of eternity when we make decisions and take actions
 - o We have an eternal existence and have faith in a just, orderly, righteous and merciful God - His truths do not change and are the standard for all matters of faith and practice
 - o Christians are God centered (Theo-centric) not man centered
 - o One man plants, another sows, but God gives the increase - we are called to be faithful to our tasks and leave the results to God (1 Cor 3:5-9)

Session #3: Christian World View (Part 2) (Detailed Notes)

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:7-11)

Purpose of this Session: To Summarize the Major views of the End Times (specifically the Millennium period) and assess their impact upon one's Understanding of their role as a Citizen of this Nation

- o Why this is important?
- o What are some general responsibilities of believers in the last days?
- o The four major end times views
- o Their implications relating to our involvement in changing society for good

1. This has been a very controversial area throughout Christendom for centuries, and has contributed to widely different approaches to citizenship

- o This session a logical continuation of some basic factors relating to Worldview
 - o Christianity and Biblical truths have relevance to all of life
 - o We are to have a solid foundation with which to address the issues around us in a godly way
- o Ultimate Worldview relates to the end of this world (or the times leading up to it)
 - o "Eschatology": The study of the order of events connected to the return of Christ
- o Review some exhortations to us by Peter concerning our actions towards the end of this age
- o Review four different eschatological views concerning the end times and their affect on our "politics"
 - o Not in detail - impossible in this time period, and not constructive
 - o Will take the "50,000 foot" overview
- o Why this session?
 - o Study of the end times is of high interest to many Christians and also the world in general
 - o Armageddon is a commonly used term - even movies have used
 - o Predictions of Nostradamus
 - o Various New Age philosophies, mystics, false prophets, have predicted either a new glorious age or terrible destruction
 - o Entering the new Millennium is bringing renewed interest
 - o People can be very divisive, argumentative, passionate, certain about their view; yet this area is one that the Bible itself warns about undue speculation (**Rev 22:18-19**)
 - o This area typically not addressed except in a dogmatic way (radio preachers, books galore)
 - o Our view of eschatology (the unfolding of the "end times") can dramatically influence our perceived role in this nation, society in general, and the practical outworking of our worldview
 - o Important to understand why believers can vary so significantly in their view of citizenship and the attendant responsibilities (we must be charitable; gracious; understanding; gentle)
 - o Quote: **"In essentials, unity; In doubtful matters, liberty; In all things, charity"**
 - o Caveats:
 - o I am not going to interpret the Book of Revelation in light of current events!
 - o Not making definitive statements on **"the"** correct end times view
 - o Primary emphasis in this session is the effect of our understanding of the Millennium period of Rev 20
 - o Draw some practical considerations at the end

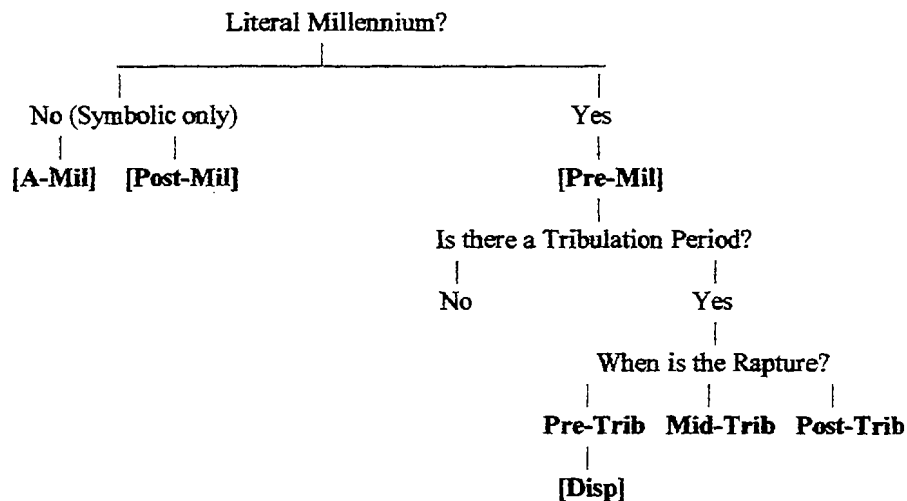
2. Are we living in the "Last Days" - of course we are! (1 Peter 4:7a)

- o The end is near as sited in this verse & others in the N.T. (Heb 9:26; 1 Thess 5:1-3; Matt 24:34)
 - o We are to be prepared for the return of Christ
 - o We can look forward to being taken to be home with Him
 - o Even if the Lord should tarry and we experience physical death, we will be home with Christ
- o Live in the expectation that Christ may return at any time, yet continue to plan our lives in a manner that is responsible and godly before God (1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-12)
- o Several responsibilities specifically defined of us by Peter in these last days:
 - o Be clear minded
 - o Be a realist about what is going on about us
 - o Don't dull the senses with anything impairing our thoughts, thinking or actions (TV; music; drugs; any type of distraction that feeds our own self indulgence)
 - o Have the things of God in mind and not be distracted by worldly things
 - o Prepare ourselves spiritually and mentally for what is ahead
 - o Be equipped to think logically, rationally, with proper focus
 - o Be self-controlled
 - o Don't let our passions control us (anger, irrationality)
 - o Be prepared to give an answer to the hope in us (1 Peter 3:15)
 - o Be able to answer others with grace and wisdom - seasoned with salt (Col 4:5,6)
 - o Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments (2 Tim 2:23-26)
 - o So: Pray
 - o Hold all things up in prayer to our Heavenly Father that we may have our priorities right and that His name will be praised (Prov 16:3)
 - o Ensure our spiritual health is doing well as we engage those around us
 - o Seek divine guidance in all that we do (James 1:5)
 - o Offer hospitality
 - o Generally meaning between believers, but for non-believers it's a way to provide a witness to those in need, build bridges to others (see our worldview lived out!)
 - o Remember all we have is from God, therefore freely give (Eph 4:27-28)
 - o Remember those around us that are less fortunate (on welfare, homeless) that we can minister to for Christ
 - o Use your giftedness to serve others
 - o Spiritual gifts are given to edify and equip the saints to grow in Christ
 - o Minister to non-believers also (God's common grace)(follow Christ's example)
 - o Variety of gifts used to accomplish being salt and light in this land
 - o The same giftedness that enriches the body of Christ can and should be used to witness to the world and hold up God's righteous standard (honesty, integrity, hard work...)
 - o Speak as if we are speaking the words of God
 - o Do not speak idly, do not be an offense to others (including to our leaders)
 - o Remember the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom (1 Cor 1:25)
 - o We are always being watched and listened to (God's ambassadors on earth in everything we do and say)
 - o Be careful not to trivialize the problems around us, but be informed on them, equipped with God's truths so our authority and integrity will not be diminished
 - o Serve with the strength God provides
 - o Dedicate all we do to the Lord & seek His strength to carry us (Eph 6:7; Col 1:29)
 - o We'll need it when engaging the enemy in the world (Prov 16:3)
 - o We are called to be faithful, not to guarantee results
 - o God is to be praised in everything we do
 - o If we cannot in clear conscience, consistent with Biblical principles and teaching commit our work to Him, then we should not do it (Col 3:17; 1 Cor 10:31)
 - o Whatever we do, we should consider it as kingdom work - why do it?
- o There is an underlying urgency to our work, we are not to have the manyana syndrome

- o End times not an excuse to give up, but double our efforts in eager expectation of the Lord's return
 - o We are to do due diligence with the time given us by the Lord
 - o What can affect our views of what and how we are to invest our time?
 - o One factor is our end times view! Specifically, the Millennium itself
 - o Not intended to raise controversy - but only to address impacts of these views (Careful - many sincerely believe one or the other of these views!)
 - o The unfolding of the end times will be as God has ordained it, not us
 - o This is not an area that we are to be divisive over
 - o We are to be careful not to pass judgment on disputable matters (Rom 14:1), but to be humble and gentle towards others
- o See **Handout: Summary of Major Millennial Views (Revelation 20)**

3. How many Millennial views are there? (primarily based upon ref (1) and (2))

- o Draw diagram on Board
 - o Draw time line; show major epochs (BC; birth of Christ; tribulation; millennium; judgment)
 - o Show relationship of the following terms and questions



- o Historically, four different end times views have been taught in church history
 - o Each to a lesser or greater extent throughout (historical conditions dependent)
 - o Relates to an understanding (interpretation) of Rev 20, many times in view of what the church was facing at the time
 - o Developments affected by:
 - o Understanding of the “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven”
 - o “Historical Jesus” movement of investigation & resulting view of church in the world
 - o The development of the “Social Gospel” - God’s kingdom is an ethical kingdom
 - o Understanding of the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy (Temple, Israel, O.T.)
 - o Understanding as to whether the events in Revelation actually occurred in the first century or not (Preterists?)
- o Although basic views can be defined, significant variations and different combinations exist, as well as significant confusion; however, the following general attributes apply:
 - o **Historic Pre-Millennialism** dominant during the first 3 centuries and at other times of crisis
 - o **Dispensational Pre-millennialism** first appeared in the early 19th century England and has become the dominant evangelical view (The Scofield Reference Bible influence)
 - o **A-Millennialism** grew out of the Constantine era and held dominant ever since
 - o **Post-Millennialism** grew in period of the enlightenment (1600’s thru early 1800’s) and was consistent with the general view of world conditions being able to be improved upon
 - o **Pan-Millennialism** is one way to side-step the issue by saying everything will “pan” out in the

future (not a particular view!)(also *Pro-Millennialism*)

- o Major common themes for all views:
 - o All humans will experience physical death, except for those when Christ returns
 - o Those that die before Christ's return will go to an intermediate state appropriate to their spiritual condition(those in Christ - bliss and reward; the rest - punishment and torment)
 - o At some future time Christ will return bodily and personally
 - o The dead will be resurrected and consigned to their ultimate destinies (heaven or hell)

4. Pre-Millennialist beliefs (historic pre-millennialism)(literal reading of Rev 20)

- o O.T. prophecies tend to be viewed more literally
- o Return of Christ is preceded by signs:
 - o Preaching of gospel to all nations
 - o Great apostasy among the church
 - o Wars, famine, earthquakes, and rise of the Anti-Christ
 - o Time of great tribulation
 - o The times get worse as the return of Christ approaches
 - o General result: Kingdom of God (us) on earth persecuted, worldly kingdoms dominate and are eventually destroyed
- o Upon Christ's return, believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air (rapture)
 - o Deceased saints will be resurrected
 - o The judgment of the righteous will occur in the "twinkling of an eye"
 - o The battle of Armageddon will be fought
- o Return of Christ followed by a period of peace for 1000 years
 - o World ruled by Christ directly (rod of iron) from Jerusalem
 - o Satan in chains
 - o Jews will be converted in large numbers
 - o Nature will be tamed (curse removed)
 - o Resurrected saints in glorified bodies rule with Christ (?)
- o End of millennium, Satan is loosed, a rebellion occurs and is defeated
- o After millennium all non-Christian dead will be raised and the judgment occurs
- o The eternal states of heaven and hell are established
- o These views held by:
 - o General church for first two or three centuries (not explicitly developed)
 - o Justine Martyr (100?-165?); Papias; Tertullian; Irenaeus (130?-200?)
 - o Anabaptists generally ; W.J. Erdman; Frederic Godet; George Eldon Ladd; J. Barton Payne; R.A. Torrey; Theodor Zahn
 - o Last hundred years - conservative groups (non-Reformed), the most conservative Baptists
 - o Grew in US after Civil War; in Britain among Plymouth Bretheran

Possible world view tendencies:

- o Tends to be pessimistic
- o Belief world will continue to decay and decline ushering in the Anti-Christ, apostasy, tribulation and then the return of Christ
- o The decay and decline of the nation/world are seen as "signs" of the impending return of Christ - in other words - good news! - He is just around the corner!
- o Presenting gospel in fulfillment of great commission is primary purpose of believers, not reforming social conditions of earth; particularly since stemming the tide of evil is impossible with the necessity of tribulation prior to Christ's return (relevance to society's problems is diminished)
- o Personal salvation and holiness can become the limit of a person's horizon or concern in the affairs of this nation and world (personal piety and passivity) with evangelism

5. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism (Pre-Tribulationist) beliefs:

- o The promises made to Abraham and David are unconditional and have had or will have a literal

- fulfillment (not fulfilled by the church)
- o The promises made to Israel have not been abrogated or fulfilled by the church, which is a distinct body in this age having promises and a destiny different from Israel's (separate programs)
- o Christ will return for His church at the end of the age
 - o Prior to His return (end of the church age) the church will become apostate
 - o He will meet His church in the air at the rapture or translation (this is not the second coming)
 - o This event will usher in the seven year period of tribulation on the earth
- o Following the tribulation, Christ's second coming will occur
 - o He will establish His kingdom on the earth for 1000 years (centered in Jerusalem)
 - o During this millennium the promises to Israel will be fulfilled
 - o Satan will be bound during this 1000 years
 - o The temple will be rebuilt
 - o The sacrificial system will be reinstated
- o At the end of the 1000 years, Satan will be released and Christ will be attacked at Jerusalem
- o Christ will call down judgment from heaven and destroy His enemies, then:
 - o The second resurrection will occur
 - o The judgment of the wicked will occur, initiating the eternal order
- o These views held by:
 - o Gleason L. Archer; Donald Barnhouse; Lewis Sperry Chafer; J.N. Darby; Norman Geisler; Harry Ironside; Walter Kaiser; Hal Lindsey; J. Dwight Pentecost; Charles Caldwell Ryrie; John F. Walvoord

Possible world view tendencies:

- o Tends to be pessimistic
- o Belief world will continue to decay and decline ushering in the Anti-Christ, apostasy, the tribulation period and then the return of Christ (can occur at any time)
- o The decay and decline of the nation/world are seen as "signs" of the impending return of Christ - in other words - good news! - He is just around the corner!
- o Presenting gospel in fulfillment of great commission is primary purpose of believers, not reforming social conditions of earth; particularly since stemming the tide of evil is impossible with the necessity of tribulation prior to Christ's return
- o Personal salvation and holiness can become the limit of a person's horizon or concern in the affairs of this nation and world (personal piety and passivity) with evangelism
- o An "escapist" mentality can occur, with the belief that believers will not go through the tribulation period

6. Post-Millennialist beliefs:

- o Currently in millennium period (began with the first advent of Christ, 1000 years symbolic; rules in the hearts of believers)
 - o The kingdom of God is extended gradually thru Christian teaching and preaching
 - o Redemptive and spiritual in nature (pietistic post-millennialists)(Banner of Truth...)
 - o Political and physical as well (theonomic post-millennialists)
 - o The world will become gradually Christianized (evil will not be eliminated but will be reduced significantly)(transform world outside in)
 - o Long period of peace and prosperity will result with many social, economic and educational problems solved (golden era)
 - o New age not significantly different from this age(quantitative vice qualitative difference)
 - o Not limited to 1000 years (symbolic only), may be tens of thousands of years in duration
 - o Not in a hurry, past success leading to exponential growth in future
 - o Eventually many believers, many nominal believers, rest small minority
 - o The great commission succeeds!
- o Period closes with short rebellion (not cataclysmic) and then:
 - o The visible, physical return of Christ, followed by:

- o The resurrection of the dead
- o The last judgment
- o These views held by:
 - o Tyconius (late 300's - Donatist), built upon by Augustine (354-430)(church and state combined By Constantine); Athanasius; John Calvin; Robert Dabney; Johnathan Edwards; Eusebius; A.A. Hodge; Charles Hodge; J. Gresham Machen; Iain Murray; John Murray; John Owen
 - o Westminster Confession tends this way; Lutheran, Presbyterian, and early Reformed group
 - o Most Puritans (1) (Golden age was about to begin, God using the saints, the church and the state to bring about conditions conducive to Christ's return; stress on the Biblical law)
 - o Modern Theonomists/Reconstructionist movement
 - o Greg Bahnsen; Gary North; R.J. Rushdoony; B.B. Warfield

Possible world view tendencies:

- o Tends to be optimistic
- o God is using believers to prepare world for return of Christ (Kingdom of God on earth triumphs over worldly kingdoms)
- o Teaching of Christianity will spread and eventually dominate the earth, inevitable, and may take a very long time
- o There'll be gradual improvement in the earth's condition because of the spread of Christianity
- o Work carried out with help of earthly agencies since they also fall under God's rule
- o Some sense of urgency in the great commission, but social activism is an important aspect of Christian work in world with evangelism - accomplish the "golden era" (involvement!)
- o This view may have affected the secular American view such as: "Manifest Destiny"; belief that America was to expand to the Pacific Ocean; "Monroe Doctrine"; "Arsenal for Democracy"; "Make the world safe for Democracy"; America being that "bright, shining city on a hill" (President Reagan) - Growth of a "Civil" religion

7. A-Millennialist beliefs:

- o No period of universal peace and righteousness will exist on this earth before the end of the world (no literal millennial period - symbolic only)
 - o Continuous growth of good and evil will occur (neither will dominate the other)
 - o The kingdom of God is now present in the hearts of believers
 - o Satan is bound during the period between Christ's first and second coming
 - o The victorious Christ is ruling now in His church by His word and the Spirit
 - o The millennium is present reign of the souls of deceased believers in heaven
 - o There will be an intensification of tribulation leading up to the anti-Christ and Christ's return
 - o No transitional period, no personal earthly reign of Christ
 - o Christ may return at any time!
- o Christ will eventually return, then:
 - o The dead will be raised
 - o The last judgment will take place
 - o The perfect kingdom will be created with the new heaven and earth for the life to come
- o View held by:
 - o Augustine (late Christian life; ref (3)) and John Calvin (both A and Post claim them!)
 - o Jay Adams; G.C. Berkouwer; Louis Berkhof; William Hendricksen; Anthony Hoekema; Abraham Kuyper; Bruce Waltke; Edward J. Young
 - o Conservatives within historic Reformed group (RCA and CRC - some); some Presbyterian
 - o Generally, O.T. prophecies viewed less literally than with others
 - o Less emphasis on eschatology in general

Possible world view tendencies:

- o Generally pessimistic in nature - world conditions demonstrate this (prevalence of sin even with

- o significant improvement in man's physical condition)
- o Christianity will not dominate the world order prior to Christ's return
- o Good and evil will continually be at war (spiritual warfare - both growing stronger)
- o Deterioration of the world and societal conditions not condemned per se - since expected
- o There is **no** urgency to improve the world's condition other than through the gospel and the changed heart (salvation emphasis over earthly conditions)
- o The great struggle is with spreading the gospel to the elect in each age in fulfillment of the great commission (**Matt 28**)
- o The relevance of Christian truths tends to be more indirect through people's changed lives rather than direct activism (some exceptions)

8. So What? What is the Bottom Line?

- o Controversy over meaning and understanding of millennium has polarized many Christians
 - o One effect is confusion over our role in the world
 - o Unbalanced approaches can occur (preaching without acknowledging physical conditions, helping physical need out of compassion at the expense of the spiritual well being)
 - o Specifics about the end times await their fulfillment - this is a very complicated area
 - o We need to be **gracious** and patient with others - realize sincere believers can differ significantly in this area - which in turn affects their "worldview"
- o Balanced approach:
 - o The real unfolding will happen as God wants it to - in this there is no doubt
 - o Whether things will get better or worse:
 - o We are called to live consistent with our understanding of scripture
 - o Universally good or bad conditions have never existed - there will always be exceptions to the prevalent world conditions (USA an example)
 - o Biblical truths and principles have **relevance** to individuals and nations relative to every societal problem we face in this world (the Bible is still the standard)
 - o The world is crying for solutions to its problems!
 - o God's people are called to be counselors to the nations (ambassadors)
 - o Spiritual gifts given by God are the same abilities that can be used to minister to non-believers
 - o We are not called to ignore the plight of our neighbors (Good Samaritan; Proverbs)
 - o We are called to be salt and light where ever we are at (active, involved)
 - o We are called to bring God's answers to our neighbor's problems (help in this life, leading to sharing how to address the life in eternity)
 - o Wisdom would dictate we need to improve our environment (if we have any control over it) in order to create a safe place for our families as much as possible
 - o We should not try and change society at the expense of the gospel
 - o To love our neighbors as ourselves includes non-believers; our concern about our own spiritual and physical condition should teach us to be concerned about our neighbors spiritual and physical condition
 - o Be gracious to those who are convicted one way or the other in their relationship to Christian citizenship, as long as Biblical truths are not compromised (sin is still sin)
- o Homework - **Handout: Paradigm/Comparison of Conservative and Liberal Theology**

Notes:

1. "A Basic Guide to Eschatology - Making sense of the Millennium;" Millard J. Erickson
2. "The Last Days According to Jesus;" R. C. Sproul; 1998
3. "City of God;" Augustine of Hippo; AD 425

Additional Notes:

- o References to the Last Times (ref (2))
 - o The end of the age (Matt 13:39-40,49; 24:3; 28:20; Heb 9:26)
 - o The end (Matt 10:22; 24:6,13-14; 1 Cor 1:8; 10:11; 15:24; Heb 3:6,14; 6:11; 1 Peter 4:7; Rev 2:26)
 - o The last times, days, etc. (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; 1 Peter 1:5,20; 2 Peter 3:3;

- 1 John 2:18; Jude 18)
- o The day (Matt 25:13; Luke 17:30; Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 3:13; Heb 10:25)
 - o That day (Matt 7:22; 24:36; Luke 10:12; 21:34; 1 Thess 5:4; 2 Thess 2:3; 2 Tim 1:12)
 - o The day of the Lord (1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 2:16; 1 Thess 5:2)
 - o The day of God (2 Peter 3:12)
 - o The great day (Acts 2:20; Jude 6; Rev 6:17; 16:14)
 - o The day of wrath (Rom 2:5; Rev 6:17)
 - o The day of judgment (Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17)
 - o The day of redemption (Eph 4:30)
 - o The last day (John 6:39-40; 44:54; 11:24)

Session #4: Brief Historical Perspective
(The Blurring of Church and State)
(Detailed Notes)

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15:4)

Purpose of this Session: To overview several thousand years of history and the implications of combining church and state domains (perspectives on relationships)

- o The Biblical foundation leading up to the Israelite Theocracy
- o The sacral nations of old (pagan)
- o The development of the Roman Catholic sacral era
- o The Protestant sacral era and separation trends leading to this country's foundation

1. Introduction: The combining of church and state has existed in varying degrees throughout time up to our present era

- a. Like most topics we've addressed - this one doesn't lend itself to a "sound bite" answer, but involves:
 - o Biblical principles and truths
 - o Biblical examples
 - o Historical perspective, knowledge and interpretation
 - o Many approaches have been tried over the centuries
 - o Dominant features and consequences can be derived
 - o A need to be careful not to grind our own axe with pre-conceived positions
- b. The world has seen variations from:
 - o A Theocracy to complete separation of church and state, and various mixtures in between
 - o The World Council of Churches to the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition
 - o Idolatrous Rome with Caesar declared a god to the Soviet Union with atheism the official religion of the state
 - o From modern Muslim "theocracies" to "Christianized" nations
- c. This to be a quick survey of different conditions since O.T. times and some lessons learned
 - o Broad Biblical and Historical view
 - o Use of things that were written in the past guide us (**Rom 15:4**) in understanding our role as citizens in God's kingdom, and in this land (history lessons from scripture)
 - o "Lens" of scripture
 - o "Lens" of history
 - o It is impossible to cover such a huge area in such a short lesson, only high points will be addressed (even these are subject to different people selecting different features)
- d. Three Important concepts are useful to understand:
 - o ***Theocracy***: First defined by Josephus to express concept of a God-governed state
 - o ***Sacral Nation***: A society held together by a religion to which all members of that society are committed - Leonard Verduin (*note (1)*)
 - o ***The Kingdom of God*** - the spiritual kingdom ruled by Jesus Christ (in the world but not part of the world)
 - o These allow a greater understanding of history and the reason for confusion when ignored

2. How and when did governments begin to form? (Creation beginnings)

- a. Adam and Eve shared in God's plan for them
 - o Have dominion (rule) over all the earth (**Gen 1:26**)
 - o Work the land (**Gen 2:5,15**) & multiply on the earth (**Gen 1:28**)
 - o God directed the affairs of man personally (first Theocracy)
 - o Eve was Adam's helpmeet (**1 Cor 11:3**), there was an authority structure on earth, with the first family being the first institution (governing body) under God
- b. The fall of man (**Gen 3:1-19**) affected all relationships
 - o God and man; man and man; man and animals

- o The created order itself was corrupted (**Rom 8:20**)
- o Man's relationship to God was totally corrupted (no longer a Theocracy!)
- o Man began to govern himself as he separated himself farther from God
- c. The Noahic covenant re-initialized the rule of God in man's affairs
 - o Re-institutes blessings to man and the rest of the creation (**Gen 9:8-10**)
 - o Noah is to work and refill the earth (**Gen 9:1,7,20**); mandate for all of mankind
 - o Implication is a godly order and organization under God's rule was to exist to fulfill the mandate given to Noah (reflects original command, but now in a fallen world)
 - o Nations and territories first mentioned in **Gen 10:5** (descendants of Javan son of Japheth) - regions imply geographic delineations, nations imply political or governmental delineations
 - o Men began to ignore God - and suffered the punishment of confused languages (**Gen 11:1-9**); Babel required organization, structure, power - a city was built, all this implies the ungodly established their own government(s)
- d. These mandates applied to all of mankind (rule and multiply), and cities, territories and nations developed very quickly

3. *God's covenant people were called out to form a nation wholly committed to the Lord (Theocracy)*

- a. Covenant with Abraham - all nations would be blessed through him (the coming seed **Gal 3:16**); selected from the entire world to fulfill God's redemptive purposes
- b. Covenant with Israel - the physical nation of Israel was a type of a future spiritual nation that was to come; through Israel, the promised seed would come into the world
 - o Israel began as a theocracy, with God governing it "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth" (**Deut 28:1-68**)
 - o Even when Israel demanded a king, he served under God's authority as "The Lord's anointed" (**Psalms 2:2; 20:6**)(the people affirmed the king, they are not in and of themselves intrinsically kings; **1 Sam 11:14-15**)
 - o This spiritual kingdom was identical with the culture (earthly kingdom) in which it existed (sacral nation, no separation of church and state)
 - o Israel rebelled, and rejected God's rule, and suffered the consequences (The glory of the Lord eventually departed - **Ezek 10:18-20; 11:22-24**)
 - o However, godly remnant always remained (**Mal 3:16-18; Rom 9:27**) in obedience to God's rule
 - o What began as a Theocracy, degenerated into earthly rule, rejecting God as the Sovereign ruler - eventually ruled over by Gentile kings "lording" it over them (**Matt 20:25**)
 - o Israel became an apostate nation that claimed the authority of God to rule its people
 - o Israel maintained a "vener" of being a theocracy in outward appearance only
 - o Israel became ruled by Rome, a stronger, pagan nation
 - o This provided context of tribute to Caesar question (were they a theocracy or not? Christ's answer showed separation had occurred (secular and sacred))(**Mk 12:13-17**)
 - o The destruction of the temple & sacrificial system sealed forever the destruction of the old economy (shadow organization - religious (form of godliness) but not righteous)
- c. The New Covenant in Jesus Christ inaugurated a spiritual kingdom that transcends all national boundaries (**Matt 28:19**)
 - o His kingdom is separate from, and not identical with the culture around it (**John 18:36**)
 - o His kingdom is not sacral in the worldly sense
 - o His kingdom is manifest in the church, for which He is the Head (**Col 1:18**)
 - o We're in the world (**1 Cor 5:9-10**), but not of the world (**Matt 6:31-33; Col 2:8; 1 Peter 2:16**)
 - o We are the "ekklesia" or the "called out" assembly; separated from the world
 - o Some attributes of Christ's kingdom:
 - o Has eternal spiritual qualities and is not comprised of material things (**Rom 14:17**)
 - o Is one of servant-hood, not dominion over the nations (**Matt 20:25-26**)
 - o Is one that is in obedience to God's ultimate authority, not man's (**Acts 5:29**)
 - o Is not of this world (not a physical land here) but is spiritual (**John 18:36**)

- o Is one of peace, one radically different than those of this age (**John 18:36**)
- o Acknowledges kingly authority in this world, and did not condemn its existence (**Mark 12:13-17; John 19:10-11; Rom 13:1-6; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-17**)
- o Jesus is King over the universe, as such He creates his own subjects
- o The new covenant kingdom (the church) replaces the old national economy of Israel (no longer needed)

d. Summary Points:

- o Original theocracy existed in the garden before the fall, with direct communion of man & God
- o Cities and nations grew in man's pursuit to rule and multiply on the earth (pagan) after the fall
- o O.T. Israel (realm where faith reigned) was in sharp contrast to the rest of the world (all other nations) where unbelief reigned.
 - o Israel was a foreshadowing of the greater manifestation of God's kingdom with the coming (inauguration) of Christ
 - o The O.T. theocracy was governed by God directly
 - o Israel was called to be holy because God was holy (setting apart a physical nation temporarily until the Redeemer came)
 - o With the coming of Christ, the physical kingdom of God manifest in Israel was no longer needed (it was destroyed)
- o N.T. church is a spiritual kingdom not of this world and not limited geographically (in the world but not intrinsically part of it)
 - o Command to be holy is now applied to the flock (**1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:5,9**)
 - o The confusion over the nature of O.T. Israel, the N.T. Kingdom of God, and their relationship to other nations has resulted in very significant difficulties
 - o The identification of the Kingdom of God with any secular nation in the world is inconsistent with Christ's teachings (**John 18:36**)
 - o The application of Biblical principles and truths to the laws of nations and their governance is, however, wise, since God knows what is best for mankind

4. The Welding of Church and State Together has been tried Throughout History (see primarily notes (1) & (2))

a. Virtually all ancient nations (Pre-Christian) were Sacral:

"By sacral society, we mean society held together by a religion to which all members of that society are committed" Leonard Verduin (e.g. Babylonians; **Dan 3**)

- o Theocracies (sacral countries) that have been tried (any others come to mind?):
 - o Islamic politics (Iran)
 - o Calvinism in Geneva
 - o Puritanism in New England

b. Typical characteristics of a sacral nation (varying degrees):

- o Monolithic vice composite one; typically one religious option
- o No room or quarter was given to diversity (tremendous abuses occurred)
- o All born (or ritually initiated) into this society were considered to be part of it
- o Religion was part and parcel to the state (each was an instrument of the other)(May or may not be a formal separation of one sphere from the other)
- o Israel was a sacral nation - all born Jewish were considered part of the covenant people, the chosen ones, by right of birth

c. Post-Apostolic Era (**90 AD to 325 AD**)

- o Church expanded, early on, no church buildings, later more centralized and institutionalized church-life began to emerge
- o Not directly connected to worldly kingdoms, operated within many cultures
- o Persecutions occurred where Christianity was viewed as a threat

d. The Constantinian Era (**325 AD to the present**)

- o Constantine's conversion brought Christianity into sacralism

Side notes: Constantine not baptized until a few days before death; major controversy over whether he was a true believer or not; convened Council of Nicea in 325

- o Christianity was declared to be the official religion of the Roman Empire
 - o Church buildings were built and religion was supported by the State - this instituted salaries and direct support (by state and mandated tithes) for the clergy, thus eventually leading to abuse, luxury, and unworthy persons in high church positions
 - o Christianity became institutionalized; "heretics" were killed in the name of Christ; while a white robe and 20 pieces of gold were offered to each person who would join the church
 - o The sacralism that was instituted used O.T. Israel as its model (theocratic)
 - o Politics became a major force within the church; Constantine viewed himself as "the servant of God" ("*pontifex maximus*" in Christianized dress)
 - o By 4th Century, simplest pagan offerings even in homes brought severe penalties; those not baptized required catechism training - then be baptized or die
 - o Even in this time, there were many who opposed the combination of church and state (Donatists - church of believers only)
 - o This shift changed nature of the "church - state" relationship that has manifested itself in many different ways since (varying degrees of Christian sacralism)
- e. Roman Catholic Era (500-1517 AD)
- o Catholic: "*kata*" = according to; "*halos*" = the entirety; = "Christian sacralism"
 - o The papal hierarchy developed and solidified
 - o Controversy existed over whether the Pope or state rulers were more authoritative at any given time, however, the Catholic church was a very powerful force either way
 - o By 1150 AD, the theology of the two swords was well developed: the sword of the state (steel; soldiers) and the sword of the Spirit (clergy; fire (John 15:6)), both being used by the church. Basis used to justify: Luke 22:23 "Lord, here are two swords"
 - o The Catholic church conquered the heathen by force and established "Christianity" in each land. Justification: Luke 14:23 "Constrain them to come in"
 - o Baptism was the initiation into the (state) church, with the last rights (death) the departure
 - o Allegiance to the Pope by the entire "Christian nation" was assumed, with infant baptism assuring all citizens would be related to the church from the very start
- f. Reformation Era (1517-1564 AD)
- o The reformers challenged the church's doctrine of salvation but did not challenge completely the wedding of the sword to the cross
 - o Christian Sacralism (one religious option) was the experience of previous 1200 years
 - o To survive, it was believed state power would be needed to challenge the Catholic churches power
 - o By mid-century most of Germany and Scandinavia embraced Protestantism, with effects occurring throughout Europe
 - o Calvinism (France) became the dominant expression of the reformation, resulting in Geneva (Switzerland) becoming the center of the Protestant world by middle 1500's
 - o Reformers had a dilemma:
 - o The N.T. declared unambiguously the church made up of professing believers only
 - o The legacy of the previous 1200 years was a loyalty to a sacral state (everyone in a local area were part of the church - the church identified with society, not within it)
- g. The Anabaptists Era (1523-1600 AD)
- o Believed only believers were to be part of the Church of Jesus Christ (church to be in society not part of it - the N.T. example)
 - o Believed baptism was for believers (not infants); true church was local, autonomous, governed by democratic polity, composed of sincere believers; should be a separation of church and state; strict church discipline; primacy of scripture; didn't oppose government, only those enforcing religious beliefs (most adhered to above; movement discredited by abuses of radical leader (Matthys) resulted in 10's of 1000's killed in 16th c.
 - o Condemned by both the Catholics and Protestants (e.g. The Diet of Speier (Catholic) decreed in 1529 "Every Anabaptist or re-baptized person, of either sex, is to be put to death, by fire, or by the sword, or by some other means"

- h. Other Movements and General Characteristics (1565-to present)
 - o Puritans - New England (1630-1660 AD)
 - o Tried to establish a "heaven" on earth, not religious liberty of conscience
 - o Viewed America as the new Israel, built society along O.T. Israel principles
 - o American Pluralism (Colonial times)
 - o Dominantly of Protestant origins, many different colonies practiced specific denominational-state combinations
 - o Heritage remained from the historical "sacral" approach of combining state and church into an alliance of function
 - o America (1776 to present)
 - o Dominantly Christian influence in the formation of the country
 - o Each state wanted to maintain its approach to practicing religion within its territory (varying degrees of encouragement and restrictions)
 - o Constitutional Amendment 1: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;..."
 - o This set stage for the prevention of a national religion, and protection from Congress restricting free exercise of religious conscience (rejecting of national sacral legacy); this ensured and encouraged religious freedom (unique in all of history)
 - o Modern times, "secularism" and "humanism" replaces the older Christian influenced state and is a religion itself - except it rejects God, and attempts to remove any semblance of it in the public domain (new sacralism - cannot tolerate a competitor)
 - o What are Current Trends?
 - o The New Left: concentrates on righting social injustice to the detriment of the gospel of justification by faith (NCC; WCC organizations; some very liberal denominations; ecumenicalism); capitalism source of all injustice; American imperialism indifferent to plight of the poor
 - o The New Right: concentrates on bringing back early American ideals supporting Christian culture and tends towards a "Manifest Destiny" for America as the new Israel (2 Chron 7:14)(Moral Majority; some very conservative Christian groups); can entail weakening of gospel message; capitalism a Biblical blessing; believes USA has special mission to world - Biblical morality and freedom are central to God's plan for all people and nations
- i. Bottom Lines for the United States
 - o Prior to 1800's, virtually every denomination of any strength subscribed to state governments supporting and regulating the church, and enact penalties on all who objected, disbelieved, or violated the state creed/ritual (Greek; Lutheran; Reformed; Presbyterian; Congregational; Episcopalian - exception were the Baptists)
 - o The US Constitution prevented creation of a Christian sacralist nation - one that endorsed one particular brand (denomination) of Christianity, which would breed intolerance of others.
 - o Constitution created environment to protect freedom of religion and religious expression
 - o The US has become a sacral nation by embracing humanism and secularism as the national religion - growing intolerance of Christianity in places (Gary Baur: "this is not a post Christian era, but an anti-Christian era")

5. Summary Observations

- o The state demands loyalty that all men can give (otherwise punished: sword; irrespective of beliefs)
- o Church demands loyalty that only can be given to Christ (sword of Spirit; moral suasion; leaven that affects any culture it resides in)
- o The Bible does not give Christians a direct command to influence or change political institutions
 - o Though we have the freedom to do this if allowed by law
 - o We have the responsibility to point out sin in the public arena (Eph 5:11; Matt 14:3-4)
- o We are commanded to:
 - o Pray for those in authority over us (1 Tim 2:1-2)(Prov 21:1)
 - o Be obedient to those in authority over us (Rom 13:1-6)

- o Give respect and honor to those for which it is due (Rom 13:1-6; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
- o Seek the peace and prosperity of this land (Jer 29:7)
- o Retain the elements of Christian worship and practice within the Christian realm, since we are not part of the world but only in the world ("My kingdom is not of this world"; John 18:36)
- o We have a unique opportunity in this nation (unparalleled in history) to participate in the governing of the country, to inform the leaders of our desires and take legal action to make changes; also to:
 - o Encourage godly laws (must define)
 - o Encourage the punishment of evil (must define)
 - o Encourage the creation of an environment not hostile to the free expression of the gospel
 - o Place godly leaders over us, men of integrity and a Christ centered life
 - o Influence virtually every aspect of society for good
 - o Answer the call of the king for godly wisdom to govern the people
- o We are called to respect other believer's Christian liberty relative to political convictions (Rom 14), as long as it does not violate a clear mandate of scripture
- o We are not called to create a Christian nation, one that would impose Christian redemptive order upon societal order by civil legislation. This would create a Christian sacralist condition - historically this leads to severe intolerance of freedom of conscience (worship), and tremendous abuses

6. See Handout: The Separating of "Church" and "State" (Depicts four realms)

- a. God is sovereign over all things at all times
 - o There are at least four different domains of influence that overlap
 - o Individual, family, societal (theocracy church and culture one and the same), national
- b. The theocracy of ancient Israel combined the sword of the state with the sword of the Spirit (word) to govern the nation under God's direct rule
- c. In N.T. times, two realms are in existence: the church (sacred) and the state (secular)
 - o The church is ruled by the sword of the Spirit (word) under Christ
 - o The state is ruled by the sword
- d. Various scripture applies to different levels of each realm
- e. Giving in the three realms:
 - o We are to be living sacrifices to God with all that we have
 - o Under a O.T. theocracy compulsory and freewill offerings were described
 - o Under the N.T. church, freewill offerings are given
 - o Under the state, compulsory taxes are taken
- f. The direction of influence illustrates the direction of impact
 - o Theocracy - it permeates the entire society since God is the King and the entire culture, laws and governance fall under His rule from the individual through the king
 - o In the church, the individual believer is the most important component, with his influence directly affecting all other structures within the family and the church
 - o In the state, the national power attempts to extend its power down as far as possible to control its people as much as possible

Notes:

1. "The Reformers and Their Stepchildren," Leonard Verduin; 1964
2. "Ministering to the Majority Culture: An Exploratory Biblical-Historical Study," Jon Zens; published in "Searching Together," a Quarterly published by BREM, Inc.; 1982; Fourth Quarter, Volume 11, Number 4
3. "The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church - Revised Edition," J.D. Douglas General Editor; 1978
4. "History of the Church of God, From the Creation to A.D. 1885," C.B. Hassell; 1886

Session #5: Is This a Christian Country? (Part 1)
(Foundational Period)
(Detailed Notes)

"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames" (1 Cor 3:10-15)

Purpose of this lesson: To address the question of whether this is a Christian country or not

- o Discuss why this is important to know
 - o Overview some of the reasons for thinking it may or may not be
 - o Overview two major developments that had a major influence on the founding of this country (Puritan heritage and contemporary western writings)
 - o Overview some of the Biblical principles that affected the countries formation
- 1. God's word is ours and the churches firm foundation, built upon the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:19-23); but is it the foundation of this nation?***
- o We know that in all matters of faith and practice the Bible is the bedrock for Christians (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - o We also know God's word provides fundamental truths, principles, and commands to govern and direct:
 - o Our lives (actions, decisions) which are to be consistent with it, for God's glory (Col 3:17,24)
 - o Our families
 - o The household of God (the Church)
 - o The nations
 - o The right role of government, rulers and the law in society
 - o Societal relationships (crimes; punishment; responsibility to down-trodden, etc.)
 - o We know if the foundation of a nation is corrupt, the nation will become corrupt (Prov 28:12; Matt 7:24-27)
 - o Question: If a community is dominantly Christian, is it unreasonable to expect governmental structures and laws to be set up in a manner consistent with and expressive of God's word?
 - o If so, would not a nation be blessed as it follows Biblical truths? (Deut 28)
 - o If a nation turns away from Biblical truths, would it not be expected to suffer the consequences?
- 2. I believe it is important to know whether this country was founded upon Christian principles for the following reasons:***
- o To be honest about the historical circumstances surrounding the formation of this nation
 - o Christian heritage over many decades
 - o Christian founders committed to Biblical truths as the ultimate authority
 - o Balance and correct the secularized history taught today
 - o To give proper credit to the source of knowledge and understanding leading to this nations formation as well as the men who were the instruments to bring it about
 - o To provide a reasoned defense of the higher authority that successfully guided this nation until basic Biblical principles were removed
 - o To account for the tremendous blessings this nation has received since its inception
 - o To assess whether principles initially established are still operative in this nation
 - o To be able to better trace why the country has such major problems today as Biblical truths are ignored
 - o To counter efforts to remove any acknowledgment of the Christian influence in the formation of this nation, and its preservation, until recently
 - o To show the state cannot and should not be separated from the influence of the church, and that the church cannot and should not be restricted by the state
 - o To determine whether Biblical principles should be re-instituted or not into the public domain

- o To provide an opportunity to witness to Biblical truths when current national issues are being addressed by being knowledgeable of the nation's roots and the blessings that came from them

3. Why would anyone think this is a Christian country?

- o Examine the data (outsiders view)
 - o In 1776, 98% professed to be Protestant Christians, 1.8% were Roman Catholics, 0.2% were Jewish (99.8% total) *(note (2))*
 - o 1990 Gallup Pole:
 - o 74% of Americans answer "yes" to the question: "Would you say you have made a commitment to Jesus Christ?"
 - o 89% of Americans perceive themselves as Christians
 - o 1999; 67% say they have a "personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today" *(note (1))*
 - o 1993-1994 Volume of the Barna Report speaking of adult Americans affirms "85% believe Jesus was crucified, died, and was resurrected and is spiritually alive today"
 - o 1992 surveys by Gallup and National Opinion Research Council (NORC) found 91% of women and 85% of men in this country say they pray regularly
 - o Relatively consistent 85% of people in this country claim to be Christians over the last two decades - Gallup surveys, with approximately 60 million claiming to be evangelical *(Note (2))*
 - o What other nation has adopted as it's official motto: "In God We Trust"?
 - o Christmas is a national holiday - Thanksgiving is a national holiday to give thanks to the Almighty God that provides for our needs
 - o More than 350,000 Christian churches in USA (more churches per capita than any nation)
 - o 164 Christian denominations, 25 of which have more than one million members
 - o More than 106 million people attend church on an average Sunday *(note (2))*
 - o Comparison of religion and sports (1992):
 - o Money to religion \$56.7 B/sports \$4 B (Major league Basketball; Football; Baseball)
 - o 1990: all sporting events attendance 388 M (professional, college, baseball, basketball, hockey, boxing, tennis, soccer, wrestling, harness, automobile, dog racing)/religious attendance 5.2 B (more in one month (433 M) than sports for the year) - same results since 1973
 - o Dramatic increase in Christian schools
 - o 1963 (year prayer removed) fewer than 1,000 Christian schools
 - o 1970 about 2,600
 - o 1976 about 5,000 (afterwards, all biblical displays and references removed)
 - o 1994 about 32,000 (Library of Congress)
 - o 1994 more than one of four (27%) secondary and elementary schools are Christian
 - o Plus home schoolers
 - o Compare with Israel: less than 20% claim to be Jewish; up to 70% have no religious beliefs; as few as 10% can realistically be called "observant Jews" who actually attend synagogue. Would you deny that Israel is a Jewish state? Most would describe Israel as a religious state
 - o Has any other nation in history been more diligent in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - o If there were a Christian country (one) in this world, which would it be?
- o However, examine ourselves closely (insiders view):
 - o 1992: 47% read the Bible weekly (other than church services); by 1995 down to 31% (some estimates are that only 17% read it regularly); 20% claim the Bible is the dominant influence in moral & ethical decisions *(note (1))*
 - o Barna Research Group survey (early 1990's) found 83% of Americans believing that "man is basically good" (I'm OK, I'm not so sure about you)
 - o 57% (6 of 10) in 1999 believe spiritual salvation can be earned by good works or character; but 74% believe "forgiveness of sins is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ" *(note (1))*
 - o 58% (6 of 10) in 1999 believe Satan "is not a living being but is a symbol of evil" *(note (1))*
 - o 63% (2/3rds) of the population has no idea what "John 3:16" refers to *(note (1))*
 - o USA leads world in: divorce, teen pregnancy, violent crime, consume 50% of world's supply

- o of cocaine, lead all nations in drug use, and close in abortions, considered the pornographic capital of the world, lead in single parent homes and teen suicide
- o More than one third of all births in this nation are to women without husbands (22% of all births to white women, 66% of all births to black women); inner city rate of illegitimacy is as high as 80% (*note (2)*)
- o Over 50% of today's marriages will end in divorce
- o Each year crime costs this nation in excess of \$100 Billion, and we have more than 1.1 million men and women behind bars (highest custody rate in the entire world; 10 times Japan, Sweden, Ireland, and the Netherlands)(*note (2)*)
- o Over 56 million Americans suffer from some sort of venereal disease (one in five)(*note (2)*)
- o Is it surprising that this last generation has seen other countries send missionaries to the US!
- o So, is America Christian?
 - o The apostle Paul warned of a time like this:
 - o "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (**2 Tim 4:3**)
 - o Referring to people in the last days: "...having a form of godliness but denying its power" (**2 Tim 3:5**)
 - o Appears to be a tailored religion, personalized to meet own needs, minimize rules, selective in what is believed or practiced
 - o However, even with the obvious problems, the legacy of a previous strong Christian heritage remains and continues to have influence
- o How did we get to where we are at? First, must understand the forces that forged this nation
 - o Two major inter-related developments came together in the founding of this country
 - o Puritan heritage based upon strong Biblical foundation
 - o Western writings establishing the role of government from a Biblical view
 - o Remaining part of this lesson will overview significant Biblical principles that affected the nations formation up to and through the writing of the Declaration of Independence (**Puritans:** movement in England in 1500's and 1600's to purify the English Church to bring about a full Calvinistic reformation in England (remove any vestige of RC influence and ritual); later, became a way of life; "Separatists" moved to Holland and New England)
 - Note:* Of the 3 million Americans at the time of the Revolution, about 2/3 of them were trained in the school of Calvin (900 thousand of Scotch/Scotch-Irish origin; 600 thousand were Puritan English; 400 thousand were German or Dutch Reformed; plus Episcopalians had a Calvinistic confession (Boettner, "Reformed Doctrine of Predestination" p 382 as cited in *note (5)*)

4. A dominant Calvinist (Puritan) heritage had a major impact upon the colonists views of law, government, education, justice, etc.

o Affect of Basic Presuppositions about Human Nature

- o If human nature is basically good, this results in:
 - o General belief that humans are altruistic and have the best interests of others at heart
 - o Punishment for crime becomes "correctional" and need not be severe
 - o Socialism or communism would be preferable: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"
 - o Trust of good intentions of leaders in the land, not require strict control of government
 - o General trust of foreign nations and correspondingly little perceived need for a national defense
- o If human nature is basically evil, this results in:
 - o General belief that man is self-interested
 - o Strict laws and severe punishment
 - o Scepticism about the possibility of "reforming" or rehabilitating a criminal
 - o Distrust of government and government power, thus need to restrict gov. authority
 - o Distrust of foreign powers and thus a desire for a strong military

- o Distrust of foreign powers and thus a desire for a strong military
- o Key issue in forming a government: how to balance the power of government to make it:
 - o Sufficient to restrain evil and to serve
 - o Limited enough to prevent oppression
- o Puritans had a basic distrust of majority rule (Democracy; Mobocracy)
 - o Unchecked majorities not likely to have Biblical wisdom dominating
 - o Voting was limited to freeholders and church members
- o Belief in the priesthood of all believers**
 - o No earthly intermediary between man and God; direct access, and personal accountability
 - o Luther: every plowboy should be able to read and interpret scripture for himself since he is responsible for his soul
 - o Protestant societies strongly encouraged universal education
 - o New England strongly influenced by Puritans & importance of education (Ivy League)
 - o Example: John Jay when 14, had to pass entrance exam at King's College by translating first 10 chapters of Gospel of John from Greek to Latin
 - o About 1800 - Dupont studied (for Jefferson) state of education, found "not more than four in a 1000 are unable to write legibly - even neatly"
 - o This widespread literacy and education stress made it possible for widespread participation in government & understanding of issues (Bible literacy and newspapers)
- o Covenant Theology:** covenant of law (civil and judicial) and grace
- o Local Government**
 - o Local church government (Presbyterian and Congregational) provided practical experience in local governing
 - o Formed basis for representative involvement at a higher level and decentralized government (states rights over national authority)
- o Limited Government with delegated authority**
 - o Belief God has given civil government limited authority in the affairs of man (**Deut 17:14-20**)
 - o Belief that the only authority government has is what was specifically delegated to it
 - o Delegation is from God (**Rom 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Dan 2:20-23**)
 - o View of the founders is based upon many writings (John Locke...) and Israel example:
 - o Israelites wanted a king (**1 Sam 8; Deut 17:14-20**)
 - o People chose kings to rule over Israel (**Judges 8:22; 9:6; 2 Sam 16:18; 2 Kings 14:21**)
 - o Judges were chosen by the people (**Deut 16:18**)

5. Western political thought provided the principle of the consent of the social contract

- o Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) wrote "Lex, Rex" ("The Law and the Prince")(1644)
 - o Challenged fundamental principle of government in Europe - the divine right of kings (King's word was law, even though scripture was normative - he interpreted it)
 - o General belief was that rulers derived their authority from God (**Rom 13:1-4**)
 - o Taught: the basic premise of government and law was the Bible, man and his word was not above it but must be ruled by it
 - o Key concepts also included: unalienable rights, government by consent, social contract (a constitution between the people and the government), separation of powers, and the right to resist unlawful authority (elaborated on by John Locke)
 - o God gives this authority to rulers through people (**2 Sam 16:18; Judges 8:22; 9:6; 2 Kings 14:21; 1 Sam 12:1; 2 Chron 23:31**)("consent of the governed")
- o John Locke (1632-1704)(Puritan background; English philosopher & political theorist)
 - o Staunch and fervent Christian (*note 5*)
 - o Wrote "Two Treatises of Government" in 1690; major impact upon political theory
 - o Social contract theory - men form a government by mutual consent and give it certain limited authority to protect life, liberty (political equality), and property (formed part of 5th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution)

- o Direct impact upon the Pre-ambule to the Constitution: *"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, 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, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America"*
- o John Witherspoon (1723-?) (Edinburgh University); Orthodox Presbyterian minister
 - o Only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence
 - o Member of Continental Congress (1776-1779, 1780-1782)/President of Princeton U.
 - o Taught: James Madison (Pres); Aaron Burr; 10 cabinet officers; 21 senators; 39 congressmen; 12 governors
 - o Called "The Father of the Constitution"; embodied the principles of Lex, Rex, such as:
 - o Covenant (constitution) between the ruler and God and the people (state could not be granted absolute or unlimited power)
 - o All men are created equal (all are born sinners, no man is superior to another, principle of equality and liberty)
- o William Blackstone (1723-1780) (English jurist in 18th century; lecturer at law at Oxford)
 - o Orthodox Christian
 - o Wrote "Commentaries on the Laws of England" (1765-1770)
 - o Carefully analyzed the law of God as revealed in the Bible
 - o God is source of all laws: whether Biblical or observable in nature; law is a rule of action (physical laws and laws governing man's nature whereby man has faculty to reason and discover the purport of those laws)
 - o Believed that it is self-evident that God is the source of all laws, whether found in nature or in the Bible
- o Declaration of Independence "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" reflect this thought

6. Biblical moral law as declared in the 10 commandments can be clearly seen in the laws of the early land (see Handout: Influence of Biblical Commandments on Laws of the Land; Ex 20:1-17)

- Note:** (1) Man's laws will never be a perfect reflection of God's laws
 (2) Many of the laws of this country result from the strong western Christian heritage with some commonality with other cultures
 (3) Many of the laws implemented in the early part of this country have been softened

- o 1st Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me"
- o 2nd Commandment: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below..."
- o 3rd Commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain"
- o 4th Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"
- o 5th Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother"
- o 6th Commandment: "You shall not murder"
- o 7th Commandment: "You shall not commit adultery"
- o 8th/10th Commandment: "You shall not steal"; "You shall not covet"
- o 9th Commandment: "You shall not give false testimony"

7. Governing Documents Prior to the Founding of the USA demonstrate conclusively that the origins of this nation were Christian (John 21:25; Eccl 12:12)

See Handout: Examples of Early Documents (Pre-Foundations of the United States)

8. The State's Oaths of Office and Other Official Documents reflect the importance of a Christian foundation and the need for leaders to be Christian (Ecc 5:1-7)

See Handout: Examples of Early State Statements

9. The Declaration of Independence itself acknowledges the existence of a supreme Creator and our accountability to Him

See Handout: Declaration of Independence

See Handout: Basic Principles in the Declaration of Independence

10. What do you think - is this a Christian country? - Yes and No!

- o Yes: o The nation was founded on Christian principles with a decidedly Christian worldview
Note: Review of 15,000 historical items (detailed review of 2,200 books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, etc.)(1760-1805), reduced to 912 items (1/3 of all public Political writings longer than 2,000 words (note (6)); source most often cited by founding fathers - Bible (34%; with Deu. frequently referred to); most cited thinkers: Montesquieu (1689-1755)(Catholic)(8.3%); Blackstone (7.9%); Locke (2.9%)(~20%)
- o The framers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were primarily Christian (see Handout Session #6)
- o Christian principles guided this country legally and socially for most of its history
- o Tremendous evangelical blessings have occurred around the world from Christian influence originating from here
- o No: o Biblically, there is no warrant for a Christian nation, only a Christian people (chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, a people belonging to God - 1 Peter 3:9) independent of a nation
- o This country can be considered part of Christendom (1. Christians collectively; 2. those parts of the world where most of the inhabitants profess the Christian faith)
- o No official recognition of Christianity as the national religion, although court decisions state as much
- o According to God's standard, the people and the nation fall far short
- o Either way: there is a legacy of Biblical principles and truths being applied to this nation that until recently has generally provided a rich environment for the free expression of our faith
- o If that trend continues, the environment will rapidly close and follow the process from:
Christian era to Post-Christian era to Anti-Christian era

- Note (1): "The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators," George Barna; 1999 (as summarized by Art Toalston, Indiana Baptist Writer)
- (2): "Character & Destiny - A Nation in Search of Its Soul," D. James Kennedy; 1994
- (3): "The Second American Revolution," John W. Whitehead; 1982
- (4): "The Myth of Separation - What is the Correct Relationship Between Church and State?" David Barton, 1992
- (5): "Christianity and the Constitution - The Faith of Our Founding Fathers," John Eidsmoe; 1987

Session #6: Is This a Christian Country? (Part 2)
(Post Revolutionary War Period)
(Detailed Notes)

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you - unless, of course, you fail the test?" (2 Cor 13:5)

Purpose of this Session: To overview the historical Christian legacy of this nation and the major trends that have significantly affected it's influence in our society

- o Discuss the framers of the Constitution and some basic principles in the document itself
- o Discuss the major trends that affected this nation since its formation
- o Overview what leaders and even President's have thought about the Christian character of this nation
- o Discuss briefly what if anything can or should be done at this point in history

1. Examine the Data - Was Christ the focus during the early foundation period of this nation?

- a. The history of America leading up to the Revolutionary War was dominantly Christian with strong Calvinist influences
 - o Session #5 addressed the foundation of this nation
(see previous Handout: Examples of Early Documents)
(see previous Handout: Examples of Early State Governments Statements)
 - o The Declaration of Independence itself (Creator; Lawgiver; Supreme Judge; Sovereign)
 - o This study (part 2) will address the time following the Declaration of Independence
- b. Western political thought (consent of the governed; no divine right of kings; inalienable rights) combined with Christian principles (basic depravity of man, distrust of centralized power, covenant relationship on paper) to form this government
 - o Separation and balance of power (See Isa 33:22 "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is he who will save us")
 - o Restrictions on the power of the federal (centralized) government (Constitutional limitations)

2. Were delegates to the Constitutional Convention Christians? Yes!

- a. Popular view is that most signers were Deists, however:
 - o Many states did not allow confessed deists to hold public office
 - o True Deist is not Christian (denies: incarnation; atonement; the trinity; the elect; direct intervention by God; any supernatural redemptive act in history)
 - o Of the 55 delegates, three were self-described Deists (one unknown); with all three raised in Calvinist homes. Rest had church affiliation/membership
(See Handout: Religious Affiliation of the Delegates to the Constitutional Convention)
 - o Most colonial churches required sworn adherence to a strict doctrinal statement
 - o Remember, a man's word was his bond
 - o Unlike today, oaths were considered sacred and not taken lightly by the people
- b. Since the delegates were strong Christians, and they represented constituents that were dominantly Christian, and most States supported/subsidized selected Christian denominations - is it unreasonable to believe the Constitution was framed with this background?

3. The Constitution of the United States: Not a religious document, but one that had Biblical principles embedded in it

- a. The Constitution does not mention God; Jesus Christ; or the Bible in any manner - is there any Christian influence?
 - o Mentions "Year of Our Lord, 1787"
 - o In the preamble, securing the "Blessings of Liberty" is mentioned, presupposing they exist
 - o They were present in the States which were openly Christian
 - o Securing the "rights" men already have from God (commandments)
 - o Article I, Section 7, Paragraph (2) reads: "If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be

Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it..."

- b. Why does it not mention God explicitly?
 - o The framers left religion out of this contract (covenant) because they did not want the federal government to have any authority over the church and religion
 - o Most states had state churches at the time - they did not want federal government picking a specific national denomination
 - o A religious preference could have created resentment amongst some of the states
 - o The Declaration of Independence was a statement of basic American values/principles and rights (*foundation*), while the Constitution is intended to define how these rights are to be secured (*structure*) - therefore, not necessary to mention God

(See Handout: Influence of Biblical Truths on the Constitution)

4. Our Judicial system, court decisions, and leader's statements attest to our Christian (Biblical) heritage and strong influence

- a. The Justice system
 - o Previous lessons relating to: Calvinist principles; Biblical commandments permeated the laws in individual states as well as nationally (basic justice followed Biblical instruction):
 - o Judicial principles that can be derived from the Book of Proverbs alone are summarized in the **Handout: Judicial Principles From the Book of Proverbs**
- b. How did the Supreme Court affirm our Christian heritage?
 - (See Handout: Supreme Court Justice Statements - Affirming our Christian Roots)
 - o Note: not many decisions rendered by the High Court addressing religious issues since State authority was the primary determiner vice National authority until this century
- c. How have Presidents publically affirmed our Christian heritage? (See Handout: President's Statements and Actions Affirming our Christian Roots)

5. Since this nation was founded upon Christian principles, is it a theocracy? No!

- a. What is a Theocracy?
 - o Derived from the Greek "*theos*" = "God", and "*kratein*" = "to rule"; denoting the rule of God
 - o A nation governed by officials regarded as divinely guided, directly ruled by God
 - o Source traced to **Ex 19:4-9** (the whole earth is the Lord's, but Israel will be His kingdom of priests, a holy nation, with the Lord ruling directly through His chosen vessels)
 - o The law of the king also recognizes the ultimate control of the Lord (**Deu 17:14-20**)
 - o "appoint over you the king the Lord chooses"
 - o Saul's rule was towards anti-theocratic
 - o David's rule was theocratic
 - o In a sense, with a theocracy, church and state are the same
- b. Is this nation a theocracy?
 - o In one sense, all nations are theocracies since the Lord rules in their existence and places the authority there (whom and when He chooses), however, a nation that does not recognize this in all of its ways is not a theocracy
 - o Biblical principles were applied in the construction of this nation and its governance, but not in the belief and practice of divine direction through its leaders and total obedience to God's law (shadow theocracy?)
 - o Biblical Christianity is not recognized as the official belief system of this nation, with all laws and governance under the authority of the Bible
 - o This nation is not a theocracy - nor has it ever been one
- c. There has never been a Christian theocratic nation
 - o Summary of Session #4 (Brief Historical perspective)
 - o Some Muslim nations believe they are a theocracy
 - o We're called to be the people of God (**1 Peter 2:9**), a holy nation, a royal priesthood, not a national Christian entity (we do have dual citizenship, however)
 - o Our "nation" is the Kingdom of God, independent of national borders

6. What happened to the dominant Christian influence in this nation?

- a. Cancer analogy of corruption: gradual spread to many different areas
 - Note: Each of the following contributed to the removal of Biblical truths from being considered relevant to societal and national issues!
- b. Growth of "Pietism" in the US, development of interior spiritual life (outgrowth of movement that took root in Germany in 1600's, gradually spread to other parts of Europe and to US in 1700-1800's)
 - o Experiential stress - personal relationship to God, salvation experience
 - o Centrality of scripture above all other sources
 - o Growth of zeal for: personal holiness, evangelism; care of the needy
 - o Aversion to the cold, structured church approach
 - o Tended to withdraw from society, specifically politics and the arts
 - o Secular vice the spiritual views of life developed, with the secular (education, science, arts not pursued vigorously)
- c. Darwin's "Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life"; 24 November, 1859
 - o Removed creation and replaced with natural selection (survival of the fittest - Thomas Huxley)
 - o Undermined any normative, divine order to nature (evolving, constantly changing)
 - o Normative Biblical foundation seen as irrelevant since we are evolving there is no absolute
 - o Social Darwinism began to reign - large business was survival of the fittest (races also)
- d. Growth of humanism
 - o Man is the measure of all things - radically affected education, science, arts
 - o Humanism: the fundamental idea that men and women can begin from themselves without reference to the Bible and, by reasoning outward, derive the standards to judge all matters
 - o No absolute standards to judge things with (behavior etc)
 - o Humanism by its nature is antagonistic to Christianity because it has an unchanging standard to judge life and practice
 - o What began with rediscovery of the "classics" (Renaissance) eventually became the authority
- e. Secular vs religious distinctions grew; different spheres of influence; even politicians believed they could operate in both arenas in a contradictory manner (personal convictions different than legislative decisions) (no such separation in reality - everything is under the Lordship of Christ for the believer)
- f. Growth of the "social gospel" - liberal activism to work societal problems - compassion for people at the expense of the gospel - salvation by works mentality not faith in Christ (turned many off)
- g. Growth of pluralism (different cultures, religions, practices) "you believe your way and I'll believe my way" giving impression Christianity has no more right to influence society than any other "practice" or "belief" (outgrowth of relativism)
- h. Many trends tending to remove the Christian influence from the public, social, academic, arts, political and media spheres of influence. "Christian ghettos" created and furthered the decay (accelerated it)
 - o Dominant trends with Christian Organizations within this country (one man's view)
 - o Initial formation of activities occurs with a Christian base or foundation
 - o Over time, these activities can become either completely secular or very liberal
 - o Rarely is an activity returned to its Christ-honoring position
 - o New activities are begun to restore Christ-honoring presence that was lost
 - o The "apostate" groups are now established and become institutionalized enemies
 - o Typically Christian organizations are established - apart from secularized institutions, which further divides into two spheres of influence:
 - o Colleges and universities
 - o Churches (denominational splits/new movements/differing views of purpose)
 - o Seminaries (new orthodox ones to replace apostate ones)
 - o Non profit organizations (Salvation Army)
 - o Research organizations (ICR)
 - o Advocacy groups/P.A.C.S.
 - o Book publishers and book stores
 - o Missions

- o Welfare (e.g. Mormon church)
- o Education (K-12)
- o Typical means of comm. used for Christian purposes separate from secular counterparts
 - o Radio stations
 - o TV stations/networks
 - o Books/publications
 - o Talk shows/forums
 - o Internet/Web-sites/E-mail
 - o Magazines
 - o Newspapers
 - o Arts/movies/music
 - o Counseling
- i. Change in the view of law precipitated legislation by Courts vice interpretation/review only
 - o Note: 2/3's of presidents have been lawyers or connected to the legal profession; 1/2 to 2/3's of seats in Congress have been lawyers
 - o 1870's Christopher Langdell, dean of Harvard Law School, introduced "case law" method of teaching law - revolutionizing the study of law
 - o This mirrored the rise of evolutionary thought
 - o Meant that what a judge said was law, not the Constitution (opinions expressed determined what was meant by the law)
 - o Law can then become whatever a few people believe it should mean
 - o Chief Justice Earl Warren said: "that the words of the Amendment must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society" (reference to a capital punishment case)
 - o Oliver Wendell Holmes; Supreme Court Justice (1902-1932) wrote: "Truth...is the majority vote of that nation that could lick all others"; "...when it comes to the development of a *corpus juris* (or body of laws) the ultimate question is what do the dominant forces of the community want and do they want it hard enough to disregard whatever inhibitions may stand in the way"; "I see no reason for attributing to man a significance different in kind from that which belongs to a baboon or a grain of sand"
 - o Effect: no standard, Constitution can be viewed in a flexible way, moral legislation begins to reflect liberal, anti-Christian bias, political agendas
 - o Basic corruption of how the Constitution is viewed, and the role of the Supreme Court is summarized by Charles Evans Hughes (later to become a Supreme Court Chief Justice): "...the Constitution is what the judges say it is" (1907)
- j. The beginning of the end - Supreme Court Justices Statements
 - (See Handout: Supreme Court Justices Statements - Beginning of the End)
 - o Systematic removal of religion (primarily Christian) presence in the public arena
 - o Schools; legislative actions of the states (reversed historic leaving to the states)
 - o Virtually every other area independent of the people's will or the Constitutional safeguards

7. Summary Trends (Own subjective thoughts)

- a. Prior to founding of the nation there were at least three major influential trends:
 - o Development of political views of the consent of the governed
 - o Development of belief in a balance of powers
 - o Strong Puritan/Calvinist moral roots throughout early America
- b. After founding of the nation there were at least three major trends:
 - o Outworking of basic principles until the 20th Century
 - o Rise of humanistic influences (fueled by evolution) began to dominate our judicial and governmental thinking - removing Christian influence from the public arena
 - o The withdrawal (retreat) of Christian influence from the public domain and concentration on personal holiness, evangelism, social gospel, liberalism
- c. Other notes and warnings
 - o John Adams: "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other" (outward expression of sin was greatly restrained at this time in history of this nation)
 - o Contemporary French environment displayed: disrespect for religion, sexual immorality, and a love of violence - leaders in US predicted the result: revolution, anarchy, terror, tyranny

o Is the US today similar to France then?

8. *What should now be done - if anything?*

- a. Immorality
 - o Return the righteous standard to the public square, promote it, understand the reasons for it and the consequences of leaving it, demand it of our leaders (promote standards such that people voluntarily restrain their sinful impulses through moral discipline - why do we teach our children?)
- b. Correct the ignorance about the founding principles this nation was based upon
 - o Promote greater understanding of the Constitution and the principles behind it (both in the public domain and within the church)
 - o Equip ourselves with basic information to counter the prevailing views
 - o Encourage our schools to return to curriculum that accurately reflects the historical legacy
- c. Constitutional convention?
 - o Article V provides two procedures to amend the Constitution
 - o 2/3's of both houses of Congress and ratified by 3/4's of the states (26 times)
 - o Calling of a Constitutional Convention by 2/3's of the states and ratified by 3/4's
 - o Twenty six amendments to date (initiated by Congress, ratified by states)
 - o None initiated by the states (32 of 34 needed called for balanced budget convention)
- d. Belief in judicial restraint
 - o Strongly encourage our leaders to appoint judges (federal and Supreme Court) that will practice judicial review (constitutionality) and not judicial policy making (new rights or freedoms (abortion; privacy; etc.))
- e. Big Government
 - o When Washington became president - 350 federal civilian employees (3 M citizens)
 - o Ratio of federal civil servants to private citizens (in 1789 - 1:8,500; in 1987 - 1:70)
 - o 3 M civil servants now (same number as entire nation in 1789)
 - o Massive control of every aspect of our lives, and expanding - encourage leaders to reduce this intrusion and control
- f. Be informed on the issues of the day
 - o To better select our leaders
 - o To influence our leaders towards better laws and enforcement of them
 - o Become equipped for office ourselves and/or encourage others with the abilities to lead
 - o Seek out Biblical lawyers to defend our rights as necessary
 - o Christianity is viewed by the public as irrelevant to today's issues - change that perception!
- g. Never forget that it is God that is sovereign and not the ungodly - His name will be glorified!
- h. Don't give up, we are called to be faithful to our dual citizenship responsibilities, we are not accountable for the results (God is)

References:

- (1) *"Christianity and the Constitution - The Faith of Our Founding Fathers,"* John Eidsmoe; 1987
- (2) *"The Second American Revolution,"* John W. Whitehead; 1982
- (3) *"The Myth of Separation - What is the Correct Relationship Between Church and State?"* David Barton; 1992

Additional thoughts:

- o Information control manifests itself in: selection of information; amount; how disseminated; delivery style; choice of methods; channels of distribution
- o Christian publishers of best sellers are not included in the national best seller lists
- o Great nations and civilizations have followed a pattern: bondage or severe persecution to spiritual faith, to courage, to liberty, to abundance, to selfishness, to dependency, to degeneracy, back into bondage
- o This nation depends upon the government to do inefficiently, ineffectively and wastefully what Christians should be doing out of love for our fellow men and enemies
- o The effect of teleological and ontological arguments

Session #7: Role of Government (Detailed Notes)

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." (Rom 13:1-7)

Purpose of this Session: To Overview the Reciprocal Responsibilities of Government and Christian Citizens

- o Overview where all authority comes from, how we relate to governmental authority, then what its role is relative to us
- o Though principles are throughout the O.T. the clearest description is **Rom 13:1-7** in the context of our responsibilities
- o Every word is important in these verses, but we will concentrate only on those that relate to exercise of power and our response to it

1. The Book of Romans gives one of the finest expositions of the role of government in scripture. Leading up to it is our responsibility as believers and followers of Christ

- a. Basic Biblical principles are portrayed throughout **Rom 1-11**
- b. Immediate context of Rom 13 deals with the believers responsibilities, primarily:
 - o Being living sacrifices, total commitment (**12:1-3**)
 - o Being humble, knowing we are all gifted by God differently (**12:4-8**)
 - o Loving others, including our enemies (**12:9-21**)
 - o Submitting and being obedient to authority (**13:1-7**)
 - o Not gratifying our sinful natures but clothing ourselves with light (**13:8-14**)
 - o Living at peace with our fellow believers who may be weak (**14:1-15:13**)
- c. Primary thrust is what our obligation is before the Lord - not what the role of government is (treated to provide further understanding of our role)
- d. Chapter **13:1-7** describes the civil government in it's God ordained form (just use of power)
 - o Delineates the most important functions of government
 - o Addresses our relationship to that government
 - o Contrast with **Rev 18:1-4** where nations become vile and believers are called to escape and not overthrow the government

2. Ultimately, all authority on earth comes from the Lord

- a. ***"...there is no authority except what God has established"*** (**13:1**)
 - o Authority is delegated to the magistrates by God
 - o No authority on earth except that which God has allowed to exist (He makes no mistakes)
 - o True for ancient Israel, all pagan nations, and the United States (read Isaiah!)
 - o God established authority amongst nations, He removes it according to His good pleasure
 - o Same is true within the church: God has raised up leaders (Elders) to watch over the flock (**Hebrews 13:17**). This authority is not to be challenged without well founded concerns (**1 Tim 5:19-20**; two or three witnesses are needed, just as with a capital crime)
- b. ***"The authorities that exist have been established by God"*** (**13:1**)
 - o Restatement of the first part of verse - providing emphasis that all authority is from God

- o Ensures no misunderstanding - the current authorities, as apostate as we may think they are, are there because God placed them there
- o This not an abstraction or only viewing certain forms of government (monarchies; oligarchies; constitutional republics; dictatorships; democracies; etc. included)
- o Even Pontius Pilot's authority was from God (**John 19:11**)

3. Christians are called to fulfill their responsibilities towards the authority God has placed over them

a. First, what authority is over us in this nation (give examples)?:

- o Government
 - o Judges (local through Supreme Court)
 - o Police
 - o IRS
 - o Laws themselves (passed by legislatures)
 - o Border patrol
 - o Firemen
 - o City building inspectors
 - o Military chain of command
 - o Customs officials
 - o Others?
- o Within the public domain
 - o School boards
 - o School principals
 - o Road construction (flag men)
 - o Bus driver
 - o Captain of a ship
 - o Teachers/professors
 - o Employers/supervisors
 - o Airplane pilot
 - o Restaurant (refuses service)
 - o Crosswalk helpers for school
- o Within family/church
 - o Parent
 - o Husband
 - o Elders
 - o Eldest put in charge while parents gone
- o What happens when there is a conflict between different authorities over us?

b. **"...he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (13:2)**

- o To "resist" or "oppose" authority is against what God has established
 - o This begins with the attitude first
 - o It is followed by actions (**James 1:13-15**)
- o This implies an active involvement in defeating the exercise of authority
- o Rebellion against the authority established by God is rebellion against God
- o Exception is when we must obey God not men (**Acts 4:18-20**)
- o The unstated assumption is that the authority in question is exercising its authority in a manner consistent with it's delegated purposes (**13:3,4,6**)(see 4 below)
- o Judgment is unspecified, but appears to be a direct result of rebellion, with punishment sanctioned by God and brought about by the authorities
- o In God's church the equivalent may be "divisiveness" (**Rom 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11**)
- o What happens if a government is overthrown by "rebels"?
 - o What constitutes a "legitimate" government?
 - o Are we to be submissive to the new regime?
 - o Is there a legitimate role for Christians to try and re-establish a previous government?
 - o What was the example of Israel? (overthrown by Babylonians, Assyrians...)

c. **"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities..." (13:1) "Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience" (13:5)**

- o Though we may think there are unreasonable demands on us, we are to still submit
- o This implies willing subservience to the authority over us, not just grudging obedience
- o Example of the Israelites in time of Moses: they obeyed, and called on God for redress, they did not rebel but allowed God to judge the abuse of power and authority by Pharaoh (**Ex 1:1-22; 3:7-10**)
- o In like way, we are to love our enemies, not take revenge - this belongs to God (**Rom 12:17-21**)
- o Submission is of the heart as well as the actions (be grateful!)
 - o As in church there's to be submission to authority placed over the flock (**Heb 13:17**)

- o Just as a wife is to be submissive to her husband (**Eph 5:22**)
- o We are not to confuse submission to authority with giving approval to their actions
 - o May disagree with what the government is doing
 - o Must accept the consequences if we disobey the laws (fines, imprisonment, etc)
 - o Queen Ester willing to be submissive to the law of Persia (King Xerxes)(**Est 5:1-2**)
- o Must not violate God's commands in being obedient to the governmental authorities over us
 - o Example of Shadrech, Meshach, and Abednego (**Dan 3:16-18**)
 - o Example of Daniel (**Dan 6**)
 - o Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (**Acts 4:18-20; Acts 5:29**)
 - o *Note: Try and be creative with the authorities; develop options in obedience (how to actually be done - work with them)*
- o The Lord will not compel a believer to violate His own commands except by direct intervention (Exodus and other examples). government compelling one to commit evil is violating God's will in the exercise of that authority
- o Conscience refers to our obligation to God
 - o First out of possible punishment in our disobedience
 - o Second, because we would be violating God's duly established authority and hence disobeying Him (**1 Peter 2:13**)
 - o We must have a clear conscience before God - we will face him (**Eccel 3:15; Gal 5:13**)
- o What about the "Sanctuary" movement?
- d. **"This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes, if revenue, then revenue" (Rom 13:6-7)**
 - o "Taxes" = tribute; tax levied on persons & property (**Luke 20:22; 23:2**)(similar to income tax)
 - o "Revenue" = *phoros*; tax levied on goods, corresponds to customs payments (similar sales tax)
 - o Whatever the actual source of tax money - the church Paul wrote to understood. **Each nation raises funds however they want**
 - o Does anyone like to pay taxes? (we pay 32-36% of our income to various taxes: income state, federal; sales; gasoline; property; phone; car registration; etc)
 - o Example of oppressive taxation (**1 Kings 12:1-17**)
 - o Example of intimidation (**2 Kings 23:35**)
 - o O.T. Israel payed: 10% to support the Priests (gov.; **Num 18:21-24**); 10% tithes for festivals to cultivate national life (**Deut 12:10-11**); 10% every third year to help the destitute, orphaned, etc (welfare); could not harvest the corners of the fields, plus the seventh year was not planted; plus half-shekel Temple tax (**Ex 30:13**). Total was at least 14-25%
 - o Free will offerings and spontaneous giving are not included in the above
 - o There is no caveat on this command - it is not conditioned upon whether the government is using the tax money in a godly manner (some implication that the persons supported by tax money are fully employed by the government and not being paid to do nothing)
 - o Jesus provided coin for the Temple tax, even though He was not required to before God - He did it to not offend the Jewish authorities (**Matt 17:24-27**)
 - o Temple tax was to pay for special needs of preparing the Temple for the Passover season (Double Drachma Tax)
 - o Kings do not exact taxes from their own family
 - o The Temple was the house of God, Jesus is the Son of God; therefore He did not need to pay the tax, yet He still did
 - o Tax went to support an apostate religion, whose services were an offense to God - a den of thieves; Jesus spoke against the abuses but still paid
 - o Jesus approach to Roman taxes (**Matt 22:15-22**)
 - o Roman coin had Caesar's image on it (Roman emperor claimed to be god (idolatry); he took liberty to pronounce absolution over sins acting as a high priest; Augustus even called himself the son of god)

- o Specific tax was a poll tax on every male
- o If Jesus said not to pay - Herodians would report Him as an insurrectionist
- o If Jesus said to pay - the Pharisees would accuse Him of idolatry
- o Jesus response "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's"
 - o Taxes were levied by Caesar, whether moral or not, whether he was blaspheming or not
 - o Worship is to be given to God alone
 - o Though text does not say Jesus actually paid the tax, context, presence of Pharisees, and **Rom 13:1-7** indicate He did
 - o In **Luke 23:1-3** false testimony included claims that Jesus opposed payment of taxes to Caesar (see Pilot's response in 23:4)
- o Do you agree with this: "Government, no matter how bad, is better than no government?"
- e. Additional supporting verses addressing our roles:
 - o **1 Tim 2:1-2**: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness"
 - o Prayer (requests, intercession, thanksgiving) for all in authority
 - o Prayer for peaceful and quiet lives
 - o **1 Peter 2:13-17**: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men; whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right...Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king."
 - o Submission to authorities
 - o Honor the king
 - o **Jer 29:4-7**: "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.'"
 - o Seek the peace and prosperity of the nation
 - o Pray to the Lord for the land so that it will prosper
- f. Bottom line: we provide stability to the nation by our obedience and help ensure an environment that is safe for the exercise of our faith in the public marketplace

4. Government, likewise, has a God ordained role to fulfill towards it's citizens

- a. "For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong" (**Rom 13:3a; Prov 21:15**)
 - o "Terror" = *phobos*; fear, phobia. Government is to instill terror in those who perform inherently evil deeds. How does it do this?
 - o To some extent, sheer presence of force keeps people obedient to the authorities
 - o Once "due process" relating to criminal acts is done, then:
 - o Punishment is to be swift (**Deut 25:1-3; Eccl 8:11**)
 - o To ensure the punishment is immediately correlated with the crime
 - o To show the ability and resolve of authority to punish
 - o To deter the offender from further crime
 - o To deter other criminals
 - o Punishment is to be without partiality, and be consistently applied (**Prov 18:5; 17:15; 24:23-25; 21:13; 22:22-23; 31:8-9; 29:7**)
 - o Punishment is not to be dependent upon the status of the individual (no double standard)
 - o Equal crimes deserve equal punishment
 - o Punishment is to be without pity (**Deut 19:11-13,21**)
 - o This will instill fear in the hearts of other criminals

- o When punishment is uncertain, evil will take risks
 - o Punishment is to be appropriate ("eye for an eye..." **Deut 19:21**)
 - o Bottom line: punishment was to be just, but remember: God is longsuffering with us but has been swift to punish the evil doer (Sabbath breaker; Ananias and Saphira; Herod)
 - o Types of punishment in the O.T.:
 - o Capital punishment (murder; striking one's parents; blasphemy; witchcraft; delving in the occult; false prophecy; rape; immorality; homosexuality; kidnaping; idolatry; violation of the holiness of the Sabbath; showing contempt for a judge (his decision) or for the priest ministering before the Lord; etc)
 - o Restitution, payment to the victim, or his family; allowed a man to regain his dignity
 - o Corporeal punishment allowed payment to be made, then to proceed with one's life; dignity was restored since payment was made
 - o What about exiling? (why or why not?; Cain?)
 - o Why were there no prisons in the O.T. times? (Cities of refuge were to protect the innocent)
 - o First mention of a prison in Israel was in **Jer 32:2** (Judah; King Zedediah kept Jeremiah in courtyard prison while Babylon besieged Jerusalem)
 - o Prisons were not part of the American justice system until the late 1700's (evil doers were punished quickly or exiled)
 - o Basic presupposition of prisons:
 - o Man basically good, therefore they must be educated so that their behavior is changed (correctional facility)
 - o Instead, the opposite has occurred; men are trained to be even more evil
 - o Prison removes immediate consequences for sin, and being seen by others (punishment is not swift; there is typically no restitution; the punishment is equal to the crime; the shame is hidden)
 - o "Scared straight" program - participant can see consequences
 - o "Ride in a police car" program - passenger can see consequences
 - o Fundamentally, men know the basic difference between good and evil (**Rom 2:14-15**)
 - o Natural revelation; conscience within each person (the "law of nature")
 - o Each society has standards that are upheld, or the society falls
 - o Punishment is to be without pity
 - o Those who do right are not to fear - even if no injustice in life, God will ultimately judge
 - o Within the church - the same principle applies
 - o Scandalous immorality is punished severely and swiftly (**1 Cor 5:1-5,13**); Paul did not ask the Corinthians to wait for his arrival to allow punishment to occur
 - o False accusations appear to be dealt with quickly (**1 Tim 5:19-20**)
 - o Even communist countries punish evil doers (and do not punish someone for not raping, or murdering, or robbing)
 - o Is it safer to walk down a street in Iran or Los Angeles at night?
 - o The role of government is to restrain evil
 - o "Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent, the Lord detests them both" (**Prov 17:15**)
 - o What are examples of the "evil" government is to punish (yet are not now doing)?
 - o Pornography o Indecency o Adultery o Obscenity
 - o Homosexuality o Abortion o Perversions o Slander
 - o High Crimes and Misdemeanors o Harsh punishment for murder, rape, etc.
 - o Pedophiles
- b. **"Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good"** (13:3-4)
- o "Servant" = *diakonos*, deacon
 - o It is not the evil act that is in view here that government is concerned to punish
 - o "Commend" is more "approval" not reward, good standing in the nation
 - o Government is to hold up good examples for the country, not evil ones

- o Even ungodly kings want honest men around them
- o "Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men" (charter for the civil servant)(**Prov 22:29; Joseph**)
- o "A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath" (**Prov 14:35**)
- o "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablets of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man" (**Prov 3:3-4**)
- o "He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor" (**Prov 21:21**)
- o What are examples of the "good" government is to encourage?
 - o Tax exempt status for churches?
 - o Protect life (sanctity of life)?
 - o Free exercise of faith in the public arena?
 - o Defense of the nation (external and internal threats)
 - o Punish evil swiftly (see 4.a. above)
 - o Not practice confiscatory taxation, particularly of those who are hard, honest workers
 - o Godly, uplifting art and music? (But not pay for it!)
 - o Humanitarian efforts
 - o True education (Godly, basic, accurate)
 - o The right use of science and medicine
 - o Encourage moral behavior
 - o Strengthening families
- o Who defines what is right in our nation?
- c. "**But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an angel of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer"** (13:4)
 - o "Servant" = *diakonos*, deacon
 - o The sword represents the power of taking life (capital punishment); this authority is granted to the state by God and is to be used as necessary (Jesus was crucified by the sword of the state)
 - o "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man"(**Gen 9:6; Matt 26:52**)
 - o "If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving of death, I do not refuse to die" (**Acts 25:11**)(Paul acknowledged the authority of the state to take his life if he deserved to die)
 - o O.T. sins which merited the death penalty (see above)(approximately 28 different sins)
 - o Removing severe punishment for crimes removes the stability that society needs - as designed by God to restrain man's evil nature. If removed, society will of necessity be forced to bring them back (fines, capital punishment, imprisonment, etc)
 - o O.T., blood guilt for murder that is not payed for (**Gen 9:6** principle; **Eze 7:20-27; 18:10-13**)
 - o The nation of Israel payed dearly for their wickedness and idolatry
 - o This nation will pay dearly for the taking of innocent lives (abortion)
 - o "Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it" (**Num 35:33; Cain; Canaan**)
 - o Taking of lives of murderers prevents the taking of other lives, and serves as a deterrent
 - o Personal basis see **Rom 12:17-21**; but government is to restrain evil an exercise by God's authority (as His servant) punishment suited to the crime
- d. Additional verses addressing roles of Government
 - o **1 Tim 2:1-2**
 - o Ensure peace in the land (peaceful and quiet lives)
 - o Be able to practice our beliefs and worship without hindrance
 - o To ensure that good is not punished
 - o **1 Peter 2:13-17**
 - o Punish evildoers
 - o Commend those who do good

5. Bottom Lines: The Bible delineates clear responsibilities of government, the question is, who tells the government?:

- o Ensure peace in the land (so it's citizens may have peaceful and quiet lives)
 - o Protect from external threats (military; economic; moral; religious)
 - o Protect from internal threats
 - o *Q: who defines what the threat is!?*
- o Punish the evil doer
 - o *Q: who defines what is evil?*
 - o *Q: who defines what the punishment is going to be?*
- o Commend or approve the good
 - o Create an environment conducive to acts of charity and compassion to those suffering
 - o Encourage the free expression of our faith (witnessing)
 - o *Q: who defines what is good?*
- o In all of this remember **Isa 33:22**: "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us."
 - o Ultimate judgment is the Lords, not ours
 - o He is the source of the righteous commands (Laws) that are to govern a nation
 - o He is the ultimate King that all nations and people are to be obedient to

Session #8: Role of the Law (Detailed Notes)

"We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers - and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me"
(1 Tim 1:8-11)

Purpose of this Session: Overview some of the purposes of God's law in relation to believers, non-believers, and the nations:

- o What is God's law
- o Is there a hierarchy to God's laws?
- o What is the rightful use of God's law?
- o What can we do about the laws of this country?

1. Intro: Biblical law in the broadest sense is an expression of God's will for us and all of mankind in a fallen world

- o The study of Biblical law is very important, is very broad, and can be controversial
 - o Many men, many lives, much time wrestling with this - why?
 - o We ignore the law at our own peril (Prov 28:9; "...prayers will be detestable...")
- o The basics: Understanding Biblical law is foundational to understanding sin and God's grace
 - o Law and Grace are two halves of the redemptive message
 - o Without law, there is no objective understanding of sin or recognition of need (Rom 7:7)
 - o God's standard (His law) requires perfect obedience or the facing of judgment (Rom 6:23)
 - o Christ obeyed the law perfectly, & paid the price of our disobedience to it (1 Peter 2:22-24)
 - o Understanding the role of Biblical law is critical to understanding our need for Christ (Gal 3:24) and God's righteous rule in our lives (2 Cor 10:5)
 - o Intention here:
 - o Not fully develop theology of Biblical law
 - o Not address the major controversial aspects or abuses of God's law (e.g. Sabbath; Anti-nomianism (Justification by faith, with the law having no function in a believers life; the believer already possess everything from eternity and as such is too free to be bound to the law in any way (carnal Christian)); etc.)
 - o Will lay a Biblical foundation from which earthly laws can be built and judged, a guide for holy living (Rom 13:4-8)
- o Two general spheres of law exist: God's perfect, and man's imperfect reflection
 - o Comparing the two is like comparing a perfect diamond & a salt crystal (2 Tim 3:16; Prov 30:5-6); yet even so, man's law is a gift of God's common grace to man
 - o God's law (immutable, consistent, timeless, perfect, holy, righteous, good, absolute)
 - o Placed within man from the very beginning (Rom 2:14-15)
 - o God's perfect law revealed to us through revelation (Old and New Testaments)
 - o Man's law (changes over time, inconsistent, imperfect, replaceable, unjust)
 - o A dim reflection of the law placed in each man's heart (conscience)(Rom 2:14-15)
 - o A corrupt implementation of God's laws through imperfect, yet sincere believers
 - o A corrupt implementation of God's laws compromised through mixed cultures and belief systems operative in a culture
 - o Can be used for both righteous & rightly motivated purposes
- o In 1 Tim 1:8 the law is good but it must be handled and used properly.
- o Biblical law can be defined in a number of ways - depending upon context?
 - o The standard by which actions are compared (a mirror for uncovering sin; but by itself, incapable of changing us)

- o Samuel Bolton (17th c. scholar; one of authors of Westminster Confession): gives a number of meanings of "law":
 - o Any doctrine, instruction, law, ordinance, statute, divine or human which teaches, directs, commands, or binds men to any duty which they owe to God or man
 - o Word for law frequently in O.T. is torah; signifies to teach, instruct, admonish
 - o In NT the word for law is derived from one meaning to distribute - it distributes or renders to God and man their dues
 - o Sometimes taken for the scriptures of the O.T. (the books of Moses; the Psalms; the Prophets); sometimes the whole word of God (its promises and precepts; Ps 19:7)
 - o The five books of Moses (Gal 3:21; John 1:45; Luke 24:44)
 - o The teaching of Moses (pedagogy) as in John 5:46
 - o The moral law alone (the Decalogue)(Rom 7:7,14,21)
 - o The ceremonial law (Luke 16:16)
 - o All the detailed laws together: moral, ceremonial, and judicial (John 1:17)
- o Context determines what part of God's word is addressed at any given time

2. Theme verse: 1 Tim 1:8-11; *The Law must be used properly or it is of no effect*

- o Addresses men teaching false doctrines or devoting selves to myths/ endless genealogies (1 Tim 1:3).
 - o These promote: Controversies/Meaningless talk
 - o These men don't know what they're talking about - implies don't know intent of the law even though they want to be teachers of it (1 Tim 1:7)
 - o Not used to build up but to salve own prideful nature
 - o Possible concentration on minor points, rabbit trails, not for understanding to bring to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to restrain evil
 - o Indites those who teach law yet don't know or believe in the purpose of it (form over content)
 - o Teachers of the law may include those that have not learned to be obedient to it (Rom 2:1-4)
- o Paul follows the Decalogue in order (see also Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 6:9-10):
 - o The ungodly, sinful, unholy and irreligious (Ex 20:2-11)(First thru fourth com.)
 - o Those who kill their fathers or mothers, murderers (Ex 20:12-13)(Fifth thru sixth com.)
 - o For adulterers and perverts (Ex 20:14)((Seventh com.)
 - o For slave traders (Ex 20:15)(Eighth com.)
 - o For liars and perjurers (Ex 20:16)(Ninth com.)
 - o For whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine (Ex 20:17)(Tenth com.?)
 - o Contrary implies the opposite of, fighting against, in opposition to
 - o Law is to restrain evil, Biblical doctrine teaches obedience to God's righteous decrees
 - o We can rejoice in the law, it's the perfect reflection of God, governs our activities in conformance with a life of obedience and holiness
- o Paul refers to kings, those in authority - addressing other than the nation Israel or the spiritual kingdom of God (1 Tim 2:2); he also addresses masters and slaves (1 Tim 6:1-2)
 - o Secular nations and conditions are also in view in this epistle!
 - o Implication of a proper use of God's law for believers, and a wider societal and cultural context
- o Implication: Use of law controls evil; structured to conform outward actions of man to what is expected of a life pleasing to God (conformity to His standard of holiness) - but there is more to the story!

3. *There's an implied Hierarchy to God's Law that proceeds from God's perfection down to specific implementation (see Handout: Is There a Hierarchy of Biblical Law?); One approach*

- o "Be holy, because I, the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7,26; 1 Peter 1:16)
 - o Clearest, and shortest summary of God's commands to His people (Vertical)
 - o Relates God's very nature as what we are to be, the ultimate goal and desire of our lives
 - o Covers direct relationship with God (without being clothed with Christ we could not be in right relationship) and by implication all others if that is our nature
- o The greatest commandment, & the second (Deut 6:4-5; Lev 19:18; Matt 22:37-40; Mk 12:30-31)
 - o Christ Himself called these the sum of the law
 - o The most important one is the vertical relationship with God, the next is the horizontal

- relationship with our fellow man
 - o Not limited to our believing brothers and sisters
- o Next level: although the Bible doesn't explicitly define laws by category there are convenient divisions: ceremonial, civil (judicial), moral
 - o Some indication of distinctions given in O.T. (**Psalm 40:6-8; Jer 7:22-23; 1 Sam 15:22**) and the N.T. (**Heb 10:1-18**)
 - o These laws were not arbitrary or unrelated to each other; moral law provided foundation for ceremonial and civil laws (definition and enacting)
 - o With exception of Decalogue, other O.T. laws rarely only ceremonial, civil or moral in nature
 - o God's judicial (civil) and ceremonial laws found throughout **Ex; Lev; Num; Deut**
 - o Not always a clear distinction between them
 - o In effect civil and ceremonial laws are application of the principles of the Decalogue (explain, apply and confirm them)
 - o The list provided is not exhaustive, but representative
- o "Moral" laws (eternal - vertical and horizontal) Summarized in 10 commandments (Decalogue)
 - o Written by God personally on stone tablets (unlike ceremonial and civil laws that were revealed by God through Moses) (**Ex 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21**)
 - o Many believe: perfect embodiment of God's moral law
 - o Eternal and unchanging, applies to all of God's creatures (not fixed in time or place)?
 - o Reveals and reflects God's holy nature and will
 - o Addresses both internal heart issues (**Ex 20:17**) as well as external actions (**Ex 20:14**)
 - o Distinguishes right from wrong
 - o Placed in man's conscience from the beginning; but corrupted by the fall
 - o "Did God reveal His moral law at Mt Sinai and not before?" (*see note (1)*)
 - o First, second and third commandment (**Ex 20:3-7**)(**Gen 35:2**)(Jacob purging idols)
 - o Fourth commandment (**Ex 20:8-11**)(**Ex 16:27-29**)(manna)
 - o Fifth commandment (**Ex 20:12**)(**Gen 9:18-29; 19:14-15**)(Noah drunk; sons; Ham)
 - o Sixth commandment (**Ex 20:13**)(**Gen 4:13; 9:6; 2 Peter 2:5**)(Cain)
 - o Seventh commandment (**Ex 20:14**)(**Gen 19:24-25; Jude 7; Gen 34:1-26**)(rape of Dinah; Sodom and Gomorrah)
 - o Eighth commandment (**Ex 20:15**)(**Gen 2:16-17; 31:19-32**)
 - o Ninth commandment (**Ex 20:16**)(**Gen 4:9,12**)(Cain about his brother)
 - o Tenth commandment (**Ex 20:17**)(**Gen 20:3,18**)(Abimelech and Abraham's wife)
 - o First three commands: relationship with God (Christ's greatest command)
 - o Last six commands: relationship with others (Christ's second greatest command)
 - o Though controversial, the 4th commandment has aspects of both
 - o The Sabbath was a holy day, a gift to man, it must be treated with respect to God who blessed it and made it holy (Christ's greatest command)
 - o It was to call into remembrance the Lord who made heaven and earth and rested
 - o Servants, families, aliens, animals rest on this day (Christ's second greatest command)
- o Ceremonial laws (temporary; fulfilled in Christ - vertical)
 - o Pertain to and govern external, public worship of God in response and of necessity to the moral laws of God
 - o Specific actions repeated according to a manner prescribed by God in the worship of God (any added by man is to contribute to, and not obscure or replace those of God)
 - o Distinguished Israel from all other nations (fixed in time and place)
 - o Signs, symbols, types and shadows of spiritual matters revealed in NT by Christ (**Heb 10:1**)
 - o Temporary, fulfilled by Christ, then abolished (**Heb 7:11-28**)
- o Civil laws (deal with the affairs of man - horizontal)
 - o Application of *moral laws* to the theocracy of Israel; its conduct and duties
 - o *Judicial laws* to maintain order among the Jewish people
 - o Defined *rules governing the nation, judges, kings, relationships between people* to preserve order and peace (fixed in time and place)

- o Applies in a form until the coming of Christ to establish His eternal kingdom
- o Current controversy amongst Christians is to what extent these laws apply to earthly kingdoms (theonomy; reconstructionists)
 - o Though social conditions have changed, hearts have not
 - o The fundamental principles of justice remain for all time
 - o There is no foreigner verses native, black verses white distinctions, but righteous requirements and a separation of responsibilities
- o Why do we care about any distinctions in God's laws?
 - o God knows us, and mankind best - is it unreasonable to expect Him to provide His perfect laws to govern human affairs?
 - o The question we must answer is what applies to others outside the church?

4. Biblical Law Applies to Everyone!

- o First, many Biblical statements specifically address the purpose of the law:
 - o "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come." (**Gal 3:19**)
 - o "The law was added so that the trespass might increase" (**Rom 5:20**)
 - o "Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law" (**Rom 7:7**)
 - o "...through the law we become conscious of sin" (**Rom 3:20**)
 - o "We also know that law is made not for good men but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious ..." (**1 Tim 1:9**)
 - o This list is illustrative, not exhaustive
 - o Lawbreakers + rebels = transgressors of established law, knowingly, premeditated
 - o Ungodly (no reverence) + sinful (profane) = willfully disobedient to God/reject His righteous decrees
 - o Unholy and irreligious = those who dishonor holy/sacred things, or deny all together
 - o "The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith" (**Gal 3:24**)
- o For believers: the law reveals God's will for His creatures
 - o It teaches and identifies what sin is (God's perfect standard)(**Rom 7:7**)
 - o It reveals the depth of the pollution of our lives (**Jer 17:9**)
 - o It is a standard to show us our need of Christ, not just today, but every day (incapable of meeting the requirements of the law on our own)(**Gal 3:24**)
 - o It shows us the perfection of Christ, who perfectly kept God's laws, was without sin and how utterly impossible it would be for other than the God-man to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law
 - o It is the standard to show us our duty to God (horizontal) and men (vertical)
 - o For each law, a duty is commanded (positive and negative sides), e.g.:
 - o You shall not steal - implies mandate to protect property of others
 - o You shall not murder - implies mandate to protect life (just war?)
 - o You shall not commit adultery - implies protecting sexual purity and the marriage
 - o You shall not bear false testimony - implies must tell the truth
- o Biblical law, rightfully applied, is a testimony to the nations of the world (**Deut 4:5-8**) and the alien residing within (**Lev 24:22**)
 - o It's very existence implies our ultimate accountability to a supreme being before which all men will give an accounting (**Rom 2:14-15; Psalm 14:1**)
 - o It demonstrates wisdom and understanding in the dealings of man with man
 - o It demonstrates the blessings that come through obedience to the law, for example:
 - o Justice ensures peace within the land (**Prov 14:34**)
 - o Sexual purity eliminates many diseases and heartache
 - o Love for our neighbor removes need for welfare programs run by the government
 - o Law is meant to fulfill justice, not an exercise in intellectual powers or cleverness, or speculation, but punishing of evil doers
- o The law shows un-believers their sin (in actions, in words, in inaction - and ultimately the heart)
 - o The ungodly will immediately:

- o Reject God's command to be holy as He is holy
- o Reject the greatest command since he is rebellious before God
- o Reject the second command except as it applies to his own benefit
- o Reject first four commands of Decalogue since they address right relationship to God
- o Reject the ceremonial laws because he does not accept his need for redemption
- o But even with blinded eyes, there is a need for spiritual fulfillment, and even these commands can bring conviction to him
- o The ungodly still have a conscience (**Rom 2:14-15**), having laws and being taught about them can bring some degree of constraining of evil actions (not heart)
- o Law continually increases since sin continually manifests itself in different ways (**Gal 3:19**)
 - o True for those to which the revelation of God's will is manifest from the beginning
 - o True for the ungodly with the expansion of earthly laws to cover creative increases in corruption and the outworking of sin
- o Law is the standard that is to be held up to men in this world (show their duty to God and man; define what is right and wrong (**1 Tim 1:9; Rom 13:3-4;9-10**))
- o Law was made to restrain evil men (**1 Tim 1:9**), providing the standard to judge when actions are to be punished (what is unacceptable)(**Prov 22:6**)
- o Law shows evil men the impurity of their hearts and their hopeless estate without a Savior. Provides greater accountability of own sin before God (the law giver) (**Gal 3:24**)
 - John Bunyan: *"The man who does not know the nature of the law cannot know the nature of sin. And he who does not know the nature of sin cannot know the nature of the Savior"*
- o It provides the standard to government so it can punish evil and commend good (**Rom 13:1-7**)
- o For the reprobate, the law is a joke; for them it provides control and a warning to others

5. We can have significant impact upon the laws in this land. The question is do we want to, and how do we do it?

- o First, we must become knowledgeable of God's laws and how they apply to our society (**Prov 29:18***)
 - o Train our children to apply Biblical principles to everyday issues (**Deut 6:6-9**)
 - o Equip others when opportunity comes (**Col 4:5-6**)
 - o Speak up in public settings (but knowledgeably - do not underestimate the complexity of many issues)
- o We can encourage our law makers to pass just laws and ensure they are enforced (**Prov 11:1; 21:15**)
 - o We can lobby for laws restoring moral standards consistent with Biblical standards of right and wrong (**Prov 14:34**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied equally (rich and poor alike)(**Prov 22:22-23; 24:23-25**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied quickly (**Deut 25:1-3; Eccl 8:11**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied fairly (**Prov 16:11; 17:15; 18:5; 20:10**)
 - o We can initiate and pursue referendums to be placed on the ballot (petition drives - DOMA)
- o We can elect officials that understand Biblical principles, the rule of law, and the need for justice
 - o Research their previous voting records and public statements (positions)
 - o We can recall officials that do not act in an acceptable manner (local through state)
- o We can research records of judges in dealings with criminals and understanding of the law (**Prov 28:4**)
 - o Many judges are elected and hence subject to removal
 - o Even Supreme Court Justices can be removed (Constitutionally allowed - never been used)
- o We can write clearly and often to our elected officials letting them know of our support or concern over pending legislation ("Committee on Moral Concerns" based in Sacramento)(**Prov 11:14**)
- o We can consider support of those Christ honoring organizations that are attempting to defend our religious liberties in this country ("American Center for Law and Justice"; "Alliance Defense Fund"; "The Rutherford Institute; etc.)
- o Legislating laws of conscience cannot be done (hate crimes try to do this and fail), laws governing actions and speech can be!
 - o Actions (murder, rape, theft, etc.)
 - o Speech (libel, false testimony, false advertising, vulgarities (?))

- o Conscience (coveting (stalking can fall into this category), idolatry, blasphemous beliefs, etc.)
- o Old "Blue Laws" attempted to legislate actions on Sunday, and thus affect thoughts, but the heart cannot be legislated
- o If the standard is set to the lowest debased level, then no one will think they are doing anything wrong (or sinful)
- o Paul says in **Rom 7:7-12** that he would not have known what sin was except through the law. The principle applies to people in general, when they become aware that something is illegal - they will be more cautious about it (in general)
- o Bottom Line: Study God's word & His law - the more we do, the more we see it applying to this nation

6. Discussion Questions

- o "Should the 10 Commandments be posted on public school walls?"
 - o Why not? Nation founded on Christian principles by Christian people
 - o If Supreme Court is afraid that the very posting of the 10 Commandments can cause a student to possibly think about them - doesn't this alone show the power the word of God has!
 - "If the posted copies of the Ten Commandments are to have any effect at all, it will be to induce the schoolchildren to read, meditate upon, perhaps to venerate and obey, the Commandments... This... is not a permissible state objective under the Establishment Clause"... "The mere posting of the copies... the Establishment Clause prohibits" (Stone v. Graham; 449 U.S. 39,41 (1980))
- o "Did Adam and Eve have God's law written on their hearts?"
 - o Garden of Eden, and first few chapters of Genesis set out universal law for all of mankind
 - o **Rom 2:14-15** indicates each man is given a conscience
 - o Apparently, with the fall and the degradation of the very nature of man, the conscience was also corrupted - but not completely
- o "Does the example of aliens obedience to the laws of Israel have merit for us today?"
 - o We are called to set an example for the rest of the world, where we have opportunity, we can create and ensure enforcement of just laws that reflect God's justice
- o "Are other nations punished when they do not obey God's law? How do they know it?"
 - o Conscience (**Rom 2:14-15**)
 - o The testimony of righteous laws that do exist throughout the nations
- o "Is man allowed to be more merciful than God in enforcing laws?"
- o "What right do we have to force our morality on others?"
- o "Should there be laws restricting a person's right to speak vulgarities, profanities and blasphemous statements against Christ?" (Third Commandment)
 - o Is this a true violation of the freedom of speech amendment (freedom of expression)?
 - o Can a person take offense at virtually anything being said? If so, can they be offended by the sharing of the gospel and hence this should be curtailed?
 - o On individual basis we can express our concern and offense at what people say, generally this will have a big impact upon them (care must be taken: lose of a friend; employer; greater persecution or disruption)

7. Homework: Many Properties of God's Law are summarized in Psalm 119(See Handout: Attributes of, and Response to God's Word from Psalm 119) - Word and Law intertwined!

- o Here God's word includes His laws, and these promises and thoughts equally apply to both
 - o They are equally authoritative
 - o The law, depending upon definition, is contained in God's word
 - o Both demand sincere and faithful study to learn about God and His will
- o **Psalm 119** is an awesome summary of the power of God's word (remember when written!)
 - o Attributes of God's word
 - o What will happen to us if we live a life according to God's word
 - o What we will learn
 - o How we are to go about studying and handling God's word
 - o What we should ask God for relative to His word
 - o What will happen to us and the wicked who ignore His word; Others?

- o Do any other attributes of God's law come to mind?
 - o Internally consistent
 - o Upholds God's honor
 - o Provides standards with which to judge evil
 - o Develops and expands over time (case-law)
 - o Absolute (God's) vs relative (man's); principle vs application
 - o They are non-arbitrary; objective, universal
 - o Are the standard with which to judge all social codes
 - o God's laws (O.T.) are a model of perfect social justice for all cultures (**Deut 4:5-8**)
 - o Perfect (**Prov 30:5-6**)
 - o Brings conviction of sin (**Gal 3:24**)

Notes:

1. *"The Law and the Gospel," Ernest C. Reisinger; 1997*
2. *"Five Views on Law and Gospel," General Editor: Wayne G. Strickland; (Bahnsen; Kaiser; Moo; Strickland; VanGemeren); 1996*
3. *"The Revelation of Law in Scripture," Patrick Fairbairn; originally published in 1869; republished 1996*
4. *"By this Standard," Greg L. Bahnsen; 1991*

Additional Notes:

- o **Rom 5:13** gives a principle of law called no "ex post facto" - that is, a law cannot be passed and then retroactively applied to someone who "broke" it before it existed

Session #9: The Role of the Church (Detailed Notes)

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph 3:10-11)

Purpose of this Session - Discuss the Biblical roles of the church (the body of believers; the Body of Christ) and how it equips us to be citizens in the society around us:

- o It's relationship to God directly
- o It's testimony before the spiritual powers
- o It's testimony before worldly powers (five ways)
- o It's role within and amongst itself
- o It's corporate role before worldly powers

1. Introduction: What is the Church and what are its basic characteristics?

- a. Basic definitions (some material from note (1))
 - o Church = English word, common usage = derives from late Greek word "Kyriakon", the Lord's house, a church building, a building set apart or consecrated for public worship, especially one for Christian worship
 - o Church = secular NT Greek = "*ekklesia*" = a public assembly; used amongst the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of the state (**Acts 19:39**); used in reference to the whole company of the redeemed throughout history (**Matt 16:18**) and in the singular to a company consisting of believers in an area (**Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:13**)
 - o The visible and invisible church (Luther, Calvin; John Wycliffe):
 - o Invisible church consisting of the elect only
 - o Visible church consists of those that claim to be Christians and are part of the organized church in one form or another, or in our day at least identify themselves as Christians
 - o The church is comprised of:
 - o Individual believers redeemed by Christ (abnormal to be alone, one person does not make a church; exceptions may exist but are temporary)(**Eph 4:4**)
 - o The body of Christ (local church for a given region, Apostolic example; Paul's letters were sometimes directed to specific churches)(**1 Thess 1:1**)
 - o The church universal, entire body of believers throughout time (the bride of Christ)
 - o Here, considering the corporate, local church role (e.g. GBC vice the universal)
- b. General characteristics
 - o "One, holy, catholic and apostolic church" (Nicene Creed (325); Ephesus (431); Chalcedon (451))
 - o One body (**Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:1-6**); one flock (**John 10:16**); Jesus prays that His followers will be one as He and the Father are One (**John 17:20-26**); independent of race, social status or sex (**Gal 3:27-28**)
 - o Holy; separated from the profane and dedicated to the service of God (**2 Thess 2:13; Col 3:12**)
 - o Catholic ("universal"); entire church, common identity of origin; lordship; purpose
 - o Apostolic; the message and mission of the apostles as mediated through scripture is the foundation (**Eph 2:20**)
 - o Body of Christ, Christ the Head (**Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 1:22-23; 4:12; Col 2:19**)
 - o Many other illustrations, analogies, to illustrate its characteristics (salt of the earth; a letter from Christ; branches of the vine, the elect lady, the bride of Christ; exiles, ambassadors, chosen race, holy temple, priesthood, new creation, fighters against Satan, sanctified slaves, friends, sons of God, household of God, members of Christ, spiritual body...)

2. *The Role of the Church first and foremost is to bring honor and glory to God (See Handout: The Different Roles of the Church (Diagram))*

- a. Individually called to honor God with our bodies (1 Cor 6:20), how much more as a Body of believers
- b. We are to bring glory to God with one heart and mouth (Rom 15:6)
- c. Our labors are to bear fruit to God's glory (John 15:8)
- d. In everything we do, particularly as the Bride of Christ, we are to bring glory to God (1 Cor 10:31)
- e. Ultimately, the church exists to bring glory to God - Historically, approaches range from:
 - o Total isolationism (monks; nunnery; monasteries) to an imposed Theocracy (Constantine)
 - o Cultural Christian (social club) to "I am my own church"
 - o Right wing conservative political activists to Left wing liberals
 - o Spreading the social gospel to spreading the true gospel (strongly evangelical)
- f. The churches functions and roles (and our salt and light mission) must ultimately be measured against this standard: If in pursuing we do not do this - we are misguided!

3. *The Role of the Church is to reflect the Multi-faceted grace of God before the Spiritual Powers (Eph 3:10-11)*

- a. "Manifold wisdom of God"
 - o Manifold: "*polupoikilos*"; variegated, in Greek refers to cloth or flowers, intricate beauty of an embroidered pattern; endless variety of colors in flowers, etc.
 - o The wisdom of God as it is manifested in different times, places and persons (Heb 1:1)
 - o Includes God's multifaceted grace administered to serve others (1 Peter 4:10), demonstrating God's love by the love we demonstrate to each other (John 13:34)
 - o Revealing God's special provision of salvation for men, even angels wonder at (1 Peter 1:12)
- b. "Should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms"
 - o The angels and other heavenly beings (1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:6; 1 Peter 1:12) in God's presence (the highest heavens)
 - o The demons (fallen angels) that dwell in this world and in heavenly realms (Eph 2:2; 6:12; Col 2:15; even Satan at one time (Job 1:6))
- c. "Through the church"
 - o The church is not an Ad Hoc plan that God created, or one of man's own imagination
 - o The bride of Christ, the object of God's love
 - o The theater through which the world sees God's wisdom poured out (1 Cor 4:9)
- d. "According to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord"
 - o The plan of God which is from eternity past has not changed (1 Peter 1:20)
 - o That purpose is to bring glory to God through His people whom He has chosen and redeemed
- e. The spiritual warfare Paul refers to in Eph 6 tells us who we are fighting in the world and that the victory is assured

4. *The Role of the Church is to testify to God's truths (of His Son and in application to all areas of life) before Earthly Powers (1 Peter 3:9-10)*

- a. "Chosen people"; "People belonging to God"
 - o Showing themselves to be separate from the rest of the world (in but not of the world)
 - o Not our actions but God's work in our lives that saves us
 - o We are in a special relationship with God and our lives are to demonstrate this fact
- b. "Royal priesthood"
 - o We are continually in the presence and before the Almighty God (just as priests were in O.T.)
 - o We have an intercessory role for others (witnessing; demonstrating our changed lives by our actions and words, praying for the lost)
- c. "Holy nation"
 - o Our first and eternal citizenship is in Christ's kingdom (heaven)
 - o Our ultimate Lord and King is King Jesus
 - o Our kingdom is not of this world, it is not a location any longer like ancient Israel
- f. "That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"
 - o We're to demonstrate to others the grace God has shown us to encourage & edify each other

- o We are to give thanks for all that God has done for us
- o We are to witness to the world what God has done for and through us
- g. We are ambassadors in this world (2 Cor 5:20)
 - o Represent God's kingdom, proclaiming truths many facets; primarily as relates to Jesus Christ
 - o Holding up God's righteous decrees to mankind to govern its affairs (common mercy)
 - o Faithfully proclaim God's truths in every sphere of life

5. The Role of the Church Amongst Believers is to Worship God and Equip the Saints

- a. Gather together for worship (Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 11:28)
 - o Preaching (2 Tim 4:2; Matt 28:19-20)
 - o Teaching (2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11)
 - o Singing praises to God (Eph 5:19; 1 Peter 2:9; Psalm 84:4)
 - o Prayer (Eph 5:20, 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17-18; Acts 1:14)
- b. Oversee the ordinances instituted by Christ
 - o Baptism (Acts 2:41)
 - o Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-32)
- c. Maintain the purity of the body (Acts 20:28-31)
 - o Correction, rebuke, admonition (1 Thess 5:14; Gal 6:1)
 - o Exercise of church discipline (1 Thess 5:22; Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4-5,12-13; 2 Cor 2:6-8)
- d. Equip the saints for works of service to God (Eph 2:10; 4:12; 1 Peter 4:10)
 - o Developing of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4-7)
 - o Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
 - o Warning of the cost (1 Peter 4:12-17; 5:8)
 - o Send out missionaries to bring the good news to others (Rom 10:15)
- e. Disciple of believers (Matt 28:19-20)
 - o To be salt and light in all of our professions (Matt 5:13-15)
 - o To grow in the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13)
- f. Minister to the physical needs of the body (Acts 6:1-6)
- g. Support other churches
 - o Prayer (Eph 6:18; 2 Cor 8:2-5)
 - o Material support (Rom 15:27; Col 4:12)

6. The Role of the Church is to Equip Believers to be Godly Citizens

- a. What do you think the role (or purpose) of the church is? What is it's divinely ordained mission?

<i>o Equip the saints</i>	<i>o Fellowship</i>	<i>o Evangelize (bear witness)</i>
<i>o Church discipline</i>	<i>o Glorify God</i>	<i>o Maintain purity & spiritual health</i>
<i>o Service</i>	<i>o Communion together</i>	<i>o Worship together</i>
<i>o Light to the world</i>	<i>o Support missionaries</i>	<i>o Care for poor, widows, orphans</i>
<i>o Teaching</i>	<i>o Preaching</i>	<i>o Prayer</i>
<i>o Singing</i>	<i>o Develop spiritual gifts</i>	<i>o Discipling</i>
- b. Instruct believers to:
 - o Be obedient to the authority (and by extension the laws) that God has placed over us (Rom 13:2; 1 Peter 2:13-17)
 - o Give honor, respect, taxes were due to the authorities over us (Rom 13:6-7)
 - o Pray for the rulers over us (1 Tim 2:1-2)
 - o Work hard and provide for our own families and others in need (2 Thess 2:6-15)
 - o Expose evil in the land to warn others (Eph 5:8-14)
 - o Not withdraw into our own Christian ghetto
 - o Have an answer when issues come up (Col 4:5-6)(Consequences of sin, results of the righteous life and obedience)
 - o Be the salt & light the nation needs (antiseptic; thirsty; truth; etc.)(Matt 5:13-16)
- c. Seek the peace and prosperity of the nation (Jer 29:4-7)
 - o Instruct government on what is good and evil (voting; representatives)(Rom 13:1-7)
 - o Appeal to man's conscience (Rom 2:14-15)

- o Demand accountability from our leaders
- o Demand good stewardship from the government
- d. Use the giftedness the Lord provides to expand the kingdom of God (1 Cor 12:4-7), ministry to our fellow man (Rom 12:20-21); be salt and light in this land (Matt 5:13-16)
- e. Remember, the power in us is greater than the one in the world (Rom 8:31-39)
 - o God rules in providence even where he does not rule as Savior
 - o We are to be the example for the world in word and deed
 - o All men and women will bow to Christ's rule over all of life, but only believers will do this before the last day (Phil 2:10-11)

7. Five Commonly held Distinctive Roles of the Church Relative to the Surrounding Culture

- a. Culture - derived from world of gardening (horticulture; cultivation); cultivation of the habits, interests, language, and artistic life of the nation. The tastes that a particular people have
 - o *High culture*: Horticulture; academics; classic music; opera; literature; science; etc.
 - o *Popular culture*: Sports; politics; public education; popular music; entertainment; etc.
- b. H. Richard Niebuhr "Christ and Culture", 1951; defined five basic historical positions toward culture
 - o **"Christ above Culture" (Modified Theocracy)(1)**
 - o Thomas Aquinas teachings (1200's), which most Roman Catholics and Anglicans have adhered to and which characterized the Middle Ages
 - o All social institutions, including government should be brought under the jurisdiction of the church, but not to simply "baptize" the entire culture into the church
 - o The church is viewed as the custodian of the divine law and should control political life and establish the laws for the state's operation
 - o In some aspects, this is similar to the theocracy of the O.T. Israel times/sacralist
 - o **"Christ and Culture in Paradox" (Dualism)(2)(*)**
 - o "Dualism" - man is a citizen of two different spheres: City of God and City of Man simultaneously. Neither sphere rules or attacks the other (two kingdoms)
 - o Martin Luther's approach - stresses that Christians should seek to promote evangelism and discipleship rather than engage in cultural activity
 - o Adherents (e.g. Lutherans) emphasize God's grace
 - o Belief that selfishness, sin, etc. are pervasive in the world, therefore Christians cannot create a righteous society through political action.
 - o At best, can only retard the spread of evil in a country, culture can never be an avenue of finding God
 - o Culture exists for a distinct purpose: when man can find pleasure in work, family, education, arts, leisure, etc. it is a gift of God
 - o Calvin: the moral law of God written on the human conscience is sufficient for framing a just society
 - o **"Christ the Transformer of Culture" (Transformation)(3)(*)**
 - o Augustine and Calvin the key proponents
 - o Although man is depraved and sin pervades all human activities, God is sovereign over all human cultural activity. God is building a kingdom on earth, and Christians are to respond obediently to God's norms and serve Him in every area of life (including politics). There are two distinct spheres but God is active in both
 - o Sin is a consequence of moral rebellion, nature is not intrinsically evil
 - o By common grace, since man still is an image bearer of God, non-believers are capable of great feats of cultural good
 - o As ambassadors of Christ, Christians are to restructure all institutions and relationships, and develop cultural life based upon biblical standards, yet there is an understanding that this side of Christ's return, evil will never be fully conquered
 - o **"Christ against Culture" (Separatism) (One prominent trend today)(4)**
 - o From the earliest Christian writings (Tertullian - Jerusalem and Athens have nothing in common); urged Christians to participate in cultural life as little as possible

- o Anabaptists have urged Christians to shun cultural and political life because they are corrupted by sin - instead concentrate on cultivating a deep spiritual life and preparing for heavenly existence (examples today: Amish; Mennonites; Quakers)
- o Believed was little hope of influencing the larger culture, hence live quiet, simple lives without pursuing secular art; music; philosophy; education and pastimes
- o Tends towards legalism and concentration on own efforts (mystics; monks)
- o **"Christ of Culture" (Liberal Protestantism) (Second prominent trend today)(5)**
- o Liberal Protestantism (1800's), approach accommodates Christ to culture and sees little tension between the church and the world, or between the gospel and the laws of nations (consistent with Gnostics of 2nd and 3rd centuries, and Peter Abelard in 12th century)
- o This approach emphasizes Christ's teachings and actions and those doctrines about Him that seem consistent with the best in civilization (Christ the ideal moralist; teacher; philosopher; vice King and Savior - the God-Man, and the doctrine of grace)
- o Tends to produce "cultural-Christians" and confusion of the nation with Christ
- o Tends to be alienated with self reliant humanism - the American way, individualism (appeals to Arminianism - man decides his destiny)

8. Does Church Leadership have a Role Relative to Society (leadership taking positions for entire church)?

- a. In colonial and early American history church leadership very outspoken on issues of the day and who the leaders should be
- b. Early American times the local pastor was the leader in the community (best educated typically)
- c. Why would church leadership not take a strong public stance on leaders, laws, issues affecting us?
 - o Fear of the repercussions? (**Acts 5:29; Rom 8:31**)
 - o Belief that it's not the mission or role of the church (neither primarily or partly)?(**1 Cor 10:31**)
 - o Fear of losing tax exempt status? (Serve two masters? **Matt 6:24**)
 - o Fear of compromise on issues; no man is to be trusted or supported; no issue is clear enough in the area of politics?(**Matt 23:23-24**)(***)
 - o Ignorance of the effect of laws, issues, and the decision process; safer to ignore it entirely?
 - o No clear Biblical mandate seen to be involved as a church organization?
 - o Belief it would be like throwing pearls before swine? (John the Baptist)
 - o Belief the cost too high compared to how the Bible clearly indicates we are to invest our time and energy (is this where we want to take our stand)?
- d. Are these valid?
- e. Final observations and conclusions:
 - o Dealing with state/culture varies from directing virtually every aspect to completely ignoring
 - o Although above are handy distinctions, not completely accurate in describing the current denominational or church approach to societal relationships (mixture usually)
 - o The Bible is God's authoritative word addressing all areas of life - including the role of government and politics and us as dual citizens (principles as well as direct commands)
 - o All nations are subject to divine authority and judgment, whether the nation knows it or not
 - o Governments must respect and protect citizens because they are made in God's image (and thus have dignity and worth), not because they possess certain inalienable natural rights (See **Session #7: Role of Government**)
 - o Political authority ultimately comes from God Himself, not from the consent of the governed
 - o I believe the church has a responsibility to equip believers to be salt and light and place God's righteous standard back into society; engage all issues; place godly leaders above us
- f. Bottom Line: The church has a profound responsibility to equip believers to be salt and light in society at all levels, and to bring God's righteous standards into the public square. However:
 - o Great men of faith have differed on the role of the church relative to the state and society
 - o We must be gracious to others that may disagree with our understanding (**Rom 14**)

9. Discussion Questions

- a. "Should the local church publically speak out against leaders by name and action when they are ungodly or compromise their duties?"
- b. "Should local churches be restricted in their taking out ads in newspapers and other forms of media in support of or against particular laws, leaders, candidates, or issues of societal concern?"
- c. "Has the tax exempt status of churches resulted in their being "gun-shy" in addressing politically sensitive issues?"
- d. "Are you willing to give up your claim to a tax deduction for contributions to the church should it's tax exempt status be revoked for any reason?"
- e. "Do you think a church should house a "Citizenship" room that provides materials, tracts, information, and point papers on candidates, issues and laws of concern to believers in order to better equip them to exercise their citizenship responsibilities?"
- f. "What should the church **not** do?"
 - o It should not identify it's mission as political goals
 - o Be divisive over these issues (Rom 14)
- g. "What other activities do you think are within the realm of church actions that are reasonable?"
 - o Voter guides?
 - o Classes in citizenship?
 - o Petition drives?
 - o Voter registration drives?
 - o Sponsoring of political debates?
 - o Maintaining a current issue web site to encourage members to write their congressmen?
 - o Sponsoring classes and working groups to write letters to the editor?
 - o Organize picketing?
 - o Sponsor billboards with: Christian messages; Biblical truths relating to abortion, homosexuality; AIDS; etc?
 - o Paying for ads in local newspapers, on radio stations, on TV bringing the gospel to the secular world and/or addressing basic issues of the day from a Biblical perspective?
 - o Sponsor seminars with other local churches to address issues of mutual interest?
 - o Conduct classes and seminars to prepare individuals for public office?
- h. "Is it easier to generically address the evils of the day instead of finding and supporting publically those that desire to bring glory to God?"
- i. "Is the church to evangelize the nations and teach them righteousness?"
- j. "Is it appropriate to work together with other Christian churches that we agree with on societal issues and actions needed, yet we differ doctrinally?"

Notes:

1. "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology;" Walter A. Elwell, editor; 1994
2. "Christ and Culture;" H. Richard Niebuhr, 1951

Session #10: Separation of Church and State (Detailed Notes)

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.' 'Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters. says the Lord Almighty.'" Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God"
(2 Cor 6:14-18)

Purpose of Session: To address one of the most abused terms in this country that is used to remove the influence of Christianity from the public arena: "The separation of Church and State". Address from two angles:

- o The Biblical principles relating to not being unequally yoked (church and politics; cautionary warnings)
- o The historical and current understanding of the term

1. Introduction: Christians can be heavily involved in politics, but they must not be yoked to it in an ungodly manner (Read 2 Cor 6:14-18)

- a. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers" (6:14 a): we have different masters with different goals!
- o Metaphor - A double yoke with two different types of animals working side by side
 - o Deut 22:10 Ox & donkey are not to plow together (possibly also Lev 19:19; mating)
 - o Both animals constrained to go the same way, one will be stronger and carry the burden of the other; may fight each other - but common direction/goal is in view
 - o Illustration: Being handcuffed together; or running a three legged race
 - o Yoke of oppression (taxes, harsh labor) is referred to in 1 Kings 12:4
 - o A believer & non-believer each have different masters (Christ, Satan) with different objectives
 - o Direct admonition not to be constrained, or forced together by our own devices and decisions such that we are dependent upon a non-believer for us to do right before the Lord
 - o Implies we can make the decision to be bound (examples):
 - o Marriage
 - o Legally binding contracts to accomplish a task/goal where moral decisions are made
 - o Company ownership/partnerships
 - o Treaties between countries
 - o What about: Sports teams? Work teams? Non-believing lawyer? Family member? Church membership? Family doctor? Schools? Mutual Fund investments?
 - o Consistent with the admonition in Gal 5:1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"
 - o This yoke is slavery to the law - living under it (Gal 4:21)
 - o Don't fall into the trap of believing we can be justified or saved by our obedience to God's law or the self "righteousness" of our old selves
 - o Jesus spoke of the proper One to be yoked with (Matt 11:28-30) - Himself
 - o Being yoked together with Christ frees our conscience, and guides our decisions
 - o We cannot serve two masters (Matt 6:24) - ensure our Master is the Lord! Then we will be able to discern the correct path and make right decisions
 - o It does not mean use of common things: water, power, air, medical services, auto mechanics...
 - o Paul allowed associations with the immoral (1 Cor 5:9-10) as a practical matter, not as an encouragement. 2 Cor 6:14-18 speaks to much stronger binding together

- b. "For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or...What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?" (6:14 b-16 b)
- o No commonality: We are righteous through Christ who fulfilled the law; all else are lawless
 - o No fellowship: Christ is the light of the world; Satan is the prince of darkness
 - o No harmony: Christ is divine, pure and holy; Satan is a created, fallen being openly rebellious against God
 - o No commonality: **Believer** has a new nature, redeemed mind, indwelt with the Holy Spirit, has the mind of Christ, lives to please God; **Unbeliever** is darkened in their understanding, loves the darkness, is a captive of Satan to do his will, is a slave of the sinful nature, lives for self
 - o No agreement: we are God's temple, His holy people; idols are false gods unbelievers worship
- c. "Be separate" (6:17 a) - that is - be Holy!
- o We are not to entangle ourselves, or bind ourselves to the depravity of the world
 - o We are to examine ourselves and remove anything that soils us or makes us impure, whether physically (through the eye, ear or touch gates) or spiritually (through compromise with ungodly things). All defilement:
 - o Internal (spirit, soul, mind) or external (body)
 - o Seen or unseen
 - o Public or private
 - o Why: because we are to be holy (1 Peter 3:9)
 - o We are not to remove ourselves from everything in the world that is not godly - if so we would have to leave the world (1 Cor 5:9-10)
 - o But we are to overcome evil with good (Rom 12:21); be salt and light (Matt 5:13-17) ; just as Israel provided godly environment for aliens amongst them - must be around it somehow!
- d. Application
- o Does not teach that we are not to be engaged in politics or societal debate, but:
 - o Must be well grounded in Biblical truths and principles before entering/participating in politics (remember Christ's example in refuting Satan with correct use of scripture (Matt 4:1-11))
 - o What about Politics or positions of leadership in the nation?
 - o Many examples of godly men serving ungodly nations (Daniel; Shadrack, Meshach, Abednego, Joseph) yet retaining their integrity and not compromising the things of the Lord
 - o We are to obey God and His will over any earthly decisions (Acts 4:19)
 - o Many decisions to be made are ones requiring wisdom, vice a clear indication of whether they are violating God's commands
 - o Difficult to develop a consistent Christian worldview for political involvement without work:

"...unfortunately many Christian legislators have not developed a consistent biblical world view to guide their analysis of political presuppositions, processes, and programs. Instead, their approach to politics has been determined much more 'by personal philosophies and prejudices they bring to the Word of God'" (note (7))(Gary Scott Smith)

- o Much "religious conviction" is shallow in fundamental understanding Biblical truths
- o Without solid Biblical basis, directly opposing views and actions can be pursued with what would appear to be the same foundational beliefs
- o Fractured Christian views (lack of unity) tends to polarize political effectiveness
- o Desire is to be able to choose the best direction from many good ones from a solid Biblical perspective (Prov 11:14; 15:22)
- o We're to be aware of the schemes of the ungodly (2 Cor 2:11) but not mimic them (3 John)
- o We're not to have binding agreements that result in compromising our walk before the Lord
 - o How about ecumenical movements against abortion (Catholics; Jews; Presbyterians..)?
 - o What about endorsing candidates for office we don't completely agree with
 - o Even the ungodly can have an objective the same as a believers, yet for different reasons - can we work together, and to what degree?

- o Must use wisdom, discernment and diligent searching of the scriptures to assess the degree of involvement with other organizations (degree of collaboration; working together; mutual assistance; sharing of resources; but binding together?)
- o Example: Peyote used in Indian rituals, breaking law - many different organizations fought to allow them to continue to exercise this particular religious freedom

2. The Historical understanding of the phrase "Separation of Church and State" has been to protect religion (Christianity specifically) from the Federal Government!

a. Background

- o The Constitution itself - Amendment I; adopted June 15, 1790 (Establishment Clause)

"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"

- o Phrase "Separation of..." does not appear in the Constitution, or any amendments to it
- o Question of **"Original Intent"**

b. Historical setting (origins) of the phrase

- o Danbury Baptist Association of Danbury, Connecticut wrote to Pres. Jefferson (not a Baptist)
 - o Concern over rumor a particular denomination would become official one for country
 - o No state at that time allowed an exclusive state-sponsored denomination; however they did encourage Christianity
- o Jefferson's response on Jan 1. 1802:

"I contemplate with solemn 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 and State" note (2)

- o This quote cited as definitive interpretation of the meaning of First Amendment since 1947. However, the following should be noted (note (3)):
 - o Jefferson made the statement in 1802, 13 years after Congress passed the amendment
 - o Jefferson was not a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, nor a member of Congress in 1789, nor a member of any state legislature or ratifying convention at the time relevant to the passage of the First Amendment (he was US Minister to France); therefore his opinion could not be expected to be definitive
- o He may have used an earlier Baptist leader's (Roger Williams) metaphor, writing:

"...when they have opened a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world, God hath broke down the wall itself, removed the candlestick, and made his garden a wilderness, as at this day. And that there fore if He will eer please to restore His garden and paradise again, it must be necessity be walled in peculiarly unto Himself from the world..."

- o Williams' wall of separation was to protect the "garden of God" from the "wilderness of the world" - in effect, to protect the church from the state
- o Use of term "state" probably used by Jefferson to denote federal gov. and not mean states were separated from religion. In later writings Jefferson attested to the church being exempt from jurisdiction of the federal gov. (never delegated this authority) - however states and churches could interact
- o Example: Jefferson opposed nationally-sponsored days of prayer when President, but supported state-sponsored days of prayer as governor of Virginia

o Jefferson himself stated during his 1805 Second Inaugural Address:

"In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution independent of the powers of the General [federal] Government. I have therefore undertaken on no occasion to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it, but have left them, as the Constitution found them, under the direction and discipline of the church or state authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies"

c. Congressional Judicial Committees judgment in 1853 (See **Handout: Has Church and State Historically Been Separate?**)

o Congress petitioned to separate church from the state (remove chaplains from Congress and from the military)

o These petitions referred to the Judicial Committees of both Houses of Congress

o Both Houses unambiguously affirmed Christianity as the bedrock of the nation

d. "*Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*" (1892) (see **Handout** for excerpts)

o Most extensive review of the issue of religion and state ever undertaken

o Again, unambiguously affirmed the Christian foundation of this nation

e. Religious liberty example reaffirming Christian national basis - "*Reynolds v. United States*" (1878)

o Legal issue: Mormon's claimed right of free exercise of religion and that state and church were separated, therefore they could practice polygamy

o Supreme Court used Jefferson's 1802 letter to show:

o Government couldn't interfere with religious opinion (like denominational differences)

o Government could enforce civil laws according to general Christian standards

o Court ruled against bigamy and polygamy as a violation of the Constitution since this practice violated basic Christian principles

o Jefferson's letter was decidedly not used to suppress religious liberty, but to make clear the Christian foundation of the nation's laws and the role of government to protect them.

o In effect, provide freedom for the Christian religion, not freedom from the Christian religion!

f. Other court cases attesting to the Christian influence throughout the nation and the courts

o *The People v. Ruggles*, 1811; Supreme Court of New York sustained lower courts conviction of one that committed blasphemy against God, and contumelious reproaches, and profane ridicule of Christ or the Holy Scriptures, are offenses punishable at the common law, whether uttered by words or writings

o *Updegraph v. The Commonwealth*, 1824; Supreme Court of Pennsylvania dealt with blasphemy - sustaining the lower courts conviction and the legality of laws on blasphemy

o *Vidal v. Girard's Executors*, 1844; United States Supreme Court ruled that a stipulation in the bequeathing of an inheritance to form a college, but with the restriction that no minister of any sect could hold any position there. Court ruled separating Christianity from education was "repugnant" and could not be done - moral principles must be taught from the Bible

3. A Radically new Interpretation of the "Establishment Clause" came into being only over the last 50 Years - with the result the systematic dismantling of Christian presence throughout the nation (Federal and State levels)!

a. "*Everson v. Board of Education*" (1947) established a fundamentally different understanding of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution - completely without precedent

o Actual Supreme Court decision:

"The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach"...
...[n]either a state nor the Federal Government...can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another."

o Supreme Court quoted "a wall of separation between church and state" out of context and used it in an opposite manner from the previous Court usage (see above)

o No previous precedent or other use of Jefferson's words were used in the decision

- o All other founding fathers, patriots, framers of the Constitution, etc. were ignored
- o An entirely new interpretation of the First Amendment occurred, with no basis in law
- o No other known instance in America's history where an individual's spoken words have become the law of the land
- o Luther's example: a wax nose, can be twisted to look like anything you want
- b. Justification for the "*Everson v. Board of Education*" decision
 - o Original Bill of Rights placed restrictions on the federal government (not the states)
 - o Fourteenth Amendment (passed after the Civil War) guaranteed freed slaves would enjoy all the privileges and rights conveyed by being a citizen of the state in which they lived, and the United States (national citizenship)
 - o The Supreme Court ruled in 1947 that the 14th Amendment allowed it to apply the 1st Amendment against the states and not just against the federal government

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law"

- o Supreme Court "interpreted" the 14th Amendment in a convenient fashion
- o Ruled that "liberty" refers to the Bill of Rights, and as such the Bill of Rights now applies to the states, with the same prohibitions
- o Virtually all of the Bill of Rights is now applied to the states as prohibitions
- c. Insight into the thinking is illustrated In *Abington v. Schempp* (1963) where the Supreme Court ruled in relation to the 1st and 14th Amendments:

"The First Amendment declares that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The Fourteenth Amendment has rendered the legislatures of the states as incompetent as Congress to enact such laws."

- d. Historical note: the Constitution of the Soviet Union stated: "Article 124: In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the USSR is separated from the state, and the school from the church" (note (4))
- e. Result: Common belief that there is not to be any outward expression of Christianity at any national, state, or local governmental level - to do otherwise would be endorsing and supporting "religion"

4. With the Removing of Christianity from the Governmental Conscience, What Role can (and should) Churches Play in the Political Process? (Material based upon note (5))

- a. Supreme Court decision in *Walz v. Tax Commission of the City of New York*, 379 U.S. 670, 90 S. Ct. 1409 (1970) - Churches still have rights:

"Adherents of particular faiths and individual churches frequently take strong positions on public issues including, as this case reveals in the several briefs amici, vigorous advocacy of legal and constitutional positions. Of course, churches as much as secular bodies and private citizens have that right"

- b. However; for legal limitations imposed upon 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations - see **Handout: "Commonly Asked Questions"** (based upon (note (6)). Summary:
 - o Churches cannot: engage in electoral activities; sponsor a P.A.C.; contribute funds, labor or endorsement for candidates
 - o Churches can: engage in voter education; hold political forums; have candidate appear in services but not to solicit; spend small amount of money and time lobbying
 - o Pastor's can: publicly support a candidate issue; engage in lobbying; lead in prayer for

- elections; but cannot speak for the church in support
 c. Levels and degrees of influence churches may exercise (not all currently legal):

o Teaching Basic Principles

- o Teaching Biblical truths, values and understanding of matters of faith
- o Educating Christians about the will of God and the dangers of the cultural values of our times (**1 Chron 12:32**; "...men of Issachar, who understood the times...")
- o **Concern**: if the teaching is sufficiently broad and general, sincere Christians could come away with different impressions of how to apply to issues of the day

o Teaching Applications

- o Teaching specific application of Biblical principles in terms familiar to us
- o Developing and teaching the factual and theological aspects of public issues
- o Taking Biblical examples and applying to specific situations today (pornography; homosexuality; abortion; racism; etc.)(**1 Chron 12:32**; "...men of Issachar, who understood the times, and knew what Israel should do...")

o Lobbying

- o Providing testimony before legislative committees on moral matters
- o Encouraging executive and judicial rulings to be consistent with Biblical merit
- o Encouraging members to write to their representatives on public issues
- o **Concerns**: risk of violating tax exempt status; losing focus on the essentials of why a church exists; leaders may become more concerned about power than the actual issue; compromise may have to be made which might entail gaining what was wanted at the risk of also supporting (in the same ruling or legislation) something that was undesirable or unintended (gives appearance of supporting something bad); any delving into this arena takes great skill, Biblical knowledge, factual expertise relating to the issue at hand, and knowledge of political approaches and processes

o Supporting Candidates for Office

- o Through public endorsements, public statements, letters to members, etc.
- o **Concern**: demonstrating support for a particular candidate is illegal with a tax exempt status; all candidates must be treated equally, therefore any issuing of information must be for educational purposes and cover all viable candidates; see Handout
- o **Concern**: endorsing a candidate implies knowing the true character of the person, which may be difficult if not impossible if not personally known for a long time

o Forming a Political Party

- Existing Christian Democratic parties in some European and Latin American countries (typically lay Christians acting in concert with and not through churches)
- **Concern**: tax exempt status; conflict of taking positions free of compromise yet needing to convince public to gain votes; potential conflict of personal ambitions; potential of neutralizing influence of other people of other parties or of ability to minister to them with the truth

o Civil Disobedience

- o Disobeying civil law because it is so objectionable that it must be withstood, with a willingness to suffer the consequences. Something is unusually or egregiously contrary to Christian conscience
 - o Accepting punishment willingly confirms legitimacy of authority of the State
 - o Martin Luther King Jr. example of Civil disobedience?
 - o Underground railroad during pre-Civil War a contrary example? (hidden)
- o To establish that a specific law or ordinance is unconstitutional - by challenging it and having it brought to trial
- o May be done individually, by a para-group, or by a church organization
- o **Concern**: what is the specific Biblical warrant to disobey laws of the land when we are not specifically affected by them (i.e. not forced to do something we know is contrary to the revealed will of God)

o Rebellion

- o Rejects the legitimacy of the existing civil order, and engages in open rebellion, or even violence (defense of own life?); supporting "rebels" attempting to overthrow existing corrupt government to establish a more "legitimate" governing body
- o **Concern:** Biblical justification for this approach?

5. Bottom Lines:

- o Biblically; nothing prevents a Christian from being involved in politics, however, as with any endeavor they must be:
 - o Grounded in God's word - truths, principles
 - o Be careful not to become involved in binding agreements resulting in the compromising of our walk before the Lord
 - o Must not lose sight of their primary role of: worshiping God; evangelizing; and living to the glory of God in all things
- o Our nation was established with one of the fundamental principles to protect freedom of religious expression (Christian denominational variation):
 - o The federal government was to have no control over religious liberty (...no law...prohibiting the free exercise thereof..)
 - o States had the right to encourage religious expression, including supporting churches for the welfare of the region
 - o The nation, each state and the society in general were decidedly Christian in worldview, moral standards, and prevalence
- o Only recently (last 50 years) has the Constitution been fundamentally re-interpreted to allow the legal removal of outward expressions of Christianity from the governmental and public arena at all levels
- o The church corporate must not lose sight of its primary mission - bring glory to God (Major in the majors, and minor in the minors)
- o The church corporate has freedom to equip the saints to be godly, actively engaged citizens
- o We still maintain great freedoms that can be exercised, and have a right to call the nation and the magistrate back to protecting Christian expression vice promulgating, funding or forcing it
 - o Personal opinion: tax exempt status has influenced many churches to withdraw from public involvement in affairs of state (noose around its neck) - result, principles and truths, direct application and activity shied away from!
- o Developing Biblical approaches to issues at all levels requires significant study and effort
- o Remember the Supreme Court decision in *Walz v. Tax Commission of the City of New York*, 379 U.S. 670, 90 S. Ct. 1409 (1970) - Churches still have rights:

"Adherents of particular faiths and individual churches frequently take strong positions on public issues including, as this case reveals in the several briefs amici, vigorous advocacy of legal and constitutional positions. Of course, churches as much as secular bodies and private citizens have that right"

6. Discussion Questions:

1. "Should we allow our children to be "yoked" to a non-believing coach in Little League?"
2. "Is it right for a Christian politician to compromise on an abortion limitation bill that is only a small step towards the final goal?" (i.e. limit for other than rape or incest)
3. "If we vote for a non-Christian, and he wins, are we "yoking" ourselves to him and his authority?"
4. "What about ecumenical movements against abortion (Catholics; Jews; Presbyterians..)? Should we work together since the objective is the same?"
5. "What about endorsing candidates for office we don't completely agree with on some issues?"
6. "Even the ungodly can have an objective the same as a believers, yet for different reasons. Is it wrong to be identified with (or work with) liberal, non-Christian groups opposing certain legislation or moral issues that we agree with?"
7. "Would we be willing to give up our church tax exempt status if necessary to become greatly involved in a political issue?"

8. "Is it possible for a sincere believer to ever serve successfully in an elective office without compromising beliefs?"
9. "Can a pastor of a church simultaneously hold a publicly elected office?"

- Notes:
- (1) David Barton, *"The Myth of Separation"*, WallBuilder Press, 1992
 - (2) Thomas Jefferson, *"Jefferson Writings"*, Merrill D. Peterson, ed, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984
 - (3) John Eidsmoe, *"Christianity and the Constitution - The Faith of Our Founding Fathers"*; Baker Book House Company, 1987
 - (4) Amos J. Peaslee, *"Constitutions of Nations"*, Concord, NH: The Rumford Press, 1950, Vol III
 - (5) J. Philip Wogman, *"Christian Perspectives on Politics"*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1988
 - (6) *"Questions Pastors Ask About Politics"*, Christian Coalition of California
 - (7) *"God and Politics"*; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. Phillipsburg, New Jersey, editor Gary Scott Smith, pg 9; includes quote from *"Cacophony on Capitol Hill: Evangelical Voices in Politics"*, Richard V. Pierand, pg 92

End Notes:

- o Notes from "Lectures on Calvinism" by Abraham Kuyper; Third Lecture: "Calvinism and Politics"
 - o Battle of the ages between authority and liberty
 - o God has instituted the magistrates, by reason of sin
 - o The glory of God demands that the sin that separates men and nations be bridled, that order be returned to chaos through a compulsory force, from without, to make human society possible, that right is possessed by God alone
 - o The magistrate is an instrument of "common grace"
 - o Where people can choose their own magistrates, that is the most desirable condition, and is a favor of God
 - o No matter how powerful the state becomes, God is above it and His people have a right of appeal to Him
 - o Duty of government relative to other spheres of sovereignty: when different spheres clash/defend individuals and weak ones/to force all together to bear personal and financial burdens for the maintenance of the whole
 - o Calvinism by praising aloud liberty of conscience, has in principle abandoned every absolute characteristic of the visible church
 - o Role of state: not subject himself to the decision of any church; investigate the rights of God both in the natural life and in His word; restrain blasphemy; suspend its own judgment and consider the multiform complex of all denominations as the totality of the manifestation of the church of Christ on earth; bear the sword that wounds, not the sword of the Spirit

Session #11: Welfare (Part 1)
(Detailed Notes)

*"And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid,
help the weak, be patient with everyone" (1 Thess 5:14)*

Purpose of this Session: To lay the Biblical basis for when help is to be provided to others (the worthy, not the unworthy poor) and to overview the approach taken with the needy in early American times and the lessons learned from that experience

- o Explain 1 Thess 5:14
- o Colonial (Christian) America view of compassion
- o Early United States experience and lessons learned in helping others
- o Some tips in addressing others with this subject

1. The Basic Principles that should govern our approach to the needy (balance of wisdom, discernment and compassion) are summarized very succinctly in 1 Thess 5:14

- a. Who is Paul writing to?
 - o Believers ("brothers"); not necessarily to those in authority (1 Thess 5:12), but the brethren and how they are to treat others (assumption, those in authority, Shepherds are already doing this)
 - o Those who know how to respect authority and live at peace with others (1 Thess 5:13)
 - o Those who know not to take revenge, but to be kind to everyone; to set the example independent of how treated (1 Thess 5:15)
 - o Those that are mature believers, that are willing to be instructed and admonished by godly leaders (1 Thess 5:12)
 - o There are three different categories called out by Paul, with different approaches to each:
 - o Lazy/Unruly - Warning
 - o Timid - Encourage
 - o Weak - Help
- b. Who are the "idle" (NIV) (*unruly*) to be warned?
 - o Those that are slothful, unwilling to work, loafing (military term, out of step, disorderly) (Ecc1 10:18; 2 Thess 3:10)
 - o Those that do not provide for their families (1 Tim 5:8)
 - o Those that are not willing to pay for what they receive, or to work diligently, or are a burden to others - imposing upon the generosity of others (2 Thess 3:6-9)
 - o Those who are unwilling to toil at doing what is right before the Lord (2 Thess 3:13)
 - o Laziness leads to unruliness and disruption
 - o These must be warned that trouble lies ahead and that help cannot be expected unless there is initiative and hard work on their part
- c. Who are the "timid" (*feble-minded; faint-hearted; Literally little-spirited*) to be encouraged?
 - o Those that are emotionally overwhelmed by the stress of things
 - o Those that need to have someone come beside them to gently support them
 - o Those who believe they have nothing of value to give to the Lord, to the church, or society
 - o These don't need to be shown their faults and sins, they probably already know them
 - o These need to be encouraged unto good works so they can excel in the Lord
- d. Who are the "weak" to be helped? (Strength less; feeble; impotent; sick)
 - o Those that are weak spiritually we are to encourage them in their faith
 - o Can apply also to those that are weak physically (disabled; feeble), to give help where it is necessary based upon the physical condition of the person
 - o Weakness can be a result of financial ruin, being taken advantage of, beat down
 - o May include those that are defenseless, unable to provide for their own needs (widows and orphans (Deut 24:17; 26:12; Prov 23:10; 1 Tim 5:3,16; James 1:27)
 - o Those that need to have what is lacking in them supplied so that they may do what is required to be faithful before the Lord (including the disabled)

- e. Why is patience so important?
 - o The work needed to equip the saints can be time consuming
 - o Cannot expect quick results since behavior patterns of others have to change, experience must be gained as well as maturity
 - o It is easy to become discouraged when working with those that are weaker, downtrodden, or less mature (**Gal 6:9**)
 - o As God has been patient with us, so we are to be patient with others
- f. These principles can be applied to those in the world
 - o First - discernment is needed to determine the category a person falls into (worthy v. unworthy)
 - o Those that are unwilling to work, are idle or unruly cannot expect to be supported
 - o Those that have ability but are unsure of themselves need to be encouraged to show initiative, gain the requisite experience, be afforded the opportunity to excel (though the opportunity is not guaranteed!)
 - o Those that are encumbered in abilities may need to have what is missing supplied to them (compassion for the disabled; severely ill; etc.)
 - o The strong (spiritually, wisdom, understanding) are to work in an understanding way, knowing what's needed in each case so that they:
 - o Will have a clear conscience before God
 - o Be a good steward of the resources God provides
 - o May be an example for others
 - o Serve as a warning to others

Compassion? "Sorrow for the sufferings or trouble of another or others, accompanied by an urge to help; deep sympathy; pity" (Webster's New World Dictionary)

Question: If God's principles relating to hard work, initiative, compassion (rewarding the worthy), and not rewarding the unworthy applies universally, shouldn't experience and statistics demonstrate these truths?

Approach: Lead you through significant historical development of societal problems, implementation of Biblical compassion, and the resulting lessons learned

2. Early America exhibited Puritan Biblical principles of justice and mercy applied in a localized geographically accountable setting

- a. Practical environmental aspects in early America
 - o Hard work was absolutely necessary in order to survive the winters with enough food
 - o Smaller towns early on, personal contact and knowledge of others was common so accountability was easier and more direct
 - o As cities grew, still had to walk through neighborhoods to get to work, mixing still occurred (churches were mixed in economic and social backgrounds also) - accountability still high
 - o Compare to contemporary situation - there is economic segregation
- b. Charity in any society will be built upon the image that society has of God
 - o A heavenly sugar daddy (or go-fur) that caters to our desires without demanding discipline (Encourages attitude that others, or government will meet our needs)
 - o A distant God that is not involved in the affairs of men (can result in hopelessness or an institutionalized governmental approach)
 - o A God of justice and mercy (hardheaded & warm-hearted)(Laziness is discouraged and initiative is promoted and rewarded; personal accountability needed to discern correctly)
- c. Early Colonial view of compassion tried to balance Puritan view of God as One of justice and mercy
 - o Puritan work ethic - hard work, accountability, severe punishment for sin (**2 Thess 3:10**)
 - o The poor were known individually, and by the entire community
 - o Charity was not dispensed indiscriminately, but provided to the worthy
 - o Individuals and churches helped the "worthy poor" (**1 Thess 5:14**)
 - o Emphasis was placed on family relationships (**1 Tim 5:8**) and church associations, instruction and accountability (**Heb 13:17**)

- o Man is sinful, and only God's grace can change it (Rom 3:10-12; 12:2)
- o Those to be helped needed to learn about God and His righteousness for man
- o It was understood that there is a need to withhold charity at times, and not provide to the unworthy poor (2 Thess 3:10)

3. As America and the United States grew, hard practical lessons were learned over and over again as Compassion was exercised (Selected from hundreds in note (1))

- a. The urbanization of America set the stage for difficulties
 - o Cities became larger and more complex
 - o Industrialization separated city dwellers from food growing regions (dependence upon others)
 - o Economic factors: weather; bad crops; economic exploitation; crime; created significant opportunity for families to become destitute
 - o Individuals, churches and societal organizations responded to meet the perceived needs
- b. Benjamin Franklin ("A penny saved is a penny earned") observed the effects of a British welfare act while in London in 1766 (note (3)):

"There is no country in the world in which the poor are more idle, dissolute, drunken and insolent. The day you passed that act you took away from before their eyes the greatest of all inducements to industry, frugality and sobriety, by giving them a dependence on somewhat else than a careful accumulation during youth and health for support in age and sickness....Repeal that law and you will soon see a change in their manners"
- c. Insights from the "Society for the Prevention of Pauperism" (New York City, 1818 ff)
 - o Ten causes of pauperism (in order):

1. Ignorance	2. Idleness	3. Intemperance
4. Want of economy (thrift)	5. Imprudent and hasty marriages	6. Lotteries
7. Pawn brokers	8. Brothels	9. Gambling houses
10. <u>Charities that gave away money too freely</u>		
 - o Aid was provided in terms of food, coal and clothes - never cash
- d. Thomas Chalmers, Scottish theologian in the 1820's had high success. Principles:
 - o Must distinguish between "*pauperism*" and "*poverty*" (Pauperism = state of unnecessary dependence characterized by intellectual lassitude and spiritual malaise)
 - o Legal or statutory relief tended to pauperize by removing need for self-help and discipline
 - o The better-offs had a Biblical obligation to become personally involved with the poor
 - o The poor were poor due to their own failings, therefore, they needed to indicate a willingness to change modes of thinking or the actions that were dragging them down
 - o Divided city district into sections with a Deacon in each that had personal knowledge of a families situation
 - o Developed many approaches that were adapted for use in the US
- e. Association of Delegates from the "Benevolent Societies of Boston" (1835; First Annual Report):

"to give to one who begs...or in any way to supersede the necessity of industry, of forethought, and of proper self-restraint and self-denial, is at once to do wrong, and to encourage the receivers of our alms to wrong doing"
- f. "New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor" (AICP) in early 1830's learned the following were keys to success in relieving poverty:
 - o Home visitation was critical to ensure adequate understanding and evaluation of conditions
 - o Needed to provide guidance in matters of religious observance
 - o Needed to provide guidance in matters of thrift, hard work, temperance, and school attendance
 - o Region was organized by districts (as in the Scottish approach)
 - o Needed to ascertain the facts to assess what was needed: references for work; grants for coal or food (Cash was never given)
 - o "Until the feelings, opinions, and practices of the great mass are governed by sound principles, and Christianity pervades and renovates the habits of social and civil life, there is no reliable foundation for prosperity" (1854)
- g. "Boston Provident Association" (established in 1851) learned:
 - o Give only food, clothes, coal, to those willing to work/or in temporary need (never give cash)

- o Never give aid to drunkards
- o Supporters encouraged to give beggars cards (not cash) indicating:
 - o Where to find a BPA office where volunteers could examine their needs and make job referrals, provide food and temporary shelter for those deserving
 - o Made list of "worthy" and "black record" (impostors, able-bodied persons who refused to work)
- h. "New York Children's Aid Society" (est. 1853) approach to children:
 - "Experience soon shows that if you put a comfortable coat on the first idle and ragged lad who applies, you will have fifty half-clad lads, many of whom possess hidden away a comfortable outfit, leaving their business next day, 'to get jackets for nothing.'"*
 - o Removing orphans and street kids from their environment and placing in homes
 - o Worked through local citizen committees in agricultural communities (leaders involved; very selective of homes; advertised; towns turned out to great children)
 - o Families had emotional (pity), spiritual (Biblical) and economic (farming - hard work) incentives to take them in. Children became part of the home
 - o Placement was public, and homes selected carefully by local leaders
 - o An agent would visit the home within a few months to ensure things were going well
 - o Between 1853 and 1893 91,536 youngsters placed from New York (half went to New York State, rest to seven Midwestern States)
 - o Although the press a key to the success of this program, Charles Brace noted:
 - "Twenty years' virtuous life in a street-boy makes no impression on the public. A single offense is heard for hundreds of miles. A theft of one lad is imputed to scores of others about him" (note (2))*

4. Summary of General Lessons Learned (Bottom lines):

- a. People give generously when they have confidence it will be used to help and not harm
- b. Widespread dislike of government subsidies existed (many believed it shameful to have to rely upon the government to provide for them - Japan example now)
- c. Many reports/tabulations showed that from 75% to 90% of all those in poverty were there as a result of intemperance (substance abuse still a major cause)
- d. The "real" cause of the poverty needed to be addressed, not just the "apparent" condition
- e. Home visitation is a key to understanding the underlying causes of the situation
- f. Aid was provided in concrete terms: food, clothing, coal - never was cash given out
- g. Direct involvement is a key to any hope of helping the poor (one person cannot do it all, arm's length cannot positively make change)
- h. Practical advice relative to finances, getting a job, education, moderation, etc. was needed
- i. Easy giving salved the conscience, but created more of the same making the condition worse
- j. Charities that gave away too freely (bad charities) drove good charities out of existence
- k. "Those who gave material aid without requiring even the smallest return were considered as much a threat to true compassion as those who turned their backs on neighbors and brothers" (note (1))
- l. Shopping for the best handout ("rounders") becomes common when given freely (note (2)):
 - "The number of poor people who enjoy a comfortable living, derived from a long study and experience of those various agencies of benevolence, would be incredible to any one not familiar with the facts. They pass from one to the other; knowing exactly their conditions of assistance and meeting their requirements, and live thus by a sort of science of alms." "...the industry and ingenuity they employ in this pauper trade are truly remarkable"*
- m. Handouts became more than charity, they became "rights" in the view of those being "helped", today they would be called "entitlements". A 1827 statement captures the change (note (4))
 - "...the unblushing effrontery, that some of them exhibit. The thanklessness with which they receive their allotted stipend; the insolence with which they demand a further supply, arrogantly exacting as a right, what ought never to have been granted, even as a charity"*
- n. Changed "worldview" was the most critical component, not a change in "worldly conditions"; this means addressing the fundamental spiritual problem (relationship to Christ - true conversion)
 - o Necessary to help ensure a true change in a person's desire to change their condition
 - o The government cannot do this

- o Secular organizations cannot do this
- o Only Christ can do this, thru the agency of His people and their fulfilling the great commandment (with compassion for the spiritual and physical needs)

5. *When Talking to Non-Believers appeal to reason, the historical record, and true compassion*

- a. Realize there will probably be a difference in presuppositions:
 - Biblically, all men are by nature corrupt and evil (only God can bring true change to the heart)
 - Humanly, all men are by nature good, with the environment causing them to become evil
- b. Appeal to the historical record for the first several hundred years of this country (lessons learned)
 - Offer them concrete examples from the above
 - Offer them a copy of the book "The Tragedy of American Compassion"
- c. Appeal to the desire of parents to teach initiative, hard work, compassion and honesty to their children (we reward these things, and punish the opposite - why?)
- d. Address logically: if we reward non-work or no initiative, isn't the system incentivised wrong?
- e. Discuss what is true compassion?
 - Addressing the real cause of the problems or just the symptoms
 - Can government be expected to provide better insight into how to help people than those who know them the best and know better what the true problems are?
 - Is having expectations of those that receive help considered harsh? If so, why?
- f. Remember the example of bears at Yellowstone
 - When totally dependent upon trash - became sickly, violent, had to be destroyed
 - Removed accessibility of trash cans and people providing handouts; some bears starved but most survived on own (back to their old, natural, healthy ways)
- g. Ask how they would define "worthy" and "unworthy" poor, if at all? How would you?
- h. Ask if they are familiar with the term "tough love"? Define it for them

6. *Next Lesson: What Happened and What Can We Do?*

Notes:

- (1) Marvin Olasky, *"The Tragedy of American Compassion"*, Regnery, 1992
- (2) Charles Loring Brace, *"The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them"*; New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1880, third edition; first edition published in 1872
- (9) Franklin quoted in Philip Klein, *"From Philanthropy to Social Welfare"*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968
- (4) *"Report of the Committee Appointed by the Board of Guardians of the Poor of the City and Districts of Philadelphia..."*(Philadelphia: Samuel Parker, 1827)

Additional Notes:

- o I grew up in a small town (Wilkeson, Washington); high accountability, had to work hard or gained a reputation as being lazy. Hard work was expected and rewarded (some similarity to early America)
- o Remember Psalm 37:25: "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed. Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever."

Session #12: Welfare (Part 2) (Detailed Notes)

*"Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil"
(Prov 4:27)*

Purpose of this Lesson: To identify those trends prevalent in the United States that resulted in Biblical Principles being replaced by the current Welfare State approach to the poor, and what we can do about it

- o What is God's balanced approach?
- o Historically, what happened from the 1800's to today?
- o Statistics of the modern welfare state approach
- o What, if anything, we can do

Preparatory:

- o Quick review of lessons learned (accountability; never cash; personal knowledge: bad charities drive out good ones)
- o Generic time line; start to foundation of country, to present. Two jagged curves (one conservative influence becoming minimized by end of 1800's. another (liberal) small and growing throughout 1800's and skyrocketing from 1963 on)
- o Diagram: horizontal line, middle with Matt 22:37-39 & 6:33; one end "right" (conservative) the other "left" (liberal)

1. Biblically there is a Balance between Harsh and Indiscriminate Compassion (Prov 4:27)

- a. There is a path that is right, with extremes on both sides (liberality; conservatism) yielding undesirable results
 - o Must be careful in defining Biblical view of "center" - it depends upon the issue (abortion?)
 - o These will be general views, not precise or absolute in practice
- b. God's priorities are clear and direct (the narrow path):
 - o "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind"; "Love your neighbor as yourself" (**Matt 22:37-39**)
 - o "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (**Matt 6:33**)
- c. Turning from, or losing sight of both of these priorities causes us to fall into a variety of error
 - o Right (Extreme conservatism)
 - o Tends to be removed from society (deserve what they get - consequences of sin)
 - o Tends to be only concerned about personal holiness and piety, inward looking, hyper-Calvinistic
 - o Hyper evangelistic and missions oriented (spiritually not physically oriented)
 - o Left (Extreme liberalism)
 - o Tends to be concerned more about social issues (role of government, corruption, hunger, the state of the poor, etc.)
 - o Tends to ignore the spiritual side of the problem (social gospel)(physically not spiritually oriented)
- d. "Swerving" (vs 27) implies rushing to take an action
 - o Not considering the results or implications without proper knowledge or wisdom (Prov 19:2)
 - o Having zeal (compassion for the suffering) but not considering the near and far term effects
 - o Many charities write about the current "crisis" that is in desperate need (political action groups also) - why do they do this? (**See Session #28: Christian Financial Solicitations**)
- e. Balance is called for; compassion for a person's condition both spiritually and physically (help the downtrodden, but point them heavenward)
 - o What is our motivation - recognition? True compassion? Obedience to God? Conscience?
 - o Must always assess the reason for doing or not doing something

2. What Happened in the United States? Why did Biblical Principles not remain the Dominate Approach to the Poor? (The dominant swerve to the left)

- a. Preliminaries
 - o Overview major changes in the social conditions in this country
 - o Overview the different trends in response to changing conditions (intertwined, reactive, adaptive, no absolute or single condition or trend existed at any given time)
- b. Early 1800's in the United States
 - o Government formed "Alms Houses" and "Work Houses" for those incapable of working, they typically had a bad reputation but no one starved
 - o Various attempts were tried to provide institutionalized support,
 - o American practicality, greater common good, why poor in a resource rich country?
 - o Tended to be limited since they acted to "dry up" local charities and support programs
 - o Famous 1840's newspaper battle of editorials (12 each) between Horace Greely (New York Tribune) and Henry Raymond (New York Times) on poverty
 - o Attempt to frame the issue and arrive at workable conclusions
 - o Provided foundation that helped steer later developments

<u>Greely (NY Tribune)</u>	<u>Raymond (NY Times)</u>
o Liberal	o Conservative
o Universalist (all saved)	o Presbyterian
o Man basically good	o Man basically sinful
o Material transfer	o Individual and church action
o Environment creates problem	o Basic nature creates problem
o Communal living and material redistribution the key	o Personal transformation the key
o Human desires are good in themselves, evil flows when these are suppressed	o Passions of man must be subjugated to law of conscience
o Man's passions do not prompt wrong doing, social distinctions were the cause of evil (foundation of "Social Gospel")	o The heart must be changed
o Appealed to the Bible and "true" Christianity	o Appealed to the Bible and "true" Christianity
 - o Liberal press began to pick up the justifications for governmental involvement by 1850's; view developed that public money was to be used to support public needs (institutionalize giving)
- c. Mid to late 1800's Developments
 - o Condition: Civil War and resulting economic crisis created massive numbers in poverty
 - o Condition: New immigration & urbanization produced massively increased population with economic & cultural segregation (easier for rich to ignore the poor and rely on others)
 - o Condition: Social anonymity grew (accountability lost)
 - o Trend: Social Darwinism became a strong movement (don't take care of the obvious dropouts);
 - o Countered by strong church movement
 - o Social Darwinism underestimated the ability to reclaim people (turned around); hence it's influence diminished
 - o Trend: "Compassion fatigue" began to appear, with many giving up
 - o Trend: "Bad charity drove out good charities"
 - o Good charities were forced to also give indiscriminately or be branded as "scrooges"
 - o Competition began in order to tempt the poor in (charity competitions)
 - o People began to lose confidence in the charities they supported, so support dried up
 - o It was a "takers" market; perceived need grew
- d. Late 1800's and early 1900's Developments
 - o Humanism became very prevalent - government was becoming the new god
 - o Government non-involvement was viewed as national weakness

- o Calvinism became less prevalent and universalism (Fatherhood of God, brotherhood of man) became stronger
- o Many books relating to "Social Gospel" - the emphasis on God's love but not His holiness
 - o Result - urged charity without challenge (prominent)
 - o Change the environment and man's true nature (good) will come forth
 - o Many philanthropists became annoyed at older approach of evangelism emphasis
- o Growth of Pietism caused many Christians to withdraw from society involvement
 - o Concentration on personal holiness (1 Peter 1:15,16)
 - o Emphasis on evangelism and missions and not social/physical needs
 - o Did not involve themselves in government affairs
- o Settlement House movement from the 1890's
 - o Lighthouses to the poor to find a better life
 - o Community centered programs rose up
 - o Voluntary service viewed as noble cause of philanthropy
 - o However, no religious affiliations (wanted to save the world not the individual) (Charlie Brown quote: "I love mankind, its people I can't stand")
 - o Emphasis of material over spiritual well being; political over personal (basis for government programs that followed)

e. Bottom lines:

- o The influence of humanism was dramatic (government became the new savior; change the environment and man's goodness will show itself)
- o The "Love your neighbor" principle was implemented through the agency of the state (how do you pay for this? Taxes!)
- o Arm's length help salved the conscience, showed compassion but accountability dropped
- o The gospel was viewed as more and more irrelevant to these issues (forgetting "Seek ye first His Kingdom..." or this without balance):
 - o Some withdrew from society
 - o Some compromised the gospel and concentrated on societies needs
 - o Some gave the gospel without attending to the physical needs
- o Sincere ministries to address gospel and physical needs had very difficult time, but still changed many people's lives

3. Modern (Contemporary) trends in the United States: The stage is set for the greatest undertaking of mankind in all of history to try and spend its way out of poverty!

a. Modern era:

- o Two world wars and a depression created tremendous demand for goods and services
- o Industrial might created by time of WW II allowed full expression to market place
- o Depression era generation did not want their offspring to suffer want
- o Consumerism pushed very hard ("keep up with the Jones")
- o TV provided common framework to become discontented with what we had
- o Humanistic base, mightiest country in the world, huge - powerful government in place

b. Modern attack on poverty accelerated tremendously by President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" programs beginning in 1963

- o Belief that the richest country that ever existed could eradicate poverty (without Biblical foundation - pure humanism)
- o Welfare as we know it came about from this national priority
- o Each President wants to leave a legacy - this was his

c. What is welfare in the United States? (definition: "the total set of governmental programs explicitly designed to assist poor and low income Americans") (note (2))

- o Poverty was defined in terms of income level - not need! - "I didn't know I was poor" occurred
- o Most welfare programs are "*individually means-tested*" (restricts eligibility for benefits to persons with "means" (non-welfare income) below a certain level - \$16,404 for four in 1997)
- o 94% of total welfare spending is means-tested aid directly to individual

- o Types of programs (77 major ones run by the Federal government alone in 1995):
 - o Cash aid (22%) o Food o Medical aid o Housing aid o Energy aid
 - o Jobs & training o Social service o Urban & community development
 - o Targeted & means tested education
- o Costs
 - o FY 1993: \$324.3 Billion (\$234.3 Billion Federal; \$90 Billion State)
 - o On avg the welfare system costs each household that paid Federal tax \$3,357 (1993)
 - o Between 1965 and 1997 it has cost over \$7 Trillion in constant 1993 dollars
 - o War on poverty through 1994 is 70% greater than costs to defeat Germany and Japan in WW II (after adjusting for inflation)
 - o \$5.4 Trillion (1965-1994) = entire cost of private sector industrial and business infrastructure of US
 - o \$5.4 Trillion = could purchase every factory, all manufacturing equipment, every office building in US, with leftover could buy every airline, railroad, trucking firm, entire commercial maritime fleet, every telephone, television, radio company, power company, hotel, retail and wholesale store in the US
- d. Misconceptions: common view that all poor are malnourished, poorly clothed, and live in filthy, dilapidated and overcrowded housing (See Handout: Selected Data on Welfare in the United States)
 - o Material poverty (family income below \$16,404 for family of four in 1997)
 - o Undernourished:
 - o "Poor" have almost the same average level of consumption of protein, vitamins, and other nutrients as persons in the upper middle class (note (5))
 - o Children living in "poverty" today are not malnourished, grow to be one inch taller and ten pounds heavier than avg child of same age in general population in late 1950's (note (6)).
 - o Most important nutrition related problem facing poor in US is obesity - poor have a higher rate than do members of other socioeconomic groups
 - o Housing:
 - o "Poor" Americans have more housing space and are less likely to be overcrowded than the average citizen in Western Europe, with nearly 40% of households defined as poor by the US government actually own their own homes (note (7))
 - o There isn't enough money:
 - o In 1992, there were an estimated 7.5 million families below the poverty line. If each family was given \$12K to put above the poverty line the total cost is about \$90B. The amount that was spent in 1992 on cash and non cash benefits for persons with limited income was \$150B
- e. Impact on the Family
 - o 1995 - 1 in 7 children raised on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
 - o 1965 - 1 in 4 black children born out of wedlock; 1995 2 out of 3 are
 - o Overall 32% of children are born to single mothers (7.7% when "War of Poverty" began)
 - o Not just a black problem: illegitimate birth rate for low-income white H. School dropouts - 48%
 - o Affects of being born out of wedlock (children affects): twice the antisocial behavior; 25-50% more likely behavioral problems; 2-3 times more likely need psychiatric care; higher suicide rates; more likely to begin sexual activity at earlier age; higher probability will use drugs; lower IQ tests; 3 times more likely to repeat grade in school; 4 times more likely to be expelled from school; three times more likely to become an unwed mother if raised by one; 92% more likely to have a marriage end in divorce
- f. Two separate views of the nation's welfare approach have become prevalent:

"America will not let its needy fend for themselves" (Democratic National Committee)
"America, the land of the free, is now the 'Land of the free ride'"

4. Bottom Line: When you provide incentives in a system to reward bad behavior, that is what you will get

- o Welfare (to alleviate material poverty) undermines work ethic and rewards illegitimacy and divorce
 - o You get what you pay for! (generates its own clientele)
 - o Resulting breakdown of the family structure is a leading cause of crime
 - o The greater the percentage of single parent families in a neighborhood, the higher the rates of violent crime and burglary (*note (4)*)
 - o The percent of low income families in a neighborhood not related to the crime rate (*note (4)*)
 - o As more funds spent, the more people will be in apparent need for it, requiring more funds
 - o Mother has in effect a contract with the government to continue to receive a check:
 - o She must not work
 - o She must not marry an employed male
 - o The fruit of human effort (without God's principles being followed) has been devastating
- o Current status with the general public:
 - o Very little confidence that tax funds will be used to truly provide help to those in need
 - o Taxpayers are forced to contribute through the state and national bureaucracies to a system that is well understood to be broken and incapable of doing what it was intended to do
 - o "Entitlement" has become the byword (a right, not just help in desperate times)
 - o There is little accountability in how effective and efficient the system is (no public control)
 - o There is very little insight to how much each person and family is paying into the nation wide welfare system (national, state, local)
 - o Has become a hot political problem
- o Significant changes have occurred over the last two years - however, much more needs to be done
 - o Work for benefits has helped significantly (**2 Thess 3:11-12**)
 - o "Sundown" approaches have also helped
 - o Attitudes towards Christian based ministries have also changed to some degree
 - o There are pockets of true poverty, but widespread poverty does not exist
 - o Beware of extended interest by politicians!!!!
 - o Beware of the sleeping secular/humanistic dog!!!!
- o The values within a family have much more to do with a child's future success in society than it's income level

5. As Christians, we can do a lot at a number of levels, beginning at home:

- o Remember:
 - o Christ displayed the most profound example of true "compassion" - He came to earth and suffered with us (**Heb 2:17-18**), we are to do the same with others
 - o Jesus' (**Matt 19:21**) responding to the rich young man; "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me"
 - o Even though the young man claimed to have kept the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (**Matt 19:19; Lev 19:18**), he did so from his riches, without sacrifice; he also ignored those that needed help the most (the poor)
 - o Are we willing to sacrifice to help the "worthy" poor or disadvantaged?
 - o Where are we stockpiling our riches - here or in heaven? (**Matt 6:19-21**)
 - o Do we know where they are at? Do we come across them? Where?
 - o Be careful of our own selfish interests
 - o Christians should set an example for others by their own lives first
- o Within our own families teach and encourage Biblical principles of hard work and compassion (**See Handout: Christian Work Virtue**)
 - o Work through applications of the Second Greatest Commandment and **Matt 6:33**
 - o Encourage saving for the "rainy day" with food and funds (similar to the Mormon church; Y2K; earthquakes; financial setbacks; etc.)
 - o Are you willing to open your home on a temporary basis to help a family out?
 - o Takes a lot of work, and requires great discernment
 - o Do not put yourself at unnecessary risk

- o Great effort needed to determine whether the person(s) are worthy or unworthy (checks and cross-checks)
 - o Is it better to error on the generous or firm side?
- o Gain practical experience in showing compassion with your family (volunteer at soup kitchen)
- o Within our churches seek out those you can help by working with the Deacons
 - o Provide substance as needed under or thru Deacon supervision (Acts 6:1-7)
 - o Remember the admonition about widows (1 Tim 5:9) and those deserted
 - o Encourage Christians not to go onto public support unless all other avenues are exhausted (The Lord knows our needs and will provide (Matt 6:25-34))(see discussion question below)
 - o Easy to say "I am being taxed for it anyway - let so and so benefit from it"
 - o What does this say about the body of Christ?
 - o When will it end?
 - o Be a real "compassionate conservative" not just a political one
 - o The "Homeless" is another issue - will be treated in Session #13 (Church Policy)
- o Within our community be discerning when need shows itself.
 - o Be armed with the Biblical principles that apply
 - o Be armed with data to counter wild claims
 - o Concentric circles of help:

o Self Initiative	1 st	o Own immediate family	2 nd
o Own relatives	3 rd	o Church leadership and friends	4 th
o Neighbors	5 th	o Secular Org. relationships	6 th
o Temp. Christian social services org. with accountability	7 th		
o Last - Temporary governmental social service help	8 th		
 - o Above layers of support proceed from own-self outwards:
 - o Until governmental service help - all is voluntary (gov. is confiscatory taxes)
 - o Degree of accountability decreases the further away from family one goes
 - o Secular organizations provide longer term relationships than one night stand with Christian para-church organizations
 - o Demand Olasky's book "The Tragedy of American Compassion" as mandatory reading
- o Within our nation (bring pendulum back to the center - not extreme left!)
 - o Keep informed on legislation and developments - voice your opinion to our elected officials
 - o Encourage leaders to return to basic principles of teaching and encouraging:
 - o Self-reliance and initiative
 - o True compassion for the "worthy" poor (disabled; orphans; severe illness, etc)
 - o Strong work ethic
 - o Removal of disincentives to: working; marriage; children in two parent homes
 - o Providing of incentives to prevent children out of wedlock
 - o Good stewardship of tax money (use only when compelling, proven successful approach can be demonstrated)
 - o Demand high accountability services - preferably Christian based
 - o Vote for propositions that are consistent with Biblical principles
 - o Vote for candidates that support and encourage use of Biblical principles
 - o If funds are provided to Christian based ministries by the government, ensure there are no strings attached, and no dependence upon the funding (maintain independence and self sufficiency)
- o Tips when Talking to Non-Believers
 - o Remember the lessons learned from the first several hundred years of the country
 - o Have several financial and social destruction facts readily available (richest nation in history, with a secular humanist approach has failed miserably - misconception of nature of man)
 - o Question who is best capable of helping the "worthy" poor - the federal and state bureaucracies or the expanding circles mentioned above (self - family - ... - government last)
 - o Our children, schools, and work are incentivised to instill hard work and accomplishment, ask why the welfare program is the exact opposite?

- o Ask why is there an expectation that the welfare program will work at all?
- o Address whether "War on Poverty" is that, or war on initiative (for both the haves & have nots)
- o Have a copy of Olasky's book available to give away
- o Remember the Yellowstone bear lesson ("tough love" - lost some, but healthier and better off)
- o Become acquainted with an excellent summary: **Handout: The Oak Ridge Affirmations and Denials**

6. Discussion Questions:

- o "Are there any conditions under which a Christian can or should accept governmental support?"
 - o Track through the 1-7 steps first (concentric circles of support)
 - o What dignity is there in receiving public support that may not be needed
 - o Is public support being used to allow one's own resources to be spent other than on necessities?
 - o Is the involvement of government into our private lives worth it?
 - o Is this a sin issue - may or may not be
 - o What would be the right example to set for others, especially the non-believer?
 - o It helps perpetuate the continuance of government usurping the role of family and church
 - o It takes money inappropriately taken (taxes) from others
 - o It uses money from believers (taxes) that could have been used for the Lord's work directly
 - o Is that which is given without expectation considered with gratitude or contempt?
- o "Is accepting a college grant or scholarship (involving public funds) appropriate?"
 - o This is a competitive environment, in essence the recipient has competed for the prize and has worked for it
 - o Much of the funds used in scholarships is from donations, alumni, etc.
 - o Government has done the trade off, investing in degrees results in higher wages later, yielding greater taxes being paid - well worth the investment up front

- Notes:
- (1) Marvin Olasky, *"The Tragedy of American Compassion"*, Regnery, 1992
 - (2) Robert Rector and William Lauber, *"America's Failed \$5.4 Trillion War on Poverty"*, The Heritage Foundation, 1995
 - (3) Michael Novak, *"The New Consensus on Family and Welfare"*, Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1987
 - (4) Douglas Smith & G. Roger Jarjoura, *"Social Structure and Criminal Victimization"*, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, February 1988, pp. 27-52
 - (5) Robert Rector, *"Food Fight: How Hungry Are America's Children?"*, *Policy Review*, Fall 1991, pp. 38-43; *"Hunger and Malnutrition Among America's Children"*, *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 843*, August 2, 1991
 - (6) Bernard D. Karpinos, *"Height and Weight of Military Youths"*, (*Medical Statistics Division, Office of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army*, 1960, pp. 336-351. Information on current height and weight provided by National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 - (7) Robert Rector, *"How the Poor Really Live"*, pp. 12-13
 - (8) Charles Loring Brace, *"The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them"*; New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1880, third edition; first edition published in 1872
 - (9) Franklin quoted in Philip Klein, *"From Philanthropy to Social Welfare"*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968
 - (10) *"Report of the Committee Appointed by the Board of Guardians of the Poor of the City and Districts of Philadelphia..."* (Philadelphia: Samuel Parker, 1827)

Other: (a) *"The Welfare of My Neighbor - Living out Christ's Love for the Poor"* by Deanna L. Carlson; thru Family Research Council

6. End Notes:

- o According to Rector/Lauber (note (2)) government must:
 - o Reduce illegitimacy (promote formation of stable two-parent families)

- o Demand reciprocity and work (mutual responsibility between government and recipients - give back something to society)
- o Demand fiscal responsibility (control welfare costs)
- o Promote moral renewal (allowing private social institutions (churches etc) to play a larger role in educating young in moral code, school vouchers etc)
- o Rules to escape poverty: finish H. S.; get a any job, stick with it; don't have children outside marriage
- o Seven Marks of Compassion (note (1)):
 - o **Affiliation** - restoring the relationship with family, the closest source of help, or neighbors and friends
 - o **Bonding** - with those that offer help, volunteers, who become their new family members
 - o **Categorization** - into a) "worthy of relief" who are poor through no fault of their own; b) those able and willing to work; c) those unworthy, who prefer not to work
 - o **Discernment** - intimate knowledge of the person's circumstances to prevent fraud
 - o **Employment** - of all able-bodied household heads
 - o **Freedom** - opportunity to work and worship without government restriction or becoming dependent upon government subsidy (must take responsibility)
 - o **God** - Spiritual as well as physical needs must be met; a new nature and changed world view are needed for true and lasting change in a life; understanding of the principles of the Bible needed to guide life
- o Affect of religious values (note (3)). Black inner-city youth with religious values are:
 - o 47% less likely to drop out of school
 - o 54% less likely to use drugs
 - o 50% less likely to engage in criminal activities
 - o providing a positive affect on behavior of others around them
- o Wall Street Journal (July 29, 1999); "there is every reason to think that church-based programs work better than many ill-fated government anti-poverty programs of the last half-century" (as quoted in FRC book promotion (ref (a) above)

**Session #13: The Homeless
(Detailed Notes)**

"If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered." (Prov 21:13)

Purpose of this Session: To Address from a Biblical Perspective what our response Should be to the "Homeless" Segment of our Society

- o Background observations
- o The Biblical view of the "poor"
- o Who the "poor" and the "homeless" (a subset of the poor) are
- o Basic principles to govern our actions (to believers as well as non-believers)
- o Practical suggestions

1. Some background observations and fundamental questions that need to be asked

- a. When I say "homeless" what do you think of? Have you ever seen any?
- b. Where were they normally seen? What time of day?
- c. Have you ever talked to any? What did you learn firsthand?
- d. Why is this an uncomfortable area for us?
- e. Current developments
 - o Advocacy groups speaking for the homeless vice the homeless speaking for themselves
 - o Homeless shelters during peak, cold times in the winter
 - o Pamphlets and information showing the best areas of the country to be homeless in
 - o Homeless web sites cropping up
 - o San Francisco buying shopping carts for the homeless (giving them a "home")
 - o Homeless fighting each other to protect their "turf"
 - o Homeless advocates lobbying for legislation to ensure the homeless have voting rights (Several states currently allow those without permanent address to register to vote (1999))
- f. Some cautions to keep in mind
 - o Advocacy groups and "official" estimates vary widely (two different agendas)
 - o True statistics are virtually unknown and almost irrelevant
- g. Are current programs and "giving" by people trying to show "compassion" helping or hindering?
 - o "In New York, a shelter administrator was reprimanded after he wrote a memo proposing that residents of a men's shelter not be allowed to wear dresses, high heels, and wigs. Reid Cramer, assistant director of the Coalition for the Homeless in New York City, pointed out the administrator's error: 'The memo is evidence of a real misconception of what the shelters are all about. Trying to curtail freedom of expression, trying to shape the behavior of clients is completely inappropriate'" (note (2))
 - o Do current programs: reunite families; provide job skills; create initiative; remove people from drug and alcohol addiction; bring people to self-sufficiency; inculcate Biblical principles of hard work?
- h. If current programs are not helping to eliminate the problem (or effectively manage it) then why continue them?
- i. What is our role in all of this?

2. Back to Basics: God shows compassion towards the Fatherless, the Widow and the Alien and also expects us to

- a. God is the defender of the fatherless, the widow, and the alien (could not own land)(Deut 10:17-19; Psalm 68:4-7; 35:10; 1 Sam 2:8)
- b. Old Testament laws protected them and provides principles of mercy for us
 - o Every 7th year debts were canceled for fellow Israelites (not foreigners)(Deut 15:1-6)
 - o Every 7th year the land was to lie unplowed and unused so the poor may get food (Ex 23:11)
 - o Jews were to be openhanded (not tightfisted), give freely and generously (not be hardhearted) and meet the poor's needs, whatever they are (Deut 15:7-11)

- o Crops support the poor (overlooked sheaves; left olives; left grapes)(Deut 24:19-22; Lev 19:9-10; Lev 23:22; Ruth 2:15-16)
- o F&W&A were counted with the Levites in dispersing tithes every 3 years (Deut 14:28-29)
- c. Book of Proverbs refers to the poor numerous times (**Handout: "The Book of Proverbs on the Poor"**)
 - o The Lord makes both the rich and the poor - He is sovereign in this
 - o Even the poor are to be righteous
 - o We are not to mock or ignore the poor
 - o We are to extend kindness to the poor, and as a result we will be blessed
 - o Various reasons given for why there is poverty (see below)
- d. New Testament shows compassion to them
 - o Jesus used compassion to the poor as a test of the rich young man (Matt 19:21)
 - o Paul instructed by other Apostles to remember the poor (which he was eager to do)(Gal 2:10)
- e. We know that they will always be with us - but do we know why?
 - o Not the way the Lord desired it to be - if His people obeyed Him completely and carefully there would be no poor (Deut 15:4-5)
 - o Sin is prevalent, therefore the poor will always be with us (Deut 15:4,11; Matt 26:11)
- f. Must remember, they are also created in God's image (Gen 1:27) and retain this dignity
- g. The poor are somewhat different than the good Samaritan example (Luke 10:25-37)
 - o Jesus taught the expert in the law who a man's neighbor was (those in desperate need)
 - o Compassion/action is to be shown towards those that are in crisis conditions (dial 911; emergency aid; disasters; etc.)
 - o This principle does not give carte blanche to help for any and all "needs" created by people
- h. Bottom line: the poor are not to be overlooked or ignored!

3. First the larger category - Who are the Poor Biblically? They are made up of the worthy (deserving of help) and unworthy (not deserving of help)

- a. Those that are a result of their own sin
 - o Those that are a result of slothfulness (Prov 6:10-11; 10:4,5; 12:24; 24:30-34; 19:15)
 - o Those that are a result of selfishness (Prov 11:24; 20:13)
 - o Those that pursue fantasies (Prov 28:19)
 - o Those that are a result of self induced handicaps (Prov 20:1; 23:19-21,29-35; 24:34)
 - o Alcohol, drugs
 - o Financial irresponsibility (Prov 13:11, 21:5; Rom 13:8; 1 Tim 6:6-8)
 - o High risk behavior
 - o Those that are wicked and suffer God's judgment (Prov 15:25)
 - o Many conditions result from self induced physical abuse through drugs and alcohol
- b. Those that are a result of God's choice in their physical or mental condition
 - o Those that are a result of disability (accidents or born that way)(John 5:5)
 - o Some have physical or mental handicaps preventing them from supporting themselves
- c. Those that are a result of other's sin
 - o Those a result of exploitation (Ex 3:7; Psalm 82:3; 10:2; Prov 14:31; Isa 3:13-15; 32:7)
 - o Unscrupulous people taking advantage of others
 - o Ungodly levels of taxation (Prop 13 effects?)
 - o Economic downturn and loose of jobs or marketable skills
 - o Inflation and substantial rise in housing costs
 - o Those that are a result of others ignoring them in their time of need (Prov 14:20; 17:5; 19:7)
 - o Those that are persecuted for righteousness sake (Heb 11:35-38)
- d. Those that are a result of calamity (John 9:1; Luke 13:2-5; earthquakes, fires, AIDS, etc.)
- e. Those that are a result of personal sacrifice (godly choices)
 - o Paul willingly put up without many things for the cause of Christ (1 Cor 4:8-13)
 - o The widow put all that she had for God's glory (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4)
 - o The Corinthians gave beyond their ability to do so for the sake of others (2 Cor 8:3-5)
 - o The Recabites gave up many luxuries to be obedient to the Lord (Jer 35)
 - o Jesus taught each will receive far more in heaven than given up in this life (Luke 18:28-30)

- o Jesus Himself was the greatest example of self sacrifice - giving up His riches in heaven to become poor for our sakes (2 Cor 8:9)

4. The "Homeless" are a subset of the poor, but have been defined in a number of ways in order to support political agendas as well as legitimate causes

- General characterizations (accurate numbers very difficult)(See Handout: Who are the Homeless?)
 - o Range anywhere from "runaways" to hardcore live on the street types
 - o Homeless advocates estimate from 3-4 million (any homeless for virtually any reason) to 500-600,000 in shelters, etc. (Mary and Joseph called "homeless" by some)
 - o Children under 18 about 25% of urban homeless; 49% African-Americans; 32% Caucasian; 12% Hispanic; 4% Native American; 3% Asian
 - o 22% of urban homeless are employed
 - o About 20-25% (some estimates 1/3) of single adults suffer from severe and persistent mental illness (De-institutionalizing state mental hospitals - from 552,000 to 105,000 from 1955-1985)
 - o From 44% to 68% are addicts (alcohol or drugs)
- What is not published is the number that are a result of their own sinful decisions and actions
 - o Financial ruin due to gambling, poor decisions, overextending credit, etc.
 - o Drugs, alcohol (lost jobs, family, mental capacity)
 - o Incorrigibles - unwilling to live at peace with others
 - o Those who will not work at a legitimate job, and delight to live off of others (sometimes working just as hard as regular work)
 - o Behavior choices are mentioned, with very little judgment on their merit
 - o Virtually no distinction between causes from societal conditions or own moral wrong decisions
- What Political agendas are there?
 - o Are they "just like us" but have been victimized by circumstances beyond their control?
 - o The environment is the evil, not their own decisions and actions - secular humanism
 - o They are "entitled" to care and support; they have "rights" to food and shelter
 - o Are they a weapon in the Social Universalism movement? (Socialist)
 - o Are they useful to maintain and expand big government? (Political tool to keep appearance of compassion and justify taxes; social crisis; only government can solve; etc.)
 - o They have come back into the news recently as an issue for the next round of elections (New York - Mayor Guiliani has two rules for anyone using a homeless shelter: cannot be on drugs; must look for a job)

5. The role of the Body of Christ towards Christian Homeless is to follow clear Biblical teachings on responsibilities and blessings

- The body needs to be instructed in the proper Biblical view towards those in need and our own responsibilities before the Lord
 - o Thrift; initiative; self-discipline; honoring contracts; avoiding debt; hospitality
 - o Generosity; family responsibilities; not pursuing easy gain or waste
 - o Responsibilities towards each other and through church leadership
- First and foremost, the responsibility is on the individual to provide for himself and his family
 - o If he will not work, he will not eat (1 Thess 3:6-10; Prov 6:6-11; 19:24; 26:14-15)
 - o He is to work diligently to be able to provide for those of his own family (1 Tim 5:8)
 - o He is to work hard to have sufficient to help others (productivity not poverty)(Eph 4:28)
- Secondly, the family is to care for its own
 - o Children are to honor and respect their parents (Ex 20:12; Prov 16:31)
 - o Family members are to provide for each other (1 Tim 5:8)
 - o Parents must train their children in proper principles (initiative; hard work; thrift)(Deut 6:6-9)
 - o Families and relatives are in the best position to determine the "worthiness" of the individual for their help (accountability directly; understanding; long term support if justified)
- Third, the body of Christ is to minister to each other with the abilities, giftedness, and resources that the Lord provides to us (Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 12:24 b-26; 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:13-15; Acts 11:27-30; 1 John 3:17, Rom 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10)

- o We are to perform "acts of righteousness" to those truly in need (**Matt 6:1-4**)
 - o Ensure when doing so that a problem is not exasperated
 - o Compassion towards the poor is an essential fruit of saving faith (**Matt 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-37; James 1:27; 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18**)
- o Hospitality is a mark of the believer (**1 Peter 4:9; Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2**), this can include housing for an extended time
 - o Personal experience, temporary lodging: physically & verbally abused wife; safe house for young boy; young couple financially strapped; young man between roommates
- o Within a church Deacons are called to minister to the physical needs of the body (**Acts 6:1-7**)
 - o Those able to diagnose the real problem (slothfulness (**2 Thess 3:6-15; 5:14**)?)
 - o Those that can & are willing to invest the time to investigate & provide accountability
 - o The quick help may not be the true help needed
 - o We must be willing to come beside them in their efforts (**1 Cor 3:6-9**)
- o Be careful to not overlook a brother's need and then justify this attitude in an ungodly way (**James 2:14-19**)
 - o Faith without works is "dead"
 - o Are we too busy with our own family or work to be concerned about others?
 - o Must address the underlying spiritual problems
- e. Encourage believers not to go onto public support unless all other avenues have been exhausted
- f. Remember **Psalm 37:25-26**: "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed. Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever"

6. If Wisdom is needed in helping Homeless Believers, how much more so Non-believers?

- a. We are to love one another as Christ loved us (**Matt 19:21; 1 John 4:11**)
 - o Seek first His righteousness and not our own benefit (**Matt 6:33-34**)
 - o Love our enemies (**Rom 12:20-21**)
 - o Be willing to error on the generous side
- b. Do not generalize about the entire problem because of some (or many) that abuse (**Prov 21:13**); do not become jaundiced to the problem; do not shut our ears!
 - o Maintain an attitude of mercy and compassion (**Prov 14:31; Matt 5:42; Eph 4:28; Phil 4:16**)
 - o Be willing to give voluntarily when justified (**2 Cor 8:8; 9:7; Acts 5:4**)
 - o Is this a test of our willingness to trust the Lord?
 - o Remember **Heb 13:2** "*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it*"
- c. Be prepared when you encounter them
 - o Is our secret prayer "I hope I don't come across any today"
 - o Have your children with you, talk about it, instruct in wisdom and compassion (**Deut 6:4-9**)
- d. Use discernment to determine the true problem (**Prov 29:14**)
 - o Compassion does not overlook sin and its consequences (well meaning people may be acting contrary to God's purpose in judging sin and bringing to godly repentance)
 - o Symptom vice real problem (see Section 3 above)
 - o Gambling, drugs, etc. ruin personal lives and the lives of others
 - o Slothfulness and laziness (don't want to work; poor employee when working; not apply self in school; etc.)
 - o Some carry around cash and give out \$5, \$10 in order to "help" - is this right?
- e. Be aware of the Devil's schemes (**2 Cor 2:11**)
 - o Many of those asking for a handout position themselves at intersections
 - o Hard to talk with, only time to throw money at them
 - o Cannot take into car to a restaurant
 - o Prey upon people's compassion and salving their conscience
 - o Signs mention "God" many times to appeal to Christians or a higher accountability
 - o Many signs say "veteran" or "Vietnam" to elicit sympathy
 - o Women use young children or babies to solicit deep compassion

- o Many have plausible stories that have been honed to cover most objections or questions
- o Don't forget the "rounders" of the 1800's
- f. Determine if this is a ministry area for you - it will take a toll
- g. Remember: God calls the poor into His kingdom (**1 Cor 1:26-31**)
 - o Balance must be maintained: gospel is the only hope of an *eternally* changed life, but Christian compassion is still called for (**Luke 10:27**)
 - o Must feed the spiritual as well as the physical nature
 - o The church itself may establish a ministry in this area if there is a need
 - o Caution to be good stewards of what is entrusted into our care (**See Handout: GBC Policy on Outsiders who Approach us asking for Material Aid**)
 - o Structure around Biblical principles
 - o Strict accountability to principles of work, initiative, thrift, basic needs
 - o Submission to authority in a discipleship approach to grow from dependance to productivity (those who do not submit to God's word and repent of sinful behavior do not deserve the church's help)
- h. **See Handout: Some Practical Suggestions Concerning the Homeless**
 - o Be prepared to be a good Samaritan (Luke 10:27, 30-37), pray for those you see, use discernment.
 - o Don't underestimate the cleverness of stories (Prov 13:7; Matt 10:16; John 5:1-7)
 - o Know where practical help can be found (physical and spiritual)
 - o Never throw money at the problem
 - o Don't put your family at risk (or overstep your authority) (Prov 26:10)
 - o Volunteer (with you family) at soup kitchens or similar Christ centered church related outreach (be prepared, work in this area can be spiritually, emotionally, and physically draining)
 - o Demand strict accountability if government initiates activities in this area (use Biblical vice secular approaches)

7. What about the Inner City Problems where the Church is Typically very Poor?

- a. Wealthier churches are to help those in greater need (**2 Cor 8:10-15**)
- b. We are not to overlook the needs of our brothers and sisters in ministries different than our own
- c. Are we aware of what inner city churches face in their hardships and ministries? Why not?
- d. Are we aware, but overlook them? (**James 2:14-19** (context is believers, but the principle can apply since we are to love our enemies))
- e. Review the Book of Proverbs and how it addresses the poor. Are we exposed to them or looking for them?
- f. This, as in other areas requires a balance of compassion and Biblical truths/principles and accountability (differentiating between the worthy and unworthy poor)
- g. What about the third world homeless?

8. The "Homeless" issue provides a classic contrast between God's ways and man's:

Biblical Approach

Personal responsibility for condition
 Individual responsibility to correct
 Principle of hard work
 Individual accountability/expectations
 Spiritual truths presented
 Targets spiritual/physical needs
 Decrease dependence upon others
 Proven to have success
 We love because Christ first loved us
 Addresses the disease and symptoms

Government Approach

Society is responsible for their condition
 Governments responsibility to correct
 Minimal if any requirements
 Little accountability/expectations (arm's length)
 God removed entirely (secular)
 Targets physical needs
 Increases (or maintains) dependence upon others
 Proven to be a failure
 We help because of conscience, or personal gain
 Addresses symptoms and mis-diagnoses the disease

- o Examples of government "help" to the homeless - what do you think?
 - o Establishment of "Homeless shelters" during seasonal times when temperature drops below a certain amount (distributed around an area to allow easier access and wider coverage)
 - o Temporary lodging vouchers for local hotels during very cold times
 - o San Francisco city council voted to provide the homeless with shopping carts (thus showing compassion...)

9. Some General Bottom Lines:

- o Historical foundation has been set
 - o Institutionalized help (arm's length; virtually no accountability or judgment on merit)
 - o Belief the "homeless" are a victim of society (environment) and who has "rights"
 - o Government has usurped the families and church's role

- o Biblical principles have been removed from the solution for most cases (thrift; initiative; hard work; accountability; repentance; submission to God's truths)
- o For every valid example of one who is in need (worthy), how many are unworthy?
- o Family disintegration (reasons: economic; welfare; sexual immorality; etc.) creating many homeless
- o Almost universally recognized that the current welfare system is discredited
- o Many of the homeless exist because of a refusal to fit into a productive society, and because society has sufficient compassion for those in rags that it is willing to support them in their sin
- o A handout does not solve a problem - it perpetuates it
- o Are we overlooking our brothers and sisters working in the inner city?
- o Remember the Yellowstone bears!

Discussion Questions:

- o "Does the government have a legitimate role in providing a safety net for those who through no fault of their own find themselves on the street?"
- o "Is it reasonable to carry around loose cash in order to give it out when homeless are encountered - with the rationale that God knows the truth and judgment is on the other's head, not mine?"
- o "Why should I help someone that is begging on the street and refuses to work - they are only paying for their own sins?"
- o "I already am paying a lot of tax money that goes to help the "homeless", why should I have to do anything else?"
- o "Where Mary and Joseph "homeless" as the Homeless Advocates say?" "How about Christ Himself?"

References:

- (1) E. Fuller Torrey; *"Nowhere to Go: The Tragic Odyssey of the Homeless Mentally Ill"*; New York; Harper & Row, 1989
- (2) Donna Minkowitz, "Shelter for Macho Men Only," *The Village Voice*, 1989 as recounted in Marvin Olasky, *"The Tragedy of American Compassion"*, Regnery, 1992
- (3) Gina Kolata, "Twins of the Streets: Homelessness and Addiction", *New York Times*, 22 May, 1989
- (4) Torrey, "Thirty Years of Shame", *Policy Review*, 1989

Additional Notes:

- o Personal talks with "homeless" found most are unwilling to work, it is their choice to be homeless, many others are mentally unstable
- o Visit with Shawn at Berkeley - man without legs in a wheelchair, asking for a handout - personal struggle with what to do (20 feet away - large black man, seems fit, talking, same cup out asking for a handout - guess which one we had more compassion for. Why?)

Session #14: Voting (Detailed Notes)

*"For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure"
(Prov 11:14)*

Purpose of this Session: To address the question of whether a Christian should vote, and if so, how to do it

- o I know some Christians that:
 - o Refuse to vote - it is a corrupt system, why participate in it?
 - o Vote pure party lines
 - o Wait until the very last moment to figure out how they are going to vote
 - o Vote how they "feel" about something, not addressing Biblical principles
- o There is a need for guidance to be provided to our leaders
- o There is a need to select godly leaders
- o What should we be looking for in leaders

Question: Why wouldn't a Christian vote?

- o Won't allow themselves to be forced to compromise on principle
- o To lazy or comfortable
- o Not enough time (how about TV; sports; hobbies; naps...)
- o Concern it would do no good ("look how big Goliath is...")
- o "Who am I to force my views onto someone else?"
- o Don't believe it is our responsibility
- o Believe it is a corrupt system, why should we be involved with it?

Question: Which is better, a Christian that votes in an ignorant fashion, or one that doesn't vote at all?

- o Axiomatic in politics that on any issue or person the immediate response is 40% no; 40% yes; 20% (?)
- o One vote can make a difference, however, very unlikely
- o Miss America Contest - (urban legend) one year elected Miss Cordiality by receiving two votes

1. Introduction: This nation, as any nation, relies upon godly counsel in order to make decisions - when this is removed, everyone suffers (Prov 11:14)

- a. Three sources of guidance can be in view in Prov 11:14
 - o Without strong, righteous leadership in a nation, the people will go their own way and the nation will cease to be a nation (Everyone does what is right in his own eyes - **Judges 21:25**) (**Prov 29:2; 11:10; 1 Kings 12**)
 - o Without godly council provided to leadership (those in authority), kings will go astray (**Prov 15:22; 29:12; 20:18; 24:5,6**)
 - o Ultimately, without a ruler seeking the Lord's will, he will fail (**Jer 17:9; Prov 20:18**)
- b. What is the 'fall' referring to? (Inside and Outside threats)
 - o Potentially being overrun by an enemy, since "victory" is mentioned in this verse, referring to war or battles (also, slavery; bondage; exploitation; utterly destroyed)
 - o A nation can fall internally into:
 - o Wickedness (moral decay)
 - o Disorder
 - o Death
 - o Violence
 - o Injustice
 - o Rebellion
 - o Poverty/famine/pestilence
- c. Implications of giving advice in this verse:
 - o Implies it is guidance that the nation needs to follow (correct guidance; or at least godly advice along with ungodly)
 - o Implies it is consistent with God's will
 - o Implies it is listened to and followed
 - o Remember, ultimately, God is the source of all knowledge and wisdom - even amongst pagans

- d. Just as a king of old asked chosen men for advice, so our country asks its people for advice
 - o Who is to rule over us?
 - o What laws are to be made? (what morality is to be legislated? What standard will we use?)
 - o What evil is to be punished?
 - o What good is to be commended?
 - o How are tax moneys to be used? (national and local priorities)

2. Christians have a very important role in this country!

- a. We are to pray to our sovereign God for those in authority over us (**1 Tim 2:1-4**), that they would:
 - o Not be ashamed of setting a Christian example publicly, if Christians (**Matt 7:21-23**)
 - o Come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ if they are not believers
 - o Realize their accountability before God to make righteous decisions
 - o Rely upon godly advice and seek the Lord's will in all matters (**Prov 24:5-6**)
 - o Not compromise Biblical principles, but make decisions knowing they are accountable to God first - above men (**Acts 4:19-20**)
 - o Be diligent in their work, striving with all the and energy and ability that God provides (**Prov 12:24; Col 1:29; Rom 13:6**)
 - o Not gather around them ungodly council (**Prov 29:12**)
 - o Set an example of righteousness in their own lives (be examples for the nation)
 - o Exercise their God ordained responsibilities and not abuse their power
 - o Do good, and in doing so would "silence the ignorant talk of foolish men" (**1 Peter 2:15**)
 - o Be willing to call "evil" for what it is (**Isa 5:20**)
 - o Be teachable (**Prov 18:15; 20:12; 25:12**)
- b. We are to encourage our leaders personally, to do what is right and just:
 - o Be informed on the issues being addressed, so we can give godly advice to our representatives (**Ecc 7:27; Acts 17:11**(good Berean principle))
 - o Calling; writing; FAX'ing; E-mail; financial support; letters of encouragement
 - o Holding up God's standard to them
 - o Encourage the creation and enforcement of righteous laws and the removal of ungodly ones
 - o Encourage them to withdraw from actions and decisions that are not part of their rightful responsibility
 - o See **Handout: Christian Survey's, Form Letters and Petitions**
 - o See **Handout: Communicating with our Elected National Officials**
- c. We are to personally encourage our leaders to fulfill their Biblical roles (whether believers or not) to:
 - o Punish the evildoer (**Rom 13:3-4; 1 Tim 1:8-11; 1 Peter 2:13-14**)
 - o Commend the good (**1 Peter 2:13-14; Rom 13:3**)
 - o Maintain peace in the land (**1 Tim 2:3; Jer 29:7**)
- d. We are to spiritually minister to our leaders
 - o Let them know we are praying for them
 - o Evangelize them, speaking truth in love
 - o We don't have to Biblically instruct them every time we express a view to them!
- e. We are to pay our taxes out of obedience to the authority over us (**Rom 13:6-7**)
- f. We are to give our leaders respect and honor as it is due
 - o Without grumbling
 - o Give a good report where it is due
 - o Do not maliciously spread evil reports when truth is not known
 - o Be careful of jokes that tear down and do not build up (**Rom 13:7; 1 Peter 2:17**)
- g. We are to vote: This is another way to directly provide advice to our nation and leadership in:
 - o Punishing the evildoer
 - o What constitutes evil? (actions, not matters of conscience) - the moral code
 - o Blasphemous use of the Lord's name (why is this not a verbal "hate" crime? (**Ex 20:7; third commandment**))
 - o Restrictions on worship services (**Ex 20:8-11; fourth commandment**)
 - o Murder (**Ex 20:13; sixth commandment**)(includes abortion, euthanasia,

- o assisted suicide, etc.)
- o Adultery (**Ex 20:14**; seventh commandment)(includes pornography, homosexuality, etc.)
- o Theft (**Ex 20:15**; eighth commandment)
- o Slander (**Ex 20:16**; ninth commandment)
- o Other sins as defined in the moral laws
- o What degree of punishment is appropriate?
- o What degree of mercy should be shown?
- o Commending the good - what constitutes this?
 - o Tax exempt status for churches, nonprofit organizations that help in times of trouble
 - o Honors for examples of virtue, self sacrifice, character, wisdom, bravery, etc.
 - o Adequate pay for law enforcement officials, military, etc.
 - o Others?
- o Maintaining peace in the land - what constitutes this? (**1 Tim 2:3; Jer 29:7**)
 - o Enforcing just laws
 - o Swift, fair, unbiased justice
 - o Military adequately maintained and paid for to support national defense
- o Protecting the orphans, the widows, the aliens in the land (**Deut 10:17-19; 24:19-22; Lev 19:9-10; 23:22**)
- o Provide godly examples of lives of holiness and character for others to emulate
 - o O.T. Israel kings set the pattern for the rest of the nation
 - o The men of the Sanhedrin noted Peter & John "were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13)
- o The role of "Voting Guides" (**See Handout: Voter's Guide Discussion**)
- h. We must approach voting:
 - o Prayerfully
 - o With discernment
 - o Knowledgeably (not in an ignorant fashion - ignorant Christian vote is more dangerous than no vote at all)
 - o With great care and diligence

"If we don't vote and tell the nation who we want to rule over us, and what laws should be made and enforced - who will?"

- o Great freedoms in this nation - communicate with our leaders, establish laws and who our leaders should be - voting is just one aspect (not to leave it at that!)
- i. Should the pulpit be used to speak out for or against a candidate or proposition?
- 3. What Should a Christian look for in a Candidate before Voting for him?**
 - a. Qualifications relating to their character
 - o Elder and Deacon qualifications are a good start (**1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9**)
 - o Have they taken personal responsibility for any prior transgressions and has repented, and learned from them, understand why they were wrong! (sins of their youth)(**Prov 28:13***)
 - b. Qualifications relating to their spiritual condition
 - o Is the man a believer
 - o Does he have a personal testimony relating to Christ
 - o Does he have a good church standing (remember, virtually all members of Congress list some form of church or denominational affiliation)
 - o Does he seek godly council and have godly men as advisors?
 - c. Qualifications relating to understanding of the position (**Prov 22:29**)
 - o Experience in the area (not to compromise, but to foresee and prevent compromising)
 - o Knowledge and understanding of the issues
 - o Previous voting record on issues (Be careful of "Moral" voting percentages!)

- d. Must our leaders be men only?
 - o Bible has little that addresses this issue external to the home, church and nation of Israel
 - o In the family, the husband is the spiritual and moral leader (**Eph 5:22-30; 1 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:11; 1 Peter 3:1-5**)
 - o Within the church, a woman is not to have authority over a man (**Eph 2:12-15; 1 Cor 14:33-35; 1 Tim 2:12-15**)(remember, not many men are qualified to lead)
 - o Within ancient Israel, a woman ruling over the nation was a shameful situation (**Isa 3:12**) (**Deborah; Judges 4:1-10** judged during a evil time in Israel)
 - o Principle in **Eph 2:12-15** and **1 Cor 11:6-10** draws from the original creation and the role of men and women - implies that this relationship is true universally and for all time (women are to be under the authority of men)
 - o Exceptions? (no qualified men; greatly gifted woman; temporary only; others?)
- e. Principle vs Pragmatic
 - o **No man meets the qualifications completely (Eccl 7:20)!**
 - o What should you do if it appears to be a choice of the "lesser of two evils"? (always the case?)
 - o What should you do if a third candidate is by far superior to the other two, but has virtually no hope of being elected?
 - o Vote your conscience before the Lord
 - o Each man's life is in the hands of the Lord, He is sovereign
 - o Is "a little better" going in the right direction, then look forward to the next election
 - o Remember, the heart of the king is in the hands of the Lord (**Prov 21:1**)
 - o Ultimately, God is sovereign in all of mens lives, and elections! There is great comfort in this!
 - o He raised up **Pharaoh** to fulfill His purposes (**Rom 9:17**)
 - o He raises up the **President** to fulfill His purposes

4. Information/Statistics Relating to Elections

- a. According to public opinion polls, only 20-25% of the American Christian community actually votes in US elections
- b. In Australia - it is mandatory for everyone to vote otherwise they will be fined
- c. In South Africa - voting was limited to those that were educated and could "understand" the issues
- d. In colonial US most colonies restricted voting to land owners, and most limited voting to members of a certain church (Royal colonies - Church of England (Anglican); New England - Congregational church)
- e. Some voting statistics
 - o In the midterm voting year of 1998 (note (1)):
 - o The total votes needed to have switched six key districts in order for the Democrats to have regained control of the House in this election - 9,537
 - o Total eligible voters who did not cast their ballots - 119,450,000 (highest on record); only 37% of all eligible voters actually voted
 - o Percentage decline in the number of election stories run by major networks in 1998, compared with 1994 midterm elections - 73%
 - o Highest voting turnout - Minnesota (59.5%)(Jesse "The Body" Ventura elected Governor; Lowest turnout - Virginia (17.7%)(not statewide races)
 - o In the 1996 Presidential election, 54.2% of the voting age population vote; 50 million eligible voters are not registered
 - o In 1992, 67% of Christians did not vote
 - o Power of one vote (unknown sources):
 - o 1776 - one vote decided if Americans would speak English or German
 - o 1845 - one vote made Texas a state
 - o 1868 - one vote saved Andrew Johnson from impeachment
 - o 1933 - one vote made Adolph Hitler head of the Nazi Party
 - o 1960 - one vote per neighborhood gave John F. Kennedy victory over Richard Nixon

5. Discussion Questions:

- o "Is it ever right to vote for a non-Christian?"
- o "Is it a sin to vote? Is it a sin to not vote?"
- o "How can a Christian, in clear conscience, vote for the 'better' of two undesirable candidates?"
- o "Can a Christian ever acknowledge openly when a non-believer does something correctly?"
- o "Is it wrong to ever vote for a non-believer over a believer?"
- o "Is it wrong to select a candidate to vote for based upon a single issue?"

6. Practical Helps:

- o **Handout: Voter's Guide Discussion**
(Are they useful or a crutch?)
- o **Handout: Christian Surveys, Form Letters and Petitions**
(Are they effective?)
- o **Handout: Communicating with our Elected Public Officials**
(Keep at your desk)
- o **Handout: Prayer List for Those in Authority Over Us**
(What should we be praying for?)

Note (1) "Time"; November 16, 1998; Numbers column, pp 35

Session #15: Homosexuality (Part 1)
(Detailed Notes)

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:9-11)

Purpose of this Session: To present the Biblical view of Homosexuality and the great promise that God holds out to those in Bondage to this sin

- o The Bible is very clear about this sin
- o God condemns this sin just as He does all sin
- o This sin is not beyond cleansing through Christ
- o The second lesson will address the tactics employed by gays and what we can do to counter
- o Warning: by exposing, the unthinkable becomes thinkable - we must be careful!

Questions: Do any of you know a homosexual?

- o Do any of you work with a homosexual?
- o Are any of you related to a homosexual?
- o One of two moral issues splitting this country - with major effects on a number of other areas (hiring; benefits; education; counseling; public displays of affection; even worse perversions)

1. Introduction: Although many do not want to believe it, Homosexuality is a sin, and bondage to it can be removed completely "And that is what some of you were"

- a. Two Greek words are rendered "homosexual offenders" in the NIV
 - o "*malakoi*" meaning literally "soft, gentle" and in moral contexts "yielding, or remiss"; those who allow themselves to be homosexually misused (the passive role); also "soft; effeminate person" (catamites, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused)
 - o "*arsenokoitai*" is a masculine gender and a compound from words for "male" and "bed"; those are the active role in intercourse with men; pederasts, sodomites (1 Tim 1:9-10)
 - o This understanding is evidenced from other Greek literature from as early as 245 B.C. (ref a)
- b. Listed amongst many other offenses that place a person outside the kingdom of God
- c. As with the other sins, repentance and faith in Christ removes the stain of this sin and the desire for it (repentance turns away from a sin completely)
- d. Claims are made that it is impossible to change a true "homosexual"; however, these:
 - o Deny the sovereignty and wisdom of God in the designing of men and women (perfect order)
 - o Deny the truth and infallibility of God's word (God is all knowing)
 - o Makes God out to be irrational, condemning that which cannot change
 - o Deny any possibility of God's grace and mercy bringing a new nature to a person
- e. This verse proves that homosexuality is a sin that can be atoned for, just as any other sin, with the person reborn into a godly life no longer in bondage to the prior sin
- f. Is this sin any worse than any other sin? (James 2:10)
- g. Is this verse an isolated treatment of homosexuality?
 - o Many verses in the O.T. (See below), however:
 - o Keep in mind that the context is Israel - the covenant nation of God
 - o The nation, and all of it's people were to be holy, as God was holy (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26)
 - o The punishment for this sin was death, as was about 28 other offenses
 - o Several verses in the N.T. (See below), however:
 - o Never is the death penalty called for (power of the sword rests with the state, not the church (God did miraculously intervene in taking lives at times: 1 Cor 11; Acts)

- o The sexually immoral, unrepentant were removed from the fellowship, not stoned
- o This was an act of mercy to show the seriousness of the offense, and how tenuous the condition the person was in

2. There are many Biblical accounts and references showing God's judgment and condemnation towards homosexuality!

- a. The account of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 18:20; 19:1-13; 13:13**)
 - o Men of Sodom were wicked and sinned greatly against the LORD (**13:13**)
 - o Outcry was so great against Sodom and Gomorrah that:
 - o The LORD Himself came down to see for Himself (**18:20,21**)
 - o God sent angels to destroy completely the two cities (**19:13**)
 - o All men from every part of Sodom participated in the attempt to rape the visitors
 - o Homosexual sin was their objective (**19:5**)
 - o They refused sexual intercourse with Lot's daughters, showing no desire at all for women (**19:7-9**)
 - o Other references to Sodom and Gomorrah show that they were an example of wickedness with which other sin is compared
 - o **Deut 29:23** (God overthrows the cities in fierce anger, example as a warning to Israel)
 - o **Deut 32:32** (Refers to vines/grapes of Sodom and Gomorrah being filled with poison/bitterness, the venom of serpents, deadly poison of cobras)
 - o **Isa 1:9-31** (Israel likened to Sodom and Gomorrah, except God left survivors)
 - o **Isa 3:9,12** (Sin paraded like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, they did not hide it)
 - o **Jer 23:14** (Prophets of Jerusalem likened to Sodom, adultery, live a lie, strengthen the hand of evildoers, no one turns from his wickedness)
 - o **Ezek 16:49-50** (Arrogant, overfed, unconcerned, did not help the poor and needy, haughty, did detestable things)(**16:26**; depraved)
 - o **2 Peter 2:6,7,10-12** (Ungodly, filthy lives, lawless men/deeds, bold, arrogant, slandering of celestial beings, blasphemes in matters they do not understand, brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed)
 - o **Jude 7-16** (Various descriptions that apply; will suffer the punishment of eternal fire)
 - o **1 Tim 1:9-10** (perverts mentioned as contrary to sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God)
 - o Sodom was utterly destroyed because it was full of homosexuals, it's sin was so grievous (**Gen 18:20**) that men day after day practiced their sexual debauchery (**2 Peter 2:6-8**)
- b. **Leviticus 18:22,24-25**
 - o Very explicit description of homosexuality - "Do not lie with a man as with a woman"
 - o This is detestable to God
 - o This will result in the defilement of nations/the land
 - o Consequence is that the land will be punished (old covenant)
 - o Action to be taken is that the person must be cut off from his people
 - o The practice must discontinue so that the example is not there for others to see
 - o There are consequences for the nation and land in allowing homosexuality to continue
 - o Judgment is a warning to other nations that they are accountable for their perversions and will be judged (even though they did not have the law as revealed by God to Israel)
 - o See also **2 Peter 2:8** "lawless"
- c. **Leviticus 20:13**
 - o Very explicit description of homosexuality: "If a man lies with another man as with a woman"
 - o Both are detestable to God
 - o Both must be put to death
 - o Their blood is on their own heads
 - o This shows that they are accountable for their own actions, they were not forced to do something that they did not want to do or had no control over
 - o Received just punishment for own sin (paid the ultimate price for their depravity - their lives)

d. **Judges 19:1-24**

- o Description of wicked men in Gibeah & their homosexual desires (disgraceful, vile)(vs 22-24)

e. **Romans 1:21-32**

- o These verses describe the process of degradation and severe moral decline that occurs when God is rejected, until one becomes reprobate (to damn!)
- o Describes those that have turned from God to idolatry, therefore, God gave them over (allowed them to plunge) to sinful desires/sexual impurity
 - o God did not force them
 - o It was their choice, God did not prevent them
 - o God's common grace was withdrawn
 - o The result was the degrading of their bodies with one another
 - o Any sin fully manifest will be horrible to behold
- o God gave them over to shameful lusts and explicitly describes what he is talking about so there is no misunderstanding!
 - o Men: "unnatural" relations (homosexuality) with other men and turned away from "natural" relations with women
 - o Indecent acts with other men
 - o Perversion
 - o Severe penalty received in themselves because of this (disease; stoning to death; ostracizing from the community; dissipation of self; conflict; and ultimately will give an account before a holy God (God's wrath))
 - o Women: In context did the same thing that the men did (lesbianism), that is, turning to other women instead of men for sexual purposes
- o God gave them over to depraved minds "filled" with the very things that a community under God's common grace loathes:

o Wickedness	o Deceit	o Boastfulness
o Evil	o Malice	o Invention of evil ways
o Greed	o Gossips	o Disobedience
o Depravity	o Slander	o Senselessness
o Envy	o God-haters	o Faithlessness
o Murder	o Insolent	o Heartless
o Strife	o Arrogant	o Approving others doing the same

(see 1 Peter 4:3-5)

Note: Do any of these traits appear to characterize the current homosexual leadership, or activists in the movement?

Note: Does this not also describe those that have become so consumed in their own sin that they viciously attack all who challenge them (grossest idolatry)

- o God's righteous decree is that those who practice the above deserve death! (**Rom 1:32**)

3. Through Christ, homosexuals have the only true hope of being released from the bondage they are in during this life and eternal judgment!

a. **1 Cor 6:9-11** Gives hope for us all - including Gays

- o Sexually immoral, idolatrous, adulterous, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, (other translations: sexual perverts, partakers in homosexuality, effeminate) will not inherit the kingdom of God (all such sin is idolatry - **Col 3:5-6**)
- o "*malakoi*" and "*arsenokaitai*" are rendered "homosexual offenders" in this listing (the passive and active roles, respectively, that homosexuals perform)
- o Very explicit description, but these sins (just as all others) can be washed by Christ's blood
- o This is what some "have" been, but not anymore!
- o Verse 11: They have been washed, sanctified, justified by the Spirit of God
 - o Shows that homosexuals can be cleansed and made new through Jesus Christ and the washing of the Spirit

- o Homosexuality isn't a permanent condition, it is not a genetic condition, it is a choice!
 - o It is not a freak condition of nature that one has no control over
 - o Through Christ they can be given a new nature (**2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15**)
 - o **Col 3:12-17** A picture of the redeemed nature, replaces the wicked nature!
 - o **2 Cor 10:5** We are all to take captive every thought to obedience unto Christ
 - o **1 Cor 6:18-20** We are to honor God with our body in Christ honoring ways, homosexuals have that same command - and hope!
- b. Bottom lines:
- o God's pattern for mankind was established at creation (**Gen 1:27; 5:2**)
 - o Male and female, designed for sexual relations in male-female union
 - o The expression of this is manifest in marriage (one man to one woman for life)
 - o Homosexuality is not consistent with God's divine order of creation but is a wicked expression of sin (not natural, but a perversion)
 - o In the O.T. it was a sin that even defiled the land (**Lev 18:22,24-25ff**)
 - o Being a non-practicing homosexual is not acceptable either
 - o Our thought life is as important to God as our actions
 - o It denies the complete transforming power of Christ (new nature)
 - o It implies that it is a "condition" that is not treatable ("That's the way I am")
 - o Homosexuality is:
 - o A choice
 - o Not an innate, genetically determined condition
 - o Not an irreversible psychological condition
 - o Not normal
 - o Caution: don't underestimate the difficulty gays have in coming out of this life-style!
- c. See **Handouts** in preparation for next week

4. Next Week's Class:

- o Expectation is that there is little disagreement amongst us as to the Biblical understanding of homosexuality
- o Address the fallacy of the three main arguments used to justify homosexuality (biological; psychological; and sociological)
- o Address the tactics used by Gay activists to force not only acceptance but special rights (condone and promote this sin) and what counter-tactics we can employ
- o Provide some basic data (information) relating to this area to equip us in the marketplace

Session #16: Homosexuality (Part 2) (Detailed Notes)

*"When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
(Psalm 11:3)*

Purpose of this Session: Address the more contemporary issues associated with Homosexuality and what we can do, if anything, specifically:

- o Review the Biblical approach to Homosexuality
- o Overview the consequences of the Homosexuality Life-style
- o Address the False Assumptions made to Justify it
- o Discuss the Tactics Commonly used by this Community and what We can do

1. Quick Review: the Bible is clear: Homosexuality is a sin, but since it is a sin, there is hope!

- a. One of several major ethical questions that is dividing our society. Has implications and impacts upon us in virtually every aspect of our lives
 - o Our personal lives (family; friends, neighbors)
 - o Our churches (how to treat the individual, is this sin worse than others, leadership positions)
 - o Our civil spheres (work conditions, laws, employees, state and national leadership, schools)
- b. The Bible does not condone homosexuality in any form - on the contrary - it condemns it in some of the strongest language found (see Session #15 and Handout: "Homosexuality - The Biblical View")
 - o It is listed along with other capital crimes of: murder; rape and kidnapping (O.T.)
 - o We are to hate that which is abominable to God (**Psalm 119:128**) just as with all sin
 - o But, is this sin any worse than any other sin?
 - o **James 2:10** "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it"
 - o All sin deserves death before a holy God
 - o Some sin carries greater consequences (disease; leads to other sin; death; depression; violence; emotional and physical pain...)
 - o Adultery is depicted in the Bible as symbolic of man's disobedience and turning from (rejecting) God; homosexuality is this and also perverting the nature of man (who is created in God's image)
 - o But we are to be compassionate with those who are repentant, or are involuntary victims
- c. God's pattern for us was established at the creation
 - o God created the human race male and female (**Gen 1:27; 5:2**)
 - o Not an arbitrary accident of evolution
 - o Not a cultural convention or choice
 - o God's image was manifest by creating both sexes
 - o God designed us for sexual relations in the form of male-female union
 - o "This creation of sexual differentiation by God from the beginning established heterosexuality as the normative direction for the sexual impulse and act" (ref a)
 - o These relations are to be pursued within marriage only (**Gen 2:24**); and are for a "man" and "woman" to become one flesh (**Mark 10:6-8; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31**)
 - o The NT maintains that the heterosexual drive is the natural God-given orientation of males and females (**1 Cor 7:2-5**); in that fashion within marriage is the bed undefiled (**Heb 13:4**)
 - o Any perversion of this pattern is sin before the Lord
 - o Sexual immorality before or after marriage (adultery) is sinful
 - o Sexual lusts any time is sinful (even within marriage)
 - o Homosexual (and lesbian) lusts and acts are sinful
 - o Pedophilia, rape, incest, etc. are perversions of the pattern God has graciously given mankind and will reap judgment
- d. Homosexuality specifically is a choice (see below), and is:
 - o Not consistent with God's divine order of creation, but comes about through man's fall into sin

- o Not natural, but is a perversion of man's nature
 - o Is a sin that defiled the land in the OT (**Lev 18:22,24-25 ft**), thus it is not a victimless crime
 - o So abhorred by God that in the OT He commanded capital punishment as the just payment for it (**Lev 20:13**) (Murder and rape could have mitigating circumstances (**Deut 19:4-13; 22:23-29**), but this sin has none!)
 - o Brought to a halt and replaced with God's pattern for men and women through the redemptive act of Christ (calling homosexuality a sin offers hope because God forgives and transforms (**2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 6:9-11**))
 - e. It is not acceptable to be a "non-practicing" homosexual
 - o Several liberal Christian denominations have allowed the ordination of "non-practicing" homosexuals, in effect accepting that gays are that way by nature but must abstain from it
 - o It implies that it is a condition such as a genetic defect or illness that we are not responsible for, but that we accommodate or suppress
 - o Our thought life is as important as our acts of sin (**Matt 5:27-28; 15:19**)
 - o It denies the transforming power of God that changes our sinful nature and removes even ungodly desires (**1 Thess 5:23; Gal 5:24; 2 Cor 7:1; Rom 12:2**)
 - f. Acceptance of homosexuality is a sign of God's judgment upon us (**Isa 5:20; Rom 1:18-27; Gen 19**)
- 2. Three General Propositions of the Homosexual Movement are pushed very hard - Each of Which are False(see Handout: "Homosexuality - Three Key Secular Lies and the Actual Truth"):**
- a. Biological argument - homosexuality is an innate, genetically determined condition
 - b. Psychological argument - homosexuality is irreversible
 - c. Sociological argument - homosexuality is normal
- 3. Tactics of the Homosexual Movement are common ones used by many immoral campaigns (see Handout: "Homosexuality: Tactics and Counter-Tactics")**
- 4. What can we do? See Handout: Homosexuality: Selected Effects and Responses to Tactics Used by the Homosexual Community**
- 5. Additional thoughts:**
- a. Nowhere does scripture condone homosexuality or provide any acceptance of it
 - b. This sin is explicitly described so there is no misunderstanding what sin is meant (both O.T. & N.T.)
 - c. The practice is the result of a depraved nature and not genetics
 - d. The very nature of things tells us that it is a perversion of how God has intended men and women to relate to each other. It abuses the natural physical use of what God has designed into us
 - e. There is no scientific evidence to support the statements that homosexuality is a genetic condition, or that a person does not have a choice - it is a choice that is made by the individual, and as such that person is accountable before God for it
 - f. 2 Peter 2:8 shows that Sodom's inhabitants violated God's law/commands, even though they were not the elect theocratic people of God - they were still responsible (Rom 2:14,15; 1:32)
 - g. Canaanites were utterly destroyed because of these "abominations" such as homosexuality and they were not under the Mosaic law (Lev 18:24-30)
 - h. DOMA: Defense of Marriage Act (ref d)
 - o California initiative to be on the ballot in March 7, 2000
 - o Adds the following to the State Constitution: "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California" to amend 1872 law (Family Code, Section 308) which reads: "A marriage contracted outside this state that would be valid by the laws of the jurisdiction in which the marriage was contracted is valid in this state"
 - o Over 679,000 signatures provided to the Secretary of State, 433,000 needed to qualify (8 of 58 counties had not submitted all of their signatures)
 - o November 3 1998 elections
 - o Hawaii passed a constitutional amendment 69% to 29% to keep marriage "only between opposite sex couples"
 - o Alaska passed a similar Amendment (#2) by 68% to 32%

- o California: Senator Pete Knight's (R-Palmdale) "California Defense of Marriage Act (SB 911) was defeated by the State legislature, thus requiring a State Initiative
- o 18 States have yet to affirm traditional marriage ("As California goes, so goes the nation")
- o Vermont Supreme Court ruled (1999) that the State must enact marital benefits legislation for homosexual partners. Polls indicate (Jan 00?) 52% disagree with the court, 38% agree; also 49% favor overturning the ruling with a constitutional amendment with 44% opposing this (Family Research Council (3 Feb 2000)
- i. We should be very careful to not stereotype gays; they may or may not have mannerisms that separate them (differentiate) from all others
- j. Homosexuality defined: Any person, male or female (including lesbians) that engages in sexual relations with members of the same sex or who desires to do so. Homosexuality is an affectional attraction to, or active sexual relation with, a person of the same sex
- k. Earlier years homosexuals were depicted on TV as something to make fun of - this allowed the subject to be exposed more to a mass audience; now has turned to acceptance as an alternative and even in cases become a desirable condition
- l. Manipulating situations in contradictory ways to gain in exposure, sympathy, and legal protection: AIDS is touted as not a gay disease, yet any attempt to quarantine those infected by HIV (or treat as with any other deadly, sexually transmitted disease) is condemned as "homophobic"
- m. Perverting two common ethical tests to justify the practice:
 - o "Would this be something you would want to be published on the front page of the newspaper?"
 - o In the past, this was shameful - technique now is to make acceptable and something of pride; "God made me this way", invokes divine authority to justify, thus no shame
 - o "What would Christ think or do in this situation?"
 - o By attributing the "condition" to God as the origin, attempts to bring legitimacy to it, thus in a perverted way justifies it

6. References:

- a. "Homosexuality, a Biblical View" by Greg Bahnsen; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 1978
- b. "Unnatural Affections" by George Grant & Mark Horne; Legacy Communications, 1991
- c. "When the Wicked Seize a City" by Chuck & Donna McIlhenny & Frank York; Huntington House Publishers, 1993
- d. "DOMA News"; Volume 1 Issue 1, November 1998, (714) 573-2252; Eric Christen
- e. "The Unhappy Gays - What Everyone Should Know About Homosexuality"; Tim LaHaye, 1978
- f. "With Benefit of Political Doxology"; The Washington Times, Linda Bowles, November 21, 1997

7. Some Background History

- a. "Stonewall Riot" of 1969, 27 June
 - New York City; Greenwich Village
 - Police conducted a routine raid on a homosexual bar - riot broke out
 - Beginning point of the radical gay movement; resulted in "Gay Pride Parade" every year
- b. 1973 - American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality as a mental illness from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders (DSM)
 - Manual that defines forms of mental illnesses and sexual perversions
 - Bullied into removing from the DSM and creating new category: "Sexual Orientation Disturbance"
 - Changed to "ego-dystonic homosexuality" - if person satisfied with condition, he is OK
 - Net effect - claim can be made that the APA declares homosexuality as "normal"
- c. 1957 - The British House of Lords struck down laws against homosexuality

8. Selected Homosexual Organizations

- a. Human Rights Campaign of Washington D.C.
- b. ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power)
- c. Queer Nation
- d. Wham
- e. Wisk
- f. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (D.C.)

9. Discussion Questions

- a. "Should the local church publically speak out against leaders by name and action when they are ungodly or compromise their duties?"
- b. "Should local churches be restricted in their taking out ads in newspapers and other forms of media in support of or against particular laws, leaders, candidates, or issues of societal concern?"
- c. "Has the tax exempt status of churches resulted in their being "gun-shy" in addressing politically sensitive issues?"
- d. "Are you willing to give up your claim to a tax deduction for contributions to the church should it's tax exempt status be revoked for any reason?"
- e. "Do you think GBC should house a "Citizenship" room that provides materials, tracts, information, and point papers on candidates, issues and laws of concern to believers in order to better equip them to exercise their citizenship responsibilities?"
- f. "What should the church **not** do?"
 - o It should not identify it's mission as political goals
 - o Be divisive over these issues (Rom 14)
- g. "What other activities do you think are within the realm of church actions that are reasonable?"
 - o Voter guides?
 - o Classes in citizenship?
 - o Petition drives?
 - o Voter registration drives?
 - o Sponsoring of political debates?
 - o Maintaining a current issue web site to encourage members to write their congressmen?
 - o Sponsoring classes and working groups to write letters to the editor?
 - o Organize picketing?
 - o Sponsor billboards with: Christian messages; Biblical truths relating to abortion, homosexuality; AIDS; etc?
 - o Paying for ads in local newspapers, on radio stations, on TV bringing the gospel to the secular world and/or addressing basic issues of the day from a Biblical perspective?
 - o Sponsor seminars with other local churches to address issues of mutual interest?
 - o Conduct classes and seminars to prepare individuals for public office?
- h. "Is it easier to generically address the evils of the day instead of finding and supporting publically those that desire to bring glory to God?"
- i. "Is the church to evangelize the nations and teach them righteousness?"
- j. "Is it appropriate to work together with other Christian churches that we agree with on societal issues and actions needed, yet we differ doctrinally?"

Notes:

1. "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology;" Walter A. Elwell, editor; 1994
2. "Christ and Culture;" H. Richard Niebuhr, 1951

Session #17: Animal Rights (Detailed Notes)

"A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel" (Prov 12:10)

Purpose of this Session: To Present a Balanced Biblical Treatment of Purpose for Animals and Man's Responsibility towards Them

- o Why God created animals
- o How man is to treat animals?
- o Address whether animals do have any rights
- o The current animal rights movement
- o What we should be doing if anything

Basics: "Right" = "that which a person has a just claim to; power, privilege, etc. that belongs to a person by law, nature, or tradition" (Webster's)

- o Biblically, we have a right to death, since we have earned it (**Rom 6:23**)
- o Our rights in this country are those defined by law - a consequence of Biblical commands (prohibitions) such as "Thou shalt not kill" - law protects our right to live
- o More accurate to say animals have legal protections, not rights in the human sense
- o Rights, as used here do not imply a commensurate obligation or duty to protect or exercise it (Man has a right to dominion by God's direct command, also protective rights)

1. Introduction: Like so many issues around us, Christians have sometimes trivialized the Biblical understanding and treatment of Animals

- a. Why is this a topic of discussion? Why should we care?
 - o "Animal Rights" movement has gained significant notoriety and presence in the public
 - o There are major agenda items for the "Animal Rights" movement that could have significant implications for us (make them equal to man legally)
 - o Many Christians have turned away from a Biblical view of animals ("They taste good...")
 - o This, like all other topics, must be measured by the Biblical standard
- b. In a fallen world, there are at least two fundamental abuses and errors (**diagram showing spectrum**):
 - o Viciousness and cruelty of man towards the creation (destruction, abuse, neglect)
 - o Falsely elevating the creation to godhead
- c. A consistent, Biblically based approach to the treatment of animals is not commonly understood
 - o By definition, an animal does not have "rights" in the sense that we do, but they do have derivative protections
 - o We have a stewardship responsibility towards animals
 - o There are profound reasons for the existence of animals

2. The Bible has much to say about why God Created Animals and the Responsibility of Man towards them

- a. Man is pre-eminent over, and entirely separate from animals (See **Handout: Animals of the Bible**)
 - o Only man is created in God's image (**Gen 1:26-27**); therefore:
 - o Man intrinsically superior to animals in nature & in relation to God (Matt 6:26; 12:12)
 - o Man is much farther above animals than they above plants, and they above minerals
 - o **Diagram showing:** God - Man - Animals - Plants - Minerals (hierarchy)
 - o Man is capable of fearing the Lord and shunning evil (wisdom), but this is not given to animals (**Job 28:20-21**)
 - o Man has been given an intrinsically different nature from animals (1 Cor 15:39)
 - o Man's called to be a good steward of animals & rule over them as God's vice regent (**Gen 1:28**)
 - o Subdue the entire earth (has dominion over animals as part of the earth)
 - o Rule over fish, birds and every living creature on the ground (active involvement)
 - o Man named all the birds and living creatures (**Gen 2:19-20**) showing great insight into each animal, and authority over them, also verifying he is totally different in

- nature from him (God separately provided a suitable helper - equal worth)
 - o All animals are given into man's hands (do with as he sees fit, rule over them)(**Gen 9:2; Prov 12:10; 27:23-27; Psalm 8:6-7; James 3:7**)
 - o All animals are given to man for food ("everything that lives and moves..." **Gen 9:3**)
 - o Therefore:
 - o Man has dominion over all animals in accordance with the desires of God
 - o Man is unique in his relationship to God, animals do not have this same relationship
 - o Man is not just a superior animal as evolutionary theology and pantheism would teach ("The Naked Ape" - Desmond Morris, 1967)
 - o But, with the fall came man's abuse of his position, and his view of animals (two extremes):
 - o Cruelty towards them: wanton destruction (killing for pleasure); torturing; killing for trivial reasons (ivory); unnecessary experimentation; burdening beyond abilities
 - o Elevating to same level (or higher) than mankind: worshiping animals; reincarnation; ascribing rights to; believing indwelt with god just as man
 - o Also, with the fall, all living creatures (air, land and sea) will fear and have dread of man (**Gen 9:2**) - fighting the exercise of his dominion calling
- b. Are animals important to God? How do we know that?
 - o First and foremost - because God created them!
 - o God populated the skies, land and seas with them, blessed them and pronounced them "good".
Next to man, they are the highest form of God's creation
 - o God commanded man to rule righteously over them (care for them - **Gen 1:26,28**)
 - o God miraculously sustained the existence of animals through the flood (**Gen 6:17-21; 7:1-16**)
 - o God shows compassion even for cattle (Ninevah; **Jonah 4:6-11**)
 - o God endowed them with unique characteristics and watches over them (**Job 38:39-39:30**)
(examples: lions; ravens; goats; deer; wild donkey; wild ox; ostrich; horse; hawk; eagle)
 - o God cares for and feeds even the birds of the air (**Matt 6:26**) and cares for every sparrow that falls from the sky (**Matt 10:29-31**)
 - o God mercifully provides laws to protect animals from being abused (see "c" below)
 - o He created them for a reason (see sections "d" & "e"), not by chance, or an afterthought
- c. Why did God create animals?
 - o To praise Him (**Psalm 145:21, 148:7,10; Psalm 150:6**)(*Doxology*) honor God (**Isa 43:20**)
 - o Illustrate God's characteristics (creativity; beauty; variety; complexity; perfection of purpose and function; order even within a cursed world)
 - o Show our uniqueness in all the creation (**Gen 2:19-20**)
 - o For our enjoyment (beauty; companionship (pets); to marvel at; even for our humor (cats))
 - o To teach dominion principles:
 - o Children learn with pets (wisdom, compassion, love to lower life form, benevolence)
 - o Children learn to be tender and gentle towards animals - the only creatures more vulnerable and helpless than themselves
 - o Letting children inflict pain on animals can lead to a callousness towards people
 - o Taming them takes time, patience, wisdom, firmness - the same as the Lord uses to discipline us (sanctification process)
 - o To assist man in his work for his benefit (**Prov 14:4; Gen 8:6-12**), an instrument to help man (Elijah and the ravens - **1 Kings 17:1-7**), and a means of transportation
 - o For our food and clothing (**Gen 9:3; 3:21**)
 - o As an instrument of:
 - o Judgment (Elisha (**2 Kings 2:23-25**); **Prov 30:17; Num 11:4-33; 21:4-9; 1 Cor 10:9**; plagues on Egypt; feasting of dead bodies; Jezebel)
 - o Fear (**Prov 22:13; 26:13**)
 - o Correction (Balaam (**2 Peter 2:16**); Jonah (**Jonah 1:17-2:10; Matt 12:40**); Cock crowing (Peter))(**Prov 30:17**)(moths eating clothes - **James 5:2**)
 - o Temporary atonement for our own sin until the coming of the Redeemer (**Heb 10:1-4;11**), however, they are insufficient to remove man's sin

- o Demonstrating righteousness (**Prov 12:10; Daniel Heb 11:33**)
 - o Demonstrating humility (Christ riding on a donkey (**John 12:12-15**))
 - o God to humble us (**Job 40:15-41:34**)
 - o God to test us (**1 Cor 15:32** Paul fighting wild beasts in Ephesus)
 - o To demonstrate Jesus was sovereign over wild animals also (**Mark 1:12** (wild animals); **Matt 17:24-27** (fish with coin); **John 21:5-11** (catch of fish))
 - o To adorn Christ's character (born in stable, rode on donkey (**Matt 21:1-7**))(**Rev 5:5** Lion of Judah; White horse - **Rev 19:11-14**)(Lamb of God - **John 1:29**)
 - o To authenticate to the world God's chosen vessels (**Acts 28:3-6**)
 - o To provide comfort in times of stress/illness, even measure of healing or relief (**Luke 16:19-21**)
 - o To teach us (**See Handout: "What Animals Teach Us"**)
- d. Are there pets in the Bible?
- o Nathan rebuked David with example of ewe lamb like a daughter in a family (**2 Sam 12:1-6**)
 - o The Lord rebuked Job by asking "Can you make a pet of him like a bird or put him on a leash for your girls?" referring to Leviathan (**Job 41:1-5**)
 - o Dogs eating crumbs tossed to them, or falling from the table (**Matt 15:25-27**)
 - o Passover lamb came to be taken into the home so affection would grow for it prior to its sacrifice - costly price of sin

3. Animals do not have rights as man does, but they do have derivative protections based upon God's mercy to them

- a. "Right" = "that which a person has a just claim to; power, privilege, etc. that belongs to a person by law, nature, or tradition" (Webster's)
- o Man deserves death and eternal separation from God
 - o God's promises are a gift to us, we have the privilege of claiming those promises, it is a right granted to us, but not one we can demand because of our own merit
 - o Laws establish in this world our "rights" that will be protected, these in general reflect God's commands ("Thou shalt not murder" - right to life)
- b. Animals have not been granted rights by God, but are protected to some degree just as we are
- o They're to be respected, not abused, they've been created by God for our benefit and pleasure
 - o Animals have no more "right" to live than we do
 - o Since Eden, higher species killing a lower species of animal for the survival has been justifiable
 - o They are not to be crossbred (**Lev 19:19; Gen 1:20-25**)
 - o Vivisection: "Medical research consisting of surgical operations or other experiments performed on living animals to study the structure and function of living organs and parts, and to investigate the effects of diseases and therapy" (Webster's)
 - o Just as we have legal rights (Thou shalt not kill - right to defend ourselves; Thou shalt not steal - right to property; Thou shalt honor your father and mother - right to exercise parental authority; etc.); animals have *derived protections* (legal rights) based upon God's commands to us in our treatment of them (Paul appealed to Caesar - he exercised rights under Roman law)
- c. Is cruelty to animals forbidden?
- o Examples of cruelty?:
 - o Balaam whipping his donkey (**Num 22:27**) - unjustified
 - o King David hamstringed captured Philistine horses (**2 Sam 8:3-4; 1 Chron 18:4**)
 - o God destroyed most animals in the flood (**Gen 6:7,17**) also land of Canaan because of the defilement by man (**Lev 18:23-24; 20:15-16;23**)
 - o Man's sin so corrupted the land that it had to be purged completely
 - o Destruction of animals as well as man showed the depths to which the consequences and depravity of sin ran
 - o Christ sending demons into pigs, they in turn running to their death? (**Matt 8:30-34**)
 - o This incident brought glory to Christ - recognition of His deity and power
 - o Similar to the lame man - not normative for others
 - o The demons asked for it
 - o Jews would think this OK: demons and swine equally detestable to them;

- o Pigs kept by local Gentile communities in NT times?
- o What about mules in the Queen Mine (Bisbee, AZ)?
- o God commands mercy towards animals
 - o Wandering ox or donkey is to be returned to owner (Ex 23:4; Deu 22:1-3)
 - o Help a donkey that has fallen under its load (enemy or not)(Ex 23:5; Deu 22:4)
 - o Sabbath rest is for beasts of burden also (Ex 23:12; Deu 5:12-15)
 - o Do not take a mother bird, only the young (or eggs)(Deu 22:6-7)
 - o Do not treat an animal as a sexual object (Lev 18:23; 20:15-16)
 - o Needs of animals are to be taken care of even on the Sabbath (necessity: Luke 13:15; mercy: Luke 14:5)(Matt 12:11-12)
 - o Even beasts of burden are worthy of benefit from their work - not to be muzzled (Deu 25:4; 1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18)
- o One sign of a righteous man is his concern and care for his animal (Prov 12:10)
 - o A righteous man will understand the role and needs of the animals he rules over, and treat them accordingly
 - o An evil man only cares for the animal as long as it meets his needs, when it no longer does, he will destroy it
- d. Why were there clean and unclean animals? (Lev 11:1-47; Deut 14:3-20)(first mention: Gen 7:2)
 - o The OT does not provide an explanation for why some animals are clean and some are unclean
 - o Clean and unclean were defined from each great domain (air, land, sea)
 - o Reasonable inferences have been suggested:
 - o The laws were symbolic of spiritual cleansing and set Israel apart from the surrounding nations - they could not co-mingle with them (no comparable prohibitions found in other contemporary nations) - Acts 10 declares all food clean, the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles was removed
 - o Protect God's people from disease ("none of these diseases..." (Ex 15:26)); pigs carried trichinosis, rabbits spread tularemia, mud burrowing sea creatures (eels, clams...) more prone to parasites than free swimming fish, scavengers (falcons, vultures, etc.) and vermin could carry disease, etc.
 - o For economic reasons: horses not reasonable for food since live off grain, camels take 17 yrs to mature (live to 45) therefore not economical for food
 - o Prohibit idolatrous practices of the nations around them (Ex 23:19; 34:26; Deu 14:21) which are known to be Ugaritic
 - o Clean and unclean animal laws served to separate the Jews from the world, protect them from diseases (unknown mechanisms to them), and to test their faith through practice

4. Current Animal Rights Movement is Grounded in Eastern Mysticism and Places Animals on the same Level as Man

- a. Part of a larger Ecological/Environmental Movement
 - o "Shallow Ecology" (fight against pollution and resource depletion with a primary objective being the health and affluence of people)
 - o "Deep Ecology" (belief that all life is fundamentally one; views derive from mysticism and intuition; often advocates are pantheists (God is everything) or embrace Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age philosophies, evolutionary thinking, with man no more important than any other species - no distinction between man and nature)
 - o Actual movement is an amalgamation of a large number of different beliefs and philosophical positions that deny human dignity (image of God)(elevate animals, denigrate humans)
- b. If all life is basically one - then supposedly one species has no greater claim on life than another
 - o Man is only an animal, one part of an evolutionary continuum, and as such has some characteristics better and some worse than other animals (no intrinsic superiority!)
 - o This logic is used to argue against killing animals for food, medical research or pleasure
 - o "Speciesism" (Peter Singer - 1975) "a prejudice or attitude of bias toward the interest of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species"
 - o Many equate principles that object to "racism", "sexism" "and anti-Semitism" as the

- o same ones to apply for "speciesism"
- o Belief in essential equality between human & other animal life (moral significance the same as between blacks and whites etc.) - thus should be equal treatment
- o Equal treatment between species (biological egalitarianism) based on evolutionary continuum theology, however - evolution also used to support racism (Hitler - survival of the fittest)
- o Concept that: Cannot respect own selves if do not respect all of life
- c. Tactics Used (also by evangelical environmentalists):
 - o Appeal to emotionalism and sentimentality (Greenpeace: poster of baby seals being clubbed to death (to meet a need or a selfish want?); Internet graphic pictures of medical experiments; sometimes staged setups to deceive others
 - o Misrepresentation of facts, dis-information
 - o Using unsupported statistics to convey the impression of a crisis (hence generate support for legislative action)
 - o Number of species becoming extinct each year: 3/day; 1000/day; 8000/year; 35,000/year; 75,000/year (all in the literature; note (1))
 - o Al Gore (note (3)) "species...are now vanishing around the world one thousand times faster than at any time in the past 65 million years" Shows pre-industrial age rate of ~1/century, present ~8,000/year, expected to be ~70,000/year by 2000, also claims ~100/day currently (all in the same book)
 - o However, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) indicates from field evidence that extinctions in recent decades is slight to nonexistent (note (2))
 - o Using legal system to create laws protecting animals (Beverly Hills ordinance to label how animals killed - failed); prevent torture and cruel conditions; lawsuits
 - o Equating animals with humans relative to importance
 - o Using exaggerated or false statistics to sway public opinion about state of animal conditions (Gorillas have 98% of the same DNA as humans)
 - o Organizing groups to lobby and publicize animal conditions (PETA; etc.)
 - o Intimidate those that do not agree with them (shouting, picketing, boycotting, name calling)
 - o Personal attack by ridicule, sarcasm or questioning of motives; misrepresentation of critics' views; moral condemnation over matters of theoretical or empirical disagreement (note (1))
- d. Other factors causing confusion in the debate (note (1))
 - o Taking rational criticism as a personal attack
 - o Attacking someone's credentials or qualifications instead of the substance of arguments
 - o Appeals to majority beliefs (polls, popular vote determining truth vice science)
 - o Intimidation by supposedly scholarly work - who can question?
 - o Unbalanced views of a situation

5. Discussion Questions, See Handout: Animal Rights: Discussion Questions

6. What Should We be doing, if Anything?

- o Engage the question as it comes up in conversation - Don't trivialize!!!
- o Address the fundamental issues
 - o Animals are not created in the image of God, and hence are not the same order of creature
 - o We are commanded to protect and show mercy towards animals
 - o There are profound reasons why God created animals (see above)
 - o We are to be good stewards of animals, but not fall into either of two errors:
 - o Cruelty and abuse of them
 - o Idolizing them (equal level or higher than man)
 - o Point out Eastern theological roots to much of the animal rights movement
- o Raise our children to respect and care for animals of all kinds, teach them to look for characteristics reminding us of God; man's traits; living parables, etc.
- o Resist laws that elevate animals to the status of man (idolatry)
- o Be careful what organizations we support

7. Homework Assignment

- o Review as a family the "What Animals Teach Us"
- o Do for your own exercise the "Animals Rights: Family Discussion Questions" and the "What Animals Teach us (Selected Examples for Self Study"

Notes:

1. *"Where Garden Meets Wilderness - The Evangelical Entry Into the Environmental Debate," E. Calvin Beisner; 1997*
2. *"Tropical Deforestation and Species Extinction," ed. T.C. Whitmore & J. A. Sayer; xvii, 93, 96; 1992*
3. *"Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit," Al Gore*

Additional Thoughts and Information:

- o In the news, a dog or cat "owner" is now referred to as the "handler". This relegates the animal to similar status to the person
- o Judy Romeo stated that every time they have family devotions, their house cat comes up and sits on her lap - as if she wants to be part of the study
- o Cartoon appeared some time back - two frames. First shows elderly woman feeding the dog. Dog says to itself "she feeds me, she cares for me, she takes care of every one of my needs - she must be a god!" Second frame is identical, but with a cat. The cat is thinking "she feeds me..... - I must be a god!"
- o New Zealand recently tried to pass a law giving human "rights" to selected animals (great apes, etc.) to protect them but also to recognize their closeness to humans
- o Bumper stickers showing up: "Support the environment - kill yourself" or relating to self extinction to remove humans impact upon nature and the animal kingdom
- o Some historical Christian views of animals:
 - o St. Francis of Assisi: animals were sacramental; a special means of grace; through animals we could experience something of Christ; animals were "brothers and sisters"
 - o Wesley: believed that when Jesus returns the animals will live in a perfect environment which will be to the "one perennial spring"
 - o C.S. Lewis: Animals are possibly "in" us in a way analogous to the way we are "in" Christ
 - o William Wilberforce fought the causes of slavery; child labor laws; and founding of the Royal Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- o "Cockroach capable of feeling pain, says study"; by Roger Highfield, Science Editor for FreeRepublic.com. Reports that slugs, snails and flies apparently feel pain. "Dr Wickens said animal welfare policies were dependent upon the extent to which people believed animals were capable of conscious states such as pain, anxiety and boredom"
- o "Men in Black" director Barry Sonnenfeld stated the animal rights police made sure the civil rights of cockroaches were not being violated. "In each shot, we had to tell them how many roaches we were using. So, if we had eighty roaches coming out of a dumpster, they would actually count - 'We're missing three, guys!'" (shooting cost \$10,000 an hour)(Quoted in "How I accidentally Joined The Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy (and found inner peace)" by Harry Stein

**Session #18: Medical Ethics - Preliminaries
(Detailed Notes)**

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be"
(Psalm 139:14)

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.'"
(Gen 1:26-27)

Purpose of this Session: To Discuss the Uniqueness of man, made in God's image, and define Biblically when physical life begins and ends

- o What is ethics?
- o What does the Bible say about human life?
- o What is unique about human life?
- o How do you define when human life begins?
- o How do you define when human physical life ends?

1. This study lays the foundation for addressing issues such as abortion, euthanasia and related topics

- a. Why is this important?
 - o Many people have bought into the utilitarian view of life (is it worth living, quality of life, etc.)
 - o Without a proper view of life from God's perspective, any number of abuses of it can be justified (without a standard - anything is possible)
 - o Medical technology has created difficult conditions and consequences that did not exist during Biblical times, forcing hard life and death decisions to be made
"Hard cases make bad laws"
 - o Must start from a firm foundation (Bible) then apply
 - o There can be disagreement amongst sincere believers and many specifics - we must remain humble towards each other, merciful, and seek God's wisdom and leading
- b. Ethics: "The study of standards of conduct and moral judgment" (Medical ethics...)
- c. Basic principles addressed here are:
 - o The sufficiency of scripture to show us the proper view and understanding of life
 - o The marvel of our own created physical existence and how we differ from animals
 - o Our time on earth is marked out and limited
 - o Human life has a sanctity about it that is fundamentally different from the rest of creation
 - o Then we can address the harder issues relating to medical situations, moral dilemmas, and conflicting priorities

2. Biblically we are unique in all the creation, made in God's image with a dignity and sanctity unlike any other created things

- a. Scripture is the only source that provides commands, principles, and truth with which to address medical ethics issues (assess the situation; the standard to use; the person involved)
 - o God equips His people to perform every good work, this includes making life and death decisions concerning other people and reaching God-honoring decisions (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - o God provides means to address a given situation in a manner that is pleasing and honoring to Him (1 Cor 10:13)
 - o God provides understanding to address the difficult decisions of life, including those we face in this technologically advanced age (Prov 3:5-6; interesting aside that following verses Prov 3:7-8 address health!)

- o God provides the *wisdom* necessary to make decisions that are honoring to Him and consistent with His revealed will (**James 1:5-8; Prov 2:6**)
- o God does not promise that all decisions we face will be easy ones, or that they will be without difficulty. In fact, seeking God's will may entail a much greater struggle than secular and worldly wisdom would entail (**Prov 14:12**)
- b. We are "Fearfully and wonderfully" made
 - o **"Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering"** - Saint Augustine
 - o God fashioned us in the womb: "Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?" (**Job 31:15; Psalm 119:73**)
 - o "Fearfully" made (*Vertical view*)
 - o Everything about us is so marvelously made (body; mind; soul) that it must be the work of a creator with infinite power, genius, and wonder (**Ecc 11:5**)
 - o As pottery belongs to the potter, so we belong to our Maker - we are accountable to Him and live only according to His good will and pleasure
 - o God is the One that holds our very lives in His hands, to Him we are to be fearful ("awe-struck"; humble; know our destiny is in His hands)
 - o God is the One that has called us into existence, and sustains our very existence just as He does the rest of the universe (**Heb 1:3; 11:3**)
 - o We ignore our relationship to and ownership by God at our own peril
 - o "Wonderfully" made (*Horizontal view*)
 - o Our bodies are incredibly complex, defying any statistics or probabilities of coming into existence from chance
 - o Even in fallen world, beauty/functional perfection of bodies beyond comprehension
 - o We have a mind beyond understanding or replication (**Ecc 3:11**)
 - o We, just like the rest of creation, are beyond understanding - the created order is proof of God's wisdom, power, and might (**Job 38:1-42:6; Rom 1:20**)
- c. Our Days on Earth are Numbered by the Lord (**Psalm 139:14**)
 - o God has ordained our time on earth
 - o **Job 14:5**; "Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed"
 - o **Heb 1:3**; "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." (His will keeps us existing!)
 - o **Ecc 8:15**; "So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun"
 - o **Acts 17: 26**; "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live."
 - o We cannot change the length of our stay
 - o **Matt 6:27**; "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"
 - o God gives life, and He takes it away (**Deut 30:19-20**),
 - o When our lives have finished their tasks, God will take us home (**Phil 1:6**)
"There is no such thing as an 'untimely' death"
- d. There is a sanctity (holiness; sacredness) to our life (**Gen 1:26-27**)
 - o In all creation, man uniquely reflects the image of God (**Gen 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9**)
 He is not an animal!
 - o The entire man is created in God's image, not just one aspect of him!
 - o God created us - final touch on His creation (we're the way He wanted us to be)
 - o Prior acts of creation rendered "Let the land...;" which is the impersonal third person; but for man God says "Let us...", the first person - a special relationship
 - o Man is the crown of God's creation ("image" implies concrete similarities, while

- o "likeness" implies similarity in the abstract or ideal
- o Both male and female reflect these likenesses - this distinction was not present with the creation of the rest of the universe (e.g. animals)
- o God has uniquely created us with characteristics that reflect His glory
 - o Man uniquely has dominion over the creation just as God is sovereign over the entire universe (**Gen 1:28**)
 - o Man uniquely possesses qualities/characteristics that reflect God. He is: self conscience; he is a free moral agent in that he can make his own decisions (moral agency; he possesses life; he can reason; he can appreciate beauty; he can create within the bounds of his existence; man is immortal and possess a soul; man can discern good and evil
 - (However, must be careful, since scripture does not specifically define what this "image" and "likeness" are comprised of!)
 - (Note: animals can possess some of these characteristics to a limited extent, but not full comprehensive manner that is uniquely given to man)
- o Man is not an animal, but possesses a unique relationship to God, and as such is uniquely precious to God (Some external differences between man and animal: speech; man's countenance looks upwards; man has facial expressions; man has a sense of shame expressing itself in a blush)
 - (Note: Soul is applied to animals in the O.T. as well as to man. However, it does not appear to be used in the same sense. Christ did not come as an animal to die for animals - their eternal state is unknown. Also, read **Ecc 3:21** for some implications)
- o Man is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (**Eph 4:24**)
- o Man's form is the perfect representation of God in the creation - Jesus Christ is the perfect representation of God in human form!
- o Man is uniquely crowned with honor and glory, with everything placed under his feet (**Psalms 8:4-6**)(this Psalm is applied to Christ in **Heb 2:6-8** - again indicating our special place in creation)
- o Therefore; man is to deal with man in a way different from the animals - life is accounted differently, the life of man has a different dignity from the life of an animal or plant; we carry God's image with us - animals do not (**Matt 6:25-26**)
- o Man's death (as in murder) uniquely defiles the land (**Gen 4:10**), as does man's sin (**Lev 18:1-25**); man's life is specially protected (**Ex 20:13**), and can only be taken by God Himself, or by use of His chosen means (man as God's instrument of judgment **Rom 13:1-7**)
- o Man's form is the perfect representation of God in creation, with Jesus Christ the perfect representation of God in human form (**Gen 1:27**; **Phil 2:6-7**)
- o In redemption, we are being re-created into God's image (**Col 3:10**), removing the corruption that sin has brought to our nature
- o We are precious in God's sight - so much so that He paid an infinite price for our lives through His Son on the cross (**2 Cor 8:9**)
 - o Our life, and by extension, all mankind, is precious to God
 - o God's common grace to all mankind demonstrates His mercy to it, even though man does not deserve it
 - o Christ didn't come to save angels, they marvel at us (**1 Peter 1:12b**; **Heb 2:16**)

3. Summary Conclusions: Man's life is to be honored and protected with the dignity God has granted to it

- o Man (in all of creation) uniquely reflects the image of God, and as such has a unique dignity, sanctity, and worth (Christ came as a man, not as an animal!)
- o Our very existence is only by God's will to bring us into, and sustain our existence. He is the ultimate determiner of our beginning and end on this earth. Our days are numbered by the Lord before any of them have come into being
- o Man's life is to be protected and not taken, unless clearly indicated as allowed by His word

- o Our hope is not in the perfecting of life extension techniques in this world
 - o Our hope is in the crucified, buried and resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
 - o Thru Him we have eternal life, without doctors (He is the Great Physician); without hospitals (it is a mansion); without the pain of death and suffering (we will have glorified bodies)
 - o For us, life is not an idol, it is a gift to be used by God for His glory

4. Discussion of Two Questions: When does Human Life Begin? How Would You Define When Physical Death has Occurred?

- o See Handout: Medical Ethics - What is Life and Death?
- o List definitions offered up and discuss
- o Critical items to define in any discussion:
 - o Soul (what it is and when does it come into existence)
 - o What is personhood?
 - o What is a person?
 - o What is life?
 - o What is the physical body?
 - o Others?

References:

1. "Making Biblical Decisions," Franklin E. Payne, Jr., M.D., 1989
2. "Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine," Franklin E. Payne, Jr., M.D., 1993
3. "Between Life and Death - The Life-Support Dilemma," Dr. Kenneth E. Schemmer, M.D., 1988
4. "Matters of Life and Death," Francis J. Beckwith and Norman L. Geisler, 1991
5. "Medical Ethics - Principles, Persons, and Problems," John M. Frame, 1988
6. "The New Medicine," Nigel M. de S. Cameron, 1991

Additional Notes:

- o My own defining moment in beginning to understand the complexity of the human body was when I contemplated how I could possibly hold up my hand and clench my fist (thinking about all that needs to occur and for it to work perfectly - and this is a minor thing!)
- o Our bodies themselves teach us about God - if we would but look for it
- o Newspaper article about an Indian woman who suddenly awoke after 16 years in a coma - blood clot when giving birth to her fourth child. Family thought she was in a "vegetative" state - implications of this
- o Modern technology has created incredible complexities in determining what to do for one who is kept on life support systems - will only get more complicated - who is to decide?
- o Wonderfully made - specialists in fingernails - think they understand, but don't even understand this completely; how arrogant for man to think he understands the body in it's entirety
- o Warning: definition of terms is extremely important in this discussion.

Session #19: Euthanasia (Part 1) (Detailed Notes)

"Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more." (Prov 31:6-7)

Purpose of this Session: To Develop a Number of Biblical Principles that apply to the Issue of Euthanasia that will be Helpful in Guiding Decisions - Something we will all face!

- o Basic definitions; **Euthanasia**: "Act or method of causing death painlessly, so as to end suffering"
- o Selected statistics
- o Selected history and rationalizations
- o Biblical principles that are Germaine
- o Practical considerations

1. Introduction: Like so many issues we face, though the principles can be found from scripture, the practical outworking can be difficult

- a. We will all face this issue in one form or another (parents; friends; children; ourselves)
- b. Evangelicals can actually have a more difficult time addressing a problem than non-believers because of the care they take to be obedient to God's will
 - o World can take more of a "pragmatic" approach, since their view of life can be so low
 - o Even with so many rejecting the dignity of life (image bearer of God), God's common grace still allows compassion to be common place in dealing with death
- c. Many issues do not lend themselves to a clear "yes" "no" solution
- d. As we saw previously, even death itself is difficult to determine under certain circumstances
- e. However, we do have an objective standard to turn to, unlike others!
- f. Not all the answers are here, each case that we face will be distinct with nuances; we are to seek God's will and wise counsel
- g. Though there are profound distinctions in who makes the decision concerning life or death (patient; care-giver; family; etc.) the Biblical principles remain the same for all cases!
 - o In fact; our perspective would vary significantly depending upon whether we are talking in the abstract about others we do not know, or our wife, or ourselves
 - o God's truths and priorities should transcend our emotional response
- h. Some of this session contains my own opinions, hopefully that will be obvious as we go along

2. We are to show compassion to those that are dying, but we are not to hasten their leaving (Prov 31:6-7)

- a. This verse contains some of the basic principles that should guide our actions
- b. Context of **Prov 31:6-7** - wisdom given to a king by his mother
 - o Kings are kings all the time and must not do anything to impair their judgment
 - o Kings are to not cloud their minds (or anesthetize themselves) with alcohol since this will affect their decisions and corrupt their judgments
 - o However: this does not preclude the easing of pain for the king if he is perishing, in anguish or in misery
 - o Kings carry a heavy responsibility to protect poor's rights; not to be lax in his responsibilities, and to set an example for others
 - o Secondary instruction concerns the showing of compassion to those that are in pain
 - o The poor have little affect on others, since they are in such a low station of life
 - o The poor referred to are perishing or in anguish (misery), they cannot change their condition, it is hopeless and coming to an end
 - o Unlike kings, clouding own mind to remove pain won't have major impact on others
- c. Euthanising (killing) the poor that are in dire straights is never suggested or implied - neither is suicide
 - o Compassion towards their pain and condition is the rule
 - o Implication is that they are eased from this life - not forcibly removed from it
 - o Implication is that they are not drugged into oblivion but just enough to comfort them
 - o Alcohol was a common form of pain reliever (ease pain by dulling the mind to it)

- o This allows time to focus on eternity vice their pitiful state of affairs
- o For those of the covenant community - their hope lies with the Lord
- o For us, the same is true, concentrating upon our "miserable" and "painful" lives makes us self-centered vice Christ-centered!
- o For those not of the covenant community - their departure from this life is eased, but there is opportunity to direct their thoughts to higher matters not their suffering (which they only know too well)
- o Their death is not hastened, it is in the Lord's hands not mans
- o Exception: sedating someone in order to accomplish a medical procedure (operation; prevent removal of breathing tubes; etc.); but this is temporary, with the expectation that the person will recover after the procedure is completed

3. *Western History is mixed in its treatment of this area (note (1)):*

- a. Greeks (mixed views) relating to suicide
 - o Pythagoras (ca. 580-500 B.C.): condemned the practice of suicide, Pythagorean movement probably influenced the formation of the Hippocratic Oath (**See Handout: Hippocratic Oath**)
 - o Euthanasia in same category as abortion, and is wrong
 - o Even the suggestion of suicide to dying persons is wrong
 - o Plato (428-348 B.C.): generally negative towards suicide, but sympathetic to the individual whose "cruel and inevitable calamity [had] driven him to the act."
 - o Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)(pupil of Plato): argued that it is cowardice to flee life on the grounds of "cruel and inevitable calamity"
- b. Romans: Seneca (4 B.C.-65 A.D.)(Roman philosopher): typical view was that choosing ones form of death was preferable to suffering, just like choosing where one was going to live
- c. Stoics did not advocate suicide for "any reason" but only when there is terminal illness or other extreme circumstances
- d. Biblical examples of taking ones' life ("suicide" and "euthanasia" are never mentioned directly)
 - o Those believers that were the most desperate in desiring death did not consider suicide a morally valid option (**Jonah 4:3; Job 3:1-26**)(however, see **Jonah 1:12**)
 - o There are at least six recorded cases of suicide (self-homocide) in scripture - each was in a condition of sin before the Lord (pride driven)
 - o **Abimelech** - rather commit suicide than be killed by a woman (**Judges 9:50-56**)
 - o **Saul** and **armor bearer** - rather than be killed & abused by Philistines (**1 Sam 31:1-6**)
 - o **Zimri** - set fire to the palace around himself (**1 Kings 16:18-19**)
 - o **Ahithophel** - hanged self after Absalom did not take his advice (**2 Sam 17:23**)
 - o **Judas** - stricken with remorse by betraying Christ, he hanged himself (**Matt 27:3-5**)
 - o How about **Sampson**? (**Judges 16:25-30**)
 - o In one sense, Jesus by coming into world to face the cross committed suicide - however:
 - o He did not want to die (**Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46**)
 - o He was prepared to die only if it was God's will for Him to accomplish His purpose
 - o The Bible shows the murder of Jesus was an immoral killing (**Acts 2,3,7** speeches)

4. *Some basic definitions of terms (draw a diagram - horizontal and vertical axis)*

- b. **Euthanasia**: "painless, happy death" from Greek "eu" for "good, well" and "thanatos" for "death"; "Act or method of causing death painlessly, so as to end suffering: advocated by some as a way to deal with persons dying of incurable, painful diseases"
 - o The intentional taking of a human life for ostensibly some good purpose
 - o Generally applied to adults, but can refer to infants also
 - o Entails sins of "commission" as well as "omission"
- c. **Active euthanasia**: Taking a life, producing the death; in medical context this involves actions by the physician or another party in the injection of a drug aimed at inducing death by the physician
 - o Could also be withdrawal of life sustaining essentials: water, nourishment, oxygen or shelter
 - o "Mercy killings" - Jack Kevorkian

- d. **Passive euthanasia:** Allowing a death to occur (omission) without intervening, permitting a death to occur, usually involves withdrawal of extraordinary or burdensome medical treatment which results in a disease or sickness causing death (commission)
- e. **Voluntary euthanasia:** People choose for themselves (suicide; physician assisted suicide; the means are provided to the patient so they can kill themselves (Jack Kevorkian))
- f. **Involuntary euthanasia:** When others choose it for them

5. Statistics, though limited, show the trend towards removing those that are burdens

- a. Netherlands (Most liberal nation in application of euthanasia)(note (5)):
 - o Causing the death of a patient remains illegal in the Netherlands, however
 - o Government appointed "Commission on Euthanasia" and the court system have expressed support for the practice when strict conditions such as clearly expressed wishes of the patient are known and followed
 - o The Dutch Medical Association has proposed guidelines for performing euthanasia
 - o Public opinion poll in 1989 showed 82% of the public supported active euthanasia
 - o 1991 "Dutch Committee to Investigate the Medical Practice concerning Euthanasia" found:
 - o Actions taken (or omitted) with the intent to end patients' lives, with the patients permission = 10,615 (direct killing = 2,300; physician assisted suicide = 400; giving excessive morphine with intent to end life = 3,159; removal or withholding of life-prolonging treatment with intent to end life = 4,756)
 - o Actions taken (or omitted) with the intent to end patients' lives, without the patients permission = 14,691 (direct killing = 1,000 (14% had complete mental capability, 11% had partial mental capability); excessive morphine with intent to end life = 4,941 (27% had complete mental capability); removal or withholding of life-prolonging treatment with intent to end life = 8,750)
- b. Recent information
 - o Informal survey of Oregon physicians showed 67% unwilling to give people deadly doses of drugs (co-author Dr. Katrina Hedburg)(note (6); 20 Mar 99)
 - o "Death with Dignity" movement says doctors have the right not to kill patients who ask to die; In 1998; 15 committed suicide under the new Oregon law (6 turned down by at least one doctor)(note (6); 20 Mar 99)
 - o Feb "Journal of Medical Ethics" one in five cases of assisted suicide occurring in Holland takes place without the patient's consent. Nearly two thirds of Dutch euthanasia cases in 1995 were not reported as required by law (note (6); 13 Mar 99)
 - o Dr. Kevorkian sentenced to 10-25 years in prison for second degree murder (videotaped and shown on CBS's "60 Minutes"; takes credit for 130 deaths since 1990; also sentenced to 3-7 years for delivery of a controlled substance (concurrent)(note (6); 24 Apr 99)
- c. Ethical issue:
 - o Doctor's that have been trained to support, protect, respect and comfort life are now asked to determine if that "life" should be continued or not
 - o When does the doctor decide to destroy the life instead of doing all that is humanly possible to protect and lengthen it?
 - o Conflicts occur over organ harvesting - others can benefit, the longer they wait the less benefit others may accrue

6. Reasons Typically given to Justify Euthanasia are based upon false assumptions or wrong world views!

- a. In each case; rare (extreme) cases make bad law (or procedures)
 - o Once begun, the "unthinkable" becomes thinkable
 - o Once the wrong principle is at work, anything can be justified
 - o Worldview will dramatically affect each decision
- b. Quality of life - "People without a personal future" or "Persons with horrible burdens" - The argument:
 - o This phrase strongly implies a subjective evaluation of a patients present or expected circumstances
 - o A person in extreme pain or suffering should not be forced to continue to suffer

- o One that can't return to a "reasonable" level of a enjoyable life shouldn't have to endure pain
- o A severely handicapped person can never enjoy a "full" life, it is only merciful to allow them to end it and not suffer needlessly
- o In essence "condition" = "quality" = "value"; slippery slope of logic
- o Bad examples make even worse law
- o However:
 - o This is making a value judgment on someone else's life, it placed ourselves in the place of God in determining what life is worth living and for how long
 - o It is equating quality of life with value of life (or better circumstances)
 - o This becomes almost a utilitarian view of life, if it is not at some level of comfort, it has not utility or worth
 - o This denies the basic dignity and infinite worth of life given by God

c. Limited resources

- o Extraordinary measures to maintain life artificially when the person will eventually die only uses up limited medical resources that someone else could benefit by; criteria proposed to be used to decide who will receive the treatments includes (have any of these been used?):
 - o Geographic closeness
 - o Probability of success in application of the procedure
 - o More learned from applying to one individual over another for future knowledge
 - o The social worth of the individual (wino vs a pastor, president vs a soldier)
 - o Random selection
 - o Order of application
 - o Ability to pay (J.R. example for a liver)
 - o Financial constraints imposed by and HMO or Medicare/Medicaid coverage
 - o "Star" chamber approach (kidney dialysis machines in 1960's)
- o Keeping a person on extraordinary measures will consume all of a families resources; financially, emotionally, etc. (minimize your losses)
- o However:
 - o This is again a utilitarian view of life, when it costs something, it becomes of little value or no value at all
 - o This trivializes the intrinsic worth of life
 - o This creates a conflict between the life of an individual and someone else's self interest
 - o Life is to be preserved, but not made into an "idol" that's to be continued "at all costs"

d. A person's "**Right to Die**" leads to "**Duty to Die**" leads to "**License to Kill**"

- o The person has a "right" to die in dignity when they choose and how they choose
- o A person has a "right" to end his life whenever they choose, it's theirs to do with as they see fit
- o Maintaining a person on life support systems only delays the inevitable and is cruel and unnecessary (unusual) treatment of the patient
- o This argument gives the impression this is a fundamental right and as such should not (or cannot) be questioned by others
- o However:
 - o A person has not been granted that right by law or by God
 - o As long as there is breath, there is hope for that person (spiritually)
 - o For a believer, suicide is not an option

e. Body alive but the person isn't there any longer

- o "Bodies without persons"; therefore let the body die!
- o Since the person is no longer in the body, but the body is mechanically kept alive, the organs can be harvested for others to benefit from
- o Disincentive to keep the person alive since eventual outcome is known, the longer the wait to harvest, the greater the possibility of damaging useful organs that can save other lives

7. Biblical truths show us life has dignity and value, we are to protect and cherish it as a gift from God

- a. Murder is condemned in the Bible (Ex 20:13), this excludes active euthanasia and suicide

- b. Until a person is dead, he is a living human being, with that life worthy of being protected
 - o He is made in God's image and deserves to be treated with dignity (**Gen 1:27**)
 - o His life is to be protected (**Gen 9:4-6**)
 - o He is a proper object of our love and compassion
 - o God is the one with the authority to take life, not us. He also places it within the hands of the magistrate to punish the evil doer, but not to take capriciously (**Rom 13:3-4**)
 - o We are to comfort the ill and suffering out of compassion for them (**Prov 31:6-7; Matt 10:23**)
 - o The cheapening of life in any form invites further abuse later, further weakening safeguards against capricious taking of life. The "unthinkable" becomes "thinkable" (**James 1:13-15**)
 - o In one sense we are all "dying" since each day draws us closer to our physical death
- c. We are to exercise wisdom in protecting a person's life, knowing that it is God that is ultimately in control of when that person will die (our days are numbered)
 - o Active euthanasia is never justified - it is murder
 - o Circumstances may warrant passive euthanasia, but only under specialized circumstances
 - o Never by the withholding of primary care (nourishment, water, oxygen, shelter)
 - o Treatment of secondary conditions not life threatening and not requiring extraordinary care should be conducted
- d. Even the most severe suffering does not make a life of less value!
 - o God can be glorified through us in our pain (**Rom 8:18**)
 - o We may suffer for others benefit (**2 Cor 4:11-18**)
- e. God's grace is sufficient for us, and His power is revealed through our weaknesses (**2 Cor 12:7-10; Heb 11**)
 - o Speaking right of God during times of great suffering brings glory to God (**Job 42:7**)
 - o God sometimes brings great suffering upon a man to gain his attention and bring him to Himself (**Job 33:28-30**)
- f. Suicide's moral implications (most from note (5)):
 - o It violates the sixth commandment (**Ex 20:13**)
 - o It destroys part of God's creation intended for His glory and reflects His image (**Gen 1:27**)
 - o Rejects moral responsibility by not facing difficult conditions of human existence (**Rom 5:3-6**)
 - o It refuses to bear in love with the weaknesses of the person one has a unique and special relationship with - oneself
 - o Taking ones own life diminishes all of us in that the unforeseen consequences and contributions of continued existence are lost (**2 Cor 5:1-9**)
 - o To assume ultimate responsibility for one's life is to reject God's Lordship. In essence this is a statement that there is no hope for an acceptable future
- g. The elderly are a special group:
 - o Deserving respect because of their wisdom (**Job 12:12; 15:10; 32:7; Deu 32:7**)
 - o Deserving protection because of their weakness (**Ecc 12:2-5; 2 Sam 19:35; Psalm 71:9**)
- h. We do not have the right to require someone to give their lives up for others (financial reasons, emotional, burdensome, etc.)(**2 Cor 8:3**)
- i. God's people can accept death because they know where they are going (**1 Cor 15:54-57**)
- j. Life is a gift from God, but it is not to be prolonged at "all costs" such that it becomes an idol, and it is not to be cheapened in any form - this will lead to further abuse later (**James 1:13-15**)

8. Bottom Line Summary Thoughts (Some Opinion):

- o Dignity and sanctity of life (we are in God's image) compels us to protect it, sustain it (food, water, oxygen, shelter), and try and improve its condition (relieve pain) - we are never to cause the death of an individual (ourselves or others)
 - o The handicapped
 - o The unconscious
 - o Any cheapening of life will eventually lead to further abuses
- o We may allow a person to die when they are dying (imminent death is expected and their condition is irreversible); however, if they are conscious their wishes are the most critical to consider. In

addition, there are rare cases of irreversible conditions being reversed!

- o We are to make a person as comfortable as possible, relieving pain (compassion and mercy) with minimal drugs so that ministry can continue on (for believers as well as non-believers)
- o In all of this - seek what will bring the greatest glory to Christ (**Phil 1:9-10**)

9. Discussion Questions to consider (Homework)

- a. *"Is there Biblical warrant (or an absolute moral obligation) for a person to always accept treatment that would sustain life artificially?"*
- b. *"Since 'death' is the last enemy (1 Cor 15:26) should it always be resisted?"*
- c. *"What about comatose patients, or those that are in a permanent vegetative state?"*
- d. *"How about decisions concerning unbelieving, terminally ill persons that want to die?"*
- e. *"How should research money or medical care be spent - how should priorities be determined?" (For example: cancer versus AIDS research!)*
- f. *"Can a person decide for themselves to refuse 'maximal' care in order to prevent others from suffering great burdens and expenses?" (self-sacrificial)*
- g. *"Can a person justifiably choose a treatment to minimize suffering rather than one which lengthens their life?"*
- h. *"Does a severely handicapped person who is a believer have a higher quality of life than a 'normal' unbeliever?"*

10. Next Session:

- o Go over the discussion questions for homework
- o Next week we will go over some practical considerations relating to end of life decisions
- o We will review a possible decision matrix

Notes:

1. *"Matters of Life and Death;" Francis J. Beckwith & Norman L. Geisler; 1991*
2. *"The New Medicine - Life and Death After Hippocrates;" Nigel M. de S. Cameron; 1991*
3. *"Medical Ethics - Principles, Persons, and Problems;" John M. Frame*
4. *"Between Life and Death - The Life Support Dilemma;" Dr. Kenneth E. Schemmer, M.D., & Dave and Neta Jackson; 1988*
5. *"Life on the Line - Ethics, Aging, Ending Patients' Lives, and Allocating Vital Resources;" John F. Kilner; 1992*
6. *"World Magazine"*
7. *Focus on the Family "CitizenLink" research paper: "Guidelines for Making End-of-Life Decisions" 27 Dec 1999; (www.family.org/cforum/researchl)*

Session #20: Euthanasia (Part 2) (Detailed Notes)

"Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more." (Prov 31:6-7)

Purpose of this Session: Discuss some practical considerations and concerns that we will face with those who may be dying

- o Definitions that help differentiate the situation
- o What about living wills and alternatives?
- o Some discussion questions to think about
- o A possible decision matrix to guide our decisions

1. There's great differences between "ending life", "prolonging death" and "allowing to die"

a. "Ending life (killing)"

- o The ending of a person's life by withholding routine or normal medical care
 - o Care needed to suppress infection, illness etc., normally secondary to the underlying illness or condition that is life threatening - thus bringing about death
 - o Care routinely applied to arrest further debilitation of the body and leading towards death - removal thus accelerating the dying process and is a direct contributor to it
- o The ending of a person's life by withholding essentials needed for life (food, water, air (oxygen), shelter); thus causing the death of the patient
- o Administering a lethal dose of medication, toxic element or poison (Dr. Kevorkian) that results (or brings about directly) the death of the patient
- o Allowing the means for the patient to take their own lives
- o This is never justified Biblically (see previous session); however, pain is to be relieved (**Prov 31:6-7**)

b. "Prolonging Death"

- o The action of using extraordinary means to keep the body alive at all costs with no expectation of improvement (or recovery); death is imminent; the patient is terminal (short time left)
 - o "Brain dead" patients? However, this is not foolproof - some have recovered
 - o The underlying illness or condition cannot be arrested, only slowed down
- o "Terminal patients", "Dying patients" and "imminent death"
 - o Terminal patients will eventually die, but may live active lives until the dying process overcomes them. This could be years
 - o Dying patients are those that are in the process of dying and continued treatment has no worthwhile benefit (other than comfort)
 - o Imminent death - those patients expected to die very soon, and even if extraordinary measures are applied to extend life, it will not extend it for long
 - o These terms vary in definition across the medical community!
- o This may not be justifiable Biblically (see **Session #19**), great wisdom is needed to discern what is the proper decision to make; however, pain is to be relieved (**Prov 31:6-7**)
 - o If the patient is conscience and requests extraordinary care, it should be given
 - o If the patient is not conscience, what would be consistent with their desires and the benefit of measures potentially taken

c. "Allowing to (letting) die"

- o This involves the withdrawing (or removal) of extraordinary medical measures that have no hope of restoring to a better level of health, or not administering them in the first place
 - o This is not the same as refusing to give aid at an accident site, where readily available (ordinary) medical help can save a life
 - o Not same as forced to help only one of two facing certain death otherwise (ex: two fall into river, you have one rope, can save only one - which one?)
 - o Also different than triage, such as in battlefields or ER's where patients are separated into: those with no hope no matter how much care is provided; those who will survive

- and do not need immediate care; those who require significant care and there is hope of survival (resource limiting conditions)
- o Cases where the patient is near death and there is no hope of recovery
- o For those that are conscience, hope remains until final death for ministering to others; for non-believers, hope of conversion remains until the end.
- o For those not conscience, allowing the disease to take its natural course without extending the inevitable may be best for the patient and the family
- o Patients should be made comfortable, with a minimum amount of medication to allow communication as much as possible
- o Remember the famous quote: "As long as the Lord has a task for me to do, I cannot die"
- d. What would you define "extraordinary" methods to be? (taken from note (3))
 - o Ordinary care:
 - o Care that is customarily performed (changes with advances and availability)
 - o Care that is obligatory (food, water, oxygen, shelter, pain relief)
 - o Palliative Care: care given to make a patient comfortable (meeting their physical, spiritual, and psychological needs)
 - o DNR = Do Not Resuscitate. Generally, orders to prevent any aggressive medical intervention should the patient stop breathing or suffer a cardiac arrest. Can be defined narrowly
 - o Extraordinary (heroic measures) care:
 - o Any care that is beyond ordinary care
 - o Optional treatment that is not likely to be beneficial or may impose burdens that outweigh the benefits offered

2. Planning ahead is wise, but limited - the best approach is to talk about your desires with your family

a. Living wills

- o Definition: A legal document where a person stipulates what should be done if they are incompetent or unable to make his wishes known in life and death situations. Applies while a person is alive vice a normal will that applies only after a person is dead
- o Advantages
 - o It makes known under what conditions extraordinary care should or should not be undertaken to keep the person alive
 - o By being written down it is not subject to the memory of someone else
 - o Can prevent unduly extending the dying process
 - o It can prevent enormous expenses from occurring from continuing medical treatment with no hope of recovery
 - o It prevents excessive emotional trauma resulting from drawing out the dying process
- o Disadvantages
 - o Difficult to define a clear line between "ordinary" and "extraordinary" medical care; this also changes as technology changes (blood transfusion 100 years ago...)
 - o "Hope of recover" term is used commonly, this term is imprecise (restoration of consciousness or quality of life?)
 - o Actual care depends upon the nature of the illness or injury and may not be able to be anticipated in advance
 - o A document created with a high degree of precision may actually inhibit the flexibility of the doctor to respond to a particular situation
 - o The doctor's religious beliefs and/or philosophical framework may differ significantly from the patients, so that differences in interpretation may occur
 - o A patients intentions when creating the living will may differ from their desires during an actual crisis - or they may have changed but the "will" was not updated
 - o Litigation issues may be created requiring court rulings, thus delaying the process and affecting use of sound judgment
 - o Advances in medical care may not be accounted for, thus use could be jeopardized

- o Like any legal document - it should be kept up to date and not done once then ignored
- b. Alternative: Durable power of attorney
 - o Definition: a legal document that gives legal authority to a designated proxy in addition to moral authority that the proxy has by virtue of family ties, church ties, etc.
 - o Advantages
 - o Greatly increased power is resident in the proxy to deal with the physicians because of the legal sanction
 - o The proxy has opportunity to interpret his own words, while a legal document must be interpreted by others - thus there is greater potential for understanding
 - o The proxy can adapt to the circumstances (particulars of the medical treatment then available and/or the illness) while a legal document may not
 - o Disadvantages
 - o The proxy may not know the current concerns or wishes of the patient
 - o (Be sure to keep on good terms with your relatives!)
- c. Alternative: Any combination of:
 - o Durable power of attorney
 - o Living will with specific desires, what is allowed and not allowed etc.
 - o "Values history" listing of what is important to you that will guide a proxy in better understanding what your decision would have been
 - o "Advance Directives" which specify what your goals are in governing what health care is to be provided, i.e., being able to respond to others, being able to live without machines, etc.
- d. Other considerations
 - o Talking about our eventual death with family, relatives and/or others we are close to so that our desires are known and understood
 - o When medical authority indicates that the continuation of extraordinary medical treatment cannot succeed in preventing death, they may be discontinued. However, treatments to maintain the patient's comfort and normal functioning must continue (Prov 31:6-7)
 - o Be willing to openly discuss the situation with the Doctor
 - o Do not assume the hospital or its staff has the same respect for life that you do
 - o Ask to see the instructions provided to the nurses on duty should a crisis occur
 - o It is not right to require someone else to sacrifice their life for others (to minimize the economic burden on family, quality of life etc.)
 - o Believing patients should have the fullest possible access to the ministry of the saints:
 - o Reading of the word
 - o Prayer together
 - o Fellowship, company, council by friends and family
 - o Non-believing patients should have the fullest possible access to be ministered to since they are facing an eternity without Christ (Job 33:19-30)
 - o We must be careful of our own motives if we are facing a close relatives imminent death
 - o Must make the decision in the best interest of the patient
 - o Must make the decision that brings the greatest glory to God
 - o Hospital verses home or hospices
 - o Hospitals isolate persons from their family and friends and tend to be cold/clinical
 - o Hospitals minimize opportunity to minister spiritually to believers and non-believers
 - o Hospitals Tend to drug/sedate a person or distract by TV instead of the person facing their situation on the threshold of eternity!
 - o Death in homes can result in hard to overcome associations with familiar things, however, death at home provides a comfortable environment for the dying and greatly expanded opportunity to minister
 - o Hospice care can either be a facility to die in or care provided directly to a home

3. Bottom Line Thoughts

- a. This society continues to make an idol of youth and want to destroy the weakest amongst us (unborn babies; infants with severe birth defects; the elderly and infirm; etc.)

- b. We are to value life (no matter what the condition)
 - o **Gen 1:27** - We are created in God's image
 - o **Exodus 20:13 (Gen 9:4-6)** - We are not to take a life unnecessarily!
 - o **Prov 31:6-7** - We are to give comfort to those that are dying
- c. If facing life/death situations seek wise counsel, Biblical truths and principles, and pray fervently
 - o **Matt 6:27** - God is sovereign over our lives, there is no untimely death (worry does not help)
 - o **2 Cor 4:11-18** - Our hope is in Christ and the life to come
 - o **2 Cor 12:7-10** - God's grace is sufficient for us, and will see us through to the end
 - o **1 Cor 15:54-57** - We have the victory over death through Jesus Christ
- d. In all of this - seek what will bring the greatest glory to Christ (**Phil 1:9-10**)

4. *What can we realistically do as a testimony to this society?*

- a. Resist "Death with Dignity" laws which can cheapen life - write legislators and representatives
- b. Write letters to the editor with well thought out arguments
- c. Discuss with family and friends, relying upon Biblical principles more, and opinion less
- d. Volunteer at hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, etc.
- e. Take care of our own affairs as an example to others

5. *Discussion Questions (as time allows)*

- a. *"Is there Biblical warrant (or an absolute moral obligation) for a person to always accept treatment that would sustain life artificially?"*
 - o Biblically, life can justifiably be placed at risk for God's glory or for other people - but not with the intent to end our own lives (**2 Sam 23:13-17; Rom 5:7**)
 - o Extending life is not the ultimate goal of our lives (one may accept death simply because it is inevitable or to prevent inordinate burden on his family (**1 Tim 5:8**))
 - o This "never say die" attitude can be making an idol of "life" itself (cryogenics; etc.)
- b. *"Since 'death' is the last enemy (1 Cor 15:26) should it always be resisted?"*
 - o For believers, we know where we are headed - however, while in this body we can still be a testimony to God's glory (**Phil 1:20-26**)
 - o We need not resist death at all costs - God gives comfort in knowing we are His (**Rom 14:7-8**)
- c. *"What about comatose patients?"*
 - o Coma is not the same as death or dying - and examples exist of those who have recovered
 - o Comatose patients should receive the care needed just as those that are dying, as well as any treatment intended to try and bring them out of their comas (some have been successful)
- d. *"How about decisions concerning unbelieving, terminally ill persons?"*
 - o Treatment should allow the broadest opportunity for evangelism (isolation and mind-numbing drugs interfere with this opportunity)
 - o As long as there is physical life there is hope
- e. *"How should research money or medical care be spent - how should priorities be determined?" (cancer verses AIDS research!)*
 - o Broad application of more routine medical care vice investment in expensive, advanced new treatments
 - o Research and care for life-style induced medical conditions vice those that are not a result of a person's decisions
 - o Resources applied for more common ailments (but less life threatening) vice less common but highly life threatening conditions)
 - o Who receives organ transplants?
- f. *"Can a person decide for themselves to refuse 'maximal' care in order to prevent others from suffering great burdens and expenses?" (self-sacrificial)(John 15:13; Rom 5:7-8; 2 Cor 4:7-18; 12:7-10; Heb 11; 1 John 3:16)*
- g. *"Can a person justifiably choose a treatment to minimize suffering rather than one which lengthens their life?"*
 - o Pain medication can relax the body which hastens death in some circumstances
 - o Relieving pain may increase the patients opportunity to minister to others
 - o Pain medication itself is not the cause of death, the underlying terminal condition is

h. "Does a severely handicapped person who is a believer have a higher quality of life than a "normal" unbeliever?"

- o In a very real sense - Yes! Their lives speak to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17,23)
- o They can testify that they will be going to a far better place for eternity through Christ (1 Cor 15)
- o Even a handicapped person has purpose to their lives, while a non-believer does not have an eternal perspective that is God honoring

6. See Handout: Decision Guiding Matrix

- a. General guidance relating to decisions either by the patient or the care-giver
- b. Obviously, each situation will be different
- c. Provide feedback on applicability

Session #21: Taxes (Detailed Notes)

"This is also why you pay taxes (tribute), for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes (tribute), pay taxes (tribute); if revenue (custom), then revenue (custom); if respect (fear), then respect (fear); if honor, then honor." (Rom 13:6-7)

Purpose of this Session: To develop the Biblical principles that should govern the Governments approach to taxes and what our response should be

- o General Biblical principles that apply, with examples
- o Principles to guide secular governments whatever the type of tax collected
- o How our modern taxation situation developed
- o What we can do as citizens
- o If time allows, some discussion questions
- o **Quotes:**
 - o "The income tax has made liars out of more Americans than even golf" (Will Rogers)
 - o "Taxes are what we pay for civilized society" (Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. 1904)

1. Introduction: Although no one likes to pay taxes, they have existed virtually throughout history in all countries

- o There's much truth in the old saying: Two things are sure in this life: death and taxes!
- o Take a guess on what date Tax Freedom Day fell this year (3 May, 2000; 124th day (leap year))
- o Does anyone like to pay taxes? Why not?
 - o Want to keep as much as you can to use on the Lord's work and also yourself and family
 - o We want to keep an honest day's pay for an honest day's work
 - o The poor have even less, while the rich either have ways of getting around it or are "soaked"
 - o Graduated income taxes tend to penalize hard work - the more you earn, the more you pay
 - o May disagree strongly with how the government uses the tax money it raises (ungodly, unwise, wasteful use), thus - do not want to support it in any way
 - o We may think we should only pay what we believe we owe
 - o We could be just selfish
 - o We revolted under British rule over many issues, including taxation without representation; now we have (in comparison) extremely high taxes with representation
 - o Other reasons?
- o Bottom lines of today's session:
 - o What does scripture say about taxes? (**Pay them**)
 - o Does scripture command us to not pay taxes if we disagree in how the money is used? (**No**)
 - o Does scripture command us to not pay taxes if they are confiscatory? (**No**)
 - o Reality check: Don't forget: compared to most of the world, we live very well, still retain much of our income, and get something back for our taxes - should we complain or not? (**2 Tim 6:6**)
- o With this obvious conflict - it is important to know what Biblical principles apply

2. The Bible has lots to say about taxes, it provides many principles and examples that should be instructive to us personally, and our nation specifically. Some selected:

- a. First: are Tithes Taxes? Depends somewhat upon the heart and how you define "taxes"?
 - o Characteristics
 - o Independent of how wealthy the man was (not a "progressive" or "regressive" tithe)
 - o Blessings for giving, judgment when withheld (**Prov 3:9-10; Mal 3:8-10**)
 - o The giving acknowledged who owned all of a man's substance and increase
 - o They were not considered oppressive unless the heart was hardened
 - o They provided for all the basic functions of government, Temple worship and sacrifices, and societal strengthening
 - o Three types and amounts of Tithes existed (some dispute about frequency and amount)

National Government (theocracy) Support

- o The tithe to the Lord (**Lev 27:30-33**), or Levite tithe (**Num 18:21-29**) - 10%
(Actual item given (grain, animal, etc.) could be redeemed by giving the amount of the animal plus 20% of its value (**Lev 27:31**); Levites tithed from their tithe (10% of it))

National Cultural Life Support

- o The Festival tithe (freewill offering, special gifts)(**Deu 12:10-11,17-18**) - 10%
(Eaten by all the families of Israel and the Levites - national fellowship meal; supports national worship, cultivates community unity, societal and cultural life of Israel)

National Welfare Support

- o The tithe for the needy (**Deu 14:28-29**) - 10%/third year - 3 & 1/3%
(Levites; aliens; fatherless; widows; poor)(Note: this may be the same tithe as the Lord's tithe above, given in the local community instead of at Jerusalem)
- o Other Means of providing for the good of Society and the Nation of Israel
 - o Harvest, but don't glean or reap the corners (for poor, aliens)(**Lev 19:9-10**)
 - o Sabbath rest for the land; not planted (what grows is for poor; animals)(**Ex 23:10-11**)
 - o The Temple Tax (atonement during census; those 20 years old; not clear how often this was collected)(**Ex 30:13**) - Half-Shekel
 - o A man could also give as his heart prompted him (**Ex 25:1-2; 35:4-10,21-22; 36:5-7; Deu 29:1-9;16-17; Prov 11:24-25**)
- o Sum of the three types of tithes was from 14% to 24% depending on how understood
 - Principle:** Tithes were not the same as taxes, they were commanded by God to support the theocracy (government), the needy, and the strengthening of society
 - Principle:** Tithes were voluntary, even though a command of God; blessings or judgment followed depending upon whether given or not (nationally and individually)
 - Principle:** Many of the functions performed by the tithes in the O.T. are performed by government today (exception being the worship and sacrificial purposes - although in a theocracy, all actions had spiritual significance)
 - Principle:** There was no graduated tithe based upon wealth

b. Israel asks for a King (**1 Sam 8:1-22**)

- o Under a theocracy, a king is not needed, since the Lord is the King
- o Warnings given in **Deut 17:14-17**; king is not to amass gold, silver, horses (wealth)
- o Elders of Israel saw no replacement for Samuel, sought a king "as all the other nations have"
- o Wrong choice, costly choice when it comes to paying for a king:
 - o Take sons to serve with the kings chariots and horses
 - o Appoint military officers and others to make weapons of war
 - o Assign others to plow his fields and reap his harvest
 - o Take daughters to be perfumers, cooks, bakers
 - o Take best of fields, vineyards, olive groves and give to his attendants
 - o Take menservants, maidservants, best of cattle & donkeys for own use
 - o Take tenth of flocks, and the people will become his slaves
 - o People will eventually cry out for relief "from the king you have chosen"
- o **Principle:** People can get what they want, but at a price they do not want to pay
- o **Principle:** What is easy to grow is difficult to shrink (law of bureaucracies)
- o **Principle:** Power vested in a king (or government rulers) can corrupt
- o **Principle:** Government requires taxes to function, and grows with time

c. Joseph in Egypt, taxes were used heavily (**Gen 41:15-40**)

- o Pagan country, but God provided the approach to address future calamity through Joseph
- o During the seven years of bounty, one fifth of harvest taken and stored by Pharaoh's commissioners (20% tax); an individual tax
- o This 20% continued (**Gen 47:22-26**); after famine, however, priests land not touched
 - Principle:** Government raised resources to meet possible future difficulties. Can be abused however. This does not replace reliance upon the Lord ultimately (wisdom)

Principle: Priests (pagan) were not taxed, but subsidized by the authorities; even here a belief that the sacred should not be taxed

- d. When Ezra was returning to Israel, taxes again played an important role (**Ezra 7:21-26**)
 - o Honor was brought to the Lord by Him moving the king's heart (**Ezra 7:27; Prov 21:1**)
 - o King Artaxerxes letter written for Ezra, commissioning his return to Israel
 - o "no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God"
 - o The sacred were exempted from taxes of any kind

Principle: Again, that which was sacred was not to be taxed, even those that were servants since their labor was for the Lord

e. The Temple Tax (**Matt 17:24-27**)

- o Situation: Apostate "theocracy" ruled by corrupt religious authorities and pagan nation (Rome)
- o Every male to pay annual half-shekel tax (2 Greek drachma = 2 days wages) to provide for needs of preparing the Temple for service (believed permitted by **Ex 30:11-16**)
- o This tax a religious not civil tax, may have been voluntary, at a minimum was obligatory
- o Jesus response:

- o King's do not tax their own families, since he provides for them (would be taxing self)
- o Jesus was God's Son, hence not obligated to pay a tax to God to support the temple services which were a means of worshiping God (His house)
- o He also paid Peter's tax, implying he also (as a child of God) may be exempt (part of the household of God in the Christian era)
- o Jesus exemplified the voluntary nature of giving for the Lord's work (**2 Cor 9:6-7**)

Principle: Christ gave money to apostate religious rulers, which paid money to Judas to betray Christ (Ultimate example of authorities using money for unholy purposes)

Principle: Jesus careful not to offend, even though He was least required to pay the tax

Principle: Even though this tax was raised unrighteously in God's name, it was paid

Principle: God does not tax His people, He loves a cheerful giver (**2 Cor 9:7**)

f. Tribute to Caesar (**Mark 12:13-17; Matt 22:15-22**)

- o Situation: Poll tax on all males paid to Rome; Caesar (Tiberias) claimed to be a god and a high priest - Pharisees viewed paying of this tax as idolatry (coin itself bore Tiberias image); Herodians collaborated with the Romans - supportive of this tax
- o Zealot's view: taxation a sign of lordship over the Jews, Lordship of God only one accepted so coin itself declared Caesar's lordship (idolatrous image)
- o Attempt to force Jesus to say "yes" or "no" (alienate either of two large communities; sedition)
- o Jesus' affirmation was to pay taxes to Caesar (acknowledging his authority) and give our worship to God (acknowledging His absolute sovereignty and authority over all)

Principle: Are God's rights over his people exclusive of other's rights? No! **2 Chron 19:11** speaks to "things of God" and "things of the king". Kings authority is not illegitimate but is not to go against God's commands

Principle: God's rights do not exclude Caesar's, but are above them

g. There are several other general Types of Biblical Taxes (not exhaustive)

- o Taxes, Tribute and Duty (**Ezra 4:17-20; 2 Kings 23:31-35**) were paid to conquering nations
- o Tribute (**Mark 12:13-17; Matt 17:25; Rom 13:6; Acts 5:37; possibly Luke 2:1ff**)
 - o An impost paid by one state or nation to another as a mark of subjugation
 - o Weaken the subjugated state (impoverish it) while strengthening the conqueror
 - o Subjugated nation responsible to pay the tribute at specific time, if it didn't, it would suffer the consequences (easiest form of taxation possible)
- o Poll tax often levied (tax levied per person vice on property)
- o Can you think of any other kinds? Roman contracted tax collectors were very resourceful!

3. Biblical principles of stewardship, honesty, and morality in government raising of taxes will bring blessings even to Secular nations

- a. Basics: Individuals face judgment during their lives & certainly in eternity, nations only face judgment during their existence on earth - the principles they follow will have a profound effect upon them

- o The nation that rejects the Sovereign Lord, or abuses the God ordained role of government, does so at their own peril
- o Governments will reflect the values of the society they rule (Christian foundation - yes; pagan foundation - no other choice, God's common grace will provide order as He sees fit)
- o Just as the nation Israel was judged in O.T., so were pagan nations (**Hab 1:5-11; 3:16**)
- o Though we don't live in a Theocracy, many Biblical principles apply to governing people (see study "**Role of Government**"). Particularly for Christian influenced countries these include:
 - o Punish the evil doer, justly (**Rom 13:3-4; 1 Tim 1:8-10**)
 - o Commend the good (**Rom 13:3**)
 - o Ensure peace in the land that we can worship in safety (**1 Tim 2:1-2**)
 - o In absence of freely giving to support government, taxes used to raise the necessary revenue
 - o How many of the following Biblical principles are being violated currently?
- b. Government should not be covetous (**Ex 20:17**)
 - o Propensity of leaders to think of citizens money as the government's money
 - o Wielding of power should not be for personal gain (bribes, etc.)
 - o Leaders should not have personal grandeur as their motivation
- c. Government should not steal (**Ex 20:15**)
 - o Taking more than is required to fulfill rightful responsibility of government
 - o Legally, government can set the tax rate at 100% - implication is that they determine how much citizens can keep vice how much is needed
 - o Should not take from the rich and give to the poor unjustly
 - o Should not amass huge surpluses and invent ways to spend it
- d. Governments should not be a law unto themselves, and rely only upon themselves (no higher authority acknowledged)(**Hab 1:6-7,11**)
- e. Government should allow the first fruits to be given to God
 - o Income with-holding tax gives the first fruits to the government not God
 - o This in effect places government in the place of primacy
 - o The hard working farmer should be the first to share in the abundance of his crops (**2 Tim 2:6**)
- f. Government should not practice deception (Hidden taxes)(**Lev 19:11; 2 Tim 3:12-13; Psalm 49:5-6; Prov 14:8; Prov 26:24-26**)
 - o Hidden taxes are those that are not readily apparent to the victim (gasoline tax; taxes passed on to the consumer in higher prices; etc.)
 - o Though appearing to be harmless, they are intended to raise funds without general understanding or knowledge of their existence
 - o It highlights government's arrogance, thievery, and cunning
- g. Government should encourage families, not destroy them
 - o Property taxes can destroy a family, burdensome, continuous
 - o Property does not belong to a family since keeping it is conditioned upon continually paying taxes on it (if it ceases, property reverts to the government)
 - o Marriage penalty tax (singles living together pay less tax than if married!)
- h. Government is to punish evil, not tax sin (**Deut 23:18**)
 - o Sin taxes are defined as taxes on those things that are easily abused, or generally considered immoral (gambling; prostitution; alcohol; tobacco; drugs (?))
 - o Government justifies: provides another source of revenue and some "control"
 - o However, taxing sin profits from it, condones it, and actually promotes it (legitimizes it)
 - o Government's role to punish the evil doer, not tax and benefit by what is believed to be sin
- i. Government is to encourage worship and godly activities - taxing the house of God defeats this (**Ezra 7:24; 1 Tim 2:1-2**)
- j. Government may prepare for future calamities (**Gen 41:15-40**)
 - o Some savings and stockpiling are appropriate
 - o Wise use of resources now can prevent greater suffering later
 - o Ultimate reliance, however, is upon the Lord by its people
- k. Government should not presume upon the future by entering into indebtedness (**Rom 13:8; Psalm 37:21; Prov 22:7**)

- o Bonds issues and the like are costly, and presumes upon future tax revenues
- o Taking on loans prevents hard fiscal decisions from being made earlier

4. Modern Taxation in this Country has lead to many abuses of fundamental Constitutional rights and what some believe to be confiscatory tax rates. Following is basic information and history:

- o Most, if not all of the principles in Section #3 have, or are being violated currently in the United States
- o Most common forms of taxation (see Handout: Some Basic Tax Statistics)
 - o Income Tax: Tax on the earnings of individuals, corporations, estates, and trusts (national, state (43), and local governmental levels)
 - o Property Tax (state and local)
 - o Gift taxes
 - o Death Tax (grave robbing)
 - o Payroll Tax (FICA/Social Security)
 - o Toll roads and bridges
 - o Taxes can be levied on virtually anything!
 - o Poll (Head or capitation) Tax
 - o Transaction Tax (sales tax; excise tax; tariffs)
 - o Capital Gains Tax
 - o Car Taxes
 - o Gas Tax (Federal - 18.4 c/gal; State avg. 20 c/gal.)
- o U.S.A. Federal Income Tax (nearly half of all federal revenue raised by this tax)
 - o Original tax authority granted to Congress by Article 1, Section 8 (1) of the Constitution:

"Article 1; Section (1); The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States."
 - o Several states levied individual income taxes before 1850
 - o Federal government levied an Income tax first in 1862 (collected in 1863) during the Civil War and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1881. Unpopular, and even with many alterations, was abolished in 1872
 - o Second Federal income tax imposed by Wilson Tariff Act of 1894, but Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in 1895 (violation of Article I, section 9 of the Constitution - rationale was that any Federal income tax (individual) must be levied in proportion to a state's population (higher total tax to be collected from a state with larger population)
 - o Income tax reinstated in U.S. by passage of the 16th Amendment to the Constitution (1913)

Amendment 16: "The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration" (Ratified Feb 3, 1913)
 - o From 1913-1943 (Note (6)):
 - o Citizens figured their own tax (usually less than 10%) and made check to government
 - o For all intents and purposes this system was voluntary
 - o 1935 Social Security Act - first truly mandatory levy on US citizens income
 - o Federal withholding began in 1943; Congress passed "Current Tax Payment" Act (with-holding tax and estimated tax); both were mandatory with severe penalties for failure to comply. Income tax became somewhat invisible by this action, since the total amount paid is not as apparent as the amount of refund (or remaining liability)
 - o Abuses of the current system of income taxes are legion. Some examples:
 - o Common belief IRS collection violates 4th Amendment

"Amendment 4: The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."
 - o Under 16th Amendment, Congress can take 100% of our income - this is tantamount to owning all our wealth & allowing us to keep whatever it decides to allow us to keep
 - o It takes from each according to his accumulation, allowing government to then give to others according to their needs - regardless of whether those needs are a result of laziness, slothfulness, or calamity etc. (Communist)
 - o "The end justifies the means" approach tends to govern many of the alleged abuses

- o IRS can obtain bank records without your knowledge or consent; seize funds and hold until forced to release; can use "writ of entry" to allow it to seize, by force, a person's property without due process of law; has maintained "hit lists" of citizens presumed to be violent, thus justifying armed agents making collections; harassment techniques; public embarrassment; instilling fear in people
- o Congress established "Board of Tax Appeals" in 1929 to arbitrate between a taxpayer and the IRS; however - no jury trial only a judge; no appeal rights; refusal to pay constitutes a felony; must accept the judgment and pay or pay and sue the government in court to gain a jury trial

5. As Citizens we have tremendous rights in this country to change how we are taxed and how the money is used

- a. Pray for the leaders over us (1 Tim 2:1-2)
 - o Wisdom in governing - God honoring decisions
 - o Be good stewards of the resources and authority placed in their hands
 - o Ensure deep awareness of the high accountability they have before God
 - o Practice the principles addressed above
- b. Inform our leaders of our concerns, especially about taxes and their appropriate and inappropriate use
- c. Research each tax issue on the ballot, or being legislated, from a Biblical principle perspective and tell our representatives what we want them to do
- d. Work within our legal rights to change the current tax system (exercise our freedoms); lobby for changed laws, petitions, referendums, etc.
- e. Pay our taxes in obedience to the authority placed over us by the Lord
 - o If we disagree on whether we should be paying a particular tax or not, pay it then sue the government for resolution (our right)
 - o If we disagree on how the government is using tax money, pay our taxes, then petition the government for changes, establish PAC to lobby, etc.
 - o Be careful of our own selfishness and motivation relating to taxes (1 Tim 6:10)
 - o Righteous indignation over how much, or where our tax money goes does not justify our violating the law
- f. Consider running for office to directly affect the laws of the land and the direction of local and national interests from a Biblical perspective
- g. Become knowledgeable on tax laws to minimize our tax liability (not pay one penny more than we need to, or one penny less that we are required to)
- h. Demand full accountability for how tax funds are being used (gasoline taxes to roads?; gambling revenues supplementing school budget vice replacement?...)
 - i. Like so many areas we have considered - we need to be informed, and if someone is particularly concerned or interested in tracking this area - do so and inform the rest of us
 - j. Be wary of any bond issue since this presumes upon the future tax ability of the region and puts the government into a debtor condition
- k. What else can be done?

6. Discussion Questions (Home dinner table discussions):

- o "Should churches be taxed?"
 - o Gen 41:15-40; even a pagan country realized it was risky to tax what was considered sacred
 - o Ezra 7:23-24; King Artaxerxes letter to Ezra specifically prevented the taxing of priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers in the house of God
 - o N.T. does not directly address this issue, although implication is that if the authorities taxed a church it should pay (Rom 13:1-7; Mark 12:13-17)
 - o Tax bill introduced as House Resolution 3321 on Oct 3, 1913 contained the following wording in Sec. 2, para G (bill implementing the Federal Income Tax):
 - "Provided, however, that nothing in this section shall apply...to any corporation or association organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific or educational purposes."***
 - o Federal law allows 501(c)(3) organizations to have tax exempt status that are created for

- religious purposes and no significant portion of its efforts committed to political objectives
- o "Is tax resistance Biblical?"
 - o Who are tax resisters? (see **Handout: Some Basic Tax Statistics**)
 - o Several million people who have stopped filing income tax returns or devise schemes to get out of paying part or all of their taxes
 - o Professional tax evaders who file but avoid paying a normal amount of income tax
 - o Methods of "tax resistance" guerrilla warfare:
 - o Non-filing of an income tax return
 - o Filing of returns which refuse information on constitutional grounds
 - o Claiming that the income tax is illegal
 - o Claims that the income tax does not reach into wages
 - o Claims that wages are not subject to tax because wages are paid in money not supported by hard metals (e.g. backed by gold or silver)
 - o Claims that paying of income taxes is only "voluntary compliance"; however, all laws are predicated upon "voluntary compliance" (stop light example); we are not forced to comply, we can choose not to, but we will be subject to penalties! Appears to refer to the fact that a citizen files out his claim and files the information voluntarily (not forced to), if he does not, then force is applied. VC is defined in the IRS Tax Code as: "Taxpayers who freely obey the tax laws, compliance is defined in the IRC as (a) filing accurate and complete returns on time, (b) paying amounts due, and (c) reporting information required
 - o Claiming to pay only what is "owed" to the government (I determine what I owe with a clear conscience before the Lord!), what criteria is used? What does it mean to "owe"? This is still a violation of the law
 - o The courts: Generally courts at the tax, state, federal levels have ruled against tax resisters and for the current tax collection legality
 - o There is no Biblical example or command justifying defiance of paying taxes. Biblical examples relating to heavy taxes include:
 - o **Neh 5:4** Oppressive taxation referred to, yet not rebelled against
 - o **1 Kings 12** Sinful rebellion against heavy tax burden resulted in splitting Israel
 - o The greater burden of proof is on the one trying to justify not paying income taxes, since courts have ruled in favor of their legality
- o "Am I sinning if I pay taxes that are used for ungodly purposes?"
 - o Paying taxes is being obedient to God (**Rom 13:1-7**)
 - o In N.T. time period, Rome was a corrupt government (pagan) that used tax revenues for ungodly purposes, as well as to maintain peace and welfare of its citizens
 - o No government on earth is Christ centered or Christ honoring, hence any tax paid will in some sense contribute to unrighteous ends
 - o Jesus set the ultimate example of paying a "tax" (**Matt 17:24-27**) for ungodly purposes
 - o Same can be said about purchasing goods and services from non-believers - however, in their case we have a choice and are therefore even more accountable! (tax laws compel us)
 - o Should a wife not cook for her unbelieving husband since he's then nourished and strengthened to commit more sin? (No)
 - o Jesus didn't sin by paying taxes to Caesar even though he claimed to be a god
 - o Remember, any government, no matter how bad, is better than no government at all

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6. "To Harass Our People-The IRS & Government Abuse of Power," Congressman George Hansen; 1980

7. "The Christian and Government - Romans 13:1-7," John MacArthur's Bible Studies; 1986
8. Tax Foundation; "www.taxfoundation.org"
9. National Taxpayers Union; "www.ntu.org"
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Additional Notes:

- o Taxation is an exercise of sheer power
- o If God's people do not fulfill their responsibilities in society, government will - this takes money
- o When civil authorities cease to exercise civil affairs in accord with God's laws and purposes, we are to lawfully replace those leaders and change to adherence to Biblical principles of government
- o Alexis de Tocqueville said "The American republic will last until the populace discovers that it can vote itself largess out of the public treasury"
- o Maxim: "The power to tax is the power to destroy"
- o Businesses effectively collect taxes for the government, since the taxes they pay are passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices

Session #22: Capital Punishment (Detailed Notes)

"Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an angel of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (Rom 13:2-4)

Purpose of this session: To bring a Biblical perspective to the issue of Capital Punishment, the single punishment that government wields that ushers one directly into Eternity

- o The secular justifications for continuing or discontinuing the practice
- o The Biblical view of capital punishment
- o Some contemporary issues surrounding the practice
- o Some statistics from this country in the last century

1. Introduction: Must be careful about approaching this subject - natural tendency can be to rejoice when the wicked are destroyed (imprecatory Psalms)

- o We know every sin will receive its rightful punishment (**Heb 2:2**) by God
- o Should we ever rejoice at one's death, even those that are manifestly evil, when we consider the eternal state they will be condemned to?
- o This punishment should give us pause, since we deserve from God what the state gives to the wicked
- o Much has been written over the years, the world has been moving away from this practice over the last century (exception being some Muslim countries and countries with strong Communist ties)
- o The Bible is our only true source to address this controversy - otherwise it is only man's opinion and reasoning (**1 Cor 1:20**)
- o Even though sincere Christians have much in common, they are divided over this issue, just as they are over many other ones
 - o "Eye for an eye" approach; if you take another person's life, you forfeit your own
 - o Western cultures up until the 18th century practiced a retribution approach
 - o Martin Luther supported it, as did most Christians through the ages
 - o Most surveys show a majority of Americans support some application of capital punishment
 - o Christians are to show compassion & forgiveness and love our enemy not hate him (**Matt 5:44**)
 - o Most mainline denominations reject capital punishment as unchristian (Baptist also)
 - o Pope John Paul II and Chuck Colson oppose it
 - o Belief that retribution is also a crime (just as bad as the perpetrator), revenge, primitive or barbaric
 - o We're called to love enemies, not kill them; The Lord is to avenge (**Rom 12:17-21**)
- o You may not think this is a topic of concern but consider:
 - o The Supreme Court is again facing issues relating to the death penalty (see current events)
 - o Each execution is publicized extensively, so that it continues to be in the public's eye
 - o Control of life and death in criminal cases compared to abortion, euthanasia and infanticide show how schizophrenic the society is
 - o There is a wide range of opinion amongst Christians as to how to approach this subject, and many mis-perceptions of what a Christian believes (**Rom 14**)

2. Basics: Four general types of legal punishment exist in this country, of which Capital Punishment is the most drastic:

- a. Loss of money or property (fine payed to the state, or restitution paid to the victim)
- b. Loss of freedom (imprisonment)
- c. Restriction of liberty (probation; parole; work release program; house arrest; restricted access to family; limitations on owning of firearms; restrictions on voting)

- d. Loss of life (capital punishment). Types of execution practiced in the U. S. (which way would an animal be put to sleep?)(See Handout: Capital Punishment, Some Selected Statistics)
- o Firing squad
 - o Hanging (public hanging: 1918; DuPage County, Illinois; vendors sold refreshment, etc.)(one of very last was Kentucky, African-American male in 1936; 20,000 people gathered to watch)
 - o Electric chair
 - o Gas chamber
 - o Lethal injection

3. Secular Arguments for or against Capital Punishment attempt to justify their position primarily from a Utilitarian, Compassion, or Constitutional Standpoint

- a. Typical reasons given to justify capital punishment (and general responses):
- o Deterrence of other murders from occurring (others that may commit murder will think twice)
 - o By itself this is not justified (same result by executing an innocent person)
 - o Statistics to determine the affect are inconclusive and highly dependent upon the assumptions and variables addressed (states with D.P. average 7.5 criminal homicides per 100,000; abolitionist states average 7.4 (ref (5)))
 - o Criminal is being used for another purpose vice punished for their own deeds (effect on society in view more than the individual paying for his crimes)
 - o However, see Deut 17:12-13; 19:18-21, some Biblical warrant, but not the primary reason
 - o Rehabilitation (provides motivation for others to reform their ways, not just self-control)
 - o Little, if any, objective evidence to support this theory
 - o This has society more in view than the individual who is responsible for their actions
 - o Protection of society from this particular murderer (permanently removed)
 - o However, the same affect can be obtained by: medical treatment; social retraining; or long term jail sentence, why not use those approaches instead?
 - o What about the one that is highly probable of committing violent crimes in the future, should they be treated also since the goal is to protect society (minimize risk)?
 - o Affect on society becomes the issue vice the personal accountability of the individual
 - o Retribution (punishment is something that the individual earns, and it fits the crime; repaid)
 - o This is individualized to the person who has earned the punishment, and them alone
 - o Proportionality applies - more serious crimes deserve more severe punishment (not unlimited)(Lex talionis)
 - o This is the fundamental principle governing Christ's payment of His life for ours to pay the price of our sin (our personal accountability and sentence of death was paid for on the cross) - this is an individual payment, He did not die for an entire family, clan or nation, but for individuals!
- b. Most legal battles over capital punishment involve addressing it's Constitutionality (ACLU)
- o 8th Amendment: cruel and unusual punishment
 - o 5th and 14th Amendments: requiring equal protection under the law for all citizens
 - o Denial of due process under the law - it is irrevocable, and deprives an individual of the benefits of new evidence or a new law
 - o Denial of equal protection since it is disproportionately imposed upon those whose victims are white, on offenders who are people of color, and on those who are poor and uneducated (statistical 'proof' of bias?)
- c. Other moral arguments:
- o Murder demonstrates a lack of respect for human life (state death penalty is referred to as State authorized killings)
 - o A decent and humane society does not deliberately kill human beings. This practice teaches the permissibility of killing people to solve their problems
 - o Executions give society the message that human life no longer deserves respect
 - o Use of capital punishment as a form of punishment obscures the true causes of crime and distracts attention from potential measures to control the real causes

- o The U.S. is linked to nations well recognized for their human rights disregard by likewise imposing the death penalty (China; Iraq; Iran; South Africa; former Soviet Union)
- d. Some logical arguments
 - o Not a deterrent since pre-meditated murderers don't think they will get caught, and those committed under great emotional stress don't consider the consequences
 - o Punishment in like kind is not done with other crimes, why with this one?
 - o Capital punishment wastes valuable resources (N.Y. 1982, if death penalty reintroduced, it would cost twice the cost of a life term in prison; *ref (6)*)
 - o Statistics used that shows it has no effect on the rate of murder (not a deterrent)

4. To address application of God's word must look in at least three ways: Commands for all mankind; Principles for righteous governance from the O.T.; N.T. teaching

- a. God's commands that speak to all of mankind and not just to His chosen people
 - o Man's relationship to God
 - o The creation ordinances and early commands of God
- b. General principles of Mosaic law that govern righteous judgment and proportionality of punishment
 - o The ten commandments and other Pentateuch teachings
 - o Cities of refuge
 - o Standards of evidence
 - o Execution by stoning by large numbers of people vice a single executioner
- c. Christ's example and N.T. teaching for our personal lives in regards to others
 - o Did He abolish the death penalty?
 - o The difference between the governmental role and our individual role

5. Creation ordinances and early commands of God apply universally and throughout time

- a. First and foremost - man is uniquely created in God's image (**Gen 1:27; 5:1; 1 Cor 11:7**)
 - o As such - every human being has a unique dignity and worth
 - o We are fearfully and wonderfully made by God (**Psalm 139:14**)
 - o Our days are numbered by God (**Psalm 139:14; Job 14:5; Eccl 8:15; Acts 17:26; Matt 6:27**)
 - o God, the Giver of life, determines when to take life away (**Deut 30:19-20**), and when it has finished its tasks on earth (**Phil 1:6**)
 - o In a very real sense, all mankind falls under the sentence of death (**Rom 3:23; 6:23**), and deserve death (capital punishment) from God
- b. Man is to deal with man in a way different from animals - life is accounted differently
 - o Our lives are precious in God's sight, so much so that He paid an infinite price for our lives to be redeemed by His Son on the cross (**2 Cor 8:9**)
 - o The shedding of innocent blood is severely condemned (see c. and d. below)(**Gen 4:1-16; 9:6**)
 - o Man's death uniquely defiles the land (**Gen 4:10; Num 35:33-34**) as does man's sin (**Lev 18:1-25**)
- c. The first murder (**Gen 4:1-16**) provided a unique opportunity to see God's mercy and His will for man
 - o As far as we know, God had not explicitly commanded man to not murder, however, this would be contrary to the command to be fruitful and multiply to fill the earth
 - o God's punishment was fourfold, but did not include taking Cain's life:
 - o Driven from God's presence
 - o Driven from the land (no longer yield its crops for him)
 - o Cain was to become a restless wanderer (not a farmer)
 - o He would be in danger of being murdered himself (vengeance upon him)
 - o Why didn't the first case of murder result in the death penalty? Some possibilities:
 - o Cain may have been repentant ("punishment" in **verse 13** may be translated "iniquity" or "guilt" but not usually). God may have demonstrated compassion for Cain because of his sorrow and thus spared his life
 - o God protected Cain from being avenged by others ("...vengeance seven times over"); implying capital punishment will be used against murderers from then on
 - o God had not yet established capital punishment as an instrument of government (**Rom 13:1-4**); He did later in **Gen 9:6**

- o The Lord alone determines when life is to be taken (His prerogative; **Deut 32:39**); in this instance, He commuted Cain's death penalty ("Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" - implying vengeance is being demanded)
- o God may have used this to establish His righteous command clearly, as a result of man's sin (Establishes also that God is compassionate, and that murder is to be severely punished)
- o "But sin is not taken into account when there is no law" (**Rom 5:13b**) Although we are all guilty before the Lord, the execution of punishment for sin occurs after God has revealed His just standard. After Cain's sin, the death penalty is clearly indicated when man takes man's life
- o God can suspend His law when He wants to in order to fulfill His righteous purposes (**Num 13:26-14:38; 20:12,24; 21:4-9; Rom 1:32**)
- d. The first formal warning against murder (**Gen 9:4-6**) established need for civil government & order:
 - o The taking of life countermands God's command to be fruitful and fill the earth (**Gen 9:7**)
 - o The universal punishment for murder is death (proportionate to the offense)
 - o This command is for all mankind (Noah and all his descendants) just as commands to Adam and Eve were for all generations that were to follow, e.g.:
 - o Marriage
 - o Dominion over the earth
 - o Be fruitful and multiply upon the earth
 - o Rest the seventh day
 - o God has ordained the way to execute a murderer - by man (legitimately formed government, civil authorities exercising this function)
 - o Not by wild animals
 - o Not by exposure to the elements
 - o Not by starvation
 - o Side note: if this authority is granted to man (capital punishment - retributive) for cases of murder, how much more is man granted the authority to rule and punish for lesser crimes (property; home; business; etc.)

6. Mosaic law governed righteous judgment and proportionality applied to a Theocracy but General Principles can Apply to us Today

- a. Man's life is specially protected
 - o Specific commands against murder (**Ex 20:13; Gen 6:9**)
 - o Creation of Cities of Refuge that allowed distinction between murder (intentional) and manslaughter (accidental death)(**Num 35:6-34**)
- b. Mosaic law codified many conditions under which capital punishment was allowed to take place
 - o See **Handout: "Death Penalty under the Mosaic Law"**
 - o Given to govern Israel as God's chosen people in the promised land
 - o They were to be holy as He is holy
 - o God dwelt amongst them in a unique, physical way
 - o Absolute obedience, and strict conformance to His law was demanded
- c. Mosaic law was not given to other nations (**Psalm 147:19-20** "He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws")
 - o However, God's law was to be a beacon to other nations as they see the wisdom of His righteous decrees (**Deut 4:5-8; Psalm 96:1-13; 98:2-3; 119:98**)
 - o Influence the moral standards and civil laws of other nations
 - o These laws could not be developed from "natural law" or "general revelation" by other nations (natural law is necessary, but not sufficient), only a shadow was possible
 - o They do, however, provide principles that other nations should note
 - o See **Session #32: Justice**
 - o Justice is to be swift (**Deut 25:1-3**)
 - o The principle of proportionality ("eye for an eye")(Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21)
 - o Principle of fairness in judging (**Prov 18:5; 17:15**)

- o Principle of witnesses (two or more) needed to prove the offense (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:16)
 - o Circumstantial evidence was not sufficient
 - o High standard required because the consequences were irreversible in some instances (death)
- o Principle of due process (two witnesses (Deut 19:15); See Handout: Judicial Principles from the Book of Proverbs of Session #6: Is this a Christian Country?)
- o Cities of Refuge to protect the innocent from vengeance (Num 35)
- o Bottom line - man uniquely reflects God's image and possesses qualities/characteristics that reflect God. Therefore:

7. The New Testament Teaching Provides even more Insights into Capital Punishment

- a. What did Jesus teach relating to Capital Punishment? Did He do away with it?
 - o **Matt 5:21-22:** "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment."
 - o He did not abolish the punishment or show the judgment was wrong
 - o He elevated the seriousness of the sin and pinpointed the root heart problem
 - o He affirmed that murder merits judgment
 - o **John 8:1-11:** The woman caught in adultery
 - o The penalty for adultery was death for both parties (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24)
 - o The penalty for false witnesses in a capital crime was death (Deut 19:16-21)
 - o The false accusers left, the requisite two or three witnesses were not present, Jesus did not condemn the woman - it was a setup from the very beginning
 - o This passage does not teach the abolishing of capital punishment for adultery, if anything it upheld the standards with which to judge it. It does show Jesus' compassion and His knowledge of men's hearts however!
 - o **John 19:10-11:** "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above."
 - o Pilate was a pagan authority, not under the Mosaic law
 - o Both Jesus and Pilate acknowledged Pilate's authority to execute a prisoner
 - o Jesus did not cancel the death penalty, but affirmed the authority God had given Pilate over life and death judgments
 - o **Matt 26:52:** Jesus said "...for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."
 - o The implication is that judgment falls on those that are violent - those who kill will themselves be killed
 - o This could be referring to wickedness reaping wickedness to themselves
 - o This could also affirm just punishment (execution) for unjust taking of life
- b. What about the rest of the New Testament? Two distinctive domains (realms) exist: the church & state
 - o The Church (and believers individually) have the example of Christ to follow
 - o We are to love our neighbor (and our enemies) as ourselves (Matt 22:39; Lev 19:18) and pray for them (Matt 5:43-45)
 - o We are not to conform to this world and act like it (revenge); instead we are to overcome evil with good (Rom 12:2; 19-21: 13:8)
 - o We are not to resort to physical violence (Matt 5:38-42; Luke 22:49-52; John 18:36)
 - o We are not to retaliate when evil comes upon us (1 Peter 2:22-23)
 - o We are to turn the other cheek (Matt 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-36)
 - o In a word, we are to walk like Christ walked (1 John 2:6)
 - o The church doesn't wield the sword, but disciplines God's people a number of ways:
 - o Incest resulted in excommunication within the church, not death - even though it was a capital offense under the O.T. (1 Cor 5:1-5)
 - o One who was unrepentant and unwilling to be reconciled faced being treated as a pagan or tax collector (Matt 18:15-17; Titus 3:9-10), not execution

- o Those who reject the faith were handed over to Satan (1 Tim 1:18-20), not summarily executed
- o Paul taught we are no longer under the supervision of the law but ruled by faith (Gal 3:25; Rom 7:6)
- o Paul acknowledged the civil authorities right to execute (Acts 25:10-11; Rom 13:1-7)
- o For us, the law serves to teach what sin is and show us our need for Christ (Gal 3:24)
- o God uses human agents (government) to execute vengeance on wrongdoers (Rom 12:19; 13:4)
 - o Government has the authority to wield the sword (take life as necessary)(Rom 13:4)
 - o In punishing the evil doer (murderer), government acknowledges the value of life and can use the ultimate punishment
 - o Peter taught we are to be subject to the authority placed over us as it exercises its God ordained role (1 Peter 2:13-14)
 - o Biblical commands and moral standards are to influence the nation we live in, but they will never be perfectly applied

8. Bottom lines:

- o Man is made in God's image, and as such carries a dignity that is not to be lightly ignored
- o Statistics and humanistic reasoning is not the foundation to determine whether the death penalty should be used or not - but God's standard (His word)
- o I believe God has, and still does allow the taking of a person's life when necessary - for crimes that society deems the death penalty is the only reasonable punishment
 - o This fulfills the God ordained role of government in wielding the sword to punish the evil doer, and to maintain peace in the land
- o God has given a multitude of principles to govern the dispensing of justice
 - o These stem primarily from Mosaic laws and wisdom issues in dealing with evil
 - o These include the honoring of human life by applying the ultimate punishment in this life against those who murder others
 - o These have not been abrogated in N.T. times, but are relegated to the civil authorities and not to the church - which is to follow the example of Christ Himself
 - o Government is to maintain peace in the land, protect the church in freely exercising its role and punish the evil doer up to and including the taking of their life
- o The greater the Christian influence in a society, the more important the balance between compassion and just punishment is needed:
 - o To reflect God's mercy He has shown to us (who are murders in thought alone, and deserve death due to our sins)
 - o To reflect God's perfect and righteous standard that calls all men to repent, and that there are consequences to violating this standard
 - o Civil and moral laws govern relationships between people
 - o Prudence and wisdom must govern their application in today's economy to bring about justice (see discussion questions)

9. What Should or Could a Christian do?

- a. Support creation and strong enforcement of just laws
 - o Proportional to the crime
 - o Support restitution as well as retribution principles
 - o Don't begrudge the appeal process - mankind is sinful, and can make mistakes - capital punishment, when exercised, is not reversible
 - o Remember the Biblical standard required to convict a murderer
 - o Remember our ultimate recourse is the justice of God, not of man!
- b. Remember sincere believers disagree on capital punishment and what should be done (Rom 14)
 - o Be sensitive to the weaker brother who's tender heart may not agree with capital punishment under any circumstances
 - o Be careful of gross generalizations in this area
- c. Forgive those who commit crime against us, but allow the state to avenge the wrong (God works thru the authorities He has established for our good (Rom 13:1-7))

- d. Be careful of our attitude concerning those facing execution - Jesus paid the ultimate price and died for His people, did we do anything less in requiring such an infinite price to be paid?
- e. Consider ministry to those in prison or facing the ultimate punishment; support ministries to them (The separating of the sheep and goats; prison, hungry; etc. (Matt 25:31-46))
- f. Become aware of the issues our society is facing in this area, e.g.:
 - o DNA usage
 - o Plea bargaining
 - o Inhumane punishment methods
 - o The rich and the poor being treated differently
- g. Use discussions as opportunities to bring moral principles to bear and raise eternal issues
 - o Whether we have justice in this life or not, there will be in the next life
 - o The effects of sin now (punishment) is a foretaste of the eternal punishment that awaits

10. Discussion Questions (homework):

- o "Is capital punishment cruel and unusual punishment in and of itself?"
- o "Are not the takers of life (executioners) just as bad as the criminal himself?"
- o "Should a man's life be taken when there are not two witnesses?" "What constitutes a witness?"
- o "Should a Christian ever sit on a jury to determine the fate of one accused of murder? What about the punishment deserved - since we are not witnesses or directly involved?"
- o "What is a Christian's proper response to one who murders a close loved one?"
- o "What about the murderer that is severely mentally incompetent or ill?"
- o "Is temporary insanity a justified defense in a murder trial?"
- o "Should race ever be a consideration in considering the death penalty?"
- o "Is it cruel and unusual punishment to keep a prisoner on death row for 10-15 years while appeals are pursued - with the outcome that the prisoner is executed?"
- o "What about the murderer that was not in control of themselves and on drugs or alcohol?"
- o "What about someone who murders while purposefully drugged by someone else?"
- o "How can you be absolutely sure you are not executing an innocent man?"
- o "What about one who murders in a fit of rage or emotion?"
- o "At what age should a murderer be tried as an adult and face the death penalty? 18? 16? 12? 8?"
- o "If we apply the Bible to justify capital punishment, why not apply it to the other crimes deserving death?" (be consistent!)
- o "Can a Christian, in clear conscience, participate in an execution?"

11. References:

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2. "Justice and Mercy - A Christian Solution to America's Correctional Crisis." Donald Smarto; 1987
3. "Biblical Principles - Concerning Issues of Importance to Godly Christians," Plymouth Rock Foundation; 1984
4. "When Critics Ask" Norman Geisler & Thomas Howe; 1997 (1992)
5. "Uniform Crime Reports, 1980-1989" as cited in "The Case Against the Death Penalty" by Hugo Adam Bedan in Ethics Updates (<http://ethics.acusd.edu>)
6. "N.Y. State Defenders Assn., Capital Losses" (1982)

12. Some Historical Notes on Crime and Punishment

- a. Ancient Rome
 - o Prisons 400 B.C. to the time of Christ served the purpose of confinement while awaiting trial (Mamertime Prison - series of small cages beneath the sewer system of Rome)
 - o Punishment - flogging, mutilation, exile, death if found guilty; confinement as a punishment was not used
- b. Constantine (4th C.) criminals were segregated from society and brought to place of seclusion where they could feel sorry for their wrongdoing
- c. Roman Catholic church instituted a similar practice as penance
- d. Dark Ages: monasteries & abbeys used as places of banishment for criminal offenders. Rooms that confined the prisoner often were monastic cells. Concept of using small cells to create an environment for penitence and contrition would influence roots of American prison system

- e. Constitutions of Clarendon (1166 A.D.) by Henry II authorized jails (gaols) in England. Abusive places: jail tax imposed upon inmates (if not paid - longer term served); charges for food (starved the poor); filthy and disease ridden
- f. First extensive penal system appeared in England, 1557, Parliament ratified construction of Bridewell House. Both prison and workhouse; strict discipline; use of uniforms; human warehousing resulted with no thought of reform
- g. In the 1600's England prescribes death for 14 offenses, but the American colonies impose the death sentence for fewer crimes
- h. 1636 - The Massachusetts Bay Colony lists 13 crimes punishable by death, including idolatry and witchcraft
- i. August 6, 1890; Murderer William Kemmler is the first person executed in the electric chair, at New York's Auburn Prison. The "chair" is later installed at Sing Sing Prison
- j. 1907 - Kansas abolishes capital punishment. Eight more states follow suit over the next 10 years
- k. June 29, 1972 - The Supreme Court in *Furman v. Georgia* rules that the death penalty amounts to cruel and unusual punishment because juries impose sentences arbitrarily. The decision overturns all existing death penalty laws and death sentences. States began rewriting their laws to accommodate the two stage process required
- l. July 2, 1976 - The Supreme Court holds in *Gregg v. Georgia* that under the state's new two-stage trial system, the death penalty no longer violates the Eighth Amendment
- m. 1977 - Capital punishment begins again
- n. 1977 - Oklahoma becomes the first state to adopt lethal injection
- o. 1986 - The Supreme Court bars executing insane persons in *Ford v. Wainwright*
- p. 1989 - The Supreme Court in *Perry v. Lynaugh* holds that executing mentally retarded persons does not violate the Eighth Amendment
- q. Some statistics
 - o Approximately 3600 condemned inmates in the United States; Texas has most with 452 men and women awaiting execution, longest waiting is 25 years (Robert Excell White); three others in nation are longer ("The San Diego Union-Tribune" 28 March, 1999; "Execution looms for the dean of death row" article)
 - o According to a 1985 study "a murder takes place every twenty-three minutes"

Session #23: Gambling (Detailed Notes)

"A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished" (Prov 28:20)

"Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death" (Prov 10:2)

"An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end" (Prov 20:21)

Purpose of this Session: To bring Biblical principles to bear on a topic that many find themselves compromising on, or unable to give a response to

- o Review some history of gambling
- o Present some statistics and current trends
- o Review the Biblical principles that apply
- o Address what if anything we as Christians can do

1. Introduction: What exactly is gambling?

a. Question: "Do any of you have relatives you visit in Las Vegas, and you only visit them?"

b. Question: "Which of the following would you consider gambling?" (Where's your threshold?)

- o Slot machines; poker in a casino; keno; roulette; etc.? (Casino gambling)
- o Betting on horse racing? Sporting events?
- o Drawing lots for a prize?
- o Playing cards; with chips; with coins?
- o Raffles?
- o Bingo?
- o Lottery?
- o Door prizes, where part of the price of the entrance ticket paid for the prize?
- o The game of Monopoly?
- o Flipping a coin on a bet?
- o Carnival (arcade) games of "chance" or "skill?" (Win tickets that are redeemable)
- o Scratch cards?
- o Baseball card packs?
- o Game shows on TV?
- o Bottle caps with prizes offered?
- o Chain letters?
- o Computer financial investment games?
- o The stock market?
- o Savings accounts? Treasury bonds?
- o Bunko?
- o Others?

c. Question: Which of the above would be fun even if no opportunity for money existed?

d. Question: What are some common themes or factors that come out of this?

- o Risk
- o Money
- o Investment
- o The condition of the heart
- o The net effect
- o The purpose for the activity

e. Gamble: "To play games of chance for money or some other stake;" "To take a risk in order to gain some advantage" (Webster's New World Dictionary)

f. Bottom Line: Is gambling sin? My opinion: It is not intrinsically evil, but it can very easily be sin

- o Freedom vs. wisdom vs. bondage!
- o Knowledgeable investment verses a game of chance (more below)

2. Throughout History men have Gambled - this is not new, or localized, or limited just to individuals (See Handout: Gambling - Background Information)

a. Ancient History

- o First records of gambling are Chinese, circa 2300 B.C. (probably existed before that)
- o Aristotle lumped gamblers with robbers and thieves (no difference)
- o "Knucklebones" six-sided bones from legs of sheep or deer used as dice in India pre-1000 B.C.
- o Soldiers drew lots for Jesus clothes (**John 19:23-24; Psalm 22:18**)
- o Shaved or crooked dice were found buried with pharaohs & loaded dice were found in Pompeii
- o Cards first appeared in Asia not long after the Chinese invented paper in the late first or early second century A.D.

b. European History

- o First known European card decks were used in 14th century Italy and France
- o England eventually enacted laws against gambling in games in 1542, and against all gambling in 1665; all lotteries became illegal in 1698 (Lord Beaconsfield: gambling was "a vast engine of national demoralization")
- o Dr. Samuel Johnson's "Dictionary of the English Language" (1755) defined "gambler" as "a knave whose practice it is to invite the unwary to game and cheat them."

c. The New World

- o When colonists arrived in America, gambling was already widely practiced by Indians. New World's first law against gambling enacted by the Puritans in 1638 (undermined sound work ethic, yielding idleness and debauchery)
- o In 1670, Massachusetts banned cards and dice as a "dishonor to God" and cards were considered the devil's playthings
- o In 1682 the Quakers decided to outlaw gambling
- o However, lotteries were common in Colonial times, all 13 colonies operating lotteries at one time or another (pay for public works). Lotteries became popular throughout Europe by the 1700's

d. The U.S.A.

- o During the Revolutionary War troop supplies were purchased with funds from colonial lotteries
- o By the early 1800's they were popular in the United States: (1832 more than 400 lotteries in 8 states with total ticket purchase of \$66M (five times federal budget))
- o Between 1790-1850 24 of 33 states used lotteries (finance roads, buildings, canals, bridges)
- o During June 10-July 2 1776 Thomas Jefferson kept notes of his backgammon, cards, and lotto winnings and losses while he was writing the Declaration of Independence (VA legislature authorized Jefferson to conduct a lottery for private gain after his years as president left him in financial straights - never happened since he died before it was implemented)
- o By the 1830's many people began to oppose lotteries, with States beginning to outlaw them after a string of scandals.
- o By 1894 legal lotteries were no longer held in the United States
- o Slot machines were perfected by Charles Frey of San Francisco in 1895 - with slots now accounting for 80% of some casino gambling profits
- o Nevada legalized gambling in 1931, and attracts 40 million visitors each year (note 10)
- o In 20th century, NH was the first state to have state lottery (1964)
- o Native American tribes began taking advantage of a federal law permitting them to operate casinos beginning in 1988

3. Massive amounts of data and statistics exist to show gambling is extensive, destructive to individuals and society in general, but the trend is for government to encourage people to pursue it more all the time

- a. Some selected statistics - the amount of money gambled is staggering
- o Americans gamble more money each year than they spend on groceries (note 1)
 - o More than \$600 billion is wagered legally in the United States annually (note 1)
 - o In 1994, the average American gambler forfeited approximately \$300 (total losses of \$39.9 B divided by 71% of adult population (age 18 and over))
 - o More money is spent on gambling in Mississippi than on all retail sales combined (note 5)
 - o The Las Vegas casino "New York, New York" was completed in 1996 at a cost of \$460 million, more that half was paid for in a period of one year (note 7)
- b. The number of people who have a serious problem is very high
- o Nearly 1 in 5 homeless people admit that gambling contributed to their poverty, yet 37% said that they continue to gamble (note 2)
 - o From 5% to 8% of American adolescents are addicted to gambling (note 3)
 - o 96% of compulsive gamblers said they began before age 14 (note 18, p. 81)(similar to drugs)
 - o From 2 to 5-6% of the adult population has a serious gambling problem (note 26)

- o 75% of pathological gamblers admitted committing at least one felony to support habit (note 4)
 - o 25 years ago, 95% of all gamblers were men, by 1995, 55% are now women (note 27)
 - o Some Fallout: There are now more than 700 chapters of Gamblers Anonymous today
- c. Government has not helped the problem
- o Government has expanded the market of people involved with gambling by instituting lotteries: One quarter of those who otherwise would not gamble at all, bet on lotteries (note 19)
 - o One decade ago, only New Jersey and Nevada permitted casinos, now 48 states have legalized some form of gambling (note 6)
 - o Per capita lottery losses in states with lotteries (1973 - \$35; 1997 - \$150)
 - o Nevada statistics:
 - o First in nation in: suicides (note 1); divorce (note 1); high school dropouts (note 1); homicides against women (note 11); gambling addictions (note 12)
 - o Third in nation in: abortions (note 1); bankruptcies (note 13)
 - o Fourth in nation in: rape (note 1); out-of-wedlock births (note 1); alcohol-related deaths (note 14)
 - o Dis-honorable mention (other ranking's): 5th in crime (note 1); 6th in prisoners (note 15); top one third in child abuse (note 16); last in voter participation (note 1); one tenth of all southern Nevadans are alcoholics (note 17)
 - o Lotteries and casinos bring in roughly the same amount of revenue (total wagered minus wins), yet 10 times as much money is placed in bets at casinos (payout rates at casinos usually >90%; for lotteries it is about 50%) (Who is the greediest?)
- d. Some trends in recent years to legitimize and promote gambling
- o "Gambling" has become "Gaming" to try and legitimize it
 - o Gambling not viewed in general as "addictive, progressive and dangerous" any longer, but as harmless entertainment (note 8)
 - o State lotteries are approved in many instances on the assurance that funds generated will be used for education - studies show after states legalize lotteries that they actually reduce spending on education (note 9). (or tending to provide no net benefit)
 - o Viewed as an easy source of public funds - a "painless" tax
 - o Claims gambling will increase employment and business into the state/locale economy
 - o Gambling revenues are unreliable and tend to decrease after first exposure, therefore it must be continually promoted, changed, and provide ever (perceived) greater opportunity to win
 - o Inner-cities see gambling as a "ticket out of poverty"
 - o Making Las Vegas into a "family-oriented" environment to encourage even more tourists and gamblers (and growing the next generation of gamblers)
 - o Indian Reservation Gambling
 - o Bureau of Indian Affairs: 554 federally recognized tribes (USA) with 1,652,879 members (less than 1% of US)
 - o In 1988 about 70 Indian casinos/bingo parlors (16 states)
 - o In 1998 about 260 facilities (31 states)
 - o Tribal gambling total revenue: 1988 = \$212M; 1997 = \$6.7B)
 - o Types of legalized gambling continues to grow:

- Casinos	- Lotteries	- Dog and horse racing
- Video poker	- Indian gambling	- Sports betting
- Internet gambling	- Card parlors	- Bingo
- e. Some net effects:
- o This situation gives the public an impression that more than adequate funds are available for schools from lotteries, hence bond issues are not received well (note 20)
 - o Is it a "painless" tax?
 - o For every dollar the state gets from gambling revenues, taxpayers put up a minimum of three dollars to cover additional costs incurred (infrastructure, regulatory costs, criminal justice system costs, social-welfare costs) (note 22)
 - o Will gambling increase employment and bring more business into the state/locale economy?
 - o However, jobs tend to be low-paid service jobs without transferable skills

- o In Illinois from 1990-1993 the net effect of gambling was that one job was lost for every job that was created (*note 23*)
- o However, computer analysis of 55 counties that allowed casinos between 1990 and '92 showed economic expansion of about 4% - the same as the rest of the nation (*note 21*)
- o Native American Indian tribes claim casinos and gambling will ensure their own self reliance!
- o Gambling brings with it crime (organized and unorganized) and vice (prostitution, assault, robbery, drugs, etc.). Crime rates in towns with casinos were almost double the national avg in 1994 (1,092 incidents per 10,000 verses national average of 593)(*note 21*)
 "Vegas isn't called 'sin city' for nothing"
- o Gambling preys on those that can least afford it (the poor spend a greater proportion of their income on gambling - thus it is in effect a form of regressive tax (*note 18*))
- o The rate of illegal gambling in those states with some form of legalized gambling is three times as high as in states where there is no legalized form (*note 18, p. 83*)
- o Gambling revenues tend to replace other sources of revenue for schools (no net benefit, in many cases there is a reduction in overall spending on education)(*note 9*)
- o Suicide rate of spouses of "compulsive" gamblers is 150 times the national average (*note 28*)
- o As much as 40% of white-collar crime is caused by compulsive gamblers (*note 27*)
- o Each compulsive gambler costs society an average of \$53,000 in lost wages, theft, related substance abuse costs, and legal and health counseling (*note 29*)
- o Money that would have gone to providing for a family is instead lost
- o Local businesses suffer since customer dollars are spent at casinos instead of in other areas of the local economy
- o It provides a legitimized (legal) avenue for those addicted to gambling to loose all that they have through financial ruin, destroyed marriages and families, and crime to gain funds to feed the habit (compulsive; addictive; in bondage)

4. Many Biblical Principles apply to this issue, including Who we trust in, where our heart really is, our role as salt in society, and the proper role of government

- a. God is Sovereign in all things (**Matt 10:29-30; Heb 1:3a; Prov 16:4; 16:33**)
 - o Is it consistent with His nature to desire to bless His children through gambling?
 - o Does God promise to meet our needs or not - who are we trusting in? (**Matt 6:25-34**)
 - o God is sovereign even over the outcome of the throw of dice ("There are no maverick molecules!") (**Prov 16:33**)
 - o We are to make decisions based upon faith not dependent upon "chance" (**Prov 3:5-6**)
- b. How has God ordained that man should provide for his family? (**Gen 3:17-19; 1 Tim 5:8**)
 - o By diligent effort! (**2 Thess 3:11-12**)
 - o By doing all things for the glory of God! (**Col 3:17-18; 23-24**)
 - o Proper planning and stewardship of earnings and resources will result in great benefit for ones family (**Prov 13:11**)
- c. God does not condemn "risk" taking, but encourages it in constructive, knowledgeable ways
 - o All of life entails some form of risk taking (we are not omniscient)(**Eccl 9:11; James 4:13-15**)
 - o The parable of the talents (**Matt 25:14-30**), "no investment" is contrasted with a bank and other investments - knowledgeable investment is approved (higher risk than banks!)
 - o Insurance policies are risk taking endeavors - prudent in our time, wise stewardship - not replacements for our trust in God, but a way to protect our investments
 - o Isn't putting money in the stock market the same as gambling?
 - o Some stock market investments are equivalent to gambling (quick return promises)
 - o Indiscriminate investment with random putting in and taking out could be the same as gambling
 - o Investment takes care and study, and involves long term results not instant answers
 - o Investments add to the economy and produces things (products, services, etc) that are of value, while gambling does not produce anything (primarily an exchange of money from one hand to another)

- o There are no guarantees in any kind of investment in this world, we should store our treasures instead in heaven (Matt 6:19-21)
- d. What are the fundamental issues we may need to address in our lives? - Contrast with the characteristics we are to demonstrate!
 - o Greed ("Hearses don't pull U-Hauls") (1 Tim 6:10; Luke 12:15)
 - o In bondage to money (addiction) (Matt 6:24)
 - o Idolatry (Matt 6:24)
 - o Chasing after fantasies (Prov 12:11; 17:24; 28:19)
 - o Lack of patience (Prov 13:11; 21:5; 28:19; Matt 6:33-34)
 - o Slothfulness (Prov 13:4; 2 Thess 3:10)
 - o Poor stewardship (1 Peter 4:10)
 - o Lack of contentment in what God has provided for us (1 Tim 6:6)
 - o Lack of trust in God to provide for us (Matt 6:32-33)
 - o Are our riches on earth or in heaven? (Matt 6:19-21)
 - o Are we asking God to bless something gained (won) through no effort?(Prov 20:21)
 - o Are we taking a wise or unwise risk? (statistically, we will loose)
- e. What if I just gamble for the fun of it (entertainment)?
 - o We are called to lead exemplary lives before the ungodly (1 Peter 2:11-12)
 - o We are not to mimic the futile pursuits of the ungodly (3 John 11)
 - o Are we telling others that our God does not adequately provide for us?(Matt 6:25-34)
 - o Our children will build upon the example we set - will it be one of righteousness or compromise?(Prov 22:6; Col 1:28)(Whatever we participate in, we legitimize!)
 - o Gaining something for virtually nothing will not yield gratitude (We do not give things to our children but allow them to work for their money, so that they learn the value of earning what they have...)(Prov 20:21)
 - o Exercising our "freedom" can destroy our brother (1 Cor 8; Rom 14)
 - o If we do not set a higher standard for the world, who will?
 - o Would we be thrilled or ashamed if Jesus Christ returned while we were pulling the handle of a slot machine? (1 Thess 5:1-11; 2 Peter 3:11-12; 14)
 - o Is gambling, no matter how benign, sin?
 - o What would wisdom dictate?
 - o What is the true motivation of our heart?
 - o What is the resulting fruit?
 - o Is this what God would want us to be doing?
 - o Can we truly say that we are gambling for God's glory? (1 Cor 10:31)
 - o We have freedom to gamble as long as we are not in bondage to it (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23-24) and our actions are not a stumbling block to others (Rom 14). However, by gambling we:
 - o Validate the State sponsoring of gambling which can be proven to have tremendously destructive effects on people and families (Eph 5:11)
 - o Endorse legal gambling as a valid form of entertainment
 - o Encourage more extensive gambling and support it financially (3 John 11)
 - o Are not being a good steward of the resources God has given us
 - o Expose ourselves to an environment and lifestyle that is not constructive to our Christian walk before the Lord (Psalm 1:1-3; James 1:13-15)
 - o Set a poor example to those brothers and sisters who are weaker in the faith and may not be strong enough to withstand the temptation/addiction that could come (it appeals to the weaknesses of people and not to their strengths)(Rom 14)
 - o Participated in a fundamentally exploitive process (for you to win, someone else has to loose - generally the poor)(Ex 20:15)
 - o Open ourselves up to greater temptation (James 1:13-15)
- f. Casting lots is found in the Bible, but isn't it the same thing as gambling? (Yes and no)
 - o Casting lots given by God to render a decision if needed, not a means to financial gain
 - o Basically: decision too important for man to make, God must make it!(Prov 16:33)

- o To select the "scapegoat" by the High Priest which symbolized Christ's bearing away of our sins (**Lev 16:8**)
- o To select which piece of land was to be occupied by which family group (**Num 26:55; Joshua 18:10**)
- o To identify the holder of forbidden things (**Joshua 7:14-18**)
- o To choose soldiers for battle (**Judges 20:18**)
- o To determine that Jonathan had violated the king's oath (**1 Sam 14:41-43**)
- o To resolve disputes to prevent bloodshed (**Prov 18:18**)
- o To decide between two qualified men who is to become a leader (**Acts 1:24-26**)
- o Even the ungodly used lots
 - o To decide who was responsible for calamity (**Jonah 1:7**)
 - o For personal benefit (winning) (**Matt 27:35; Psalm 22:18**)
- o Urim and Thummim also used as a form of casting lots (**Ex 28:30; Lev 8:8; Deut 33:8,10; Num 27:21; 1 Sam 28:6**)
 - o No explicit description of how this system was implemented or used
 - o One conjecture: Urim (gives negative answer); Thummim (gives positive answer); each stone with a yes and a no side - tossed - "yes", "no", "no reply" possible answers
- g. Is promotion of gambling a proper role for government?
 - o Government is to punish the evil doer, and not promote actions and behaviors that result in the growth of evil and the destruction of families
 - o Government is to commend the good, restraint from gambling is beneficial for all
 - o Government is not to benefit from evil behavior (taxing & sponsoring gambling for revenue)
 - o Government is not to legitimize evil behavior by participating and encouraging its spread

Quote from "Family News From Dr. James Dobson", April 1999, "Lotteries also foster a get-rich-quick mentality while belittling the work ethic. A Massachusetts Lottery ad offered two options for how to 'make millions.' Let me quote: 'Plan A: Start studying when you're about 7 years old, real hard. Then grow up and get a good job. From then on, get up at dawn every day. Flatter [your] boss. Crush competition ruthlessly. Climb over backs of co-workers. Be the last one to leave every night. Squirrel away every cent. Avoid having a nervous breakdown. Avoid having a premature heart attack. Get a face lift. Do this every day for 30 years, holidays and weekends included. By the time you're ready to retire you should have your money.' Or 'Plan B': Play the lottery.'"

5. As Christians, we have a responsibility to set an example (salt & light) to this nation and demand strict accountability of government to discourage those things destructive to society

- a. In our own personal lives:
 - o Study the Biblical principles involved
 - o Work hard, show restraint, do not trust in gambling to bring about riches, set a godly example
 - o Prayerfully consider what the real motivation is to gamble (entertainment?)
 - o Consider what we are supporting by being involved at all
 - o Consider the example we are setting of others
 - o Do not place ourselves at greater risk of temptation
- b. In our home:
 - o Teach proper Biblical principles about trust in God, diligent work, personal initiative
 - o Set an example for our children by our own actions
 - o Be sensitive to examples set in our homes that may lead to greater involvement in gambling
 - o Make wise investments after careful investigation; be prudent with our time and resources (insurance policies provide assistance in being a good steward of our resources, not a means to get rich)
- c. In the church:
 - o Help those that may be in bondage to gambling to realize it is idolatry
 - o Be aware of the Biblical principles involved, as well as statistics
 - o Differentiate between sin and ignorance relative to the issues involved
 - o Be sensitive to the weaknesses of our brothers and sisters
 - o Be wise in providing help to a family - what's the real source of financial difficulties (Deacons)

d. In our State:

- o Be aware of the common reasons little opposition exists against gambling:
 - o Apathy of most people
 - o Lack of awareness of the problems associated with gambling
 - o Legal ambiguity and complexity involved discourage any in-depth investigation
 - o Limited resources available to combat it
 - o Poor understanding of the proper roles of government (**Rom 13:1-6**)
- o Don't support legalization of gambling in any form (not a proper function of government)
- o Demand scientific information and statistical data to prove gambling is beneficial to society should any gambling be endorsed by the state
- o Encourage strong fiscal accountability for funds the state is collecting from gambling
- o Work to remove legal sanctions (and impose stiffer control) of legalized gambling through letters to representatives, letters to editors, petitions, talking to neighbors, passing data along

6. Bottom Lines:

- a. Gambling is pervasive in our society, it begins in early life, and is encouraged in many venues
- b. It is not the purpose of government to entice, promote and benefit from gambling
- c. Gambling per se is not evil
 - o But the environment, our heart, and our desires can be sinful
 - o We have the freedom to gamble, but (like drinking) it can be unwise, a poor example to others, and contributes to the moral malaise and destruction of our society
- d. We are to set a godly standard and example for our families and the world by our actions
- e. My opinion: we are not called to force legislation to make gambling illegal, but we can enter the public debate with truth - and try and minimize the problems it creates
- f. *Jer 17:11 "Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay is the man who gains riches by unjust means. When his life is half gone, they will desert him, and in the end he will prove to be a fool."*

7. Homework Discussion Questions and Statements (See Handouts)

- a. "Is it all right to work for a gambling casino?" "How about providing a service to one?"
 - o Can't the Lord provide honest employment (even if for a lower wage)?
 - o We are in the world but not part of the world - selling goods and services to casinos is the same as to any non-believer (unless our entire market is to gambling)
- b. "What are the effects of gambling?"
 - o Destroyed families
 - o Great increase in social program and justice costs to be born by the country
 - o Leads to greater temptation and sin
- c. Is "Destination Gambling" OK for a Christian? (families that budget for vacations in a gambling center expecting to lose a predetermined amount of money)
 - o Same issues as stated above about Christian witness, example, exposure
- d. "What about computer games for children that involve play gambling, there isn't any money involved?"
 - o Train up a child correctly (**Prov 22:6**)
 - o What skills are we trying to impress into our children to equip them in their walk of faith? Are the games supplemental to our instruction about the Lord, or in replacement to them?
- e. "Where does it say in the Bible 'thou shalt not gamble'?"
 - o This explicit commandment is not found in the Bible, however, many principles are found that can be applied (see above lesson)
 - o Likewise - it does not say that gambling is OK - thus principles need to be addressed
 - o This is a wisdom and a Christian witness issue
- f. "Isn't gambling a victimless crime?" No!
 - o Statistically you will lose!
 - o It feeds a large industry that is corrupt for the most part
 - o It has an allure that creates impure thoughts and motives in the Christian - the call of the ungodly to something more exciting than the life God has given us
 - o It appeals to the baser in us not the higher

- o It attracts many forms of criminal behavior
- o In order for you to win, someone else must lose
- g. "What's wrong with Bingo - even churches do that?"
 - o Just because some churches play bingo does not make it right (is there a difference as to whether there are gifts offered or money, or whether some money is kept for ministry?)
 - o What is better attended, the bingo night or the worship service?
 - o Is this really how the Lord intended to supply for the needs of a church?
- h. "What about: Playing cards; raffles; door prizes, game of Monopoly; carnival games of chance or skill; scratch cards; bottle caps with prizes?"
- i. "Is it all right for a church to accept money that has been won in a lottery?"
 - o If not known, then matters of conscience are not violated (1 Cor 8; 10:25-33)
 - o If known, then probably not accept since it is not gained in a worthy manner (1 Cor 10:28)
- j. "Is it all right to accept Lotto tickets as an inducement to review a company product or service?"
 - o If that is the sole motivation - then we must search our own hearts before the Lord
 - o Why not just refuse the tickets (will we still listen to the "pitch")?
- k. "Is flipping a coin to decide an issue considered gambling?"
 - o Extremely rare for all things to be equal - thus a flip of a coin can decide. If this is so, then it does not matter which one is selected, choose one!
 - o If this replaces study, prayer, and trust in the Lord, then it is wrong and we have taken the easy way out and not exercised the abilities and knowledge God has given us
 - o Typically, there is no money involved (wagering) so it is a pure decision that has to be made
- l. "Is gambling a sin?" (Most likely it can be)
 - o Wisdom issue
 - o Motivation (moral) issue
 - o Resulting fruit issue
 - o Test yourself - if entertainment is the only motivation - then leave the winnings in the tray!
- m. "Is it all right to band together with non-reformed or even non-Christian organizations in efforts to fight legalizing (or government sponsoring) of gambling?"
- n. "If it is OK to drink alcohol as long as it is not abused, why is gambling so bad if it is not abused and only done as entertainment?"
 - o Can be very similar type of sin (idolatry; escapism; destructive life-style; destructive of family)
 - o Again, it is a wisdom and witness issue
- o. What's wrong with the following statements?
 - o "If I hit it big, I'll give half to the church for its new building program"
 - o "All I have to do is hit it big once, then I'll stop"
 - o "Some people will always gamble, so why not capitalize on it and let the State benefit?"
 - o When gambling activities are legalized, economies are plagued with 100% to 550% increases in the number of addicted gamblers (note 24)
 - o From 3.5 to 5% of those exposed to gambling will develop into pathological gamblers (with the percentage higher for adolescents and young adults)(note 25)
 - o "I don't gamble expecting to get rich, but only to have some entertainment"
 - o "I don't gamble, but others should have the right if they want to" (pro-choice)
 - o "Somebody is going to win, why not let it be me?"
 - o "Sure, the Lottery may hurt some people, but look how much good it does for schools"
 - o "Everything in moderation, including gambling"

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Additional Notes:

- o "National Gambling Impact Study Commission" report; "www.ngisc.gov.reports/fullrpt.html"
- o Man at work told me he has cooked hamburgers and other food at his church Bingo night (once a week for five years)(Catholic church). Recently, man suffered a heart attack, paramedics called, treated him there and took away in ambulance - not one beat or number call was missed or delayed! Those at the table argued over who was going to take over his Bingo card

Session #24: Extraterrestrials (Detailed Notes)

*"And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light"
(2 Cor 11:14)*

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing" (2 Thess 2:9-10)

Purpose of this Session: *To provide a Biblical answer to the increasingly pervasive belief in the existence of extraterrestrials*

- o How many people believe in UFO's? What are the most plausible explanations?
- o What does the Bible say? Are there relationships to the New Age movement?

Note: *Study Questions sheet to be handed out prior week for students to think about (See Handout: Study Review Questions)*

1. Introduction: *As the "possible" becomes the "plausible" and leads to the "probable", Christianity becomes more irrelevant. This can have major implications for our Christian witness to the world*

- a. "Do you think this is an important area to discuss?" "Why?" "How many of you are Trekkies?"
- b. "Have you ever seen what you would consider to be a UFO?"
- c. This topic has permeated society and our very consciousness for an entire generation
 - o Covers from simple UFO's that are lights in sky not identified by the observer to alleged alien contacts (physically, thoughts, dreams, trances) to abductions
 - o Movies: Forbidden Planet; M.I.B.; Independence Day; Contact; E.T.; Star Wars; Star Trek; Arrival; X-Files; hundreds of others)
 - o TV: X-Files; Third Rock from the Sun; ALF; My Favorite Martian; Star Trek; etc.
 - o Toys: tremendous market for alien beings and videos
 - o We have grown up with this exposure all of our life
 - o Much of entertainment industry accepts the possibility, if not the certainty that aliens exist
- d. Contentions:
 - o Addressing this topic will force us to address issues we may steer clear from normally
 - o This is not just a result of the "drug culture", but is a worldwide phenomenon
 - o The only sure standard to turn to even for this topic is the Bible (truths, principles)
 - o The topic of extraterrestrials has significant implications for us as Christians
 - o Understanding this area will help in our evangelistic efforts (Christians looked upon as narrow minded - in fact, the opposite is true!)
 - o It affects the understanding of our uniqueness and the uniqueness of the earth
 - o It affects our understanding of how life come about on earth
 - o It replaces the yearning people have for a "higher" source or power to solve the world's problems (apparent accounts bring about concreteness to the desire)
 - o It is a "silver bullet" that non-believers use to embarrass Christians by their trivializing its possibility and implications
 - o As belief in extraterrestrials becomes more prominent, Christianity becomes more irrelevant and archaic to the world

2. A Little History of Sightings and Writings in the Modern Era

- a. Modern era began on Mt. Rainier in 1947 (Flying "saucers" were reported by a pilot)
- b. Historical sightings recorded throughout history (reassessment of previous historical accounts)
 - o Very low incidence, treated as strange occurrences or visions at the time
 - o Book of Ezekiel (vision of objects - wheels within wheels...)(Ezek 1:15-28)

- o In 1800's cigar shaped objects were reported seen floating in the air
- o Typically the technology seen reflected the understanding and terminology of the day
- o "Foo-fighters" reported by Allied pilots during WWII in Europe
- c. Post WW II Cold War era: technological developments great concern (identifying potential threat capabilities (new, advanced) and hiding our own)
 - o 1947 "wave" of sightings reached as high as several hundred per day in July
 - o 1952 "wave" of sightings around the nation, even over the White House
 - o Thousands of "sightings" in the United States and the U.S.S.R. and also around the world
- d. Modern categories of UFO's (originated by J. Allen Hynek, Air Force's astronomy consultant to Project Blue Book: investigating sightings from 1947-1969)
 - o Section one Categories (Most common sightings)
 - o Nocturnal lights
 - o Daylight disks
 - o Radar/visual simultaneous sighting
 - o Section two Categories (Close encounters)
 - o Close encounters of 1st kind: UFO seen close range, no interaction with environment
 - o Close encounters of 2nd kind: Physical effects on both animate and inanimate objects
 - o Close encounters of 3rd kind: Aliens (occupants) of UFO reported in or around craft
 - o Close encounters of 4th kind: Abductions by extraterrestrials (post Hynek)
 - o Close encounters of 5th kind: Humans & aliens intentionally communicate through ordinary light and sound (post Hynek)
 - o Of 12,618 sightings reported to Project Blue Book; 701 remain "unidentified" (See Handout)
- e. Erich Von Daniken's books: "Chariots of the Gods?" and "Gods From Outer Space" in the late 60's
- f. Whitley Strieber's book: "Communion" (NY Times Bestseller); 1987

3. Selected Statistics since 1947 shows dramatic increase in belief in extraterrestrials

- a. 1947: Gallop Poll; virtually no one considered UFO's to be from outer space (hoaxes; secret weapons; illusions; some phenomenon that could be explained)
- b. 1950's: 3.4% believed UFO's manned by extraterrestrials
- c. 1973: 11% claimed to have seen a UFO
- d. 1987: 50% believed in the existence of UFOs, same number considered extraterrestrials to be real
9% reported they had seen something they thought was a UFO
- e. 1990: 14% claimed to have seen a UFO
- f. (1995?) 50% believe the government is restricting information about extraterrestrials and UFOs (note 7)
 - o Government can't be trusted, so if the government stance is contrary to our beliefs, we hypothesize they are lying to bolster our claim (much harder to prove nonexistence than existence of something)
 - o Area 51 secrecy bolsters these beliefs
- g. 1997: 45% believed UFO's have visited the Earth in some form
48% thought UFO's were "something real."
12% claimed to have seen a UFO
71% believed the U.S. government knew more about the phenomenon than publicly revealed
31% of Americans believe a spacecraft from another planet crashed in Roswell, NM in 1947
38% believe "there are people somewhat like ourselves living on other planets"
- h. Insurance policies are available (\$10 M coverage against alien abductions - requires signature)
- i. Magazines; journals; books (1998 - books in print relating to UFO's was 256; Kennedy family 266)

4. Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI): well publicized scientific attempt to find evidence of extraterrestrials by searching for RF communication signals from outer space

- a. Brought about by lack of governmental support for the project, yet high public interest remains
- b. Rationale behind SETI continuance (whether openly discussed or not)
 - o Universe so large - must be other life in it (evolutionary philosophy) - this is a logical inference if evolution is correct, but presuppositions are wrong!
 - o Arrogant to believe that we are the only intelligent life form in the universe
 - o Paranoia - fear of the unknown drives some to seek out answers to these questions

- o Seeking after a higher power to save us from our apparently insoluble problems on earth
 - o Attempt to prove we are something less than God intended (not the highest form of creation)
 - o Attempt to show the Bible is wrong, and Christians are "narrow-minded" (elitist; speciest)?
 - o Pure scientific curiosity (implications staggering) while excluding the spiritual realm
- c. Methods
- o Radio telescopes searching for signals between 1000 and 3000 megahertz (1-3 gigahertz)
 - o Weed out background signals from earth and satellites
 - o Government funding provided until 1993; private donations now (\$4 M/yr)
 - o Investigating about 1000 stars similar to our sun (by 1996 1/3 examined with negative results)
 - o Seti@home project; downloadable software that processes collected emissions from space; currently (Feb, 2000) 1.6 million participants in 224 countries; computing time contributed since May 1999 equal to 165,000 years, averaging 10 Teraflops
- d. Results: No contact to date; why? (remember **1 Kings 18:16-39**, Elijah and the prophets of Baal):
- o "Self-destruction hypothesis" (suicide or self destruction)
 - o "Contemplation hypothesis" (non-colonizing, contemplative)
 - o So far away that it is impossible to contact us
 - o May not use the electromagnetic spectrum as we do
 - o Beyond our search-space on interest
 - o Techniques being used could be wrong
 - o Aliens may not be in a communicative phase
 - o Aliens may be seeking to avoid us
 - o There may not be any out there!
 - o How would you ever prove this without divine revelation?
 - o To prove something doesn't exist is much harder than to prove something does

Aside: Drake Equation (attempt to calculate probability of communicative civilizations)

$$gs*fs*ne*fl*fi*fc*L = N$$

Where: gs = rate of star formation in the galaxy (yearly)	(~20)
fs = fraction of stars that can support planets	(~0.9)
ne = fraction of planets that are habitable (right temperature)	(~0.1)
fl = fraction of planets on which life originates	(?)
fi = fraction of planets in which a life form has evolved to intelligence	(?)
fc = fraction of "fi" planets that have technology & will to comm.	(?)
L = mean lifetime (yrs) of a communicative civilization	(?)
N = number of communicative civilizations	(?)

Bottom line: Though used and gives the impression of scientific trustworthiness, it basically is a useless equation! (Can yield any results you want)

5. Just because we haven't received recognizable signals from outer space, doesn't mean UFO's don't exist - some creative secular explanations to sincerely believed alien encounters:

- a. Mental aberrations; delusions; drug induced
- b. A creation from our own mind out of a:
 - o Desire to believe in something grand to fill a void in their lives
 - o Desire for disruption of the routine of life, excitement
 - o Desire to know something is out there that is maybe greater than us gives hope
 - o Desire for a "space brother" that can watch out for us and take care of us
 - o Need for an answer for hopelessness when one does not believe in God
- c. True extraterrestrials from another planet or planets

- d. Origins are on earth, but so different from us that people cannot accept it
- e. Creatures from another dimension (space-time)
- f. Creatures from the future coming here through time travel
- g. Humans from the future, disguising themselves to prevent temporal effects
- h. Mental hallucinations induced by natural phenomenon (magnetism, low frequencies, etc.)
- i. A following phase (or stage) of human life after death (larvae now, extraterrestrial form later)
- j. Actual physical creatures being created from our own unconscious mind (belief creating reality)(Movie: "Forbidden Planet")
- k. Departed spirits of the dead that come back in disguised (or changed) form
- l. Not surprisingly, **worldview** affects a person's approach to this subject:
 - o New Age ("space brothers"; antidotal reports; sightings; abductions; "cosmic masters"; UFO organizations founded to welcome extraterrestrials; lost civilizations; etc.)
 - o Evolutionary explanation (Eric Von Danekin "Chariots of the Gods"; extraterrestrials came to this world long ago and have visited ever since). Blatant disregard for the Bible and its trustworthiness: some Biblical accounts used to "prove" extraterrestrials:
 - o Exodus - pillar of fire & cloud a spacecraft; parting of the sea by spacecraft exhaust
 - o Ezekiel 1:4,6,15.18; landing modules & gears; helicopter type blades; rocket engines
 - o Luke 1:35; Mary artificially inseminated; later aliens appearing to the shepherds; star of Bethlehem a spacecraft; miracles - people were hypnotized into believing they had problems, then responded to Jesus prompting; etc.
 - o Ascension - being taken up into a spacecraft in the clouds
 - o Angels, gods, God - extraterrestrials
 - o Hell depiction - story or pictures given showing Venus
 - o John 14:2 "In my Father's house are many rooms.." Used to justify belief in extraterrestrials, context does not allow this
 - o Biblical worldview generally not considered (revealed truths and principles that can be applied; reasonable inferences; known Satanic powers and agenda; etc.)
 - o Have you considered this approach?
 - o Virtually the entire media approach is geared to existence of extraterrestrials (to the exclusion of the spiritual realm)

6. Three Categories are the Most Realistic to explain the occurrence of UFO's and credible (?) "alien encounter" stories:

- a. Natural phenomena (over 90% can be explained by this (note 1))
 - o Planets: distant airplane landing lights; ball lightning; weather balloons; satellites;
 - o Formations of birds; lenticular and other strange clouds; wind borne objects (kites; Frisbees, pieces of paper); blimps; searchlights at night; various kinds of astronomical and meteorological phenomena; etc.
 - o Ball lightning: usually oval in shape; intense red; often heard with sizzle sound; moves in an erratic manner (responsive to EM fields); plasma can reflect radio waves; low altitude
 - o Reflections on windows; military aircraft dropped flares; "black projects" by the military; 7087 manmade objects in space (screws to satellites) in 1990
 - o CIA report in 1997 admitted Air Force lies in 1950's and 60's to cover up U-2 spy plane flights
 - o What about Area 51?
- b. Deliberate hoaxes (inadvertent hoaxes also?)
 - o Publicity seekers
 - o Those seeking notoriety for personal gain, attention, etc.
 - o Those taking this as a challenge to "pull the wool over others"
- c. That there is something "unnatural" that is actually being seen and experienced not "of this world"
 - o Too many credible witnesses that have put their careers at risk (airline pilots; college professors; elected officials; astronauts; etc.)
 - o Some reasonably consistent reports from around the world over a long period of time (lights to electromagnetic phenomena to abductions to almond eyes to experiments...)

- o However:
 - o No conclusive physical evidence exists (excluding secondary effects such as radar intercepts, sounds, photos, scars, etc.)
 - o No spacecraft has been found and publicly revealed
 - o No signal from outer space has been intercepted
 - o The abductions and "close encounters" are typically a terrifying experience
- d. The most obvious explanation typically not considered to explain "c" above is: Demonic spirits
 - o Must identify Biblical truths and principles that apply
 - o Compare evidence with Biblical data

7. Back to basics: the Bible teaches that man is the object of God's creation and love, and that Satan is the great liar!

- a. God has the power to create untold other civilizations in the universe if He wanted to
 - o But there is no direct Biblical evidence pointing to this
 - o There are "extraterrestrials", but not the kind most people are looking for (angels & demons)
 - o The Bible does not directly or indirectly indicate that there is created life on other planets
 - o Would it make sense that part of it was not affected (protected from the fall?)
 - o Is it reasonable to believe other races in the universe were tainted by man's sin here?
 - o Would Christ need to redeem other creatures in their worlds, if they existed?
- b. The Bible points to the centrality of the earth in God's creation
 - o The sun, moon and stars were created afterwards (lesser importance) (**Gen 1:1-2,14-16**)
 - o Five words describe the rest of the stars/galaxies ("He also made the stars")(**Gen 1:16**)
 - o The rest of universe is a very hostile place for life (vacuum; exploding stars; mostly hydrogen)
 - o There is a splendor associated with the heavenly bodies that is different from that of the earthly bodies (**1 Cor 15:38-41**)
 - o Heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars)
 - o Earthly bodies (man, animals, birds, fish)
 - o Implies that the earth is the abode of life in the created realm, not the cosmos
- c. The Bible points to the centrality of man in God's creation
 - o We are the pinnacle of God's creation, being made in His image after all else (**Gen 1:27**)
 - o Each phase of the six day creation provided the necessary environment and preparation for a suitable home for man - then with man it was declared "...very good" (**Gen 1:31**)
- d. The sin of man affected the entire universe (**Rom 8:20-22**)
 - o The known universe (within our observation) is subject to decay everywhere! (second law of thermodynamics)
 - o This also points out the centrality of man in God's created order!
 - o The fall affected man's search for knowledge (**1 Cor 1:20-22**)(attempt to justify a creation without a creator)
- e. The Earth is where God sent His Son to live, walk, and die - displaying His infinite love for us
 - o Christ came "being found in appearance as a man" (**Phil 2:8**)
 - o Christ is the perfect representation of God in human form (pointing again to the centrality of man in God's creation!)
- f. Is the very size of the cosmos a compelling argument to justify believing there are other life forms out there? Why is the universe so large?
 - o **Psalm 19:1-4** "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the earth" (it testifies to God's power, majesty and glory)
 - o **Rom 1:20**: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (it testifies to God's power, and that only Divinity could bring it into being, man had nothing to do with it's creation, but it is for our good)
 - o The immensity of the universe speaks to the infinite, incomprehensible nature of God
 - o To captivate man in the use of his curiosity and intellectual powers in order to find out

- o how marvelous God's creative powers are (educate and enthrall us) (**Prov 25:2**)
- o Show man how **insignificant** he is compared to all of creation (worm (**Job 25:6**); grasshopper (**Isa 40:22**); grass (**Psalm 90:5-6; 103:15-16; Isa 40:6-7; 51:12; 1 Peter 1:24**); dust (**Psalm 103:14**); a passing breeze (**Psalm 78:39; Isa 2:22**)); and that is what he is on his own
- o To show the **significance of sin** - it affected the entire universe (**Rom 8:20-22**; second law of thermodynamics); something we cannot comprehend (just as Adam's sin changed the nature of every human being that came into existence from that time on)
- o To show the **depth of love** of God toward His people (as insignificant as we are) by sending His Son to die for them (infinite gift to pay for infinite sin)
- o To show the **extent of God's love** to even redeem the universe after man has despoiled it (**Rom 8:20-21; Rev 21:1-5**)
- o **Bottom Line: Instill awe; humble us; fill us with infinite gratitude! Show the depth of the love God has for us by sending His Son to die for such a speck as us!**
- g. Satan is powerful and a deceiver (Simius Dei - "ape of God" - Augustine)
 - o He is capable of counterfeit miracles and signs (**2 Thess 2:9-10; Matt 7:22-23; 24:24; Rev 13:11-13; 16:12-14; 19:20**)
 - o Turning a staff into a snake (**Ex 7:12**)
 - o Turning water into blood (**Ex 7:20-22**)
 - o Making frogs come up out of the river (**Ex 8:7**)
 - o He is very powerful
 - o He can control the actions of men (**Job 1:13-15,17**)
 - o He can control the weather (**Job 1:18-19**)
 - o He can send fire down from the sky (**Job 1:16; see also Rev 13:11-13**)
 - o He can bring terrible disease and suffering on man (**Job 2:7**)
 - o He can transport a man to a far place (**Matt 4:5,8**)
 - o He can show a man visions of things around the world (**Matt 4:8**)
 - o He can drive his servants (demons) out of people (**Matt 7:22-23**)
 - o He has his demons indwell men (**Mark 1:26; 5:1-13; 7:24-30; 9:14-32; 16:9; Acts 8:4-8; 19:13-17**)
 - o He sends his demons to deceive men (**1 Tim 4:1**)
 - o He sends his false apostles, teachers, workmen and false servants of righteousness (**2 Cor 11:13; 2 Peter 2:1-22**) to deceive men
 - o He can himself appear as an angel of light (**2 Cor 11:14**) (angel Maroni of LDS)
 - o Satan will counterfeit as much of God's righteous plans as he possibly can
 - o Angels are **ministering spirits** - demons are **deceiving spirits**
 - o Christ brings **eternal life** - Satan is a **murderer**
 - o Christ is the author of **truth** - Satan is the father of **lies**
 - o Christ establishes a **righteous kingdom** - Satan promises to bring man into a **new age**
 - o **Christ** will rule the world - Satan promises world government under **Anti-Christ**
 - o Believers indwelt with **Holy Spirit** - unbelievers can be possessed by **demons**
 - o Christ is the **light** - Satan is the prince of **darkness**
 - o God made man **pinnacle** of creation - Satan wants man to believe he's **inferior** to aliens
 - o God is source of **true peace and comfort** - Satan wants men to believe he can do it **on his own** (or with the help of "space friends")
 - o **God alone is to be worshiped** - **Satan wants man to worship him alone**
 - o Is there any doubt whether Satan (and his demons) can appear as extraterrestrials? (beings, spacecraft, physical disturbances, physically harming others, lights, etc); However:
 - o He is not omnipresent!
 - o He is not omnipotent!
- h. Three pronged attack by Satan to deceive mankind:
 - o Secular scientific study which disallows spiritual realm and attempts to justify a creation without a creator

- o Extraterrestrial "alien" encounters:
 - o Stories of benevolent encounters tend to be from thrill seekers, drug induced, or delusionary in nature
 - o Vast majority are terrifying experiences, malevolent influences, with Satanic associations (slaughtered animals; etc.)
 - o Cosmic masters; New Age theology (see below)
- i. Christians are to have nothing to do with the occult (**Lev 19:26**)
 - o Do not be naive or ignorant of Satan's schemes (**2 Cor 2:11**)
 - o Do not have anything to do with divination, sorcery, omens, witchcraft, casting of spells, mediums, spiritists, those who consult the dead, astrology, etc. (**Deut 18:10-12; Lev 20:6; Isa 47:12-15; Jer 10:2**)
 - o If we do, we open ourselves up to control by Satan or his demons (**Rom 6:16**)
- j. We are to test the spirits to see whether they are from God or not (**1 John 4:1-3**)
 - o Have nothing to do with deceiving spirits (**1 Tim 4:1**)
 - o Resist Satan and he will flee (**James 4:7-8**)

8. Is it a surprise there is a strong "New Age" Association with Extraterrestrial Beliefs

- a. "New Age" beliefs ("Age of Aquarius")
 - o Existence of higher "spirit guides" or "cosmic masters" that want to help mankind
 - o Mankind is on the brink of a new age that will allow it to advance into another level of higher spirituality, but it must go through a time of "cleansing" first (tribulation period)
 - o Reincarnation very dominant theme (**Psalm 14:1**)
 - o Over 75% of New Age'rs believe in UFOs (note 5) and think:
 - o Man is not unique, and is inferior to many extraterrestrial civilizations
 - o Extraterrestrials come from a variety of galaxies
 - o Aliens are here to help mankind in quantum leap ahead (transition to the new age)
 - o Extraterrestrials are more advanced spiritually & technologically and hence have the answers to all of our problems
 - o Aliens won't openly reveal selves or interfere until mankind is ready to receive them
 - o Christianity hinders ones progress towards this deeper understanding of the universe (we are the enemy to New-Age'rs)
- b. "New Age" techniques and tactics:
 - o Gradually changing man's beliefs and acceptance of the paranormal and extraterrestrial
 - o Toys and self help material with New Age ingredients; video games
 - o Recruiting of famous personalities to make more popular and acceptable
 - o Gradual creeping into the public school environment to train children early on
 - o Occultist techniques: divination; out-of-body experiences; levitation; clairvoyance; spiritism (channeling); automatic handwriting; use of crystals; seances; trances; telepathy; astral projection; Ouija boards
 - o Organizations; literature; books; films; gradual indoctrination through awareness; for example:
 - o UNiversal ARtificate Interdimensional Understanding of Science (UNARIUS)
 - Starships will touch down in 2001 near San Diego, from 33 other worlds, usher in new era; Atlantis connection; end disease and troubles; machines to view peoples past lives to cure them of ills (90 K on mailing list)
 - o Raelian Movement
 - Founded 1973 by Frenchman believed mother human, father alien; last of 40 prophets (all crossbred); build embassy to greet aliens 2025; eternal cloning (35 K members)
 - o Aetherius Society
 - Worldwide spiritual brotherhood; founder George King, told by cosmic spirits he would be the voice of the "Interplanetary Parliament"; Jesus living on Venus; ascended masters; 7 million planets members
 - o Heaven's Gate publicity (**1 Tim 4:1-4**)

- c. "New Age" ultimate agenda:
 - o Prepare mankind for a new era of higher spirituality and harmony
 - o Prepare the foundation for a one-world government to usher in tranquillity
 - o Prepare mankind (the world) for a one-world religion (universalism - replacing the exclusiveness of Christianity)(Universal fatherhood of god, universal brotherhood of man)

9. Bottom Lines - Why are there so many apparently "legitimate" sightings and experiences with what people believe are extraterrestrials?

- a. Belief in extraterrestrials provides filler for the spiritual vacuum many people have today
- b. Satan can perform mighty works - even to deceive many that he is an angel of light
- c. The **Ultimate Deception Plan** is to deceive many about Christ's coming
 - o Type 1: Some will believe one world government with one ruler that unites the world is at hand; this will be accomplished with the help of "visitors" (this will be the Anti-Christ, not a benevolent ruler)(2 Thess 2:5-12)
 - o Type 2: Some will believe that superior alien being(s) are about to come to help mankind (but Christ is returning to bring judgment)
 - o Type 3: Some will see Christ's return as an invasion from outer space and to be feared and fought against (Rev 19:19-21?)
 - o Type 4: Some will see the returning Christ as He is, one bringing judgment of sin, and will fight against Him because of their own sin
 - o Type 5: Some will see Christ as the returning Savior and Lord, and rejoice!
- d. The real "extraterrestrial" is returning to take His people home! (1 Thess 4:15-18)

10. Discussion Questions

- a. *"What about Christians that claim to have seen UFO's, or been abducted?"*
 - o Remember that the vast majority of UFO sightings can be explained by natural phenomenon
 - o Search scriptures for answers, not pagan sources or writings (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 2:1)
 - o Question whether you're a believer (test yourself with the word - the standard) (2 Cor 13:5)
 - o Consider the very real possibility that Satan has deceived you (1 John 4:1-3)
- b. *"If alleged extraterrestrials are demonic - how can they affect believers?"*
 - o They can manifest themselves visibly and create confusion and fear (2 Cor 11:14)
 - o Can they physically indwell a believer? (Demonic possession) (2 Thess 2:9-10)
 - o Demonic "oppression" vice "possession"?
 - o Can they affect our thoughts? (1 Peter 5:8-9)
- c. *"Aren't hidden (suppressed) memories that are recovered by hypnosis valid?"*
 - o "...recollections obtained during hypnosis not only fail to be more accurate but actually appear to be generally less reliable than recall" (note 6)
 - o Encyclopedia Britannica: The central phenomenon in hypnosis is "suggestibility - a state of greatly enhanced receptiveness and responsiveness to suggestions and stimuli"
 - o Those being hypnotized are in an altered state of consciousness, opening themselves up to the possibility of demonic influence (like deep meditation, trance states, etc.)
- d. *"What about the supposed physical evidence that exists?"*
 - o Anyone can make any number of claims - it does not mean it is true or verifiable
 - o Remember the fossils from Mars allegedly found on the meteorite in Antarctica? Proven to be contaminated while on earth
 - o Supposed "proof" has not withstood scientific scrutiny yet, but even if it does, what standard are we to use to evaluate its source?
- e. *"How do I evangelize those that are caught up in belief in extraterrestrials?"* Points to consider:
 - o By laughing it off we will loose credibility with a number of people, remember:
 - o Either they or someone they know has had an experience with UFO's of some kind
 - o Evolutionary theology is a primary underpinning of their belief system
 - o There really are "extraterrestrials" (angels, demons)
 - o There is a deep seated desire in many people for a "higher" power to save, protect or help them (or humanity) from its hopelessness. They are replacing a search for a true and living God with an approach to anything else but (1 Cor 1:18,21; 2:14; Col 2:8)

- o In the physical realm, known laws cannot be broken - yet they must be to account for aliens amongst us; however, these same laws are not accepted as not applying when the spiritual realm is addressed (inconsistent)
 - o Even if there are extraterrestrials, the question of purpose and meaning in our lives, and the ultimate destiny of each of us is still not answered - hopelessness will still overwhelm you
 - o Have they researched the alternative theories explaining what people claim to have seen and experienced - or only investigated that which they want to accept?
- f. *"Do you believe the government is withholding information on extraterrestrials?"*
- g. *"How would you address the argument that the universe is so large, there has to be other life out there?"*

Notes:

1. *"Alien Obsession - What Lies Behind Abductions, Sightings, and the Attraction to the Paranormal," Ron Rhodes, 1998*
2. *"UFO Cults and the New Millennium," William M. Alnor, 1998*
3. *"Close Encounters - a Better Explanation," Clifford Wilson & John Weldon, 1978*
4. *"Communion - a True Story," Whitley Strieber, 1987*
5. *"Inside the New Age Nightmare," Randall N. Baer; 1989*
6. *American Medical Association Council on Scientific Affairs; 1985*
7. *"UFOs Real? Government Covering Up?" in Skeptical Inquirer, Nov-Dec 1995; Kendrick Frazier*
8. *Http://msa.gov/docs/efoia/releaseed/ufo.html*

Session #25: Movies and TV (Detailed Notes)

*“Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word”
(Psalm 119:37)*

Question: “How many own a TV? How many have ever gone to see a movie at the theater?”

Question: “Is your living or family room furniture oriented around the TV set?”

Question: “ How often have you said: “The show (or movie) was great.....except for...””

Purpose of this Session: Address from a Christian perspective one of the most influential aspects of our modern culture - the visually oriented mass media (the eye gate!)

- o Overview some of the dangerous aspects of TV and Movies that are so prevalent in our day
- o Review pertinent Biblical principles that apply to our use of TV or Movies
- o Discussion some practical things we as Christians can do to protect our families and enrich the environment in which we live

1. Introduction: Movies and TV have, and are having, a very significant impact upon us not only as a family but as a society

- a. What most shapes “popular culture?” (TV; movies; songs; the gospel; schools; church; parents?)
 - o **Nothing new under the sun (Job 31:1; Psalm 119:37; Eccl 1:8)**
 - o **What audience** is targeted and why?
 - o 18-30 year old’s
 - o Buying power is significant (also influence others)
 - o Habits influenced before ingrained then they can be manipulated
 - o **Dominant Message?**
 - o Selfishness, self-centeredness, man-centeredness
 - o Everything is relative (no absolutes; post-modernism)
 - o Feelings orientation
 - o Shocking, outrageous, in your face (“As bad as I want to be”)
 - o Vulgarity, course language
 - o Unrestrained sexual gratification and deviation (homosexuality)
 - o Violence, graphic and intense
 - o Disrespect for authority, particularly pastoral, police and parents
 - o Tearing down of Christian beliefs, faith, standards, chastity
 - o Inaccurate portrayal of history (political agenda - Pocohontas)
 - o Dwelling on the negative, depraved, deviant, degenerate
 - o Man can solve his own problems (super-heros example)
 - o Other trends? (Mystical; satanic; New Age; adult situations...)
 - o World magazine special issue: contrasted father image (“Father knows best”, “Ozzie and Harriet”, “My three sons” to “All in the family”, “The Simpsons”, “Home Improvement”, “Married with Children”)
 - o **Contention movies don’t influence but reflect society** (media producers & executives)
 - o Why pay millions for advertisements? (Superbowl; billboards; magazines; movie trailers; radio ads; etc.)
 - o What about: self help books; psychology; public service announcements; education in general; using prominent people as spokesmen for issues or causes; war propaganda; political candidate ads; attack ads; parents example; etc.
 - o Each in their way want to affect our thoughts; decisions and actions!
- b. Many opinions about visually oriented entertainment mediums: TV and Movies
 - o Some believe TV is Satanic
 - o Some prefer not to have TV around because of the content and temptation

- o Some use TV sparingly, with discernment
- o Some are unaware of the degree of decay
- o Wide variety of approaches relative to movies
- c. Types of popular TV programs (examples):
 - o Soap operas (daytime TV)/Sporting events/Situation comedies (Sitcoms)
 - o Talk shows (Oprah; Donahue; etc)/Variety shows (entertainment acts)
 - o PBS (Nova; National Geographic; specials; nature; public service; etc.)
 - o News (National; local; specials)/Movies (old and new)
 - o Series (Historical fiction; special topics; docu-dramas; etc.)/Documentaries
 - o Cable channels (special events; pay per view; restricted movies; etc.)
 - o Do it yourself channels (painting; cooking; house repair; etc.)
 - o Old movies; auction channel....
- d. Types of movies (examples):
 - o Chick flicks/Adventure films/Science fiction/Historical fiction
 - o Slasher films/Revenge films
 - o Films exploring mental aberrations or social conflicts
 - o Recent mini series "Jesus"
- e. Was it always this way? (**Handout: "The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 (Hays Code)"**)
 - o Even a secular organization recognized the impact of this media and the moral responsibility attendant to using it
 - o Virtually every caution addressed has been attacked and ignored openly
 - o Could use this guide in our homes today!
- f. Like any tool (technology), visual media can be used for great harm or noble works, however:
 - o There is a great amount of inherent evil in much of TV and movie material
 - o There is an obvious "agenda" being promulgated in much of this media form
 - o I don't know where you are at - but we need to go back to basics

2. Biblically, though we have great freedom, we are also called to be modest and not indulge our sinful nature. General principles:

- a. **How we look** - Since earliest times, modesty has been the normal condition
 - o Sin in the garden of Eden resulted in Adam and Eve covering up, not undressing (**Gen 3:7**)
 - o Noah was covered up by his two sons in a respectful, modest manner (**Gen 9:20-23**)
 - o The Ammonites shaved off half the beard of David's men and their garments in the middle at the buttocks (**2 Sam 10:1-5**; see also **1 Chron 19:4**); bringing humiliation on them
 - o Isaiah went about naked (outer garment removed) in the discharge of his prophetic duties in order to draw attention to himself (and message); but the Lord uses this to describe how Egypt will be humiliated - with buttocks bared (**Isa 20:3-5**)
 - o Women are to dress modestly (**1 Tim 2:9-10**)
- b. **What we look at** - Be careful what we place before our eyes (**Psalms 119:37**)
 - o What goes through the "eye gate" is retained in our memories
 - o **Job 31:1** "I made a covenant with my eyes, not to look lustfully at a girl"
 - o **Eccl 1:8** "The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing"
 - o The eyes and ears are not passive receivers, without affect on us - can we truly "block" out what is being presented to us?
 - o David's sinful heart was aroused by gazing at Bathsheba (**2 Sam 11:2**)
 - o What we watch can arouse sinful desires within us, and our sinful nature can cause us to sinfully look on things we ought not
- c. **What we indulge in** - Tremendous freedom as believers, not to gratify/indulge our sinful nature (**Gal 5:13,16**)
 - o Not above being affected by what we are exposed to, and tempted by it (**James 1:13-15**)
 - o Not above suffering the consequences of sinfully indulging in what is profane before God (**Gal 5:7-8; Eccl 11:9**)
 - o Constant exposure dulls our sensitivity to the obscene, vulgar and sinful
 - o Even when helping someone else address their sin we are at risk in our own life (**Gal 6:1-2**)

- o Though everything is permissible, not everything is beneficial (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23)
- d. Who we listen to** - Not to remain in the presence of the wicked (Psalm 1:1-3)
 - o There is a progression to becoming polluted by the world, we are not to:
 - o "...walk in the counsel of the wicked..." - to listen to the ungodly (expose ourselves to defilement)
 - o "...or stand in the way of sinners..." - to accept the words of the ungodly (buy into ungodly justification of sin in its many forms)
 - o "...or sit in the seat of mockers..." - to participate in the actions of the ungodly (act out what we have learned, become what we have watched and studied)
- e. What we think about** - Practice Phil 4:8-10 at all times - how does TV and movies compare?
 - o "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things..."
 - o No allowance for ungodly exposure to evil, become defiled
- f. We're not to be partners with darkness** around us (Eph 5:1-7)(also Gal 5:19-21 & Rom 1:29-32):
 - o "...sexual immorality..." "...impurity..." "...greed..." "...obscenity..." "...foolish talk..."
 - o "...coarse joking..." "...immoral, impure or greedy person..." "...idolater..."
 - o "...disobedient..." "...fruitless deeds of darkness..." "...drunk on wine..."
 - o How are we partners with them?
 - o Buying movie tickets - supports the industry and tacitly approves the content
 - o Buying products advertised on commercials provides - incentive to continue
 - o Subscribing to cable TV (extra stations) - we encourage their continuing
 - o Watching and listening - any different than the rest of the world?
 - o Participating - we risk defilement in our own lives and becoming like them
- g. Bottom lines:**
 - o God condemns those who call evil good and good evil (Isa 5:20); we are to be diligent in our decisions; do not give credence or approval to that which God condemns!
 - o Remember that Christians can disagree on the degree of exposure allowed (Rom 14)
 - o Wisdom would dictate great caution in what involvement we have in any of the media
 - o Individuals and families must wrestle with this issue
 - o Seek out others to compare with and seek approaches that have been successful
 - o Commonality amongst families helps re-enforce the standards that are set, however, as parents we are accountable to the Lord for our choices, we cannot blame others
 - o Standards may vary amongst people, since each has a different degree of weakness & strength
 - o Be sensitive to others and the decisions they make - seek understanding not judgement first
 - o Be careful when we recommend TV or movies to others (our mind tries to filter)
 - o As we eat and drink from the world's fountain of vile TV and movies - are we doing so for the glory of God? (1 Cor 10:31)

3. Besides Biblical warnings about exposure to blatant evil, and its corrupting influence, there are a number of other dangers to be aware of

- a. What's wrong with "Vegging" out for awhile?
 - o Rationalization: "I've had a long day, why can't I just sit back and relax for a little while?"
 - o We may not realize the impact that is really happening
 - o Selective recall: "That's the first bad thing that has been said..." when I walk in
 - o The presence of authority brings new awareness to what is being watched
 - o Replacing more productive endeavors with non-productive ones (time is a limited quantity - it cannot be replaced)
 - o Replacing time spent more profitably edifying, equipping, and developing discernment
 - o Particularly at dinner time (family time; devotions; discuss the day; weigh issues)
 - o Replacing time that could have been spent reading (becoming illiterate)
 - o Form of laziness ("Idleness is the Devil's workshop")
 - o Remember TV trays - the family that watches TV together is not together
 - o Stopping conversation and interaction with others ("Shush - wait until the commercial")
 - o What is more important - our family or the program we are watching?

- o How does our family interpret the importance they have in our lives?
- o Is this Biblical? We are to work (part of fall, yet rich blessing - Eph 2:10; Eccl 2:24-26)
- o Even eating and drinking are preferable to TV since communication is typically occurring (Eccl 2:24-26; 3:13)
- o We still are affected since we are "drinking" in whatever we place before us
- b. Voyeurism and fantasizing (James 1:13-15)
 - o Placing thoughts in our minds difficult to remove or prevent affecting us (Matt 5:28)(God's mercy can remove most if not all!)
 - o Dwelling on make believe men and women instead of our own spouses - God's gift to us
 - o What we watch may produce a lack of contentment in our own life, family, etc. (1 Tim 6:6)
- c. The example we set will be one for others to follow, whether good or bad (Eph 5:3)
 - o What message are we leaving to our family?
 - o What message are we giving to our other brothers and sisters?
 - o What message are we giving to the world that we work around, or our friends?
- d. The more we are exposed to seductive, repulsive, depraved, anti-Christian themes, the more calloused we become, and the more we are unable to discern its impacts (Psalm 1:1-3)
 - o Though these can be used as teaching times, is this truly necessary?
 - o Even strong men of faith have fallen to sexual temptation - who are we to think we are above exposure to it or other evils?
 - o Our standards will gradually degrade if we are not constantly vigilant (we will weaken)
- e. Exposing children to adult themes and situations too early (making morbid; insecure; troubled; afraid)
- f. Embedded offensive commercials during ordinarily "tame" TV programs
- g. Channel surfing can even increase our exposure to a larger variety of depraved material, with the short quick exposure multiplied many times over (and without context)
- h. False sense of security with industry "Voluntary Rating Codes" (Handout: TV Rating Guidelines)
 - o These imply parents have a better opportunity to better screen TV and movies from their children, but in reality they:
 - o Create opportunity for conflict with children when parents standards are higher than the industries marked levels
 - o Create an allure for "adult" entertainment that is "forbidden"
 - o The "V-chip" only as good as the industry self assessment; tends to give parent false sense of security (encourages dual job parents resulting in more latch key kids)
 - o Producers of filth have a vested interest to sell as much as possible and/or obtain as large and lucrative an advertising clientele as possible
 - o TV probably has a greater sensitivity to the viewing public because of the ads
 - o Movies appear to have more of a peer professional "push the envelope" admiration and anti-establishment/Christian/moral bent independent of financial loss
 - o Self imposed codes and ratings serve to postpone legislative action as long as possible
 - o Prevents Federal government from having to prosecute the industry for violating the broadcast decency law (parents have the responsibility to police the air waves now)
 - o At best they are subjective (qualitative) in nature and do not cover such things as:
 - o Consistently portraying Christians in a derogatory light
 - o Glamorizing offensive behavior, attitudes, lack of respect for authority, etc.
 - o The changing nature of what is "offensive" to the TV elite - how can they understand or even appreciate where a Christian is coming from?
 - o The worldview will not change
 - o Standards used by industry will change(deteriorate) over time, not become stronger
 - o Industry's standards of acceptability for children (or adults) not based upon God's standard, but their own sinful, vile worldview (disgusted by Christian virtue and morals)
- i. What is touted as basic "*entertainment*" is actually "*indoctrination*" into a worldview that is corrupt and anti-Christian
 - o Bias against Christian influence; truths; principles; chastity; godly men & women (hypocrites)
 - o Inaccurate portrayal of history (Pocohontas) to serve an agenda

- o Dwelling on the negative, socially degenerate, violent nature of man while highlighting man's ability on his own to solve his own problems (without God)
- j. Metabolic rate goes down (fewer calories burned than those reading or doing nothing; 12-16% metabolic drop triggered by watching TV)(note (12)) - **New meaning to "Couch Potato!"**

4. OK; Are there Positive Aspects to TV and Movies? What do you Think?

- o History channel (still has a view or slant that is taken)
- o Animal specials (evolutionary?)
- o Novel series (historical accuracy may suffer; what is the worldview being projected; how are traditional values treated; how is Christianity handled; what is the view of God (relevant or not))
- o Children's programs (Sesame Street)(what worldview is projected; political correctness)
- o Newscasts (what worldview is being presented; is there balanced treatment of the topic; what is provided the most coverage - items that are consistent with godly values or not; how are Christians portrayed; are interviews balanced?)
- o What have you been pleased with in the past?
 - o Christian videos?
 - o Straight PBS historical accounts
 - o The older the movie the better?
 - o Remote classroom instruction (USIU; UCSD; etc.)
 - o Other?
- o "Crossfire" and other debates between conservatives and liberals over issues of the day
- o How about historically based movies?
- o Suggestion: use the "**Paradigm/Comparison of Conservative and Liberal Theology**" listings to evaluate the underlying emphasis of a show or movie

5. There are a number of practical things we can do at all levels - from individuals to society in general

- a. Individual or parent
 - o Must equip ourselves first - to know what is right or wrong
 - o Ask ourselves: "How is Christ honored by this show?"
 - o Ask ourselves: "Would I be embarrassed to have my mother watch this with me?"
 - o Ask ourselves: "If our children shouldn't be watching something, why are we?"
 - o Also:
 - o "How is this show edifying and instructing me?"
 - o "If Christ were here with me, would He be well pleased with me?"
 - o "How am I fulfilling **Phil 4:8-10?** by watching this?"
 - o Be aware of the current culture and state of TV and movie offerings
 - o Don't be naive about the content of movies based on hearsay (especially by younger viewers)
- b. A family
 - o Establish standards that are as clear as possible, and hold each other accountable to them
 - o If you think you are doing well as a family, consider:
 - (**Handout: One Families Covenant Together About Watching Movies**)
 - o Talk about it together - what would please God? What is more important, pleasing God or doing the same thing "others" are doing?
 - o Children: encourage parents in the standards they're setting/don't fight them (**Eph 6:1-3**)
 - o Parents: don't follow a different set of principles and standards for yourself from those established for your children (some exceptions).
 - o Let other parents know what your expectations are when your children visit others homes
 - o Access TV and movie reviews from Christian sources that rate according to type of content, particularly those that provide detailed descriptions of content and/or viewer feedback (**See Handout: Movie & TV Evaluation Sites (Internet)**); but don't rely upon it completely
 - o If you don't have Internet access at home, use the public library
 - o Relative to the reference web sites for rating TV shows and movies:
 - o Each person will use different criteria to judge content of a show or movie
 - o Fault can be found with virtually everything that we are exposed to

- o The greater the supporting material to describe the reason for the assessment the better (allows you to calibrate on the ratings)
 - o Talk to others about their impressions of TV programs and movies, however:
 - o Each person will have a different threshold and criteria
 - o Many sincere believers tend to forget many of the offensive parts since they were not what they wanted to see (will remember vividly the most offensive parts, however)
 - o If renting videos, a rule of thumb is that older is typically better (classics - though not necessarily "Christian" may still have a moral foundation and little gratuitously offensive parts)
 - o Remember - you are voting each time you turn the TV on or watch a movie (in the theaters or rented on video)
 - o Watching/renting those that are wholesome and enrich lives is a vote for that content; watching or renting filth is a vote in favor of that, and encourages more of it
 - o Frequent and support good shows and movies - write the producers and let them know
 - o When unfortunate times occur and something is watched that is not appropriate
 - o Discuss it and compare to God's standard
 - o If in a movie theater, walk out and demand your money back (especially formative on your children if present with you)
 - o If TV change channels and discuss why
 - o Don't worry about disappointing your children - they will respect high standards as long as they are reasonable and well thought out (understandable)
 - o Challenge public schools when they use movies to augment their teaching and violate your standards (personal example)
 - o What about the technology that is coming down the road (a la "CyberPatrol" by Learning Company). "CyberPatrol blocks out web sites from access. 12 Categories:

o Violence/profanity	o Partial nudity	o Full nudity
o Sexual acts	o Gross depictions	<i>o Intolerance</i>
o Satanic/cults	o Drugs/drug culture	o Militant/extremist
o Questionable/illegal & gambling	o Alcohol/tobacco	o Sex education
o "American Family Association" filtered out for "intolerance" (racism?)		
o Only as good as the one placing the offending web sites on the reject list (what is their worldview?)		
 - o TV editing systems are becoming available (ref (11)) "Curse Free TV"; \$129; 1-800-737-9617
 - o Claims to mute profane references to God and Jesus
 - o Filters out over 100 offensive words and phrases by scanning closed-captioning
- c. A citizen
- o Boycotts of products advertised on TV shows (Donahue example (see note 5))(see **Handout: Disney Fact Sheet by American Family Association**)
 - o Address the media directly
 - o Write advertisers describing the offensive material and the linkage of their product
 - o Write the national media executives (see **Handout: Guidelines in writing a Letter to Advertisers or Media Executives** for some suggestions)
 - o Write the CEO's of leading broadcast and cable companies
 - o Use letterhead if you can - shows you have affect on many others if in your own business or face public
 - o Encourage those legislators that are fighting against obscenity and indecency
 - o Support Christian groups (financially and with encouragement) that are fighting O & I
 - o Contribute your own views on movie reviews in Christian web pages
 - o Write to the FCC and complain about the obscenity etc. witnessed (see **Handout: Federal Obscenity & Indecency Laws**)
 - Note: Prurient = having or expressing lustful ideas or desires; tending to excite lust*
 - o Consider: If a company had a toxic waste spill near a children's playground, they would be expected to take responsibility and clean up the mess - so also the filth cable and TV companies pour into our homes

- o Encourage movie executives to return to their roots (Hays Code)
- o Push for and support “edited” videos (Utah “Titanic” example)
- d. A church
 - o Ensure Biblical principles are taught relative to our need for purity of our own lives
 - o Inform members of the dangers resulting from needless exposure to TV and movies that are ungodly and anti-Christian in nature
 - o Provide resource materials to equip members to assess the nature and content of programming and movies prior to investing time actually watching them (references; URL’s; books; etc.)
 - o Provide guidelines on how to:
 - o Approach the media to voice concerns
 - o Address advertisers on particularly repugnant shows
 - o Provide guidelines on how to conduct a boycott if needed (products, etc.)
 - o Encourage participation in the legislative process to better control the content of programming
 - o Call for strict enforcement of existing obscenity and indecency law and encourage their strengthening
 - o Call for boycotts by members of offensive shows, movies, and products advertised on them
 - o Provide alternative materials for use in the home (videos, books, etc.)

6. Discussion Questions:

- o “What right do you have to censor what is on TV or shown in the Movie theaters?”
 - o “Censorship” is the prior restraint of First Amendment rights by government
 - o This exists in a number of countries in the world, but is illegal in this county
 - o Enforcement of obscenity laws is not censorship since no prior restraint is being done on pornographers freedom to publish whatever they want. However, the distribution, exhibit, or sale of materials that are obscene is subject to prosecution (after the fact)
 - o The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that obscenity is not a First Amendment right
 - o Many “free speech” actions are illegal and punishable without violating the First Amend.:

o Perjury	o Contempt of court	o False advertising
o Libel	o Falsely shouting “fire”	o Copyright infringement
o Obscenity	o Child pornography	o Disturbing the peace
 - o President (Commander in Chief) can legally censor news reports & protect national security
 - o The Supreme Court has ruled that incitements to acts of violence and the overthrow of the force of orderly government is not protected (affects the security of the community)
 - o A publisher can choose what he will publish, just as a cable provider can choose what to distribute and these are not violations of the First Amendment
- o “All movies and TV do is reflect what is going on in society - what’s the big deal?”
 - o The Surgeon General of the US concluded in 1982: “there is clear consensus among most researchers that television violence leads to aggressive behavior”
 - o The American Psychological Association (1991) after a five year task-force investigation: “The conclusion drawn on the basis of twenty-five years of research...is that viewing televised violence may lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behavior, particularly in children”
 - o Remember: Instrument; individual; influence (I3); movies and TV are a strong influence
- o “If I insulate my family from all of these influences, I’d have to lock them up in a closet, right?”
 - o There is a difference between feeding them poison and warning them about it
 - o Is your primary concern what others will think of you (prudish?) - what does the Lord think?
 - o Do we really know the difference between what is permissible and what is beneficial?
- o “What about all of the good that comes from movies and TV?”
 - o Be careful when you ask yourself - does the good outweigh the bad? This is not a Biblical standard to go by
 - o What are we really trying to justify?
- o “It’s obvious these stories and depictions are not real - what’s the big deal?”
 - o Stories and dramas are meant to elicit emotion (sexual; hatred; love; compassion; envy; sorrow; lust; etc.)

- o Jesus said if I look at a woman lustfully, or hate someone I am guilty of adultery or murder; these are emotions and feelings that are misplaced - artificial, and sinful
- o What we are exposed to influences our thoughts
 - o Direct message (challenging authority; sexual licentiousness; etc.)
 - o Indirect message (always depicting pastors as liars; etc.)
- o Commercials are also typically unreal in their depictions, yet they intend to affect how we spend our money
- o Constant exposure to something will make us less shocked by it (homosexuals, gratuitous sex)
- o Biblical commands: stay away!
- o "What's wrong with watching sports on TV?"
 - o Priority in our lives?
 - o Hero worship (what kind of lives are professional athletes living?)(do we know who the Christians are so we can root for them?)
- o "Why complain about Disney when so much of what they produce is family oriented - far more than any other producer?"
 - o See copy of American Family Association "Disney Fact Sheet"
- o "Is entertainment of ourselves a Biblical freedom?"
- o "Is it true - we are what we eat?"
- o "No one was ever raped by a book or murdered by a movie"
 - o Must distinguish between influence, instrument, and individual
 - o The instrument in sin could be an object, our mouth, etc.
 - o The influence could be the book or movie giving the idea
- o "Is acting a godly pursuit?" "Is it condoned in the Bible?"
 - o To sin in depicting a story is always wrong (cursing, indecent exposure, using the name of the Lord in vain, sexual encounters of any kind)
 - o Verbal stories were told by Nathan to David
 - o Jesus used parables to tell stories
 - o Jeremiah and Ezekiel were personal parables (illustrations) by their own lives, lived out lessons by the Lords direction to teach Israel
 - o Hosea - marriage a living illustration

7. Bottom line points to consider:

- o The entire issue of TV and Movies can become very discouraging if we let it
- o We must be vigilant relative to the worldviews, content, and destructive potential of this medium on ourselves and our family
- o Ask ourselves - is watching this glorifying to God?
 - o Are we rationalizing what we watch?
 - o Would we be comfortable watching this with our mother? Our children?
- o Set standards for yourself and your family and hold each other accountable to them
- o Seek out those movies, TV shows, and videos that are acceptable (Christian books, video stores, church resources, etc.)
- o Be gracious to other believers that may have a different threshold than you do (**Rom 14**)

References:

1. "Morality in Media." <http://pweb.netcom.com/~mimnyc/index.html>
2. "All that Glitters - A News-Person Explores the World of Television," Coleen Cook; 1992
3. "Warning: Nonsense is Destroying America - The Role of Popular Culture in America's Social Problems," Vincent Ryan Ruggiero; 1994
4. "Hollywood vs. America," Michael Medved; 1992
5. "Taking on Donahue and TV Morality," Dr. Richard Neill; 1994
6. "www.familystyles.com"
7. "<http://www.christiananswers.net/spotlight/home.html>"
8. "<http://www.christiananswers.net/spotlight/tv/home.html>"
9. Focus on the Family: "Community Impact Seminar" video cassette series (four)
10. "American Family Association," 1-800-326-4543; www.movieguide.org; www.afa.net

11. *World Magazine*; June/July 2000 Special Issue on Marriage & the Family; advertisement page 26
12. Jane E. Brody "Metabolism May Make TV Fattening," *Arizona Republic* (5 April 1992)

Additional Notes:

- o Recently - highly touted episode of "Chicago Hope" said to be "artistically truthful" by using "Sh__ happens" in the dialogue (one of the seven words not allowed on prime TV)
- o Family hour (8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) Programming on major non-cable networks (note (1)):
 - o Two thirds of the show contain sexual references
 - o The amount of violence portrayed has doubled since two years ago
 - o Foul language has increased 58% since two years ago (including explicit use of vulgar and religious curse words not aired previously)
 - o Average instances of objectionable material per hour (Fox: 11; NBC: 9.63; CBS: 3.62)
 - o For TV as a whole, negative elements occur an average of 7 times per hour (75% increase since last year)
- o On average, over 6 hours a day are spent by the American family either watching movies, television, or videos (parents, on average spend 27 and ½ minutes per week focusing on and talking to each other)
- o The average child between 2 & 11 years old watches over 27 hours of TV per week (only thing a child spends more time doing is sleeping)
- o The average child sees 20,000 commercials per year
- o The average 5 year old spends 25 minutes a week in close interaction with his father, and 25 hours in close interaction with the TV (note (2))
- o Documented correlations, as amount of TV watched by children goes up:
 - o Amount of aggressive behavior goes up
 - o Academic achievement goes down
- o Survey of 750, 10-16 year olds: 75% said if they had a choice between watching TV or spending time with their families, said they'd opt for the family time (note (3))
- o 1983 Public Opinion Poll of 104 TV executives showed 45% claimed no religious affiliation whatsoever, 93% seldom or never attend religious services
- o 80% of a representative sample of people polled by Newsweek believed movies contain too much sex and violence (1992)
- o 61% of movie releases by 1992 were rated "R"; while those with "G" were 2%

- Notes:
1. "World" magazine, 18 Sept 1999; Cover story by Gene Edward Veith (citing Parents TV Council findings)
 2. Robert S. Welch, "Making Your Family #1..." Focus on the Family Magazine (Jan 1987)
 3. Patti Doten (New York Times News Service), "Home Alone With Your TV?" Mesa Tribune, 16 April 1995 (poll conducted by "Children Now" a national Children's Advocacy group)

Session #26: New Genetics/Genetic Engineering (Detailed Notes)

"Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good." (Gen 1:11-12)

"And God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals according to its kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1: 24-25)

Purpose of this Session: To wake Christians up to the massive moral and ethical questions sown by Genetic Engineering and call them to engage in a reasoned and Biblical manner

- o Provide a basic understanding of what has already been accomplished
- o Provide a view to the possibilities and implications of continued research in this area
- o Overview significant Biblical principles that apply to this area
- o Realize much of man's effort (in this area especially) is an attempt to reverse the consequences of the fall
- o Discuss what if anything can and should we do

1. Introduction: Genetic Engineering (GE'ing) is already occurring, with the most profound impacts still ahead

- o Preliminary questions:
 - o How many read routinely about the developments in GE'ing? (See Handout: GE Basics)
 - o How many read articles about the ethical or moral implications of GE'ing?
 - o What do you know about cloning? (Molly, or the talk about cloning people)
 - o Do you think you have already been affected by GE'ing?
- o The major developments and impacts of genetic research are still ahead of us
 - o The most profound changes imaginable are technologically feasible
 - o The most challenging ethical questions concerning the nature of life itself are with us now
 - o This area could very well shape the 21st century (like Nuclear weapons did last century)
- o Current Recombinant DNA (rDNA) research promises:
 - o New agricultural products (most corn grown in the US is genetically altered already)
 - o Greatly improved productivity in crops (herbicide & insecticide resistance)(From "Green Revolution" to "Gene Revolution")
 - o New means of remedying environmental problems (GE'd bacteria "eats" (digests) oil slicks)
 - o New medications (GE'd bacteria produce human insulin)
 - o Elimination of genetic causes of disease
 - o Creation of "designer" babies
 - o Possibility of extending human life span by a factor of two or three
 - o To eventually change character and personality, and ultimately engineer away all pain
- o The Bible is not a text book on technology or scientific truths, but it does speak authoritatively on issues raised by rDNA or cloning:
 - o Moral and ethical issues (**Rom 15:4; 2 Tim 3:16-17**)
 - o The nature of man, animals and plants!
 - o Biblical truths provide basis to address GE issues since there is no hope of secular (humanistic) wisdom and self interest making the right decisions

2. Short History: Though genetic screening has been practiced for thousands of years, the creation and manipulation of fundamental life is recent - and exponentially expanding

- o Genetic inheritance screening is as old as the O.T. (Animal husbandry (Jacob; Gen 30:31-43); the command for the Israelites not to marry from the pagan nations)
- o 1818 - Frankenstein by Mary Shelley: Creating life has been a fascination for many years; the tampering with forbidden areas
- o 1859 - Charles Darwin: "The Origin of Species" dealt with variations in inherited characteristics
- o 1865 - Gregor Mendel (monk); noticed certain characteristics of peas could be produced by selecting certain peas and cross breeding
- o 1883 - "Eugenics" coined to apply to the theory that the human race could be improved by selective breeding (smarter and more capable allowed to breed, those that were "inferior" not allowed)
- o WWII - Selective breeding ultimately applied under Nazi rule (exterminations; selected breeding partners; superior race)
- o 1953 - Drs J. D. Watson and F. H. Crick; discovered the double helix structure of DNA; since then the genetic makeup of DNA, its chemical constituents, and ordering has been detailed
- o 1980 first patent awarded by the US Patent Office on a living organism: for a genetically engineered bacterium for cleaning up oil spills; ruling by US Supreme Court; "anything under the sun that is made by man" may be patented (note (10))
- o 1982 Eli Lilly & Co. Successfully introduced the first commercial product of genetic engineering: human insulin made by bacteria given a copy of the human gene for insulin
- o 1987 the "polyploid oyster" was patented; followed by patents on mice, rats, sheep, worms, birds, fish and pigs (note (9))
- o 1988; the US awarded a patent on the OncoMouse, a cancer-prone lab mouse useful in cancer research
- o 1988 the Human Genome Project begun (recently privatized) - sequencing the Human genetic code:
 - o Expected to be completed as early as 2003
 - o Lays groundwork for advanced genetic testing (causal and susceptibility relationships)
 - o Detecting single gene mutations that relate to disorders that are causally necessary and sufficient for a disease to manifest itself (Huntington disease)
 - o Detecting single gene mutations that relate in some way to multiple disease disorders
 - o Detecting multiple gene mutations that relate causally to a single disorder
 - o Determine environmental triggers to genetic mutation: *Xeroderma Pigmentosum*, genetic condition - if a person exposed to ultraviolet light, will develop *Melanoma*
 - o Diagnose in advance all diseases an individual will be prone to during their lifetime
 - o Diagnose susceptibility *in vitro*
 - o Opens door for genetically manipulating genes to create a "better" individual
- o 1994 FDA gave St. Louis based Monsanto Co. authority to sell milk from cows treated with genetically engineered hormones (rBST)
- o 1994 not one acre of commercially grown genetically altered plants were grown
- o 1999 there are over 70 million acres of soybean, corn, cotton, potatoes planted (note (11))
- o 1999, Sept; Gallup Poll: 80% of Americans were confident that food from groceries is safe to eat; 51% said they supported use of biotechnology in food products; 41% said they opposed it (note (6))
- o Bottom line: Genetic Engineering is already with us:
 - o Genetic screening already occurs with the unborn (amniocentesis testing for Down's Syndrome and major deformities)(also: in Ashkanazi Jewish community a high prevalence of Tay-Sach's Disease; (three others also) the community is being asked to voluntarily be tested if they are thinking about dating someone to see if both the man and woman are heterozygous carriers - if so, stop pursuing the relationship or don't have children; very small community in New York with a high percentage of Hasidic Jews)(Brea Walker - newscaster in L.A.)
 - o Sperm banks holding only Nobel prize winners and known geniuses is an example of Eugenics: selective breeding. Genetic engineering will allow this in a more overt and precise way!
 - o There is an increasing number of new food products coming to market that are GE'd
 - o Improved: rapeseed oil; soybean; maize; sugar beet; squash; cucumber; Roundup Ready Corn, Lecithin (also cotton)

- o BST-milk from cows fed GE bovine growth hormone to boost milk yield
- o Tomato GE'd to prolong shelf-life (Calgen's Flav'r Sav'r tomato - first GE'd food)
- o Currently about 50 GE'd food crops have been approved
- o GE'd foods in 75% of all processed foods (most Americans have eaten altered food)(note (8))
- o Future Shock is coming (see also **Handout: Representative Issues Spawned by Genetic Engineering Technology**) - This is only a sampling!
 - o Linus Pauling (Nobel prize winner in Chemistry): Advocated a tattoo on every young person's forehead, showing his or her genetic makeup to aid in selection of a suitable superior mate (note (3))
 - o Sir Francis Crick: "no newborn infant should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment, and...if it fails these tests, it forfeits the right to live." (note (3))
 - o A gene war between nations striving to grow superior race (greater intelligence, longer life, better physical powers)
 - o Create a life that is in a continual state of ecstasy, never suffering pain or disease
 - o Create pathogens that attack and kill selectively (by genetic marker)
 - o The killing of the unborn for virtually any undesirable trait (looks, height, eye color, genetic deformity, male pattern baldness, sex) very early on in the pregnancy; or worse yet the artificial fertilization of eggs *in vitro* with many zygotes, then selecting the "good" one only (prelude to designer babies)

3. Tactics to justify and continue work are based fundamentally upon Evolution (logical extension), Economics (better, cheaper) and that it is Safe (extensive testing)

- o Evolutionary worldview
 - o Genetic modification touted a logical extension of: bread and wine making, selective breeding, cross breeding, hybridization (tangelo (tangerine-grapefruit) & beefalo (cow-buffalo) hybrids) to genetic modification (only this is more exact and precise)
 - o Lack of requirement to label foods as GE'd prevents consumer from knowing extend it has become available (1992 FDA policy against labeling - rationale: genetic changes don't alter composition or nutritional content)
 - o Extension to performance enhancing drugs; cosmetic surgery vice only for accident victims; Human Growth Factor (HGF) treatment for pituitary dwarfism (used on black market to grow bigger children)
 - o Evolutionary theology generally underlies research and technology development in this area
 - o Belief that science can "improve" upon living organisms (accelerate what would supposedly take under ordinary conditions eons to accomplish)
 - o Man has evolved to where he can improve himself and his surroundings and not wait for time and chance (perfectability)
 - o How could anyone fight the removal of horrible suffering and pain in the world that could be alleviated by GE'ing better humans
 - o Completely ignores the spiritual side of man (essence; life; soul)
- o Economic drivers
 - o Because economy is so strong, little interest in addressing other issues that don't affect us directly and immediately
 - o To layman, advances seem good & beneficial - they produce "better" crops at lower prices
 - o If one objects to development of greater food yields and reduction in use of herbicides and pesticides they will be viewed as not compassionate towards the starving masses or the delicate balance of "nature" (have's verses the have nots)
 - o Large industry (e.g. Monsanto) employs individuals that had high positions within current and previous Presidential administrations (influence; lobbying; access; influence foreign governments) to ensure protection of marketing rights, continuance of research, etc.
- o Safety ensured
 - o Industry wants public to believe extraordinary precautions are taken to protect individuals and environment through extensive testing and government oversight - who are we to question the

- o progress being made
- o Scientists put on pedestal, scientific “breakthroughs” almost commonplace - expected in medicine, drug, and therapy arenas. Work in GE assumed to be in good, knowledgeable hands
- o Terminology and technology are very sophisticated and difficult to understand, giving the public difficult time to understand implications (counter: nuclear weapons are very sophisticated, yet we understand the consequences of their use!)
- o Awareness of the public in general to the implications has received minimal treatment
 - o Large companies will tend to “marginalize” the potential effects and tout benefits
 - o The public appears so far removed from this technology it doesn’t think it has a say
- o Some counter tactics used
 - o Terminology: “Tampering with Nature” what does this mean or conjure up? “Scrambling genetic code” “genetic pollution” “suspicious DNA” “Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)”, Xeroxing of life
 - o “Frankenfood” (now in dictionary)
 - o Lawsuits, publicity, visions of grotesque creatures that are half man and half beast
 - o In Europe, the burning of test crop sites
 - o In this case, radical environmentalists and conservatives share a common concern - yet for different reasons

4. There are significant conflicting interests in the secular community - few concerns are based upon Biblical principles

- o **Political (government vs citizens vs big industry):**
 - o EPA and FDA to protect consumer; Congress wants to encourage big business
 - o Is some science bad and not worthy of pursuing (leaving more funds for other research)?
 - o Should the government be sponsoring technology development that has such a huge impact upon the world without engaging citizens in open and detailed dialogue?
 - o Biotechnology is extremely big business, multi-national and trans-national, how should it be controlled or regulated - if at all?
 - o What right does government or the public have to regulate or control industry from exploiting these new product lines?
 - o Who supervises science - should some science be done only under the supervision of non-scientists who can have a more objective opinion (or are they not qualified)
- o **Economic (US vs Europe vs consumer vs world hunger):**
 - o Do the economic benefits outweigh any “potential” harmful effects?
 - o Should large corporations be allowed to own new life forms, techniques, etc. and not be regulated or controlled by outside agencies
 - o US government does not require labeling of foods that are GE’d, yet European countries and Japan already demand it
 - o Does the consumer have a right to know whether their food is the result of GE or not?
 - o Is the development of a “terminator” technology in food crops really concerned with protecting intellectual property or ensuring the third world remains dependent upon US production
- o **Environmentalist (Environmental fragility vs evolutionary quantum leap):**
 - o Protect “nature” and maintain status quo vice improve upon “nature”
 - o Is nature so fragile or delicate that any tinkering could be catastrophic?
 - o Could entire organisms be wiped out by accidental release of GE’d organisms, thus upsetting the environment forever?
 - o Is this the next logical step in improving in a few years what it took “nature” millions of years to accomplish?
- o **Humanistic (Exultation of human life vs selective destruction of life):**
 - o Individual rights supreme but destroy or radically affect all follow on generations
 - o Is this the next natural step in the evolutionary process - self improvement?
 - o Is this a more humane way to bring about a superior race?
- o **National Security (National protection interests vs accidental catastrophes)**
 - o Protect this Nation but at same time put it a tremendous risk (escalation; accidents)

- o If US didn't pursue certain genetic technology - what prevents rogue states from doing so?
- o Biological weapons for defensive purposes can be used offensively also, no real distinction
- o Does the creation of exotic pathogens with no known cure demand a response by others, whether they actually exist or not?
- o Is it possible to totally prevent accidental release of deadly organisms forever?

o Theological (Co-creators vs end-of-the-age):

- o *Deify life on the one hand, but destroy it on the other to eventually "improve" it*
- o Are we just "Co-creators" with God and this is a natural extension of what God has done and now gives us the ability to do?
- o Are we trying to change the "kinds" that God originally created?
- o Are we ushering in the end of the world with ghastly creatures of our own making that we will be unable to control? (Book of Revelation?)
- o Hindu's are concerned that the creation of genetically mixed life forms (transgenic) could have major implications on reincarnated life

5. Biblical moral principles must be examined to provide a foundation to approach this area

- o First, man created in God's image, has a unique dignity that is not to be spoiled (**Gen 1:26-27**)
 - o Man is unique of all creation and is intrinsically different from animals and plants
 - o Unique relationship with God
 - o Uniquely possesses qualities/characteristics that reflect God (self-consciousness; free moral agent (will); can reason (intellect); can appreciate beauty; can create within the bounds of his existence; he is immortal and possesses a soul; can discern good & evil)
 - o Man has a unique dignity and position above the animals
 - o Man uniquely has dominion over the creation
 - o Man is of infinite value to God since He gave His Son (of infinite worth) for us
 - o Man's form is the perfect representation of God in creation (Jesus Christ took it on)
 - o The GE of animal or plant genes into the germ of man would degrade the created order and nature of man into another "creature" however close he may still appear to be fully human
 - o Exception may be a one to one replacement of constituent "part" that is identical (similar to receiving an animal organ transplant - same function)
 - o This area is so sophisticated that much is still unknown
 - o Eve formed from Adam's flesh
 - o Second miraculous act of creation of a human being (others: Adam and Jesus)
 - o Interesting that "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" description used - implies use of specific genetic material and/or differentiated cells to form another human being - distinct from yet part of the man
 - o Implies that creation from existing material to form another human being (other than through God ordained propagation by marriage) is of God only and not for man
 - o The time of entrance of the soul is unknown - cannot be determined with certainty -
 - o Reasonable approach - accept it occurs at conception, not arbitrary time afterwards
 - o Fertilized egg contains all the information needed to grow a fully developed human being
 - o Zygote should be protected from conception on (no experimenting or selection for destruction)
- o Biblical pattern is to reproduce only after their kind. Q: what does "kind" mean?(**Gen 1:11-12, 24-25**)
 - o Is "species" equivalent to "After their own kind?" (**Gen 1:11-12,21,24-25**)
 - o "Species" - "A particular kind of organism; members possess similar anatomical characteristics and have the ability to interbreed" (*note (7)*)
 - o Biologists also define common species as those that breed in nature & produce viable offspring
 - o Species structure established by Linnaeus (not a Biblical system) - classifying all things into:

1. Kingdom	2. Phylum	3. Class	4. Order
5. Family	6. Genus	7. Species	8. Variety
 - o "Kind" = "*min*"; uncertain origin; provides specification or technical enumeration; always occurs in the singular (**Gen 1; 6; 7; Lev 11; Deut 14**)

- o Biblical usage cuts across a biologists/zoologists species; genus; family and order classifications in different verses
- o Implies animals and plants are to reproduce according to their ability in the “wild” according to their natural propensity and viability, and that cross-kinds are not to occur
- o Principle: cross breeding or genetic engineering across unlike “kinds” is against the structure that God has established. Transgenic would specifically be prohibited
- o What God created separate, man is to maintain as separate
- o Selective breeding (genetic screening?) described in O.T., but still within its “kind” (**Gen 30:31-43**)
- o Mixing of “kinds” prohibited (different kinds of animals; planting different kinds of seed in the same field; wearing clothing woven of two kinds of material)(**Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9-11**)
 - o Instruction applies to holy nation of Israel and its distinctive separation from world - however, for animals the command is consistent with command to multiply only after their own kinds
 - o Limits appear to have been set by God that are not to be violated (**Gen 1; 6; 7**)
 - o Mixing of genetic sequences taken from animals identical to human sequences may not constitute mixing “kinds” since “parts” are the same. True also if an animal sequence is substituted for an abnormal human gene sequence (identical to what a normal gene sequence would be). However, larger gene sequences from an animal have unique animal attributes and would be mixing “kinds” if used in humans (and vice versa)
 - o Organ transplants from animals to humans is mixing of “parts” that have the same function and are not the whole organism
 - o Mixing of a germ cell from a human with an animal germ cell would be mixing “kinds”, creating a whole new “kind”
- o Related sexual prohibitions in the O.T. and N.T.
 - o Having sex with an animal (**Ex 22:19; Lev 20:15-16**)
 - o Violates the created order
 - o Destroys the dignity of man by debasing him in a vile act strongly condemned by God
 - o Implication is that animal husbandry between animals that have an abhorrence towards each other (do not mate in natural conditions) is wrong
 - o If we are not to become “one flesh” with a prostitute (**1 Cor 6:15-17**) how much more are we not to be combined in any fashion with an animal (genetic material mixing)
 - o Incest (besides other sexual relationships strictly prohibited by God)(**Lev 18:1-29**)
 - o Known genetic disorders can result from close family interbreeding
 - o Severe consequences can occur for offspring when God’s commands are ignored
- o Genetic engineering is progressing towards the development of a superior man, first improved upon, then perfected. (Nazi’s tried this in WW II)
 - o Biblically, man is to be conformed to image of Jesus as his highest goal and end state (**Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18**)
 - o Technology will not overcome the sinful heart, the consequences of sin in the world, or ultimately the results of the fall of man - if anything, this will provide opportunity for incredible abuses
 - o Any technology can be used for good or for evil (**Prov 14:12**)
 - o The pridefulness of man convinces him he can improve upon what God has created
 - o Our future hope is in Christ and the new heavens and earth, not a man made (created) one on this planet
- o Is there a possibility of the destruction of all (or much) of mankind through a new GE’d bacterium or totally new living thing?
 - o **Rev 6:8** “I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! It’s rider named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth”
 - o **Rev 8:8** “The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A Third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed”
 - o **Rev 8:10**: “The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from

the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water - the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter."

o **Rev 9:3-11** "And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man....The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lion's teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon."

o **Rev 9:17-19** "The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails: for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury."

o The end will not come until the Lord is ready to bring all things to an end! (**2 Peter 3:10**)

o Man cannot anticipate the ultimate consequences of GE in a fallen, sinful, corrupted world (**Ecc 3:11**)

o Would imply great caution needs to be taken in everything that is tried

o Research should not be pursued if a clear moral and spiritual implication is destructive to us or offensive to God

o We should not be presumptuous upon God's blessing of these technologies

o Ultimately, God allows trials and suffering to fulfill His purposes (**Rom 5:3-5; 1 Peter 1:6-8**)

o A Biblical approach is to investigate benefits, tradeoffs, and implications, and determine how the result will bring glory to God - the Creator!

o **Prov 25:2** "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, to search out a matter is the glory of kings"

o **Ecc 7:27** "Adding one thing to another to discover the scheme of things..." (Building blocks)

o Should priority be placed on removing those genetic conditions that debilitate people and do not allow them (hinder them) from supporting a family or contributing to the needs of others more fully (*note (2)*)

o Improving mankind for purely cosmetic purposes serves only vanity and cannot be justified on a Biblical basis (exception are those that suffer terrible burns and disfiguring accidents).

But where do you draw the line? (**1 Sam 15:17; Isa 53:2; 2 Cor 12; 1 Peter 3:3-4**)

o We should not take lightly the concern that we may be tampering with forbidden areas! **Deut 29:29**

6. Bottom Line: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law" (Deut 29:29)

o Christians specifically (and Biblical truths generally) are not obviously engaged but seem to be conspicuously absent from the GE battleground

o We have the only sure source of truth to engage the entire area

o If not engaged, it will soon overwhelm any opposition or moral inhibitions currently operative

o Man is incapable of understanding the complete effects and consequences of rDNA. To think he is able is ultimate pride and arrogance. Because of this:

o Great caution should be shown in any experimentation

o Some experimentation should be absolutely forbidden (human embryo, fetus, etc.)

o Very high accountability should be maintained for any work - private or governmental

o The dignity of unique human life should be preserved

o Mankind is created in God's image, and as such his life has a unique dignity that demands

- o it's respect and protection
 - o Because of the lack of definitive knowledge as to the beginning of human life; personhood; and the existence of a soul - all human life must be protected from the earliest point of its existence (conception)
 - o Full legal status must be given to human life from the point of conception
- o Man is commanded to provide good stewardship of animals, therefore animal life must be respected and protected and not willfully:
 - o Destroyed
 - o Harmed
 - o Created in potentially grotesque ways
 - o Genetically "mixed" with other "kinds"
- o Sanctity & uniqueness of God created "kinds" in plant & animal life must be preserved and not violated
- o Though plant, then animal rDNA splicing is justified on economic & environmental basis, & human rDNA work on humanitarian basis, the ultimate end point of this research is a very sophisticated form of "eugenics" - creating the super man, super race; the desire to fulfill **Gen 3:5** "...you will be like God..." Reversing the fall by creating beings:
 - o Superior physically (without disease or pain)
 - o Superior intellectually (genius, morally superior)
 - o Never die
 - o Perfect human being, created "...in our own image..." according to our own design!
 - o The ultimate deception and exercise of pride & arrogance

7. There is much we can and should do as Christian citizens!

- o Be informed (several good Christian books on the topic are available - see the notes)
- o Monitor the work going on (various web sites (see notes below), however, few from a Christian perspective or even remotely "religious" in nature)
- o Encourage Christian leadership to investigate the issues, research the Biblical principles that apply, and inform the Body of Christ about them
 - o Encourage active participation with our elected officials
 - o Anticipate moral and ethical issues and publicize widely to help ensure proper accountability
- o Develop a sound Biblical moral and ethical approach to the various issues that are being raised
 - o Address while the technology is being discussed, not after it has been developed
 - o Encourage debate and assessment amongst a large Christian constituency to identify Biblical principles, implications and reasonable safeguards
- o Create a Biblically based web site for information publication; contributions from other writers; ethical issue exploration (comments; chats; etc.); warnings)
- o Demand strict accountability from our legislators (research sponsored; testing; control; exporting; monitoring other nations) and open disclosure of the ethical basis for decisions
- o Demand clear definition of roles, objectives and controls in any GE effort
 - o Most people do not understand the technical details of nuclear fusion, but they do understand the implications of its use as a weapon!
 - o Just because a technology is possible, it does not mean that there is a ethical or moral imperative to develop or use it
- o Continue to force politicians to face the fact that life begins at conception, and that embryos are to be protected and considered as living beings, not as things to be experimented on and discarded.
- o Continue to treat human life with the dignity it should have, and not allow it to be mingled with animal or plant genes which would denigrate it and make it into something less than what God would will

o Misc End Notes:

- o July 25, 1978; Louise Brown born, first human conceived outside the womb (England)
- o 1983; UCLA perfected the technique of implanting an already-conceived embryo into another woman's womb, where the baby is carried to term
- o One couple in eight has fertility problems, and adoption may take up to seven years (note (1))

- o 1962, Seattle: first hemodialysis machine became available, with many more people with end stage kidney disease than there were machines - resource allocation problem (who pays - currently the U.S. provides Medicare entitlement to dialysis and renal transplantation)
- o Bumper sticker: "Hey you - out of the gene pool!"
- o In Illinois about 40% of soybeans and 25% of corn are mixed together in the grain holding tanks prior to shipping - with no way available to separate it (and no dual system in existence to keep it separated to begin with)
- o 1998 - 600,000 Chinese farmers sowed Monsanto's gene-altered seed products
- o GE'd foods are in 75% of all processed foods (most Americans have eaten altered food)

Notes:

- (1) *"The Price of a Perfect Baby," Bruce L. Anderson; 1984*
- (2) *"Making Biblical Decisions," Franklin E. Payne, Jr. M.D.; 1989*
- (3) *Charles Frankel, "The Specter of Eugenics," Commentary, March 1974, p. 28*
- (4) *"The Unholy Alliance," Dr. Mae-Wan Ho; article in The Ecologist; Vol 27; No. 4; July/August*
- (5) *Dr. Ernie W. D. Young, lecture notes as posted in "Access Excellence - Activities Exchange: The Genetic Revolution: Ethical Issues", Gene Connection Second Annual Bioethics Symposium and Workshop presented by the San Mateo County Biotechnology Education Partnership*
- (6) *Bill Lambrecht; Post-Dispatch; Washington Bureau; 7 Oct; 1999*
- (7) *"Biology" Third Edition; Neil A. Campbell; 1993*
- (8) *Bill Lambrecht; Post-Dispatch; Washington Bureau; 27 Dec; 1998*
- (9) *"The Lawyers Weekly" June 26, 1998, Vol. 18 No. 8 (pg 11); revised Feb 10 1999*
- (10) *Diamond, Commissioner of Patents v. Chakrabarty (1980), 2066 U.S.P.Q. 193; U.S. Supreme Court decision granting a patent for oil-spill-eating bacteria*
- (11) *Bill Lambrecht; Post-Dispatch; Washington Bureau; 10 Oct; 1999; "Genetic research on plants steams ahead here, despite concerns in Europe"*

Session #27: Abortion (Detailed Notes)

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,...’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Gen 1:26a, 27)

Purpose of this Session: Present Biblical, reasoned answers to the issue of abortion, with supporting statistics and suggested actions we can take

- o Biblical foundation
- o Historical development of current conditions in this country
- o Basic statistics and data relevant to the discussion
- o Commonly used arguments to “justify” abortion
- o Actions we can take to change this nation

Take-aways for this session:

- o This is a long term war, with very sophisticated tactics
- o Pro-Choice is not a middle ground!

Basic Spectrum of Beliefs (Pro-Choice is decidedly NOT in the middle!)

Pro-Abortion (Pro-Death) - Pro-Choice - Anti-Abortion (Pro-Life) - Deified (Idolized) Life

- o In this country the righteous standard must be held high - the dignity and worth of life must be protected
- o The Bible is our standard in this area as in all other areas we have discussed
- o We can do much, but the individual to individual interaction will be the most profound

1. Introduction: This issue, like homosexuality, has helped to frame and illustrate very clearly the way of Satan (death & curses) and the way of Christ (life & blessings)

- o Something as profound as life must be considered very carefully
 - o Once taken, it cannot be retrieved (not reversible)
 - o It cannot be created by man, only extended (artificially and through offspring)
 - o If there is error in dealing with it, it must be on the conservative side (just as with car accidents, emergency rooms, earthquake disasters, fires, etc.)
- o One of several issues that have split the nation (homosexuality another one)
 - o Evil has taken deep root in our land and around the world
 - o Incredible implications result from this issue (**Matt 7:16-20**)
 - o If the right to life is not secure, all others we enjoy are in jeopardy (infanticide, euthanasia...)
 - o The tactics used to justify are insidious and typical (**See Handout**)(2 Cor 2:11b)
 - o This is not a new conflict, the issues are clear for the most part - the question is what is our role in it? Do we have a responsibility beyond our own personal lives?
- o The Bible is the only reliable standard to approach this area (in this life and for eternity)
- o What is Abortion - Definitions:
 - o Abortion is the act by which the life of a baby in the womb is deliberately and artificially terminated for any reason during the pregnancy
 - o Methods:
 - o Dilation and Curettage (D&C)(usually before 12th or 13th week)
(Vaginal entry, curette scrapes uterine wall cutting baby and placenta into pieces)
 - o Suction abortion (usually before 12th or 13th week)
(Suction tube is inserted into the uterus)(more than 2/3 of abortions done this way)
 - o Saline abortion (usually after 16 weeks; amniotic fluid present)
(Injection of concentrated saline solution through the mother’s abdomen into the baby;

- o about 1 hr later baby dies; mother goes into labor about a day later, delivers dead baby)
- o Hysterotomy (when too late for D&C, suction or saline procedures)
(Same as Cesarean section, but baby allowed to die thru neglect or direct act)
- o Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)(usually between 12th and 24th week)
(As with D&C the baby is cut into pieces; but is much larger - weighing as much as a lb and up to a ft long)
- o Prostaglandin (usually after the 12th week)
(Uses chemicals (Upjohn Pharmaceutical Co.), hormone-like injected or applied to the muscle of the uterus causing it to contract intensely and pushing out the baby)

2. Like so many major issues facing this country, there are endless battles and arguments over innumerable associated issues - Some selected ones:

- a. Legal issues (See Handouts: Roe v. Wade and other relevant legal actions)
 - o Is the unborn child a person protected by the law?
 - o What rights should the mother have relative to the unborn baby?
 - o What rights should the father have to the life of his child before it is born?
 - o The Supreme Court has become a legislative body vice a ruling body
- b. Polling issues
 - o How the question is phrased dramatically affects the results
 - o The sample size and whether it is a representative sample affects the results significantly
 - o Terminology can be confusing
- c. Use of public funds
 - o To subsidize abortions
 - o To support welfare recipients with increasing numbers of children
 - o Fetal research
 - o Fetal organ harvesting
- d. World pressure
 - o Population "explosion"
 - o United Nations sanctioning and promoting abortion as a form of birth control
 - o Famine in overpopulated areas
- e. Terminology issues
 - o Pro-Abortion (Pro-Death); Pro-Choice; Anti-Abortion (Pro-Life); Divinity of man
 - o What is life? When does it begin?
 - o What constitutes a person? (personhood)
 - o When is a human being a human being? (See Handout: Human Development)
 - o Viability and when does it occur?
 - o Conception verses pregnancy verses birth control vs abortifacient
- f. Biblical issues
 - o Understanding of key texts that relate to this issue
 - o Liberal views that weaken the Biblical authority
 - o When does life begin, the soul enter, blood, breath?
- g. Other related issues
 - o Sexual immorality
 - o Contraception vice abortifacient
 - o School based health clinics
 - o Parental rights and authority verses their child's
 - o Incidence of breast cancer for women who have had abortions
 - o Incidence of infertility amongst women who have had abortions
 - o Incidence of Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS)
 - o Incidence of child abuse
 - o Incidence of miscarriages later in life after a previous abortion
 - o Incidence of partial birth abortions
 - o Are crime rates related to number of abortions?
 - o Slanted view from the media (liberal press etc.)

- o Anti-abortion protests freedom of speech - at abortion clinics?
- h. Others you are aware of? Technology issues? (RU-486)
- i. These are the tactics in the war - the fundamental principles and truths must be in place beforehand

3. Ancient History is divided in its views and laws concerning abortion (a sampling):

- o The Code of Hammurabi in Babylon (circa 1728 B.C.) dealt with unintentional acts causing a woman to miscarry (Perpetrator was fined)(note (b))
- o In Assyria King Tiglath-Pileser in 12 century B.C. punished the woman who caused herself to miscarry and penalties were prescribed for accessories to the act (note (b))
- o Hittites also proscribed abortion with prohibitions applying to all persons, means used, and circumstances (financial penalties were exacted against the perpetrators)
- o Opposition to abortion was widespread in ancient Indian religious writings (Vedas, Vinaysas of the Buddhists; also the Code of Manu circa A.D. 100)
- o Later Hindu tradition ranked abortion with the murder of a husband or a learned Brahman
- o In Zoroastrian literature, when a couple “destroy the fruit in her womb...the murder is on both the father and herself, both the father and herself shall pay the penalty for willful murder”
- o The Hippocratic Oath (4th and 5th Century B.C.) States “Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly, I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion”
- o Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) taught that a fetus originally has a vegetable soul, evolves into an animal soul, then “animated” with a human soul about 40 days after conception (males) and 90 days for females
- o Many cultures and religions competing with Judaism in the Roman Empire allowed women to have abortions and to strangle or expose (abandon) new-born babies at their will

4. Church History varied in its Treatment of the Subject

- o Many writings, letters, and petitions of early Christian philosophers and Church Fathers equated abortion with infanticide and condemned both as murder
- o Letter of Barnabas; 1st Century; “You shall not kill either the fetus by abortion or the new born”
- o Athenagoras stated that Christians “call women who take medications to induce abortion murderers” (Petition to Emperor Marcus Aurelius)
- o Tertullian: “...we are not permitted, since murder has been prohibited to us once and for all, even to destroy...the fetus in the womb. It makes no difference whether one destroys a life that has already been born or one that is in the process of birth”
- o St Ambrose: “The poor expose their children, the rich kill the fruit of their own bodies in the womb, lest their property be divided up, and they destroy their own children in the womb with murderous poisons, and before life has been passed on, it is annihilated”
- o The Didache (2nd century) refers to “child-murderers, who go the way of death, who slay God’s image in the womb”
- o St Augustine (354-430 A.D.) Returned to Aristotle views. Believed a human soul cannot live in an unformed body. Thus, early in pregnancy, abortion is not murder. (St. Jerome similar beliefs)
- o Penitentials from the 7th century on viewed abortion as less of a sin than sexual sins, particularly before “quickening” - when movement is first felt
- o St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.) considered only the abortion of an “animated” fetus as murder
- o Pope Sixtus Papal bull “Effraenatam” in 1588 - threatened those that carried out abortion at any stage of gestation with excommunication and the death penalty. Pope Gregory XIV revoked this bull in 1591 - reinstated “quickening” test
- o 17th Century belief in simultaneous animation (embryo acquires soul at conception) gained acceptance in the medical and church community
- o Pope Pius IX in 1869 removed distinction between “fetus animatus” and “fetus inanimatus”
- o In 20th Century, liberal and mainstream churches may promote a woman’s right to choose an abortion, or be relatively silent on the issue. Conservative Christians are opposed to all abortions (conception thru birth)(some accept some exceptions)
- o The Roman Catholic church believes all abortions are a form of murder

5. Modern History (Sampling)

- o Common law (English origin): Sir William Blackstone, “Commentaries on the Laws of England”

- o Wrote that life is “the immediate gift of God” which begins in the womb.
- o Declared that the destruction of the unborn child is “homicide or manslaughter”
- o The right to life of the unborn child is an “absolute” right
- o Other common law protected child after “quickening”, the time when life was first detectable
- o Early 1800's statutes appearing that criminally punished abortion (ovum discovered in 1827)
- o 1803 - English law specified abortion after “quickening” a capital offense, prior punishable
- o By 1860 in US 31 states had adopted statutes punishing abortion
- o 1859 the AMA position: “condemn the procuring of abortion, at every period of gestation, except as necessary for preserving the life of either mother or child (and) request the zealous cooperation of the various State medical societies in pressing this subject upon the legislatures of their respective States”
- o Pioneers of feminist movement during this time opposed abortion (act exploiting women)
- o Oct 1949 the World Medical Association adopted the International Cod of Medical Ethics which stated:
“A doctor must always bear in mind the importance of preserving human life from the time of conception until death”
- o 1973 Supreme Court decision of "Roe vs Wade; dissenting position penned by justice Byron White;
“This decision has no basis in law, morality, or the Constitution”, it is “an exercise of raw judicial power”
- o 1973 Roe v Wade; 1992 Supreme Court Decision not to reopen the earlier decision that established the right of legal abortions (See Handout)
 - o Few if any full reviews of abortion related issues by Supreme Court since then with the exception of anti-abortion protestor issues
 - o Supreme Court ruled in essence that the un-born were not human beings, therefore not entitled to protection under the law
 - o "Choice" has become the issue now, not whether there is a life at stake or not
- o Even amongst churches, these is a split on this issue
- o 25 years 1973-1998; estimated 35 million abortions

6. God is the giver of life, and calls us into being from conception

- a. God has given a sanctity (holiness; sacredness; inviolability) to human life
 - o Man is unique amongst all of creation by being made in His image (**Gen 1:27; 2:7; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9**)
 - o Unique characteristics
 - o Unique dignity and worth (compared to animals **Matt 6:25-26**)
 - o Uniquely precious to God (rest of creation commands impersonal third person)
 - o We are truly “fearfully and wonderfully made” (**Psalm 139:14**)
“Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering” - Saint Augustine
 - o There are eternal issues associated with human life that differ from the rest of creation (There will be a new heavens and a new earth, but man is immortal)
 - o Life (though fallen) has continued on in an unbroken line since Adam and Eve (**Gen 1:28**), God has sustained it even though the wickedness of man has tried to destroy it
 - o When are we not in God's image?
- b. God is the ultimate giver and taker of life
 - o We existed in God's mind before one or our days came to pass (**Psalm 139:16b**)
 - o Our days on earth are numbered by the Lord (**Psalm 139:14d; Job 14:5; Heb 1:3; Eccl 8:15; Acts 17:26; Matt 6:27; Psalm 31:15**)
 - o God puts to death and brings to life (**Deut 32:39; Heb 9:27**)
- c. God has made special provision to protect human life
 - o All mankind is accountable for the taking of life (shedding of blood) (**Gen 9:5-6**)
 - o God specifically reveals His will relative to murder (**Ex 20:13**)
 - o Capital punishment for murder reinforces the sanctity of human life and the need to protect it (it is precious)
 - o Commands to not take life implies the right to life, unless the Lord intervenes; you are

- defending your own life, or the magistrate takes the life of an evil doer!
- d. When does human life begin Biblically? (Amongst Christians, this can be controversial)
- o God forms the child within the mother (**Job 10:8-12; 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Eccel 11:5**)
 - o David in **Psalm 139** uses a personal reference, implying he existed from conception, there was not a time he was an “it” vice himself (“...when I was made...”)
 - o The unborn child has a sinful nature from the point of conception (**Psalm 51:5; 58:3**)
 - o This nature is inherited from Adam in an unbroken chain of humanity (**Gen 5:3**)
 - o If the child was just flesh, and not a human being from the beginning, it would not be sinful by nature until it became a “person”
 - o David is speaking to his very nature that was always sinful, as far back as his coming into existence (**Psalm 51:5**)
 - “...I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me...” (KJV)
 - “...I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me...” (NKJV; NAS)
 - “...I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me...” (NIV)
 - o God uses the same word to describe the child inside and outside the mother
 - o O.T. example:
 - “...and her children shall belong...” (**Ex 21:4**)
 - “...strike a woman with child...” (**Ex 21:22**)
 - o N.T. examples (**Luke 1:31,41-42;44; 2:16; 18:15; Acts 7:19**) (“*brephos*”)
 - o No material difference is attributed to the baby other than location
 - o God brings judgment on those who harm the unborn
 - o **Ex 21:22-24**
 - o An accidental miscarriage is to be fined (manslaughter?) or born safely?
 - o Premature birth with serious injury is to be punished life for life, etc.!
 - o Pregnant women were ripped open (assumed the child was killed) as a sign of severe punishment (**2 Kings 8:11-12; 15:16**)
 - o When was Jesus Christ not both human and God after Mary became pregnant?
- e. God loves & calls His servants from before birth (**Isa 44:2,24; 49:1-2; Jer 1:4-5; 20:17; Gal 1:15**)
- f. What about **Prov 24:11-12** to justify civil disobedience? (Test yourself in this)
- o Consider the following:
 - o These verses are not addressing the unborn child - they are addressing those that are being “led” astray - they are to be warned!
 - o Civil disobedience is not in sight here either
 - o Warning those that are deceived into thinking a certain way about abortion can be in sight here - their sin should be addressed as with anyone
 - o We are called to be obedient to the magistrate - we are currently not forced to have abortions (**Rom 13:1-6**)
 - o Israel did not force it’s laws onto other nations that practiced abhorrent acts
 - o In Roman times, the empire practiced infanticide, idolatry, sexual perversion, but Christians did not force their views on the world around them
 - o Actions within the church are through church discipline, not physical restraint
- g. We are called to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (**Prov 31:8-9**)
- o This addresses more specifically what we as Christian citizens can legally do in this nation
 - o We can exercise our rights (see handout):
 - o Voice our opinion anywhere
 - o We can lobby for righteous laws and lawmakers
 - o We can affect the “informed consent” laws of this land
 - o Don’t forget **James 4:17** “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (**James 2:15-17**)

7. What can we do? (See Handouts: Selected Statistics and What if anything can we do?)

8. Additional Misc. Notes:

- o Abundant access to abortion clinics = high abortion rate = abortion legality secure

- Severely limited access = low abortion rate = abortion legality vulnerable
- o Educate medical community about realities of being an abortionist
 - o Legislation at the state level is allowed under Webster (1989) to minimize the number of abortions that can be performed legally. This decision allows parental consent and notification laws (and informed consent laws) to be passed
 - o "I observed during my medical training as an Australian physician many abortions by experienced practitioners. They experienced, without exception, physical revulsion and moral bewilderment" Dr Susan Conde, New York Times, 19 Oct 1994
 - o "Under siege from protesters and largely isolated from medical colleagues, doctors who perform abortions say they are being heavily stigmatized, and fewer and fewer are willing to enter the field" The New York Times News Service, 21 Jan 1990 - The risk to the mother is going to increase because of this
 - o If a person participates in an activity that they feel is morally justifiable, they are generally comfortable defending it to others who may believe it is wrong. If someone does something in spite of a belief that it is wrong, they are often extremely defensive about it. They can be so hyper-sensitive about it that they become unreasonably belligerent anytime the subject is brought up
 - o Young boy next to a tree with a stick, ready to swat a robin's nest full of eggs; "Hey, don't do that!" "What's it to you? It's my tree. It's my yard!" We feel a sense of duty to protect those birds that will be free to fly. (Psalm 82:3-4)
 - o When a woman announces she is pregnant, one doesn't say "oh, your having a fetus" but "oh, your having a baby!"
 - o Why allow a baby to be born that is the result of incest, rape, or is defective?
 - o Why should the child die for the sin of its parent?
 - o Infanticide is more acceptable when we don't have to witness the death of the child (done within the mother). Rationalizations:
 - o He is going to die anyway
 - o He'll suffer if we let him live
 - o His life will only bring pain to his parents
 - o He has no chance of living a normal life
 - o This is really the best way out for everyone concerned
 - o Rights: someone who is in this country from another country doesn't loose their rights because of geography, same is true for a baby inside vice outside the mother - geography should not matter

References:

1. *Life Dynamics Incorporated; PO Box 2226; Denton, Texas 76202; (940) 380-8800 FAX: 8700 (provides legal help in malpractice cases; lawyer referrals; direct mail campaign to doctors and hospitals; legal briefs, etc)*
2. *Newheiser sermon of 18 January, 1998 "Abortion and the Philosophy Behind it"*
3. *"Achieving an Abortion-Free America by 2001," Thomas A. Glessner; 1990*
4. *"Matters of Life and Death," Francis J. Beckworth & Norman L. Geisler; 1991*
5. *"Accessory to Murder - The Enemies, Allies, and Accomplices to the Death of Our Culture," Randall A. Terry; 1990*
6. *"Fearfully & Wonderfully Made," Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey; 1980; 1987*
7. *"Biblical Principles Concerning Issues of Importance to Godly Christians," Plymouth Rock Foundation; 1984*
8. *"The Zero People - Essays on Life," Edited by Jeff Lane Hensley; 1983*
9. *"Third Time Around - A History of the Pro-Life Movement from the First Century to the Present," George Grant; 1991*
10. *"Legislating Morality - Is it Wise? Is it Legal? Is it Possible?" Norman Geisler & Frank Turek; '98*

Additional Notes:

- (a) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control, Abortion Surveillance Report, May 1983
- (b) Harold O. J. Brown, "What the Supreme Court Didn't Know: Ancient and Early Christian Views on Abortion" in "The Human Life Review 2" (Spring 1975)

**Session #28: Christian Financial Solicitation
(Detailed Notes)**

*“For through we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
(2 Cor 10:3-5)*

Purpose of this Session: To Equip Christians to be good Stewards of the Resources God has Entrusted into their care

- o Address those organizations specifically identifying themselves as Christian (not secular groups)
- o Review the Biblical principles that apply
- o Provide an awareness of the tactics (approaches) that are used
- o Provide some suggestions on what we could or should do

1. Introduction: Like virtually all other organizations that rely upon people’s generosity to exist, Christian and Para-Church organizations solicit support

- a. Have any of you ever received a solicitation from a Christian organization for support?
- b. Have any of you wrestled with whether to provide money to that or other organizations?
- c. Have any of you been turned off by the deluge of correspondence you receive after giving once?
- d. What is the general bottom line request (though not always the case)?
- e. There are some secular organizations that may be noble and worthwhile in their efforts, this session does not address them specifically
 - o They must be assessed in the light of God’s word also, however
 - o What purpose do they serve, and what is the compelling reason to support them?
 - o How much do you truly know about them?
 - o Is there any aspect about them that does harm to Christian principles or ministry?

2. Biblically, we have weapons at our disposal that the World doesn’t have, and we are to wage a different kind of war

- a. How are we to wage war in this world?
 - o The tactics of this world:
 - o Human wisdom; philosophy; secular entertainment; massive organization
 - o Overwhelming physical power; taxation; isolation; education; etc.
 - o Hollow and deceptive philosophies; persecution; deception; character assassination; half truths; attack ads; intimidation; questioning authority of scripture; punishment...
 - o Biblical tactics:
 - o Use the light of God’s truth (His word)
 - o Clear conscience (1 Tim 1:18-19)
 - o Endurance, knowing God will win the day (2 Tim 2:3; Heb 10:32; James 4:7)
 - o Gentle instruction vice intimidation (2 Tim 2:23-26)
 - o Discernment to know right from wrong (Matt 7:6; 1 John 4:2-3)
 - o Use of the gospel (1 Cor 1:20-25)
 - o Using the words the Holy Spirit gives (Luke 12:11-12)
 - o Godly wisdom and council to confound the adversary (James 1:2-8)
 - o Love our enemies (Rom 12:17-21)
 - o Go the extra mile
 - o Pray at all times
 - o Remember our rewards are in heaven not in this life
 - o Be aware of the Devil’s schemes (2 Cor 2:11)
- o Our fight is against rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and spiritual forces of evil, not flesh and blood (Eph 6:12)

- b. How did the churches in the N.T. raise the necessary support they needed?
 - o First, by the generous giving of those within, and being added to the body (Acts 2:44-45)
 - o By sending men to help, support, and report back (Phil 2:19-30)
 - o This provided first hand (personal) knowledge of the status and needs
 - o This provided familiarity on a longer term basis
 - o Once known, other means of communication could be used (letters)(Eph 6:21-22; 2 Cor 1:8)
 - o By sincerely praying for each other (Phil 1:3-11; Col 1:9-14)
 - o By providing financial support equal to the need and according to the means (2 Cor 8:2-7; 11,14; 9:12-13; Phil 4:14-19)
 - o Note: There is no indication of indiscriminate giving to help others (see Welfare and Homeless Lessons), only well supervised examples when remote churches are mentioned
 - o Note: Pattern of many churches throughout the ages:
 - o Early growth (membership; generous; support local needs)
 - o Buy buildings and facilities
 - o Routine, comfortableness sets in
 - o Becomes more consumer oriented/competition for "customers"
 - o Begins to compromise the gospel and social involvement (turns back on issues)
- c. Wisdom and discernment must be used whenever anything is given to others
 - o As within the church, the leadership is given to help guide godly response to needs
 - o Individual to individual help is strongly encouraged (Matt 6:3-4)
 - o Giving through the Deacons ensures spiritual as well as physical needs are met
 - o Church leaders have access to experience and knowledge of organizations, church ministries etc. from a wider base than most people - this should be used as much as possible
 - o Elder/pastor information networks
 - o Some direct giving by Christians can be with a "I know better" attitude, independent of factual information
 - o Error can occur on the other extreme: a small difference in a disputable area may be an excuse to not provide needed support in any form (virtually all ministries will have some shortcomings)
 - o Not all giving needs to go through the local church
 - o We have freedom to support any ministry we believe is Christ centered and honoring
 - o We are to be good stewards of the resources provided to us from the Lord
 - o We should not forsake support of the local assembly for ministries elsewhere (Priority is to be placed within the local context that is known best)

3. Are Para-Church organizations justified? Biblically, little justification exists, however, can they be justified on a temporary basis?

- o What constitutes a Church?(See Session #9)
 - o Invisible church (all believers); visible church (local expression of believers or those that claim to be believers in one form or other)
 - o The purpose of the church (universal and local) is to glorify God (1 Cor 10:31)
 - o The church (universal and local) is to be a testimony to the spiritual powers (Eph 3:10-11) and the earthly powers (1 Peter 3:9-10)
 - o The church (universal and local) is to worship God and equip the saints
 - o Regularly gather together to worship (Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25)(preaching; teaching; singing praises; prayer)
 - o Equip the saints for works of service (Eph 2:10; 4:12)(developing of spiritual gifts; evangelism; warning of the cost; send out missionaries)
 - o Disciple believers (Matt 28:19-20)
 - o Minister to the physical needs of the body (Acts 6:1-6)
 - o Support other churches (Eph 6:18; 2 Cor 8:2-5)(prayer; material support)

- o The local church is to oversee the ordinances instituted by Christ
 - o Baptism (Acts 2:41)
 - o Lord's supper (1 Cor 11:17-32)
- o The local church is to be ruled by Elders, shepherding the flock and maintaining its purity (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Thess 5:14,22; Gal 6:1; Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4-5,12-13; 2 Cor 2:6-8)
- o What constitutes a Para-Church? (Come along beside; aside)
 - o An organization of believers that are formed to accomplish a subset of the above in one form or another with an emphasis on a specific ministry area
 - o They do not come under Elder rule (typically) - church discipline is not exercised
 - o They do not formally administer the ordinances (Baptism or the Lord's Supper)
 - o They are not a ministry under the authority or oversight of a local church (Elders)
 - o They tend to draw on resources of other people and churches remote from them
- o Do you know of any examples of Para-Church organizations?
 - o Salvation Army/Focus on the Family/Coral Ridge Ministries (?)
 - o San Diego Rescue Mission/Institute for Creation Research (?)/Bible Study Fellowship(?)
 - o Crisis Pregnancy Centers ?)(Local church affiliations?)
 - o Christian Coalition (prior Moral Majority)
 - o Habitats for Humanity/Aviation Missions Fellowship/Home Schooling organizations
 - o Doctor's without Borders/Promise Keepers/Prison Ministries/ACLJ
 - o Whytcliff Bible Translators?/American Bible Society/Gideon Bible Tract Society
 - o Radio Stations/TV Stations?/Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization(?)
 - o Christian Colleges and Universities?/Seminaries?
 - o Many have chapel as part of its offerings, within the University environment, thus the historical setting of the church is under the Para-Church umbrella
 - o Denominational organizations sponsor many Christian Universities and Colleges, thus under the Denominational organization (Para-Church)
 - o F.I.R.E.? (no employees, no budget; the association is not to sponsor any projects or ministries)
 - o Others you know of?.....
- o Why this rise in Para-Church groups?
 - o Doing what churches should be doing, but aren't? (Sign of weak outreach in community?)
 - o Strong leaders desiring to lead their own followers but not be under an accountable condition
 - o Are the issues they are addressing so systemic that only a widespread approach independent of any local church is the only way to success?
 - o Many churches reflect lack of solid Biblical teaching to be salt & light in its various manifestations?
 - o Lack of large enough aggregate of expertise to create sufficient force or influence (lawyers groups, colleges, etc.)
 - o Are there insufficient resources within a local church to support a particular ministry, but with many churches it is possible (missionary example)?
- o Potential for abuse is very high
 - o Without local church leadership oversight and accountability abuse can more easily occur
 - o How would church discipline ever be applied if needed?
 - o Arm's length relationships invite compromise and adaptation to circumstances vice holding firm to Biblical principles
 - o High potential to draw resources away from the local church
 - o Concern that existence of a Para-Church organization becomes a disincentive for the local church to be salt and light as needed
 - o God's divine pattern is a local church with a plurality of leadership (worship; gospel; equip to be salt and light; ordinances)
 - o Are the tactics used to generate support Biblically based (in general) or are they the tactics of the world? (See next section)

4. Many times the Tactics (Approach) used to Generate Support are virtually Indistinguishable from those the World Uses

- a. Form letters with a routine approach (for example):
 - o A Major problem exists (crisis!) and these are the dire consequences if not checked
 - o Scare stories, newspaper clippings, etc. are used to bolster the concerns (beware of information that does not have proof texts to support)
 - o This organization can uniquely be used to correct this evil
 - o There is an urgency to the request - it must be done NOW!
 - o Matching fund commitments make it even more desirable since you can now leverage your money much further (the matching donor is rarely identified by the way)
 - o You may receive a "gift" in appreciation for the support (buying you off?)
 - o You may have your name engraved somewhere - giving you status or a sense of permanence
 - o Very rarely are any other organizations featured or mentioned in this battle
 - o You are a personal friend that understands the importance of the problem
 - o All you have to do is send money and that will help "win the battle" against this evil
 - o Sometimes a "gift" is enclosed, again giving the recipient a feeling of obligation to respond
 - o Many times a survey or letter to a high ranking government official (President, etc.) is enclosed.
 - o This gives the person a feeling of doing something important (direct access to power)
 - o The wording is much better than we could do
 - o The organization obviously better understands what needs to be done than we do, hence I can trust their judgment
 - o I feel obligated to do something, since there is such a crying need
 - o The response asked for typically entails a very minimal level of effort on the donors side (send a check; check off a questionnaire (typically obvious answers); sign petition; return in pre-addressed envelope (use own postage)
 - o How often are just the victories discussed or talked about (this would imply less of an urgency)
- b. Professional fund raisers are enlisted to provide the form letters addressed above
 - o There is a known expectation on return on investment (postage, professional advice, etc.)
 - o The larger the distribution the greater the "take"
 - o The letters are double spaced, typically, to show more content and "weight"
 - o These groups buy "lists" of people of known persuasion (conservative, church goers, registered with a certain party, etc.)
 - o Once identified as a "conservative", other organizations will pay for your address and name to solicit your support (guaranteed higher response rate than "cold" mailings)
- c. Other techniques
 - o Tugging on the heart strings to illicit compassion similar to the "homeless" situation
 - o This organization is doing "God's" work
 - o Children are dying right now
 - o Phone solicitations
 - o "You gave before" how about now?
 - o "Personal" recorded messages from ... to you
 - o Why won't you give...?
 - o Phone cards with a small percentage going to the charity of your choice
 - o Dollar swap (bait and switch?) - raising funds for a particular purpose, replacing funds already allocated by the organization for that purpose so that the replaced funds can be used for other things
- d. Is this how God wants us to wage war in this world?
 - o Arm's length?
 - o Low accountability?
 - o Unknown results?

5. What, if anything, should a Christian do concerning Solicitations from Christian Organizations? (See Handout)

- a. First, ensure that primary support is provided to the family of God that you are a member of
 - o Direct accountability and ministry of time, talent and treasures for God's glory
 - o Direct involvement in others lives
 - o Giving in a variety of capacities is a holy act of worship
- b. Provide generously in a variety of capacities for special needs within the body as they become apparent
- c. Consider other Christ centered ministries to support over and above the local body
 - o Seek advice from the leadership
 - o Request a statement of faith, constitution and by-laws, and other governing documents (basic operating principles; accountability; etc.)
 - o Demand strict accountability for their efforts and the use of resources; ask for a financial statement and how funds are used
 - o Determine if they are under the supervision (oversight) of a local church body and not just an arm's length association - find out what church that is and how they operate
 - o Determine whether they are a member of E.C.F.A. (Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability)
 - o If at all possible, visit the ministry for a first hand view, or find someone who has
- d. Cautions and other Suggestions
 - o Never give over the phone (credit card numbers) - always ask for a mailing of information first
 - o Be wary of work related payroll deductions (United Way; CFC; etc.)
 - o Encourages payment to ungodly organizations if none is specified
 - o Specifying one organization may replace funds that would go to it by proportionality otherwise (no net increase therefore)
 - o This is arms length involvement and does not have the same direct accountability desirable to ensure a proper understanding of the ministry
 - o Keep good and up to date records of your giving so that multiple solicitations will not result in erroneously giving more than you wanted to
 - o Ensure you and your spouse are in agreement with whatever you decide to do
 - o Limit the number of organizations you support to ensure the understanding and monitoring is done well
 - o When you receive a solicitation that you are not going to support, send them a response asking them to remove you from their mailing list (One time donation as a result of a relative wish during a funeral vice sending flowers - receive literature from that time on!)
 - o Ensure the organization knows you do not want them to sell (or give) your name to others
 - o Be careful of our motives whenever we support other groups or ministries
 - o Is it to salve our consciences so that we do not have to be involved directly ourselves?
 - o Is it to receive "goodies" promised through the donation?
 - o Is it to spite someone else that believes the ministry is unworthy?
- e. Alternatives to Para-Church Organizations - How would a church do it right?
 - o Direct church ministry, with other churches providing various types of support (prayer; labor; special expertise on in an advisory or direct involvement role; funds; resources; facilities; etc.)(how many churches canvas other churches for ministerial support?)
 - o Information and coordination by means of the Internet, visitations, conferences, etc.
 - o Publication of materials then locally copied and distributed (resource material for training, teaching, equipping)

6. Bottom Lines:

- o Para-Church organizations may be a reflection of a weak state of Christian-dome
- o Para-Church organizations have a higher potential for abuse because of the lack of formal church Eldership accountability
- o Giving (time, talent, treasures) should be to the local expression of the Body of Christ first, with other organizations not taking from this use of the abundance God provides
- o Strict accountability must be maintained for any Para-Church group

7. Discussion Questions

- o "Since Political Action Groups are intrinsically political, they cannot be directly associated with a church. If they are Christian in nature, how should they be run?"
- o "Is it right to send money to support the legal defense of the Judge in Arkansas with the 10 Commandments on the wall?"
- o "Are all para-church organizations wrong?"
- o "Should we ever give money to other than a direct church ministry?"
- o "Is it right to support organizations that stand for Christian values and principles but are not specifically Christ centered?"
- o "Is using the same tactics that the world uses always wrong?" "Is it sinful?"
- o "Is the growth of Christian political activity organizations (religious right) an indictment of churches not doing what they are supposed to be doing, or should this work not be done at all?"
- o "The Salvation Army and American Red Cross advertise the same way: 'we are not a government agency, and we rely upon your donations.' What is, and is not said by this?"

Additional Notes Page:

- o Information card received from "Covenant House" in Los Angeles (appeal for donations to June 30, 2000)
 - o To support crisis care, including food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, job placement, and counseling for homeless youth, without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin
 - o Expenses estimates at \$1,445,000 for printing, postage, computer services, mailing lists, consultant fees, and miscellaneous expenses
 - o 1998-99 appeal raised \$4,590,336 from gross receipts of \$6,348,081 at an expense of \$1,757,745 or 27.7% of gross receipts
- o Scenario's:
 - o What about long distance telephone companies that allow a percentage of the cost to go to a designated organization, and corporately they support ungodly causes?
 - o Stewardship of resources would allow use to save money
 - o Raising of funds this way is painless, but not readily seen (may give impression of donating more than actually given; could become dependent upon this as a source)
 - o What if service provider known to support ungodly issues (abortion, homosexual rights, etc.)?
 - o We have the freedom to use, since it is a service (brain surgery, auto mechanic, etc. are not screened necessarily as to believer status before using)
 - o What is more important, the principle or the benefit?
 - o If this is a stumbling block for others (becomes known), then consideration may need to be given to change the service provider to one more acceptable (1 Cor 10:23-32)
 - o Is it necessary to screen businesses if the church organization is involved? What about individually? (Disney; AT&T; Delta Airlines; etc.)
 - o This is not a Para-Church approach but it is using a non-Christian organization to raise funds for Christ's work (is this Christ honoring?)
 - o What if the long distance carrier is a Christian company?
- o What about an inner city church ministering to the homeless that is very understaffed, undersupplied, and underfunded? If a Para-Church approach is not used, what should be done?
 - o Those gifted in inner-city ministries can be elicited to help
 - o May have to decide what is more important - secular employment or move
 - o What is a person's giftedness and ability?
 - o Churches can send short term missionaries into this field (labor, giftedness, experience, etc.)
 - o Other churches can send funds to support the inner city churches (2 Cor 8-9)
 - o Same ministry can be accomplished with a church structure in place vice Para-Church

Session #29: Environmentalism (Detailed Notes)

"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:20-21)

Purpose of this Session: To Provide Balance to the Issue of Environmentalism and Re-Engage Christians in the Process

- o What is the issue here?
- o What is the Biblical foundation for a Christian's approach?
- o What should we be doing?

Q: Who was the first environmentalist? (Adam)

Q: When was the first Biblical concern for the carrying capacity (ability to sustain life) of a region of the earth? (Abraham and Lot)(Gen 13:3-12)

Q: Has anything changed over the years? When do you think the following quote was made:

Tertullian (Carthage around A.D. 200): "Everything has been visited, everything know, everything exploited. Now pleasant estates obliterate the famous wilderness areas of the past. Plowed fields have replace forests, domesticated animals have dispersed wild life. Beaches are plowed, mountains smoothed and swamps drained. There are as many cities as, in former years, there were dwellings. Islands do not frighten, nor cliffs deter. Everywhere there are buildings, everywhere people, everywhere communities, everywhere life...Proof [of this crowding] is the density of human beings. We weigh upon the world; its resources hardly suffice to support us. As our needs grow larger, so do our protests, that already nature does not sustain us. In truth, plague, famine, wars and earthquakes must be regarded as a blessing to civilization, since they prune away the luxuriant growth of the human race."

(World population at this time probably fell short of 500 million)

1. What is the Problem? There are at least four basic Contentions that Fuel the Environmental Debate (Population; Capitalism; Pollution; Christianity)

- a. The human population is creating an overwhelming burden on the earth
 - o Overpopulation, with man being a major consumer of resources and a resultant major polluter of the environment
 - o Terms used: *population bomb; population explosion; population boom; population plague; a cancer; people pollution* imply mankind is a plague on the earth
 - o Bumper sticker: "Save the environment - become extinct"
- b. Mankind is consuming the natural resources of the planet and will soon exhaust them (capitalism)
 - o Blaming capitalism specifically (first world countries)
 - o Industrialized nations are consuming the majority of resources of the underdeveloped nations unjustly
 - o Developed countries have despoiled the environment in their pursuit of rampant development
 - o Within this are claims that there is not a just distribution of resources ("The consumption of 40% of the earth's energy and mineral resources by 6% of the population is unjust" (ref 4))
 - o Blaming the existence of mankind in general:
- c. Mankind is polluting the environment & destroying countless species and natural habitats
- d. Christianity has been the greatest source of destruction to the environment because of its teaching to dominate the earth and subjugate it (anthropocentric).
 - o Claiming Christians have polluted and pillaged the environment by pursuing the Biblical

- mandate to “dominate” the earth without regard to the consequences
- o That Christianity is anthropocentric, leading to neglect of other forms of life
- o Some feminist groups believe the drive of men to dominate women is leading men to dominate and subjugate nature
- o Lynn White (late 60's)(ref (6)) “Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions...not only established a dualism of man and nature, but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” - probably most cited reference work in the ecological arena
- o **Note:** Biggest environmental impact of all time (to date) was the Noachian flood - direct act of God in response to man’s wickedness!

Therefore: The environment should be left to itself with all human influence removed

One Christian’s response:

“If they’re concerned about us, wait til they see what God will do!”

2. The Historical Roots of Today’s Environmental Movement are Quite Recent in Origin

- a. Conservation Movement (early 1800's until the 1930's) laid the foundation for environmentalism
 - o Key leaders of the Conservation Movement included:
 - o Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)
 - o John James Audubon (1785-1851)
 - o John Muir (1838-1914)(Sierra Club founder)
 - o John Burroughs (1827-1921)
 - o President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)
 - o Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946)
 - o Key tenants of the Conservation Movement included:
 - o Nature was a resource upon which man could draw to meet their physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual needs
 - o Nature was to be conserved so that it would be around for later generations to use
 - o This was decidedly people centered (human management of nature for human benefit for the long term)
 - o In mid 1900's the movement became known as “preservationism” and then from the 1970's on known as “environmentalism”
- b. The Environmental Movement was significantly influenced by Ado Leopold (1887-1948) founder of the *Wilderness Society*. Later developments:
 - o 1962 “Silent Spring” written by Rachel Carson (scourges of DDT)
 - o 1960's-1980's many environmental organizations began
 - o This movement rejected the “anthropocentric” view and embraced a “bio-centric” or “eco-centric” view of nature
 - o The Current Environmental Movement is Nature-Centric and not Theo-Centric
 - o Major organizations with this view are: Greenpeace; the Green political parties; Friends of the Earth; Earth First!
 - o Key tenants of the environmental movement include:
 - o The environment (everything except of human origin) has intrinsic value apart from any human use for it
 - o The earth is the only environment that humanity will ever have (breeds desperation and compulsion)
 - o “Deep Ecology” aspect - the protection of nature for its own sake (Arne Naess, Norwegian philosopher the key originator of the “Deep Ecology” beliefs)
 - o Nature should be left as it is, without human intervention. Barry Commoner’s four Laws of Ecology state (ref (3)):
 - o Everything is connected to everything else
 - o Everything must go somewhere

- o Nature knows best (“Any major man made change in a natural system is likely to be detrimental to that system”)
 - o There is no such thing as a free lunch
 - o Current Environmental Movement has strong underpinnings of Pantheism & New Age beliefs:
 - o Can take an element of God’s truths and twist and distort it by personifying nature
 - o This rejects man’s right to have dominion over the earth
 - o Belief that all things that exist are totally inter-connected (some degree of truth)
 - o Belief that everything is part of god and god is in everything (god and the universe are one); everything has the essence of deity and nothing can be seen as greater or more important than anything else
 - o “I - thou” vice “I - it” view of animals, plants and the like
 - o Some pursue nature as a spiritual personality, try to “merge” with it thru meditation and psychic surrender
 - o For many environmentalists, this world is all there is - it must be protected at all costs since there is no “wholly other” (God or afterlife)
 - o At the same time, science has removed reverence for nature - gigantic machine!

Plot: Horizontal line, New Age on left point, Science on right point (no true God)
New Age - god is earth; Science - there is no god (both wrong)
 - c. Evangelical attention to the environmental issues began in the 1980’s
 - o Au Sable Institute for Environmental Studies (Mancelona, Michigan)
 - o By late 1980’s of 125 church-related colleges found 95% offered environmental courses
 - o Some liberal church groups are more concerned now about ecology than salvation!
- 3. Christians, for the most part, removed themselves from the battle and became not just irrelevant - but accused of being the Cause of the World’s Problems**
- a. Studies show:
 - o The more zealous Christians are to evangelism, the less concerned they are about environmental issues
 - o The more theologically conservative church members are, the less likely they will show interest in ecological concerns

Plot: Y-axis (Gospel on bottom, Environment on top)
X-axis (Liberal at origin, Conservative to the right)
Curve: Parabola; top left, down towards origin, curve horizontal to bottom right
 - b. General Christian community perceptions of the environmental movement include:
 - o Thinking the movement is mostly made up of “environmental Wackos”, “Tree huggers”, eco-terrorists, fanatics, and the like that are out of touch with reality
 - o Belief most environmental activists are liberals, anti-capitalists, and want to take nation down
 - o Believing most activists are New-Agers with a pagan, idolatrous view of nature (e.g. a tree is more important than a human being)
 - o Thinking liberal Christian groups involved in ecological issues are more concerned about ecology than salvation (evangelism)
 - o Being passive towards the environment, being influenced by Pre-Millennium beliefs, the earth’s corruption even providing evidence of Christ’s soon return (attempts to reverse will be fruitless, attempts to deter Satan’s attacks accomplish nothing)
 - o Believing that technology will eventually give answers to the problems around us
 - o God gave us dominion over the earth, what’s the problem?
 - c. Christian activists on the other hand:
 - o Have been in error at times in applying Biblical moral authority illegitimately
 - o Haven’t helped Biblical case by watering down the dominion mandate (i.e. speaking to the servant-hood of Jesus setting the example for us to nature and ignoring the creation mandate)
 - o Sometimes use scripture incorrectly to try and discredit environmental abuses, thus alienating other Christian groups and doing a disservice to our Lord. Examples:
 - o **Isa 5:8:** Used to condemn urbanization as reducing bio-diversity; crowding the planet; depleting resources; deforestation; habitat destruction

- o However; this verse may be addressing the oppression of the poor and ignoring the Jubilee provision of God to ensure each family has a land inheritance to survive on (house to house - the accumulation of property with the poor living as servants on the land)
- o **Jer 2:7-8** Defiling the land - interpreted as destruction of the environment
 - o However, **2:5b-8,13** shows the defiling is idolatry not despoiling the environment
 - o Similar approach for **Isa 24:4** (claims represents poor ecological practices)
- o Sometimes overlook fact God has judged mankind by bringing down ecological disaster on him - independent of man actually destroying land (Plagues of Egypt (**Ex 7-12**); destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding plain (**Gen 19**); the flood (**Gen 6-8**); the curse (**Gen 3:17-19**); turning rivers into deserts/vice versa (**Psalm 107:33-34; Isa 35:6-7; 41:17-19**); the destruction of forests and fields of Assyria (**Isa 10:18-19**); destruction of wild animals (**Isa 34:6-11**); the sending of locusts, earthquakes, floods, droughts, etc (**Joel 1:4,6-12; Amos 9:5-6; Mic 1:3-4; Nah 1:3-5; Hab 3:1-12**)
- o Some Christian views are that Satan is the one that has corrupted the universe, and actually corrupted the evolutionary process so that now we have mosquitoes, germs, viruses, etc (Eastern Orthodox Church)
- d. When Christians become involved, they must be careful to do so with clear Biblical understanding and not go beyond God's word

4. A Proper Biblical Approach to Environmentalism Needs to Understand the Mandate given to man in Genesis by God

- a. Man did not create the earth and it didn't come about through chance (**Gen 1:1**)
 - o It was a purposeful act of the almighty Creator
 - o It has purpose - to bring glory to God
 - o It is sustained by God alone (**Heb 1:3**)
- b. Who owns the world?
 - o **Psalm 24:1** "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it" (**1 Cor 10:26**)
 - o This plus many other verses demonstrate that the Lord owns all things, nothing is beyond His control (**Job 41:11; Psalm 50:10,12**)
 - o This in some fashion has been used to rationalize away or negate any claim of human ownership
 - o **Psalm 115:16** "The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man"
 - o Man has been granted a subordinate ownership responsibility under God for the earth
 - o Similar passages such as **Ex 20:15** against stealing, demonstrate an ownership in this world and commensurate responsibility for it
 - o We even sing this: "**This is My Father's World**"
- c. Man was to tend/care (cultivate/guard)(till/keep)(work/take care of) the Garden (**Gen 2:15**)
 - o Eden was especially good - and God planted the garden within it
 - o Adam was to maintain the Garden, and ensure it did not lose some of its perfection and become like the rest of the earth (took effort and care to maintain the perfection that was already there, this was given to man to do)
 - o The garden (already perfect) was the example for Adam to follow in subduing the rest of the earth - basically, turn the rest of the earth into the equivalent of the garden, but with man's unique talents and creativity to manifest itself in a manifold way! (probably not make the earth identical to the Garden)
- d. Man is to exercise dominion (subdue and rule) over the earth (**Gen 1:26-28**)
 - o There is a hierarchy to the creation (**Psalm 8:3-9**) (heavens, heavenly beings, man, flocks, herds, beasts, birds, fish)(see **Gen 1** order also; **Matt 10:29-31**)
 - o Basically a "pastoral" care of the earth; stewardship (**Matt 25:21** - ruler over small things)
 - o Though it was created "very good", God intended for man to make it even better
 - o Man was to transform the earth bit by bit into a larger Garden, following the pattern and example he had from the Garden of Eden

- o The implication is that the earth was not yet what God had intended it to be without man's work in it - this apparently is true even prior to the fall and the curse!
- o A garden is suited to tender cultivation, while a more forceful subduing is needed for that which is not yet a garden
- o Transformation of the earth was man's mandate, both for his own good and for God's glory
- e. After the Fall, man still had the mandate to fill and subdue the earth
 - o The work was not the curse, the sweat of the brow was the curse
 - o The work was made much more difficult by the curse, but man's mandate was still to be fruitful and fill the earth (**Gen 9:1**)
 - o In addition, man no longer had the pattern available to guide him in his work (**Gen 3:23-24**)
 - o The curse subjected the earth to "frustration" and "bondage to decay" (**Rom 8:20-21**), making the task for man much more difficult (it rebels against man's rule, just as Adam rebelled against God's rule)
 - o The animals also were subject to the effects of the fall, and the fear of man (dread) fell upon them - making dominion over them much more difficult
 - Note:** Animals turned on man (feared him) just like man turned on God (feared Him)
- f. Man's exercise of dominion over the earth is not what has subjected the earth to frustration or decay as some would have us believe
 - o The true state of the earth is addressed in **Rom 8:20-21**
 - o The earth was subject to decay and death due to the fall also (not morally responsible as man is, but subject to the consequences of man's fall)
 - o God is the one that cursed the ground, not Adam (**Gen 3:17; 5:29; Rom 8:20-21**)
 - o Man's role is to re-claim the earth and rule over it as a good steward until God redeems the earth (**Rom 8:21**)

5. What is a Proper Response to the Claims of the Environmentalists? (See Handout)

- a. Claim: The human population is creating an overwhelming burden on the earth!
- b. Claim: Mankind is consuming the planet's natural resources and will soon exhaust them!
- c. Claim: Man is destroying countless species and natural habitats by pollution!
- e. Claim: Christianity has been the greatest source of destruction to the environment!

6. Basic Biblical tenants to guide our approach to environmental stewardship:

- a. The creation (physical universe) reflects God's glory, even in its fallen state (**Psalms 19:1; 1 Tim 4:4**)
- b. God sustains the world (**Heb 1:3; Col 1:17; Psalm 104:10-14; Job 38-39**)
- c. God made His covenant with the creatures of the earth as well as with man (**Gen 9:9-11**)
 - o He cares for the birds of the air (**Matt 6:26; 10:29**)
 - o He commands man to be good stewards of animals (**Prov 12:10**)
 - o Reasonable inference is to care for every living thing and protect them
- d. Man is to fill the earth and rule over it (**Gen 1:28**)
 - o Is this command given to the race or every human being? (**Matt 19:11-12; 1 Cor 7:8**)
 - o The imperative is to populate, not to overpopulate the world
 - o Since animals and plants are also commanded to be fruitful the implication is that we have an obligation to not overrun them (Prevent extinction!)
 - o Just as Christ is king and servant (Elders are to be the same (**Heb 13:7; 1 Peter 5:2**)) so we are to be rulers over the environment, as under-shepherds. We are to serve the creation well
 - o We are to fulfill the proper role God has called us to perform in this earth
- e. Basic stewardship principles include:
 - o Those given a trust must prove faithful with it (**1 Cor 4:2**)
 - o Rest is conducive to productivity (**Ex 23:12**)
 - o Rest for the land is important (**Ex 23:10-11**)
- f. In addressing the environment, must uphold man's dignity & uniqueness compared to rest of creation
 - o Man was not created subordinate to the other creatures
 - o Man has a dignity far above that of the animals, plants etc.
 - o Man's life is always to be protected over the life of animals

- g. Establish sound approaches to environmental issues; ensure a proper balance so that nature:
 - o Is not worshiped (idolized)
 - o Is not destroyed (wanton destruction from a pure near term utilitarian perspective)
 - o Is viewed in the light of the truth it will eventually be destroyed and replaced with a new heavens and earth

7. What if Anything should we do?

- o Ask the question: "Will this action enhance or damage creation's ability to glorify God and testify to His power to provide for and nurture what He has created?"
- o Practical things we can do (remember the old maxim "waste not, want not"):
 - o Live a simpler life (buying fewer luxury goods)
 - o Living in smaller and more energy efficient homes
 - o Eating foods that are more unprocessed
 - o Supporting measures to decrease pollution and increase recycling
 - o Reuse materials normally thrown out
 - o Drive less
 - o Dispose of toxic materials correctly
 - o Avoid materials that are not biodegradable
- o When confronted with dire predictions on state of the earth, challenge with asking for the "facts" and material that can be referenced
- o Many publications exist that list good environmental practices, less harmful, how to save money and get money by recycling
- o If desire to become more active with environmental groups, it provides an opportunity to provide a clear view of Christian teaching vice the corrupted one currently held
- o Teach our children to not waste things and practice good stewardship principles
- o Concentrate attention, understanding and actions (as a church) on a selected few issues, such as:
 - o Global warming (facts, issues, actions, organizations, etc.)
 - o Population growth (fact, fiction, issues, etc.)
 - o Development of third world countries
 - o Species extinction
- o When confronted with wrong views of the Biblical position on stewardship of the environment - correct it (conversations; newspapers; TV; etc.)
- o Others?

8. Discussion Questions (see Handout)

9. References

1. John Elkington, Julia Hailes, Joel Makower, *"The Green Consumer"* (New York: penguin Books, 1991)
2. "Where Garden Meets Wilderness - Evangelical Entry into the Environmental Debate," E. Calvin Beisner; 1997
3. Millennium Institute 1997
4. Loren Wilkison, ed., "Earthkeeping in the Nineties: Stewardship of Creation," 1991
5. "Project Earth - Preserving the World God Created," William B. Badke; 1991
6. Lynn White; "The Historical roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science*; 155 (March 1967)
7. "The True State of the Planet," edited by Ronald Bailey; 1995

Additional Notes:

- o Litany of problems claimed (alleged) to face us:
 - o Acid rain in the North Eastern states
 - o Availability of fresh, clean water
 - o Pharmaceutical wastes washed up onto beaches
 - o Increased levels of mercury and lead in the environment (can cause mental retardation)
 - o Cancer causing agents polluting the environment and our foods
 - o Pesticide residues on foods causing cancer
 - o Asbestos in schools
 - o Radon in basements
 - o Toxic wastes; dioxin
 - o Electromagnetic fields
 - o Smog degrading health and exasperating asthma and other lung disorders (Mexico City people

- o breath the equivalent of two packs of cigarettes each day; ref (5))
- o Nuclear waste leaking into the aqua-sphere
- o Oil spills causing "irreversible" ecological effects
- o Ozone layer depletion (increased sunburns; skin cancers, cataracts, breakdown in human immune systems; decreased crop yields)
- o Pesticide residues on our food, weed killers and chemical fertilizers polluting the water table
- o Food additives
- o Non-biodegradable materials polluting the environment; etc. (Styrofoam, etc.)
- o Greenhouse Effect (widespread droughts; melting of the polar ice caps; massive flooding of coastal areas; global warming; maybe triggering a cooling trend
 - o Predictions of 2.5 to 7.5 degrees F. increase over the next 60 years (ref (5))
- o Rain forest destruction (>11 million hectares of tropical rain forest destroyed each year (in 30 years this amounts to an area the size of India; ref (5))
 - o Tropical peoples dying by the 1,000's from diseases once unknown to them
 - o Over half of all species live in rain forests - disappearing rapidly
 - o Curative properties of rain forest plant life disappearing forever
 - o Present rate, no rain forests will be left by the year 2135 (some estimates 100 years)
 - o Increasing risk of land slides and flooding
- o Soil depletion of nutrients
 - o Intensive farming practices have brought salinization and alkalinization of land
- o What about: Audobon Society; Sierra Club; Wildlife Federation?
- o Environmental slogan: "Think globally, act locally"
- o Average American spends eight full months of his life opening and looking over junk mail
- o Michael Peters Group research - consumers were willing to pay 5% more for products packaged with recyclable or biodegradable materials
- o Liberation theology: 1) deliverance of humanity from sin and death 2) deliverance of oppressed people into freedom and well-being that God intended for all people 3) deliverance of all of creation from those oppressive powers that exploit it for profit
- o USA: 7 million cars junked every year; NY 70,000 cars abandoned each year; 40 B metal cans/26 B bottles/65 B bottle caps each year
- o Physicists have written about "mysterium tremendum" - in referring to the universe, in awe
- o Green Cross International; Mikhail Gorbachev, President; established 1993.
- o Some Christian views of animals:
 - o St. Francis of Assisi: animals were sacramental; a special means of grace; through animals we could experience something of Christ; animals were "brothers and sisters"
 - o Wesley: believed that when Jesus returns the animals will live in a perfect environment which will be to the "one perennial spring"
 - o C.S. Lewis: Animals are possibly "in" us in a way analogous to the way we are "in" Christ
 - o William Wilberforce fought the causes of slavery; child labor laws; and founding of the Royal Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- o Calvin: general utilitarian view of nature; it is intended for our use and pleasure; he also urged good stewardship
- o Excerpts from "Time" Special Edition - Earth Date 2000; Spring 2000
 - o Earth Day started by Senator Gaylord Nelson in the US on April 22, 1970
 - o Page 11, Roger Rosenblatt ("All the Days of the Earth"); "People automatically lose themselves in wordless reverence at the sight of a curlew or a silver cloud of anchovies or at the mournful wail of howler monkeys. Or they stare dumbly out at oceans, as if longing for their microbial past." Page 12; "Fewer than 2 million species of animals, plants and microorganisms have been identified. Yet tens of millions more may exist..."
 - o "Condition Critical" by Eugene Linden; analysis of preliminary report of the U.N. due out in September 2000 (half of world's wetlands lost in past century; 58% of coral reefs are imperiled by human activity; 80% of grasslands are suffering from soil degradation; 20% of drylands are in danger of becoming deserts; people use 54% of available freshwater)
 - o "Vanishing Before Our Eyes" by Edward O. Wilson; "Not since an asteroid smacked the

earth 65 million years ago have animal and plant species died out so fast. We have no idea what we're losing"; biologists have described from 1.5 to 1.8 million species; estimates of the true number of species (depending upon the method employed) ranges from 3.6 to 100 million); Subsurface lithoautotrophic microbial ecosystems (SLIMES) go down to 2 miles below the earth's surface; general agreement that the rate of species extinctions is now 100 to 1000 times as great as it was before the coming of humanity; "Throughout most of geological time, individual species and their immediate descendants lived an average of about 1 million years. They disappeared naturally at the rate of about one species per million years, and newly evolved species replaced them at the same rate, maintaining a rough equilibrium"; throughout history people have cultivated or gathered 7000 plant species for food, today only 20 species provide 90% of the world's food (three - maize, wheat, rice - supply more than half)

- o "Extinctions past and present" by Richard Leakey; "It is estimated that more than 95% of the species that have existed over the past 600 million years are gone"
- o 247 are born every minute in the world
- o Humans use 54% of the Earth's rainfall, and 70% of that goes to agriculture
- o Jane Goodall: We are not separated from other animals by "an unbridgeable chasm"
- o Lynn White, historian at UC Berkeley, wrote that Christianity: "...not only established a dualism of man and nature, but insisted it is God's will that man exploit nature...Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt" (Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, #155 (1967); pp 1203-1207
- o "This Is My Father's World": #111 - Trinity Hymnal
 - This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
 - This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hadn the wonders wrought
 - This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise, the morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise. This is my Father's world; he shines in all that's fair; in the rustling grass I hear him pass, he speaks to me everywhere
 - This is my Father's world, O let me ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet. This is my Father's world; the battle is not done; Jesus who died shall be satisfied, and earth and heav'n one
- o Further study - the role of government
- o Contrast between western (dominant Christian heritage) and eastern countries

Session #30: Art (Detailed Notes)

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.”
(Phil 4:8)*

Purpose of this Session: To Discuss how a Christian Should Personally approach the Arts (in Particular the Visual Arts) and the Ultimate Purpose of Art

- o What is art really?
- o God has blessed mankind with artistic abilities
- o God has also put bounds on what art should not do
- o A short history of art development
- o What are some basic questions we should be asking ourselves?

1. Introduction: Is art truly in the eye of the beholder, or is there more to it?

- o Why this session?
 - o Evangelical Christianity is conspicuously absent from the mainline art culture
 - o This topic is very rarely touched upon relative to its deeper uses, significance and role
 - o “As a man thinketh, so is he” - we are influenced constantly by images and “works of art” in the cultural media, museums, and many other venues
 - o Art is virtually everywhere we go - and as such has tremendous influence on us
 - o Artists have been placed on a pedestal in our culture - even using terms that have made art into a mystical arena (“inspiration” “vision” “creation” “transcendent” “revelation”...)
- o What issues are there?
 - o Person’s worldview will affect their creative insights, leanings and manifestations
 - o Government pays for works of art - some of which may be offensive to you - is that a proper role of government?
 - o Why hasn’t a uniquely Christian art form come into being to lead the art world instead of just following it?
 - o We will be wise to remember **Joshua 1:7** in approaching this subject (“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful...”)

2. What is Art? How would you define it?

- a. Fundamentally, art is a form of communication (Artist - Artifact - Audience); it can:
 - o Entertain?
 - o Educate?
 - o Elicit a response of some kind?
 - o Bring healing?
 - o Bring glory to God?
 - o Direct our attention towards God?
 - o Bring pleasure?
 - o Express an idea or perspective?
 - o A form of rebellion?
 - o Therapeutic?
 - o Adornment?
 - o Direct our attention towards God’s truths?
- b. There are many different expressions of artistic creativity:
 - o Visual: painting, sketches, cartoons, sculpture, light shows, photographs, architecture, movies, stain glass windows
 - o Written (literary): literature (poetry, stories, novels, historical accounts, fiction; science fiction)
 - o Musical: singing, songs, hymns, Gregorian chants, whistling, music
 - o Spoken: storytelling, comedians
 - o Performance: dancing; plays; opera; theatre
 - o Others? (Aromatic arts; culinary arts)
- c. Are there levels of art work?
 - o Fine art is generally defined as: painting; sculpture; poetry; classical music
 - o Popular art generally includes: novels; theater; cinema; popular music
 - o The crafts are usually seen as lower art forms not requiring exceptional skill

- d. Art is uniquely a God-given human ability - animals cannot do it
 - o God is the Creator of the universe - He created everything out of nothing (**Heb 11:3**)
 - o The heavens and the earth below speak to God's artistic creativity (**Psalm 19:1; Eccl 3:11; Matt 6:28-29**)
 - o Man, in God's image, reflects these abilities
 - o Animals, have not been endowed with artistic creativity since they are not created in God's image
 - o Man creates out of existing material, he makes something new, but not out of nothingness
 - o Works of art are found universally - every culture and nation - an intrinsic characteristic of man that has shown itself in ever complex and more sophisticated ways everywhere

3. Until the modern era, most artistic endeavors were by skilled craftsmen (based upon ref (4))

- a. Throughout much of history, artists were primarily craftsmen, members of guilds
 - o Accomplished workers, craftsmen in their trade or area
 - o Items made according to rules of the trade (carving; sculpting; woodworking; tapestry; working in gold and silver; leather, etc.)
 - o Trades handed down one generation to the next with techniques, tools, patterns and knowledge transferred
 - o Not necessarily originality, but solid and good work was looked for - beauty was the natural result of appropriate materials and techniques used with accomplished skill
 - o Typically, works (some masterpieces) did not demand intellectual debate or interpretation but served a function of some kind (adornment; decoration; or as a metaphor for high values)
 - o Skill, quality and appropriateness were the measures of value
- b. Within the Church two extreme positions tended to dominate (*see ref (6)*)
 - o Those who built and venerated icons used as religious objects to inspire and focus devotions and prayers of the faithful (Western church)
 - o Those who rejected art in its religious uses, believing worship of the invisible God does not permit any "idolatrous" use of art (Eastern church)(*Iconoclasts*)
 - o The Reformation was generally accompanied by iconoclasm
- c. Around 1500, a different era began, resulting in a major shift in the 1700's
 - o The Age of Reason (Enlightenment)
 - o Art became fine art and the crafts were viewed as something inferior (or less)
 - o The artist became a "genius"
 - o Distinct division of the arts and sciences began
 - o Art began to become disconnected from the normal functions of life, beauty became an abstract quality - sometimes unrelated to what is being depicted
 - o Art became the domain of the connoisseur (collector; person of taste and knowledge)
- d. By the 1800's, Christianity began to withdraw from the cultural side of society (pietism)
 - o Humanism began to permeate art works
 - o Relativism
 - o Arbitrary meaning and purpose became common
 - o Innovation - change for change sake become common
 - o Art began to be art for art's sake, independent of the artist (or the body of work)
 - o In art courses now, tend to overlook the spiritual (Christian) driven forces in earlier works, and concentrate on style, technique and the genius being manifest
 - o Result: people are searching for the meaning in art now, also;
 - o Tends to mock Christianity, parents, and distorts truths and messages
 - o Dominance in reflecting the sinfulness of man, decay, blindness, hopelessness
 - o Tends to exalt art itself, genius, is man-centered and intellectualized
 - o Significant division exists today:
 - o Very good art is far away from the common person (shunned practical demands such as decoration, entertainment or any involvement in real life)
 - o Popular arts are seen as below the level of acceptability (commercial art)

- e. The dilemma for Christian artists - and Christians that appreciate art is (*ref (4)*):
 - o The culture in general is antagonistic to Christianity - thus Christian “art” will be virtually unacceptable in the common marketplace (Exceptions? Thomas Kinkade?)
 - o Many Christians see no need for Christian “fine art” and are suspect of Christians that try to produce it. Much of this view stems from a common view of artists as radicals and anti-Christian
 - o The Christian artist, therefore, has two communities that may not be accepting of his work
 - o Also, history tends to show Christians either bringing art into an almost idolatrous position (venerating icons), to rejecting any religious art (iconoclasts), to basically ignoring art as not important at all

4. Back to Basics: God has richly blessed His people with artistic abilities, but He has also given warnings about how to use those abilities

- a. Man is created in God’s image, the image of the Creator who created the universe
 - o God creates out of nothing, and with perfect beauty, purpose and design - man is given to create out of the material that God has brought into existence (will not be perfect)
 - o God has given man amazing creative abilities
 - o This is true across mankind (not limited to Christians) with different cultures expressing it in unique and different ways
 - o It is not sinful to exercise this ability as long as it does not violate clear Biblical commands
 - o Sin corrupts this gift (artistic talents) just as it corrupts all abilities
 - b. God grants a wide variety of artistic gifts at various times to accomplish His will & bring Him glory
 - o Moses and the Tabernacle (Ex 26:1; 28:2-3; 31:1-11; 36:8ff; 39:43) - artisans (craftsmen) were chosen and equipped by God directly
 - o Curtains for the Tabernacle had images woven into them
 - o Artistic designs were fashioned in gold, silver, bronze, also to cut and set stones, work in wood, and make all the furnishings for the Tabernacle
 - o Garments were specially designed for priests for “...glory and for beauty” (Ex 28:2)
 - o NIV translation is “...give him dignity and honor”
 - o This does not carry the true significance of this verse, the artistic endeavors were to bring glory to God and were to be worthy of the God the priest was to serve before. Beauty is the result of the best work, something to inspire
 - o The creation of the Tabernacle involved “almost every form of representational art that men have ever known” (*ref (8)*)
 - o The fashioning of Cherubim (things of heaven)(Ex 37:7-9)
 - o Bezalel & Oholiah (Ex 35:30-36:7) - The most complete description in the Bible of God’s provision for, and purpose in artistic endeavors!
 - o The Lord called him individually (specifically)
 - o This was a vocational calling (regular work) as well as an avocational (called away)
 - o He was filled with the Holy Spirit (not mentioned many times in the O.T. - a special anointing from God to equip him with ability; Bezalel was the first one mentioned in the Bible as being filled with the Holy Spirit)
 - o He was filled with **ability** (talent); **intelligence** (reason, understanding, common sense); **knowledge** (knowhow, information); and **craftsmanship** (skill, mastery of technique)
 - o The purpose of his calling was to devise artistic designs; work in gold etc.; inspire to teach others to use their abilities for God’s glory
 - o Other provisions for the Tabernacle included:
 - o Wood carvers (sculptures)(Ex 25:9-30) provided for the furnishings of the tabernacle
 - o Silver and goldsmiths (Ex 25:31-40) - The golden lampstand
- Side Note: Other expressions of artistic ability for God’s glory:**
- o Choreographers (Ex 15:20; Psalm 150:4,5)
 - o Miriam took a tambourine (with all the women) and danced and sang to the Lord
 - o This was an apparent spontaneous gesture following the crossing of the Red Sea

- o David danced before the Lord as the Ark was returned (2 Sam 6:14-16)
- o Songwriters and singers
 - o Moses sang a spontaneous song (with the Israelites) to the Lord following the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-18)
 - o Miriam (the prophetess) in Exodus 15:20-21
 - o The Psalms were intended to be sung (poetry)
 - o Mary's song (Luke 1:46-55)
 - o Eph 5:19 refers to songs, hymns, spiritual songs
 - o There are many examples of songs, hymns and spiritual songs in the Bible (Col 3:16)
 - o New Testament era needed new songs to express new truths (e.g. 2 Tim 2:11-13)
 - o What are others?
- o Musicians (2 Chron 5:11-14; 1 Chron 23:5)
 - o Cymbals; harps; lyres; trumpets
 - o They joined in unison, as with one voice to give praise & thanks to God (Psalm 136?)
 - o It was acceptable to God (vs 14)
- o Storytellers (Judges 9:7-20)
 - o In the time of the Judges, Jotham recounted a story to the people of Shechem to try and convince them not to allow Abimelech to rule over them
- o Poets (Isa 40ff; David himself (2 Sam 1:19-27 as well as the Psalms; The Song of Solomon))
- o Bible has various genre's of writings:
 - o Metaphor (Psalm 90:1,2; Ex 19:4)
 - o Simile (Matt 18:2-3)
 - o Allegory (Luke 16:19-31)
 - o Parable (Matt 13)
 - o Apologetic (1 Cor 15:29-32; Rom 9:16-21)
 - o Apocryphal (Rev)
 - o Poetic (Psalms)
 - o Proverbs (Prov; Eccl)
 - o Historical narrative (Ex 1-13)
 - o Proposition? (Matt 12:40)
- o Artisans of many sorts (1 Kings 7:13-22)
- o What can be conclude from this?
 - o It is within God's will and good pleasure to gift people to be artistic in a wide variety of venues (His common grace dispenses these abilities across mankind)
 - o The pursuit of art creation is a vocation allowed by God and is important to God
- c. God condemns idolatry in all forms (Ex 20:3-6; Deut 7:25-26; 29:16-17; Isa 40:18-23; Lev 26:1)
 - o Idolatry: Worship of an idol or of a deity represented by an idol (usually an image)(Rom 1:25)
 - o Ex 20:3-6 *"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.."*
 - o This explicitly prohibits anyone from worshipping anything but the true God, and from worshipping anything representing divinity no matter what the source of the image (God or creatures in heaven, animals or plants on the earth, fish or other living things in the waters)
 - o That worship is the subject is clear in the command to not bow down or worship them
 - o Also, the use of the term "idol" specifically calls out the purpose of the object
 - o Said another way - none of these things are to be made with the intention of worshipping them - like pagan nations around the Israelites
 - o Worshipping the "sky gods" of Deut 4:19 (stars; planets..)
 - o Worshipping animals, chthonic deities (underworld of the dead, spirits)
 - o Worshipping of "earth goddesses" (golden calf; Baal; Ashtaroth)
 - o Worshipping water deities such as fish-gods, leviathans etc (Egyptians, Canaanites)
 - o An idol of the true God would undermine or reduce His immanence (transcendence) to something less and misdirect attention to the creation and not the Creator
 - o God will not share His place with another
 - o This is illustrated in practice in Ex 20:24-26 where an altar of stones, undressed and no tool to be used on them (no engraving) was to be done. These stones could become

- idols if carved into any likeness! (See also **Joshua 8:31**)
- o This admonition probably also covered the making of idols for others to worship (i.e. a Jew fashioning an idol for a pagan to buy and worship; Christians fashioning crystals for New Age worship and reverence)
 - o Does God truly intend that nothing be made to resemble “anything” in heaven above or in the earth below, or in the seas? (Even if this strict interpretation is correct, it does not preclude non-representational art (abstract art; symbolic and fictional art))
- Side note:** Ex 32:1-10; 32:24; Aaron claimed to not have fashioned the idol, could this be in strict conformance to the first half of the Ex 20:4-6 admonition and an attempt to circumvent the law since he didn’t admit to worshiping it?
- o Aaron claims to not have fashioned it (“*Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!*”) - however, see Ex 32:4-6
 - o He did not worship it directly (possibly) but he did fashion the idol and built an altar in front of it to allow sacrifices to be made (Ex 32:5-6)
 - o He was an accomplice in the act and therefore guilty of participating in the sin
- d. God Himself condones the creation of artistic objects resembling things in heaven and on earth
- o Representational art of non-religious objects were used to adorn God’s place of holy worship
 - o The fiery serpent that Moses was commanded to make illustrates two key points (**Num 21:6-8**)
 - o The making of an object of “art”, crafted, was not in itself wrong
 - o The worship of this object was evil - resulting in its being destroyed (**2 Kings 18:4**)
 - o At the same time God gave Moses the 10 Commandments He showed him the patterns for the Tabernacle (God was the architect - Ex 25:9; 26:30; 27:8)
 - o In providing instructions concerning embroidery on the priestly garments, even differences from what is found in nature were allowed (blue pomegranates; Ex 28:31-33)
 - o What about the cherubim of Ex 25:18-22 (**Heb 9:5**)? Does this violate Ex 20:4-5?
 - o Cherubim are angels that protected the Garden (**Gen 3:24**)
 - o They were placed on either side of the cover of the ark of the covenant (**Ex 25:18-22**) and were the throne on which the Lord met with Israel (**1 Sam 4:4**)
 - o They were embroidered on the curtains and veil of the tabernacle and the walls of the Temple (**Ex 26:31; 2 Chron 3:7**) and also Solomon’s temple (**1 Kings 6:26ff**)
 - o How did the craftsmen know what they looked like in order to fashion them?
 - o However God showed or instructed their making
 - o God placed in David’s mind the detailed plans for the Temple - which he passed on to Solomon to complete (**1 Chron 28:11-12**)
 - o The Temple was adorned with precious stones for beauty (**2 Chron 3:6**)
 - o Cherubim were carved into the ceiling, doorframes, walls and doors (**2 Chron 3:7**)
 - o Solomon’s temple also had pomegranates (**1 Kings 7:18,20**); lilies (**1 Kings 7:19;22,26**); gourds (**1 Kings 7:24**); bulls (**1 Kings 7:25,29**); lions (**1 Kings 7:29**); cherubim (**1 Kings 7:29**); wreathes (**1 Kings 7:30**); floral work (**1 Kings 7:49**); palm trees (**1 Kings 7:36**)
- e. Bottom Line: Christ is Lord over the entire man, including all of his activities
- o This includes his exercising of creativity in whatever way or means used
 - o This includes the creation of works of art (**1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17**)

5. Recent Controversies have brought into question the role of government in art

- a. New York’s Brooklyn Museum of Art
- o “The Holy Virgin Mary” by Chris Ofili, a 1996 collage using elephant dung
 - o Mayor Rudolph Giuliani tried to cut off public funding of the museum
 - o Supreme Court has ruled in past that government cannot penalize artists solely because their work is disagreeable
- b. NEA (National Endowment for the Arts)(Welfare for Artists?)
- o Created by Congress in 1965 to “...provide or support in the United States - (1) productions which have substantial artistic and cultural significance, giving emphasis to American creativity and the maintenance and encouragement of professional excellence” (*ref (11)*)

- o From 1966 through 2000 approximately \$3.6 Billion has been used to fund the “arts”
- o NEA has funded plays depicting denigrating Christ, glorifying pornography, homosexuality, sexual perversion, etc. (See www.family.org for Focus on the Family “CitizenLink” paper for details as well as www.heritage.org for their analysis)
- c. Historical perspective (*ref (9)*)
 - o Traditionally, the US has not funded the arts until recently
 - o Charles Pinckney (Philadelphia, 1787, Constitutional Convention) introduced a motion calling for the federal government to subsidize the arts
 - o The Founding Fathers overwhelmingly rejected the suggestion because of a belief in limited, constitutional government (not to be a power enumerated and delegated to the federal government)
 - o The Founders knew firsthand of various European systems for public arts patronage!
 - o “[T]o compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical.” Thomas Jefferson (*ref (10)*)
- d. Is the funding of art a valid role for government?
 - o What are the demonstrated advantages?
 - o What are the demonstrated disadvantages?
 - o What moral foundation/standard will government use to decide what to fund and not fund?
 - o Is government currently fulfilling its “...punish the evildoer” and “...commend the good” role in what it supports?
 - o What about ‘fungible’ money from the government?

6. Some basic thoughts can be used to guide us in our pursuit of, or enjoyment of, Art

- a. First and foremost - does it glorify God?
 - o If so, how does it?
 - o Does it draw attention to the majesty, creative power, transcendence of God or to man?
 - o If not, what purpose does this particular art form and piece serve?
 - o Christian art should have as its primary objective to glorify God
 - o Creating it to evangelize or carry a “message” is not wrong, but it may not become great art
 - o Handel’s “Messiah”; Rembrandt’s “Denial of Christ” and Bach’s “St. Matthews Passion” are examples of great art works that glorify God but are not weakened or limited by conforming to a message
 - o Christian art is not to be intended for religious propaganda or holy advertisement
- b. Remember **Joshua 1:7** *“Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go”*
 - o We are not to idolize art - God’s word is the standard with which to judge it. Art is not to be considered perfect or holy unto itself. Art is not to be one’s religion - with meaning coming from aesthetic experience
 - o Art is not to be ignored - it has influence; it can be a valid expression of truth; if properly used it can bring glory to God; God’s common grace allows man to create and enjoy it
 - o Golden calf - principle, don’t make anything that will be used by others to worship as an idol
- c. Are there any direct Biblical criteria to judge good and bad art, or just our exposure to it?
 - o Noah’s sons did not allow themselves to see their father’s drunken nakedness (**Gen 9:20-23**)
 - o We are not to place anything before our eyes that would cause us to sin (in thought or deed)
 - o **Job 31:1** *“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl”*
 - o **Matt 5:28** *“...anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”*
 - o Also **Psalm 119:37** (nothing worthless) and **2 Sam 11:2** (Bathsheba)
 - o Since earliest times, modesty has been the normal condition (**Gen 3:7; 9:20-23; 2 Sam 10:1-5**; see also **1 Chron 19:4; Isa 20:3-5; 1 Tim 2:9-10**)
 - o Voyeurism and fantasizing (**James 1:13-15**), the placing thoughts in our minds difficult to remove or prevent affecting us (**Matt 5:28**)

- o Does the art form or expression support our attempt to live up to **Phil 4:8**?
 - o "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things..."
 - o If it does not, why are we listening to, or participating in it?
 - o Are we justifying indulging a wrong appetite by claiming "Christian freedom"? (**1 Cor 10:23**)
 - o Constant exposure dulls our sensitivity to the obscene, vulgar and sinful (**Gal 6:1-2; 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23**)
 - o The more we are exposed to seductive, repulsive, depraved, anti-Christian themes, the more calloused we become, and the more we are unable to discern its impacts (**Psalm 1:1-3**)
 - o There should be no allowance for ungodly exposure to evil, we can become defiled
- o Does the art form help us to "...take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ"? (**2 Cor 10:5**)
- o We are not to be partners with the darkness around us (**Eph 5:1-7**). Compare these verses with the dominant characteristics of today's TV and movies (see also **Gal 5:19-21 & Rom 1:29-32**):
 - o "...sexual immorality..." "...impurity..." "...greed..." "...obscenity..." "...foolish talk..." "...coarse joking..." "...immoral, impure or greedy person..." "...idolater..." "...disobedient..." "...fruitless deeds of darkness..." "...drunk on wine..."
- d. Remember that Christians can disagree on the degree of exposure allowed (**Rom 14**)
 - o Wisdom would dictate great caution in what involvement we have in any of the visual media
 - o Individuals and families must wrestle with this issue
 - o Seek out others to compare with and seek approaches that have been successful
 - o Commonality within families helps re-enforce the standards that are set, however, as parents we are accountable to the Lord for our choices, we cannot blame others
 - o Standards may vary amongst people, since each has a different degree of weakness & strength
 - o Be sensitive to others and the decisions they make - seek understanding not judgement first
 - o Do we know what we have in our own homes?
- e. Bottom lines:
 - o We have tremendous freedom as believers, but we are not to use it to gratify our sinful nature (**Gal 5:13**) **James 1:13-15; Gal 5:7-8; Eccl 11:9**)
 - o God condemns those who call evil good and good evil (**Isa 5:20**); we are to be diligent in our decisions; do not give credence or approval to that which God condemns!
 - o Christians can disagree on the amount of exposure allowed (**Rom 14**)
 - o The example we set will be one for others to follow, whether good or bad (**Eph 5:3**)
 - o Christian art can produce great art in many venues, and could be leading the field instead of just mimicking the trends of the day
 - o Other Dangers to consider:
 - o What message are we leaving to our family?
 - o What message are we giving to our other brothers and sisters?
 - o What message are we giving to the world that we work around?

7. Bottom Line Summary Thoughts (My Opinion or Opinions I agree with):

- a. The Garden of Eden was a pattern for the rest of the earth - for man to creatively improve upon the "good" that God created, and make it even better for His glory and man's benefit
- b. The very words God has given allows us to individually visualize in our imagination what is being spoken of, this is art in our minds - is this sufficient?
- c. Art is not just something to be intellectually analyzed and evaluated - it is also something to be enjoyed (*ref (8)*), and to be a servant of truth - glorifying God in the process
- d. It is good to preserve Christian art heritage in museums, etc. since this continues to speak to a time when Christianity had great influence and points to the true God and His word
- e. We can appreciate the brilliance that God has given to men and women in their creativity, but we cannot accept the pagan world view that may be presented (art does not exist solely for itself)

g. Frances Schaeffer suggests four standards of Judgment that can be used in evaluating art (*ref (8)*):

o Technical expertise

- o An artist's work can be appreciated for its technical excellence independent of its worldview that is being portrayed
- o This is being honest (fair) relative to acknowledging the mastery and genius of the artist (color, form, composition, texture, balance, unity, etc.)

o Validity

- o If an artist plays to the critic or the audience they have compromised their approach (Remember Aaron and the golden calf)
- o In settling for something less, that is, what the expectations of the market are, then the art is just a commissioned work to reflect the patron - not the expression of the artist and what he really wants to say or convey

o Content

- o This is what reflects the worldview of the artist
- o All art from this standpoint can (and should) be judged by the word of God
- o We can agree that there is technical excellence, and validity to the artists creation, but held up to God's standard, we may conclude his worldview is wrong (as we judge any other man's efforts - philosopher; politician; laborer)
- o The greater the art (with a wrong worldview) the more dangerous it is. In it's excellence, it becomes much more powerful of a statement and compelling
- o Four possibilities exist relative to the worldview expressed: Believers expressing a Christian worldview or a non-Christian worldview; a non-believer expressing a Christian or a non-Christian worldview.

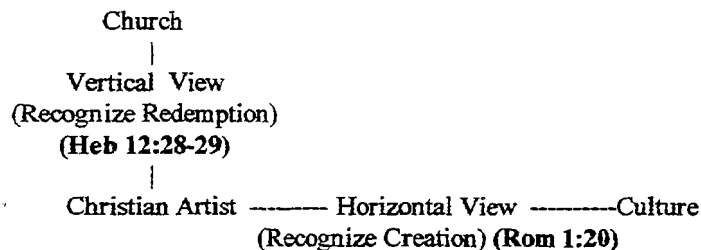
o How well the vehicle being used fits the worldview being presented

- o T.S. Elliot's "The Waste Land" was poetry that depicted in its form the broken, unrelated and ruptured world that existed
- o Truly great works of art have a correlation between style and the content (worldview) being presented

h. Christian art does not have to always be religious art (depicting a theme)

- o The creation itself speaks to the majesty of a creator God, and is a valid subject of art works
- o Just as not every portion of God's word specifically talks about God, so may art?
- o It is worthwhile for man to create works based upon the works of God - including the human
 - o Use contemporary art forms to communicate
 - o Art forms can vary depending upon the culture
 - o The world view must be consistent with Biblical truths
- o The body of works of a Christian artist should display his Christian worldview (the artist's complete worldview cannot be expressed in a single piece)

i. Different domains of artistic endeavor:



o Horizontal View:

- o Can appeal to emotion and imagination
- o Can be for the good or benefit of our neighbor
- o Example: Much of contemporary Christian music is neither sacred nor secular (too religious for secular audience; too lacking in transcendence and theological depth to be appropriate for worship)

- o Vertical View:
 - o Not to appeal to emotions only
 - o Intent is to worship God, be for His glory
 - o Has a rigor about it
 - o Not intended for entertainment purposes

Additional Notes:

- o C.S. Lewis: "I do most thoroughly agree with what you say about Art and Literature. To my mind they can only be healthy when they are either (a) admittedly aiming at nothing but innocent recreation or (b) definitely the handmaid of religious or at least moral truth"
- o C.S. Lewis: "An author should never conceive himself as bringing into existence beauty or wisdom which did not exist before, but simply and solely as trying to embody in terms of his own art some reflection of eternal Beauty and Wisdom" - "Christian Reflections"
- o Example of great stories: C.S. Lewis' "Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe". Aslan the archetype of Christ, but never mentions God, the church or anything explicitly Christian by name
- o Rembrandt: "The Crucifixion" could just as easily hang in MMOA in New York as in a church
- o All of life is "the marvelous theater of God's glory" Calvin
- o Francis Bacon: "Man by the Fall fell at the same time from his state of innocence and from his dominion over nature. Both of these losses, however, can even in this life be in some part repaired; the former by religion and faith, the latter by the arts and sciences."

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Session #31: Justice (Detailed Notes)

*“Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent - the LORD detests them both”
(Prov 17:15)*

*“These also are saying of the wise: To show partiality in judging is not good: Whoever says to the guilty, ‘You are innocent’ - peoples will curse him and nations denounce him. But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them.”
(Prov 24:23-25)*

Purpose of this Session: To lay the Biblical foundation for justice between man and God; man before men; and on a personal basis

- o Overview the Biblical basis for our three relationships critical to achieving justice
- o What are some basic Biblical principles concerning justice as it should be practiced
- o What went wrong in the last 100 years?
- o What should we as Christian citizens be doing?

1. Introduction: Justice is the foundation for society to exist, when it is aligned with God’s word (in standard and practice) blessings occur, when it is removed, corruption will surely follow

a. Why this session?

- o We know that the concept of justice emanates from the knowledge that there is a God that all will stand accountable before (**Matt 25:32; Heb 9:27; Jude 14,15**)
- o We also know every country implements laws to provide order and peace to the land so that anarchy will not reign (**Rom 13:1-6; 1 Tim 1:8-11**)
- o It’s important to understand how justice is practiced in this country since we play a key part in determining what is “good” and defining the “evil” that is to be punished

b. Do we have justice in this country?

- o Has anyone sat in a court room or sat on a jury? What were your impressions?
- o Is the picture of the goddess of liberty, blindfolded, holding a balance scale still apply?
 - o **No!** - not in the absolute, eternal sense since our system is imperfect
 - o **Yes!** - as our laws and their enforcement reflect God’s civil and moral laws
- o As our (and any) nation distances itself further from God’s law (Biblical and in “natural” law) justice in the land will suffer and become less godly
- o What recent “miscarriages” of justice can you think of?
 - o O.J. Simpson trial?
 - o Abortion/Abortion protests
 - o The impeachment of President Clinton?
 - o The Rodney King trial?
 - o The exoneration of the officers that shot the girl in Riverside?
 - o Armed force used to remove Elian Gonzales to return him to his father?
 - o The elderly woman awarded millions of dollars from McDonalds for the damage hot coffee did when she spilled it on herself?
 - o The exoneration of the New York police officers that shot an unarmed alien visiting this country (he ran away from the police when questioned)?
 - o Others?

c. Basic definitions

- o Justice: “the administration of what is just (reasonable) by impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited reward or punishment”

- o Justice implies:
 - o A standard
 - o A willingness to enforce this standard
- o Law: "The study of principles of conduct or procedure which are expected to be observed"
"Law is organized justice" - Frederic Bastiat
- o Question: Can we legislate morality? Is it right to do so?

2. The Biblical understanding of Justice addresses at least three fundamental relationships (God-man; man-man; government-man)

- a. First and foremost is our relationship to God (Vertical relationship)(Matt 22:37)
 - o God is the ultimate judge of all mankind in this life and in the life hereafter (Gen 18:25; Psalm 58:11; 82:1; 96:13; Eccl 3:17; 11:9; Heb 12:23)
 - o God demands perfection and complete obedience to His will (Matt 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16; Lev 11:44,45; 19:2)
 - o God is the ultimate source of justice
 - o The giver of truth that defines what justice is
 - o The dispenser of common grace in its application (Man is not the originator of "justice" or of "law" (the standard))
 - o God reveals His righteous standard through several means:
 - o His special revelation (Bible)(Rom 7:7; 2 Tim 3:16; Prov 30:5-6)
 - o His general revelation (the creation and natural law)(Rom 1:20; 2:14-15)
 - o Man's conscience (Rom 2:14-16)(I may rationalize stealing from you, but I know you stealing from me is wrong)
 - o We all fall short of His standard and as such deserve His judgment (Rom 3:10-13; 6:23)
 - o There is no one that does any intrinsic good (Rom 3:10-18)
 - o Our righteous acts are but filthy rags (Phil 3:4-9)
 - o We have no merit of our own, but stand condemned before God
 - o In this life, God displays His mercy and wrath toward both individuals and nations (Ex 6:6; Eccl 3:17; 12:14; 2 Cor 5:10)
 - o God is both just and the Justifier by sending His Son Jesus Christ - the perfect atonement for our sins (Rom 3:21-26). Justice is served, God's wrath is appeased, and we are the recipients of His mercy (for His glory)
 - o When Christ returns, God will apply His just standard to all of mankind (Matt 25:32; Acts 17:31; Rom 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:12)
 - o Ultimate justice will be served throughout eternity (Rev 20:12-15)
 - o God sets the perfect standard and exercises perfect justice (2 Chron 19:7)
- b. Man as he relates to his fellow man (Horizontal relationship)(Matt 22:39)
 - o Jesus Himself set the example of how we are to react to the evil around us
 - o We are to turn the other cheek, give our cloak as well, go the extra mile (Matt 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-36)
 - o We are to love our enemies and pray for them (Matt 5:43-45)
 - o We are not to resort to physical violence (Matt 5:38-42; Luke 22:49-52; John 18:36)
 - o Likewise, the Epistles teach that believers are not to be like the world, but to be like Christ
 - o We are not to conform to this world and act like it (revenge, greed, etc.); instead we are to overcome evil with good (Rom 12:2; 19-21; 13:8)
 - o We are to walk like Christ walked (1 John 2:6)
 - o We are not to lie, insult, retaliate or threaten (1 Peter 2:22-23)
 - o These principles are summarized in the command to love our neighbor (even our enemies) as ourselves (Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39)
 - o "Is there a place for righteous indignation?"
 - o Jesus expressed this in the overturning of the moneychanger tables and driving out the animals (Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; John 2:12-16)
 - o It is not explicit that Jesus struck men, He may have driven the animals out by force only, but drove out the men by His actions and force of presence

- c. God instituted government to dispense justice amongst men (Gen 9:5-6; Rom 13:1-6)(See Session #7: **The Role of Government**); specifically:

- o Government is ordained by God for man's benefit and to fulfill His purposes (Rom 13:1)
- o Government is to commend the good (Rom 13:3-4)
- o Government is to be an agent of wrath to restrain evil and punish the evildoer (Rom 13:3-4)
- o Government is to maintain peace in the land (1 Tim 2:2)
 - o Protect the individual
 - o To encourage and protect God ordained institutions of home, church and state from anarchy, crime, corruption and harm from without
- o Although man's laws are an imperfect reflection of God's righteous standard, they serve to define evil, instruct people in what is not acceptable, and inhibit actions
- o However, man's laws are a gift from God to provide order and peace in the land (God's common grace to govern society)

"The fundamental basis of this nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings which we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have the proper fundamental moral background, we will finally wind up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in rights for anybody except the state." - Harry S. Truman

3. **The Bible provides many basic principles to govern justice in this country (select ones):**

- a. Government is to instill terror in the evil doer by being diligent in the dispensing of justice (Rom 13:3a; Prov 21:15; Deut 19:19b,20-21). Some attributes of Justice include:
- o Being visible - the sheer presence of force keeps people obedient to the authorities
 - o Being swift (Deut 25:1-3; Eccl 8:11)
 - o Being dispensed without partiality (Prov 18:5; 17:15; 24:23-25; 21:13; 22:22-23; 31:8-9)
(Statue of the goddess of justice/liberty, blindfolded with a balance scale)
 - o Being dispensed without pity (Deut 19:11-13,21)
Question: "Can government rightfully show mercy?"
 - o Being appropriate, not excessive or too light (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21)
- b. Types of punishment dispensed in the O.T.
- o Capital punishment (See Handout: Death Penalty Under the Mosaic Law; Session #22: Capital Punishment)
 - o Restitution; payment to the victim or his family (Ex 22:9)
 - o Corporeal punishment?
 - o Banishment (exiling)?
- c. Basic judicial principles found in the Bible include:
- o Standard of proof for conviction of a crime (two or more witnesses)(Deut 19:15); in effect, innocent until proven guilty
 - o Protecting the accused until an orderly trial can occur - Cities of Refuge (Ex 21:13; Num 35:6-29; Deut 19:1-7)
 - o Difficult cases brought before higher authority (Ex 18:13-27)
 - o Due process to resolve guilt or innocence (See Handout: Judicial Principles from the Book of Proverbs)
 - o Punishing the false witness with the punishment they sought against the innocent party (Deut 19:18-19)
 - o Establishing responsibility when accidents due to carelessness occur (Deut 22:8; parape)
 - o Punishing the guilty person, not the father, son or others along with them (Deut 24:16)
- d. For further study see Session #8: **The Role of the Law**

4. Major changes over the last one hundred years have fundamentally altered the way justice is viewed and implemented - basically due to a withdrawal from the Biblical foundation of the founding fathers

- a. Growth of humanism, evolution, and relativism has removed the belief that there are “truths” from God that do not change (natural and revealed law)
 - o With no absolute, societal changes drive understanding of law and justice
 - o Man is thought to be basically good, therefore others (people, environment, lack of education) are the source of his problems, not his own sinful nature
 - o Immorality escalates as moral standards are removed from the laws (adultery, sodomy, pornography, etc.)
 - o With the removal of a clear, open Christian witness for righteousness, evil will flourish
- B. Supreme Court legislation of new “rights” never intended in the Constitution
 - o Court legislating vice Congress legislating
 - o View that the Constitution is a living document that needs to be re-interpreted in light of new social issues and conditions and “truths” (“Truth,...is the majority vote of that nation that could lick all others” - Oliver Wendell Holmes (Supreme Court Justice 1902-1932)
 - o “...the Constitution is what the judges say it is” (1907)(Charles Evans Hughes - later a Supreme Court Justice)
- c. Training of law students from a humanistic worldview (*ref (d)*)
 - o No transcendent, personal God
 - o Both the world and man result from evolutionary forces
 - o Societal institutions (family, civil law) have no theistic origins
 - o Theistically ordained absolute standards do not exist for the guidance of either individuals or institutions
 - o The Bible is false and of no use as a source of guidance for man in his attempt to progress
 - o Man’s self effort is primary, if not sole, tool available to him in his attempt to progress, also:
 - o Changing emphasis from ideal of determining truth to defending client at all costs

5. Major wrongs exist in our current judicial system which pervert justice (The triumph of Political Correctness over godly Morality)

- a. Hate crime legislation (See Session #36: Hate Crimes)
 - o Fundamentally, hate crimes legislation increases punishment of those individuals that can be shown to be motivated by “hate” towards specific categories of individuals or groups
 - o Flaws:
 - o Virtually all crime is motivated by “hate” in one form or another, and in effect are already banned
 - o This is primarily a victim’s discrimination law - certain victims will have less protection than others (in effect, crimes against them are not as serious)
 - o Conservative Christians speaking against homosexuality (for example) could be subject to hate crime prosecution, yet condemnation of Christians in any manner, no matter how vile would be legal!
 - o This approach obviously panders to the “politically correct” thinking to win the approval and support of targeted groups. This could change overnight
 - o Hate crime laws can and will infringe upon free speech since thoughts rather than the actions themselves will determine the severity of the punishment
 - o The most powerful and vocal group espousing hate crime legislation is the gay lobby - this would elevate crimes against gays to the same status as civil rights issues involving characteristics that cannot be changed (race; national origin; sex; disability; age) or are protected by the First Amendment (beliefs). But sexual orientation is a decision one makes, not an inbred characteristic
 - o Double jeopardy issues are created as a State prosecutes the criminal act and the Federal government prosecutes the crime as a hate crime
 - o Another root issue: “Tolerance” traditionally meant respecting and accepting someone without necessarily accepting their beliefs or practices. The new climate of “Tolerance” means

- o acceptance of someone's beliefs or practices as equally valid to our own
- o Bottom line: this constitutes legal discrimination against selected victims because of their religious beliefs, race, or any other factor specifically excluded
- o All laws should be enforced without regard to subjective and irrelevant factors
- b. Abortion - Supreme Court decision to legalize abortions (*Roe v. Wade 1973*)
 - (See Session #27: Abortion)
 - o Justification for the Decision (Major points as written by Justice Harry Blackmun - representing the majority)
 - o A woman has a right to privacy based on the 14th Amendment of the Constitution
 - o The 14th Amendment does not include the fetus as a person protected by it
 - o There's no clear historical consensus on abortion, contemporary prohibitions are of recent vintage
 - o The purpose of nineteenth-century abortion laws was to protect the woman from a dangerous operation rather than to protect the unborn child
 - o No one knows when life begins. "We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer" (note (2))
 - o Fallacies associated with the Supreme Court Decision
 - o Jane Roe, who claimed to be gang raped (key issue), admitted many years later that she had lied
 - o 19th century abortion laws were not enacted to protect the mother from a dangerous medical procedure but to protect both the mother and the unborn baby (considered person under law)
 - o The criminal status of abortion is not of recent vintage; common law has prohibited abortion since early English and American times. Difficulty existed in proving it occurred when the baby was alive
 - o The drafters of the 14th Amendment supported pro-life legislation either in their own states or in American territories or both (note (3))
 - o The statement that no one knows when life begins is directly contradictory to known medical facts and consensus. Life begins at conception. Even if it was not known, then reason would dictate that a very conservative approach should be taken, i.e. the prohibit abortion to ensure a mistake isn't made
 - o Abortion prohibitions are not of recent origin, they have existed in ancient cultures and definitely in historic Judeo-Christian teachings
 - o Other injustices:
 - o Picketers at Abortion Clinics are arrested and punished with inordinate harshness in comparison with the severity of the crime (trespassing; obstruction of access; etc.)
 - o Father's rights relative to the unborn child are virtually non-existent
 - o Parental rights of authority over their children are superceded by those of the state as implemented in the public school system (can advise and assist in obtaining an abortion, but cannot give an Aspirin without the parents permission)
 - o If a child is born alive, it's subject to full protection of the law, but if it is killed inside the mother, it has no rights whatsoever throughout the entire pregnancy
- c. Homosexuals - being granted special rights and privileges (See Sessions #15,16 Homosexuality)
 - o Granting anti-discrimination status based upon an immoral lifestyle choice
 - o Courts incapable of distinguishing destructive behavior and the moral implications any longer
 - o Inability to uphold God ordered definition of family and societal commitment
 - o Denying morally sound approach towards mother - father roles in raising children by allowing Gays to adopt

- d. Criminal rights at the expense of victim's rights
 - o Criminal protection includes:
 - o Reading of specific rights they have - any of which are violated or incorrectly addressed will result in throwing the case out
 - o Technicalities throwing cases out of court
 - o Not a search for truth but winning at all costs by the defense attorney
 - o Prison term that is subject to parole
 - o Legally protected actions while within jail such as lawsuits, weight rooms, TV in some jails, magazines (including soft pornography)
 - o Automatic appeal in murder convictions
 - o Appeal rights that can delay execution for decades
 - o Victims however:
 - o Probably will not be provided any restitution for losses suffered
 - o Must face significant emotional trauma during a drawn out court case that may occur
- e. Being politically correct in saying "you can't legislate morality"
- f. Others that you can think of?
 - o Raising the standard of proof so high, that virtually no one could be convicted of a crime
 - o In the O.J. Simpson trial, having racial issues cloud the evidence

6. We can have significant impact upon the laws in this land. The question is do we want to, and how do we do it? (Excerpts from Session #8: Role of the Law)

- o First, we must become knowledgeable of God's laws and how they apply to our society (**Prov 29:18***)
 - o Train our children to apply Biblical principles to everyday issues (**Deut 6:6-9; Prov 22:6**)
 - o Equip others when opportunity comes (**Col 4:5-6**)
 - o Speak up in public settings (but knowledgeably - do not underestimate the complexity of many issues)
- o We can encourage our law makers to pass just laws and ensure they are enforced (**Prov 11:1; 21:15**)
 - o We can lobby for laws restoring moral standards consistent with Biblical standards of right and wrong (**Prov 14:34**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied equally (rich and poor alike)(**Prov 22:22-23; 24:23-25**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied quickly (**Deut 25:1-3; Eccl 8:11**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied fairly (**Prov 16:11; 17:15; 18:5; 20:10**)
 - o We can initiate and pursue referendums to be placed on the ballot (petition drives - DOMA)
 - o We can lobby to eliminate the parole system
 - o We can lobby to eliminate hate crime legislation
- o We can elect officials that understand Biblical principles, the rule of law, and the need for justice
 - o Research their previous voting records and public statements (positions)
 - o We can recall officials that do not act in an acceptable manner (local through state)
- o We can research records of judges in dealings with criminals and understanding of the law (**Prov 28:4**)
 - o Many judges are elected and hence subject to removal
 - o Even Supreme Court Justices can be removed (Constitutionally allowed - never been used)
 - o Do they uphold 2 Chron 19:4-7 standard
- o We can write clearly and often to our elected officials letting them know of our support or concern over pending legislation ("Committee on Moral Concerns" based in Sacramento)(**Prov 11:14**)
- o We can consider support of those Christ honoring organizations that are attempting to defend our religious liberties in this country ("American Center for Law and Justice"; "Alliance Defense Fund"; "The Rutherford Institute; etc.)
- o Legislating laws of conscience cannot be done (hate crimes try to do this and fail), laws governing actions and speech can be!
 - o Actions (murder, rape, theft, etc.)
 - o Speech (libel, false testimony, false advertising, vulgarities (??))
 - o Conscience (coveting (stalking can fall into this category), idolatry, blasphemous beliefs, etc.)
 - o Old "Blue Laws" attempted to legislate actions on Sunday, and thus affect thoughts, but the heart cannot be legislated

- o If standard is set to lowest debased level, no one will think they're doing anything sinful
- o Paul says in **Rom 7:7-12** that he would not have known what sin was except through the law. The principle applies to people in general, when they become aware that something is illegal - they will be more cautious about it (in general)
- o Remember - justice may or may not prevail in this life, but ultimately, God's justice will prevail:
 - o Those whose sins have been paid for by the blood of Christ will obtain eternal life (Eph 2:8-10)
 - o Those who remain in their sin and rebellion will receive their reward - eternal damnation
- o Justice, if executed properly, provides a way to point men to the final judgment and their need for salvation (Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 3:24)
- o Bottom Line: Study God's word & His law - the more we do, the more we see it applying to this nation
- a. Can we legislate morality? Of course - we do it with every law!

"Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and turned them back to the Lord, the God of their fathers. He appointed judges in the land, in each of the fortified cities of Judah. He told them, 'Consider carefully what you do, because you are not judging for man but for the Lord, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.'" (2 Chron 19:4-7)

References:

- a. "Legislating Morality - Is it Wise? Is it Legal? Is it Possible?" Norman Geisler & Frank Turek; 1998
- b. "Understanding the Times - The Religious Worldviews of Our Day and the Search for Truth" David A. Noebel; 1994
- c. "Questions & Answers About 'Hate Crimes'"; Coral Ridge Ministries Fact Sheet; 1999
- d. Armstrong, "The Flight from America's Foundations: A Panoramic Perspective on American Law"

Additional notes and thoughts

- o Criminal justice system
- o Difference between moral, judicial and ceremonial laws
- o Man's conscience and the implications
- o A nation is judged in this life, man is judged in the life to come
- o Job
- o David sparing every other person that was conquered?
- o Justice as discipline (Prov 22:6; Heb 12)
- o Law preserves values; law is the standard with which to judge and punish the evil doer
- o Issues of justice in this country:

o Racial profiling	o Rights	o Paroling
o Technicalities	o Judged by peers	

Session # 32: Is There a Just War?
(Detailed Notes)

“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
(Eph 6:11-12)

Purpose of this Session: To determine Biblically whether there is such a thing as a “Just War” in this world, and what a proper Christian response would be

- o Why do Christians disagree over this
- o What hermeneutical issues are there?
- o To what degree is this a personal conscience issue?
- o How does the O.T. Theocratic condition apply to today?

Opening:

- o Movies, books, TV glamorize war, depict brutality (realistically and unrealistically)
- o Trend is to view war as the just vs the unjust
- o Understanding of war revolutionized since Viet Nam (TV in everyone’s home - political and propaganda tool)
 - o Shocking at first
 - o Desensitizing after time

1. Introduction: War, whether declared or not, is still common throughout the world, and will be until the Lord returns

- a. What is war?
 - o Armed struggle between rival groups that can be recognized as a legal conflict
 - o Armed rebellion within a nation or violent struggles between nations would be considered war
 - o Riots or individual acts would not be considered warfare
- b. What is a just war? In the context of our world today: *A war limited by moral principles*
- c. As Christians, we know that the ultimate war has already been won
 - o God gives us victory over Satan and death through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:54-57)
 - o Every knee will bow, every tongue confess - Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:9-11)
 - o Whatever the last manifestations of the end of the age, Jesus Christ will rule the new heavens and the new earth (Rev 15:4; 20:11-21:27)
 - o And we know that we are more than conquerors through Christ (Rom 8:31-39)
- d. We also know that in this life a spiritual war rages around us, & will continue until the end of the ages
 - o Eph 6:11-12 tells us how to be equipped for this war (2 Cor 10:4 - weapons not of this world)
 - o We are to fight the good fight of the faith (Eph 6:12)
 - o Paul uses the example of a soldier to illustrate our struggles (2 Tim 2:3-4)
- e. We also know physical wars have existed throughout time, and will continue until the very end
 - o “Wars and rumors of wars...Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matt 24:6-7)
 - o In the words of The Teacher (Solomon) “There is a time for everything...a time for war and a time for peace” (Eccl 3:1,8)
 - o Wars have existed from the very beginning (Cain killing Abel) until the very present
 - o Wars are not glamorous
 - o Wars are vicious, destructive, and unimaginably cruel
 - o In a real sense, declaring war on drugs, poverty or crime weakens the perception of the inhumanity of war as it has been practiced over the millennia
 - o The tendency throughout history, however, has been to attempt to limit the extent of war and the methods that are used to conduct war
- f. Why won’t war go away?
 - o War is God’s judgment upon the world

- o God used war to punish His chosen people in O.T. times for disobedience (**Lev 26:23-26,33; Isa 1:19-20; Jer 5:14-17; Deut 28:49-52**; etc.)
 - o War is a sign of God's judgment in the end times (**Rev 6:3-4**)
 - o Fundamentally, war is the result of man's sinful desires (**James 4:1-3; Jer 17:6**) except at a national level (nations reflect the heart of the people; wickedness; ruthlessness)
 - o War in this world is a physical manifestation of the spiritual war that is raging around us (**Eph 6:11-12**), which will not end until the Judgment Day
- g. Since wars are part of the fall - is there such a thing as a Just War? And what can we as Christians do?
- 2. Biblically - the only just wars were those specifically commanded by God**
- a. O.T. Israel conquered the promised land (Direct command of God)
 - o **Deut 7:16** - Holy war to seize the promised land (**Ex 17:8-16; Num 31:1-54**)
 - o **Deut 20:10-18** - Rules on conquest
 - o Who is not to go into battle (built a new house and not dedicated it; new vineyard and not yet enjoyed it; pledged to marry or recently married (**Deut 24:5**); any afraid or fainthearted)(**Deut 20:5-8**)
 - o March against a city (enemies far away) - make offer of peace/forced labor or kill all the men in it (**Deut 20:10-15**)
 - b. Israel was disciplined by other nations (examples of just punishment by "unjust" means)
 - o Habbakkak - God raised up the Babylonians to punish Israel (**Hab 1:6**)
 - o Amos - identifies unjust actions of warfare that the Lord condemned:
 - o Threshing Gilead with sledges having iron teeth (**Amos 1:3**)(excessive force)
 - o Taking civilians captive and selling into slavery (**Amos 1:6**)(punishing non-combatants)
 - o Disregarding a treaty (**Amos 1:9**)(dishonest, deceitful)
 - o Not showing compassion on the vanquished (**Amos 1:11**)(excessive violence)
 - o Ripped open pregnant women (**Amos 1:13**)(excessive violence; non-combatants)
 - o Burning the bones of Edom's king as to lime (**Amos 2:1**)(dishonoring the king and by extension the nation)
 - c. What did Jesus teach?
 - o "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews." (**John 18:36**)
 - o The kingdom of God is what each Christian is a part of, not limited by national borders, and it is not a physical kingdom
 - o We do not fight to establish God's kingdom on earth - it resides wherever Christ rules
 - o This does not explicitly condemn believers participation in the military or in wars
 - o "Put your sword back in its place, Jesus said to him, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (**Matt 26:52**)
 - o This cannot mean literally all who are engaged in warfare, or kill in warfare will themselves die that way - for many men have returned from battle and lived long lives
 - o Peter was attempting to intervene and disrupt the course of events that had to be fulfilled in order to complete the redemption process
 - o Jesus was again, strongly, stating that His kingdom and purposes are not of the world, the world's devices are violence and force - if one's life is violence, that is what they will ultimately succumb to
 - o Jesus's disciples were to set a different example for others - not personal revenge but to love their enemies and pray for them
 - o "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." (**Matt 5:44-45**)
 - o On an individual basis, this is our greatest strength, to love our enemies and pray for them. This will be a witness to the world and to them
 - o Vengeance is the Lord's, not ours, He will repay (**Rom 12:17-21**)
 - o This teaching is addressing private actions, not public or civil actions

- o “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also...”
(**Matt 5:38-39**)
- d. What about the rest of the N.T.?
 - o Soldiers are neither commended or condemned as such!
 - o A centurion sought help from Jesus for his servant that was dying (**Matt 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10**)
 - o This man was trained in warfare, and commanded others in warfare
 - o The soldiers faith was the object of this encounter, the fact that he was a soldier was not an issue, nor was the fact he was probably a Gentile
 - o Cornelius was also a centurion (Italian Regiment) who came to faith (**Acts 10:1-48**)
 - o No where does Peter take the opportunity to condemn his profession
 - o John the Baptist answered some soldiers when they asked him what they must do to be saved (**Luke 3:7-14**)
 - o He told them “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely - be content with your pay.”
 - o He did not condemn their profession but addressed abuses of their position
 - o Paul used military illustrations and terminology extensively to illustrate his points (e.g. **2 Tim 2:3-7; Eph 6:10-18**)
 - o The role of government (**Rom 13:1-6**) indicates:
 - o The state carries the sword to punish the evil doer
 - o The state is God’s agent to do good
 - o Although the word for sword would indicate a short (domestic, police action) not long (battles) one, both were used in warfare
 - o Reasonable to conclude that the state also had a responsibility to protect the nation against aggressors
 - o No specific (direct) statements on whether Christians should/should not enter military service
 - o Likewise, no specific statement as to whether a just war can or does exist (other than the spiritual one we will fight until the Lord returns)

3. The growth of the “Just War” theory began in ancient times and was gradually Christianized in the N.T. era

- a. Ancient philosophers and warriors (just war tradition)
 - o Considerations were made, depending upon the culture and religious beliefs, concerning women and children and how prisoners were treated
 - o Issues of honor also played a significant part of warfare
 - o Plato urged limits on war and that the only legitimate purpose of war is to restore peace
 - o Aristotle argued man’s nature calls for rule of reason rather than passion/violence (conscience)
 - o Cicero (Roman orator, jurist, philosopher) one of first to deal with the question of a just war
 - o Believed the ability to wage war rested with the state alone, and was lawful only after an official demand for satisfaction was given and formal declaration given
 - o Proposed existence of universal norm for human behavior which transcended laws of individual nations - governing their relations with each other
- b. What is the practice of the early church?
 - o First generations of Christians - no account of serving in the military until after 170 A.D.
 - o Incompatible with the command and example of Christ (Tertullian (155-220 A.D.): “If we are enjoined to love our enemies, whom are we to hate? If injured we are forbidden to retaliate. Who then can suffer injury at our hand?” “Christ, in disarming Peter, ungirt every soldier”
 - o Origen (185-254 A.D.) argued that Christians supported the empire by prayer and disciplined lives. Through these means they are of more use to the king than as soldiers (chief enemy is spiritual (Satan))(**Matt 26:52** also) “for warfare, or for vindication of our rights, or for any occasion, we should take the sword; for no such occasion is allowed by this evangelical teaching” (he who takes the sword...)

- o Why fight for a government that persecutes and kills Christians?
 - o Rome did not have universal conscription
 - o There was little pressure for Christians to serve in the military
- o Christians will be vindicated in the life to come, we are only pilgrims and strangers here, citizenship is in heaven not in this world
- o Canons of Hippolytus (170-236 A.D.). Followers of Christ “must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to do so if he is commanded” (Roman Army performed many public services besides warfare: fire; police; etc.)
- o From 180 to 313 A.D. (when Christianity became legal) all the outstanding writers of the East and West repudiated Christian participation in warfare (ref (4))
 - o Being in the military required taking an idolatrous oath of allegiance to the emperor and participating in the state religion (offering incense to a god or the emperor and image worship)(privilege of citizenship required participation in the state religion)
 - o Same was true for government service, no example of a Christian civil servant until about 250 A.D.
 - o Some believed the Lord was returning soon to destroy the empire that they were called upon to defend
- o From 313 A.D. on, since official persecution of the church ended, Christian objections to participating in the military defense of the empire began to decline. Result:
 - o Once Christian allowed to legally live with privileges of others - then they could in clear conscience participate in all functions of civil government - including war (Clergy still not allowed to fight)
 - o Churches image began to be identified with state (if Rome fell, so would the church)
 - o Right must be defended, wrong rectified (Empire defended against invading hordes)
 - o St Athanasius, St Ambrose and St Basil taught (last half of 4th Century) killing in combat may be justified for good of society & defense of property & religion
 - o Those who killed in war forced to do long terms of penance
 - o No glorification of Knights until 11th century (Holy Christian Knights)
 - o With breakup of empire and infusion of Germanic peoples (warlike) a new attitude grew in Europe (emphasis on warfare now mixed with religion of peace)
- c. Augustine (354-430 A.D.)
 - o Developed the first systematic approach towards war - leading to Just War theories
 - o Asked by Roman general (commander of armies in N. Africa) should he lead his troops in battle or retire to a monastery. Response - just war approach, based upon Cicero and Plato but with a Christian emphasis
 - o War should be fought to restore peace and/or justice
 - o War must be under the direction of the legitimate ruler
 - o War must be motivated by Christian love (love doesn't preclude benevolent severity)
 - o War must be conducted in an honorable manner
 - o Faith must be kept with the enemy
 - o No unnecessary violence, massacres, burning or looting
 - o Only those in public office or in the army were to engage in violence
 - o Those in Christian service (monks, priests) were not allowed to take part in warfare
- d. The Crusade experience (circa 1095 and afterwards)(“Holy Wars”)
 - o Eastern Emperor (Constantinople) Urban II sermon - expedition under papal leadership to free the Middle East from pagan rule
 - o Council of Clement (1095) responded to this “righteous” call. Also, it provided a convenient vehicle to prevent the Knights from fighting each other (common enemy)
 - o 1st Crusade - lower class - total failure
 - o 2nd Crusade - Nobles, well equipped and lead, captured Jerusalem in 1099
- e. Gradual merging of violence and holiness at all levels of society developed
 - o “Holy Wars” became in vogue
 - o The liturgy blessed weapons of war and standards

- o New religious orders came into existence (ex: Templars - promised to fight enemies of God, founded 1118, dissolved in 1312 - originally protected pilgrims to Holy Land, grew powerful)
- f. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.)
 - o Developed not only justifications for war but also the kinds of activities that were permissible
 - o Believed a war is justified when three basic conditions were met:
 - o The war was prosecuted by a lawful authority with the power to wage war
 - o The war was undertaken with the right intentions, those that are attacked must deserve to be attacked
 - o The war was to achieve some good or to avoid some evil
- g. Pre-Reformation through the Reformation era
 - o There were always separatists in existence that did not believe in war or participation in it - generally they were persecuted (Anabaptists; Cathari; Albigensians; Waldensians; Hussites)
 - o Roman Catholics viewed state as extension of church (Luke 22:38 - sword of state/church)
 - o Protestants: man was sinful and government is to control, punish, maintain orderly society. Government a result of the fall, valid use of force for police, death penalty, and war as the last resort if for just causes
 - o Luther deplored government protection, but needed it from the German princes (Luther supported the princes during the peasant uprising)
- h. Amongst Christians there is a wide variation of thought and belief (pacifist — hawk)
 - o Some denominations refuse to have anything to do with bearing arms (soldiers or police)
 - o Mennonites
 - o Brethren (Dunkers)
 - o Quakers
 - o “Defenseless Mennonites” hold that it is wrong for Christians to call police for physical protection
 - o “Dunkers Tract” (circa 1900). “In support of the principles of non-resistance the following scriptural facts”:
 - o Isa 9:6; 2 Cor 10:4; John 18:36; Matt 5:39,44; 26:52; Rom 12:21;13; Luke 9:55-56
 - o Leads to social isolation, & ends with “peace churches”
 - o Some believe in United States as the New Israel, manifest destiny, spread Christianized nation approach around the world

4. *Christian Pacifist Arguments*

- a. God is against violence of any kind but allows organized restraint (Gen 6:11; 9:16)
- b. Progressive revelation reveals that what was excusable in the O.T. has been superseded by a higher standard in the N.T. era
- c. The O.T. wars of Israel were not the will of God, but were necessary because of Israel’s disobedience to the will of God (Ex 34:11; 23:20,23; Deut 7:20-21). In effect, God would have conquered the land directly if Israel had been faithful (no wars at all)
- d. Non-violence toward neighbors is the command for us (Matt 5:34,40; John 13:15; Rom 11:16; John 17:14)
- e. God has a right to command His people to shed blood in war, but He has not commanded Christians to do so
- f. Our weapons are now spiritual in nature, not physical (e.g. “You have heard it said..(1 Sam 15:1-3)..”)

5. *The modern formulation of the “Just War” theory (Peace actions as well as war?)*

- a. Given:
 - o That there will continue to be wars and rumors of wars
 - o That sincere Christians will differ over what degree Christians should be involved
 - o Individual conscience (before Lord) will dictate our actions in the light of His perfect word
 - o Then: what constitutes principles to govern the use of armed conflict as a last resort?
- b. Major tenants (see **Handout**: Principles of a “Just War”)
 - o Amalgamation of principles developed over 1000's of years
 - o Commonly written about and incorporated into Humanitarian law attempting to limit the effects of war (see **Handout**: Can War be Limited?)
- c. Practical limitations
 - o There is no acknowledgment (directly) of a higher power (God) that all nations and people are accountable to. Thus, any agreement is subject to imperfect man’s attempts to control evil

- o The implication is that there is a higher world authority over the actions of the belligerents that they are accountable to (stronger nation that can be punitive if necessary)
 - o If no higher earthly authority, then an aggregate of nations may suffice, or fear of the repercussions from the victor
 - o The "fight to the end" is almost a necessary consequence of a losing nation if their national pride or condition is on the line
 - o The wickedness of man's heart is easily manifest in life and death struggles, and a man made restriction will not compel one to limit his actions (only a changed heart and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ can do that)
 - o The nuclear case (and other weapons of mass destruction) make any limitation almost moot
- d. How have we done as a nation? (See **Handout: Is There a Just War?**)

6. What should we do?

- a. Recognize that a truly Just War could never occur again (other than Christ's return)
- b. Recognize that we as Christians are not commanded to go to war to achieve God's purposes
 - o We have the freedom to defend ourselves, and by extension our nation
 - o We have the freedom to support a government that acts to restrain evil
 - o Since we have the right to participate in the decisions of this land, wisdom would dictate that we should express our concerns and desires to our leadership
- a. Hold our leadership accountable to ensure the cause is just (morally defensible), and that just means are used
 - o Must be well defined objectives
 - o Must have a compelling reason to enter into combat of any kind
 - o Must not go beyond what is necessary to accomplish the objectives
- d. Recognize that sincere Christians can differ over this issue
 - o We are to be gracious to those that we differ with
 - o Recognize that even the Lord allowed those that were fainthearted (though commanded to go to war) were excused from participation

References:

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2. "Handling Problems of Peace and War - An Evangelical Debate" Edited by Andrew Kirk (John Stott; Jerram Barrs; Alan Kreider); 1988
3. "The Peace-Mongers - A Biblical Answer to Pacifism and Nuclear Disarmament" Robert Duncan Culver; 1985
4. "The Early Church and War" Roland Bainton; Harvard Theological Review; July 1946

Additional Notes:

- o Each Christian is involved with government whether they like it or not (birth records, taxes, draft sign up, regulations, police)
- o Canadians view the U.S. Revolutionary War as reckless and unnecessary. They generally believe the taxation without representation was a pretext, not a just cause to rebel
- o To some extent we must be careful in comparing our times to the early N.T. times, conditions were quite different than they are today (careful in judging)
- o Communist countries today are the closest approximation to the way countries were back then
- o Just war is an attempt to guide decisions of another nation
- o To what degree is war a wisdom issue?
- o Is war by this country an attempt to impose our system of values?
- o Luke 14:31ff - count the cost, can we win?
- o We can affect government foreign policy - remember the Viet Nam war
- o There is no completely just war now
- o Does government has the freedom of action if it is a wisdom issue?
- o Support in a large number of ways in war very rarely directly kills someone
- o Moral offense is the greatest motivating factor for Christians in this country
- o Conscientious objectors - respect it, but is it required?
- o How does Jesus' reference to buying a sword apply?

Session #33: Creation/Evolution (Detailed Notes)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

- o And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light* - the first day
- o And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water* - the second day
- o And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.’ Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’* - the third day
- o And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky’* - the fourth day
- o And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures and let birds fly above the earth’* - the fifth day
- o And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures.’ Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over...all the earth.’* - the sixth day
- o He rested from all His work.* - the seventh day”

(Gen 1:1-3;5-6;8-9;13-14;19-20;23-24;26;2:2)

“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day” (Ex 20:11; 31:17)

“Ex Nihilo”

Purpose of this Session: To provide a general overview of the profound implications of the Creation - Evolution debate with some practical actions we can take

- o How many models of origins are there, and what are they?
- o What competing world views are implied?
- o What are some practical ideas to help us engage others?
- o What are some of the evidences for creation and that disprove evolution?

1. Caveats:

- a. This topic is extremely broad and diverse and has thousands of facets to it
- b. Many here know much more than I will ever know about many of the factors
- c. There are many technical experts that have studied this their entire careers (both sides)
- d. Many sincere Christians have disagreed over this topic, either through:
 - o Ignorance
 - o Lack of appreciation for the significance of it
 - o They have bought into a compromise between the two competing camps
 - o They truly believe evolution is true due to the “scientific evidence”
 - o They may accept the authority and accuracy of scripture on “theological” issues, but believe it primitive when it touches scientific issues
- e. Some Christians do not address this issue because they would:
 - o Be embarrassed
 - o Be viewed as “ignorant”, “fundamentalist”, “religious, uneducated”
 - o Show how little they really know
- f. Intent here is to keep the discussion simple and not complicated (K.I.S.S.):
 - o Not to provide a detailed exegete of the scriptural foundation for creation
 - o Not to address the entire battleground (long series by itself), but selected critical aspects:
 - o To equip on a practical level to engage those around you
 - o Many other facets could be treated and would be just as important

2. Introduction: The understanding of origins has a profound impact upon our lives (socially, morally, scientifically, spiritually, personally)

a. Scientifically, there are only two general models that try to explain the origin of the universe and everything in it (virtually all other models are a subset of these two):

- o **Evolution:** change over time; a natural process whereby life arose from non-living matter; the descent of all life forms from a common ancestor; process of development as from a simple to a complex form (ameba to man?); gradual progressive change; time and chance; the development of more complex forms from simpler ones through natural process alone.

Bottom-lines:

- o No need for an external agent (no need of a God or a supernatural realm)
- o All things originated & developed by natural laws, processes still in operation today
- o The universe evolves itself into higher levels of order by means of its innate properties
- o In effect: from “chaos” to “cosmos” (*from goo to you!*)
- o **Creation:** the ascribing of the origin of matter, energy, and all living species to a special act of God. The universe, and everything in it is of supernatural origin (**Gen 1:1**) and is externally directed.

Bottom-lines:

- o The creation of the universe was a purposeful act, bringing into existence fully functioning and completed life (can still be seen, even after the fall of man)
- o The act of creation (*ex nihilo*; **Heb 11:3**) is no longer occurring, only conserving processes continue on in their various forms up to today
- o In effect: from “cosmos” to “chaos”

b. Origins Basics:

- o Draw diagram: time vs activity (creation a spike, then small changes; evolution gradual number of changes with overlaid spikes (punctuated equilibrium))
- o Theories of origins cannot be conclusively treated or verified scientifically
 - o Experimental observation and repeatability are not available, only selected mechanisms and rational (directly) predicted consequences can be tested
 - o **For creation**, this process is not taking place today - as far as we can tell, thus it is not subject to scientific investigation or replication (occurred only in the past)
 - o See **Handout: Selected Evidence for Creation**
 - o **For evolution**, if it is taking place, it is occurring too slow to be measurable and is thus outside the realm of empirical science
 - o See **Handout: Evidences Cited for Evolution and Some Rebuttals**
- o For either construct (model) of origins to be accepted, it must be by faith (belief) since it is not directly verifiable
- o If one model or the other is proven to be true, the other is disproved (both cannot be correct)
 - o Popular approach is to attempt to combine the two (major difficulties occur)
 - o See **Handout: The Six Days of Genesis One**
 - o The reasons making theistic evolution (God reveals in the Bible the “fact” of creation, but scientists determine the “how”) invalid are addressed in the handout

3. Why is this study important? Because it addresses two competing world-views, one representing fundamentally a “philosophy of life” the other a “philosophy of death”

a. If evolution is true, then:

- o Death, suffering, disease, bloodshed, decay, thorns, etc. existed before the Fall of man
- o There is no need for a God as the first cause or ultimate source of everything
- o There is ultimately no purpose or meaning in the universe
- o Life is the result of chance and serves no ultimate purpose in its existence
- o There are no absolutes, no morality, no right or wrong, everything is relative and changing
- o Man is only a more highly developed animal, with no more right to life, or meaning to his existence than any other form of life
- o The value (or worth) of life is arbitrarily defined, and can be changed whenever desired (abortion; infanticide; euthanasia; etc.)

- o Social institutions (marriage; family; church; government; nations) serve no ultimate purpose; can be changed, adapted or scraped at will since they only exist for man's convenience
- o Racism, exploitation, wars, are only an expression of the "survival of the fittest"
- b. If creation is true, then:
 - o There is an almighty God that created the entire universe and everything in it
 - o We are accountable to this Creator for our very existence
 - o There is ultimate reason and purpose to everything in the universe, including us!
 - o What God has revealed about the nature of man, his relationship to others, the created order and the Creator, marriage, morality, government, the church is true and absolute
 - o Significantly, atheists understand this implication very well!
- c. Consider the following quote from "The American Atheist" of September, 1978, pg 19 by G. Richard Bozarth in an article entitled: "The Meaning of Evolution":

"...Christianity is—must be—totally committed to the special creation described in Genesis, and Christianity must fight with all its full might, fair or foul, against the theory of evolution...It becomes clear now that the whole justification of Jesus' life and death is predicated on the existence of Adam and the forbidden fruit he and Eve ate. Without the original sin, who needs to be redeemed? Without Adam's fall into a life of constant sin terminated by death, what purpose is there to Christianity? None."
- d. The meaning and purpose of the Christian gospel depends upon the origin of the problem it claims to be the solution for!
 - o Diagram: Circle (creation) leading to Fall (death) to Christianity (salvation); Circle (evolution) leading ultimately to godhead, destroying the problem of man
 - o Evolution attempts to destroy the foundation upon which the gospel rests
 - o **Psalm 11:3**: "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
 - o **Luke 16:31**: "He said to them, ' If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" (Lazarus and the rich man
 - o **John 5:46-47**: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"
 - o Evolution attacks the general revelation of God in the universe (**Job 12:7-10; Rom 1:18-23; Psalm 19:1; 53:1**)
 - o Evolution is a belief system that desperately tries to explain the origin of all: chemical, biological, cosmological and social (cultural) developments by natural processes without the aid of an external force or entity (denying the sinful nature of man, morality, accountability)
 - o Evolution is an attempt to explain supernatural occurrences without resort to the supernatural
 - o Religions which are basically polytheistic, pantheistic, humanistic or atheistic must be based upon some form of evolution. All atheists and humanists must believe in evolution as do Buddhists, Confucianists, Taoists, Hindus and animists (also Marxists, Nazis etc.)
(If you believe in evolution - consider the company you are keeping!)

4. Some Practical Considerations

- a. Self education
 - o This is a very broad subject area virtually covering all aspects of science and life. A general understanding will serve well, but for domain experts, expert rebuttal may be needed
 - o Read at least one book that addresses the creation/evolution controversy from a Biblical creationist viewpoint
 - o Visit the "Museum of Creation and Earth History" sponsored by the "Institute for Creation Research" in El Cajon
 - o Become familiar with the major problems with evolution and the consequences of rejecting the Biblical account
- b. When talking to those who believe in evolution consider using the following questions:
 - o "What undeniable facts do you know of that proves evolution to be true?"
 - o "Since evolution is so critical to ones worldview, have you ever critically challenged its claims?"

- o "How much time have you spent in studying the scientific basis for creation?"
- o "Why not just teach the scientific method in school and let students verify for themselves whether the evolution or creation model best fits the evidence?"
- o "If evolution is true, what ultimate hope do you have in your life?"
- c. More specific challenges that can be used (Proof vs. Conjecture)
 - o "Is there any irrefutable fact of science that indicates a complex creature can arise from a less complex parent?"
 - o "Changes in organisms from one generation to another are limited to the information content of DNA. Has any organism been observed to overcome these limits and add to its information banks in such a way as to result in a radically different offspring?"
 - o "In common experience, complex systems tend naturally toward disorder, the reverse is never observed. How could matter organize itself into increasingly complex systems in obvious opposition to its natural tendency to break down?"
 - o "The overwhelming percentage of mutations are harmful to organisms. Why would an occasional beneficial mutation be sufficient to reverse this process, or not be overwhelmed by non-mutating organisms? Can you give an example of a beneficial mutation?"
 - o "Mutations are the supposed source for evolutionary change. This entails changes to genes (genetic code). Where did the first gene come from?"
 - o "Information (computer programs, music, S.O.S. signals) do not arise by chance but speak to an intelligent source. DNA is vastly more complex information. Why is DNA regarded as resulting from chance but very simple examples of information require prior intelligence?"
 - o "Name one fossil record that demonstrates change in the direction of increased complexity with time"
- d. When talking to a Christian that is sympathetic to evolution:
 - o Appeal to the infallibility of scripture on all topics it addresses
 - o Question the changing standard of science being the authority over scripture
 - o Point out the logical consequences of evolution. If the Genesis foundation is removed, then the rest follows:
 - o God being the Creator (not necessary)
 - o Man's purpose in this world (mandate) and relationship to it is degraded
 - o The entrance of sin (the fall) and the resulting need for a Savior is abrogated
 - o The sanctity of life, the institution of marriage, the need for government are perverted
 - o Challenge their assumptions about Genesis 1 and why they accept evolution

References:

1. "Scientific Creationism" Henry M. Morris; 1974; 1985
2. "Starlight and Time - Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe" D. Russell Humphreys; 1994
3. "The Revised & Expanded Answers Book - The 20 Most Asked Questions about Creation, Evolution, and the Book of Genesis, Answered!" edited by Don Batten (Ken Ham; Jonathan Sarfati; Carl Wieland); 1990
4. Creation Research Society; St. Joseph, MO 64508-8263 ("www.creationresearch.org")
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6. "Science, Scripture and the Young Earth" Henry Morris and John Morris, 1989
7. "Creation Scientists Answer Their Critics" Duane Gish, 1993
8. "Darwin on Trial" Phillip Johnson, 1993
9. "Darwin's Black Box" Michael J. Behe, 2000
10. "That Their Words May be Used Against Them" Henry Morris, 1997
11. "Reason in the Balance" Phillip Johnson, 1995

Additional Notes:

- o Understanding how something works does not necessarily mean we understand how it got there (origin)
- o Matrix of information to be used with Christians and a separate one to be used with non-Christians
- o "The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable with the chance that

- a tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein” (Sir Fred Hoyle; English astronomer; Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge University; as quoted in “Hoyle on Evolution” in *Nature*, vol 294, 12 November 1981, p 105)
- o “The entire hominid collection known today would barely cover a billiard table...the collection is so tantalizingly incomplete, and the specimens themselves often so fragmentary and inconclusive, that more can be said about what is missing than about what is present” (John Reader; photo-journalist and author of “Missing Links”, in “Whatever happened to Zinjanthous?” in *New Scientist*, 26 March 1981, p 802)

Session #34: Illegal Aliens (Detailed Notes)

“A poor man pleads for mercy, but a rich man answers harshly” (Prov 18:23)

Purpose of this Session: To identify the Biblical principles that apply to our national problem of illegal aliens crossing the border and remaining in this country

- o Describe some of the competing views relating to immigrants in general and illegal aliens specifically
- o Identify Biblical principles that would guide us in how to handle illegal aliens
- o Identify some practical implications to guide our actions

1. Introduction: Illegal Aliens are part of a broader question of Immigration in General

- a. Current events:
 - o Elian Gonzalas in Florida
 - o A reported \$10K bounty on any U.S. border patrol agent
 - o The “Light up the Border” program
 - o The illegals that die each year in the desert east of San Deigo (forced to cross further east in much harsher terrain)
- b. This is a serious question for many Californians especially, and most border states in general (Note: U.S. and Mexican border runs for 2,000 miles; total border is about 8,000 miles)
- c. Definition: Illegal Alien - *“An illegal alien is a person who is in the United States in violation of U.S. immigration laws (8 U.S.C. 1365).”* Such an alien may have entered:
 - o Illegally, without Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) inspection (undocumented) or using fraudulent documentation
 - o Legally, under a non-immigrant visa or other temporary condition, but subsequently violated the visa’s terms or other terms of entry (tourist; student; employment)
- d. This is a subset of a larger issue concerning immigration in general
 - o Some want a completely open border - with virtually no restrictions at all
 - o Others want severely restricted entry
 - o Opinion: current approach is a very complicated process subject to political correctness and selective enforcement
- e. Christians especially are sensitive to this issue - we know we are aliens in this land (1 Peter 2:11)
 - o Who are we to not want others to share in our prosperity?
 - o Aren’t we to love our enemies?
 - o Difficult topic, requiring wisdom, like so many we have addressed

2. Selected Arguments relating to Illegal Aliens

- a. Arguments for stemming the number of illegal aliens (and immigrants in general) in the country:
 - o Reduces the cost of welfare, medical and educational benefits used by I.A.’s
 - o Impacts the overcrowding of classrooms
 - o Reduced service available under Medi-Cal for senior citizens to subsidize cost of I.A.’s
 - o It takes away jobs from citizens
 - o Use of I.A.’s in the food industry greatly increases our risk of infectious diseases
 - o It will reduce the crime rate
 - o Environmentalists see increased population as a threat - no matter where they come from
 - o Most illegal aliens are concentrated in only five states (California; Florida; Illinois; Texas; New York) which magnifies their impact on local government services
 - o Why should we make up for another countries internal problems?
 - o Benjamin Franklin complained in mid 18th century: *“Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs any more than they can acquire our complexion”*
- b. Reasons that favor more aliens (illegal or not) into the country
 - o By removing I.A.’s from public schools, CA will loose large amounts of federal funds

- o Requiring schools to only admit legal immigrants, citizens and resident aliens would create a significant administrative burden (costly, legal function)
- o Denying basic health care to “undocumented” workers would place many of us at risk due to the increased potential for spreading communicable diseases (thousands work in fields and restaurants)
- o “Open Borders” policy with no limitations on who enters the country - would be consistent with a one world government philosophy
- o Immigrants in general have added greatly to the economy of the United States, starting businesses and paying taxes
- o Even illegals add revenue to government by paying sales taxes
- o If current trends continue, European descent ethnic groups will become a minority in this country (viewed as a positive!)
- o Cultural and ethnic diversity have always been a strength in the U.S., more immigrants would serve to continue to enhance this diversity
- c. Remember: virtually all U.S. citizens are either immigrants or direct descendants of immigrants
 - o Early years, most immigrants came from European countries, this trend has decreased and Asian and Hispanic has greatly increased
 - o Question is whether the current trend is towards balkanization or a melting pot (assimilation)

- Where do you begin to address the problem? -

3. Biblically, Individuals, the Church, and the Government each have their Responsibilities as concerns Illegal Aliens

- a. God originally created the existence of different language (ethnic) groups (**Gen 11:1-9**)
 - o The fall of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages resulted in the scattering of people over the face of the earth
 - o Nations grew up separately
 - o Even to this day language is a large barrier between different groups, keeping them separate
 - o Even though there are different “races” of man, they all have the same ancestry (**Acts 17:26**)
- b. In O.T. Israel, God provided for the aliens amongst them
 - o The Lord loves the alien and shows mercy to them (**Deut 10:17-19**), and commands the Israelites to do the same
 - o Aliens (rabble) left Egypt with the fleeing Israelites (**Ex 12:37-38**)
 - o Mercy was shown to them
 - o They were not excluded from their midst, even though the Jew was not to intermarry
 - o Though they became an instigator of grumbling amongst the Jews that resulted in judgment (**Num 11:4-34**), they were not completely destroyed
 - o They were not to be mistreated or oppressed since the Jews knew what it was like to be oppressed (**Ex 22:21; 23:9; Jer 7:6**)
 - o Aliens living amongst the Jews were to be treated as one of the native-born (**Num 15:15**)
 - o They were to be loved as themselves (**Lev 19:34**)
 - o They (aliens and temporary residents) were to be helped if poor or unable to support themselves (**Lev 25:35**)
 - o Cities of Refuge were intended to protect the innocent Jew as well as the alien in their midst (**Num 35:15**)
 - o They were not to be denied justice (**Deut 27:19**)
 - o If an alien sinned defiantly, or blasphemed the Lord, like a Jew he was to be cut off from his people (**Num 15:30-31**)
 - o Aliens were to be instructed in God’s law, learn from it, be obedient to it (**Deut 31:12**)
 - o Aliens could:
 - o Participate in the Passover, but only in accordance with its rules and regulations - they were to be followed in the same manner as the Jews (they did not have to participate, however)(**Num 10:14**)

- o Make an offering by fire before the Lord - but it must be done exactly the way the Israelites did (**Num 15:13-16**)
- o Be covered by the offerings made to cover unintentional sins (**Num 15:26**)
- o Were included in the ordinance relating to the water of cleansing (**Num 19:10**)
- o Though aliens had tremendous privileges and freedoms, they were to remain separate (not intermarry)
- o **Bottom line principles (which apply to us?):**
 - o Aliens are to be treated the same as native born (compassion, mercy, love)
 - o Aliens are to be taught our ways as they reflect God's pattern of righteousness
 - o Aliens are to be obedient to the same laws as native born (no preferential treatment, ensure equal access and application of justice)
 - o They are to conform to us and we're not to embrace their ways if they run counter to God's desires and commands
 - o The example of God's people, and the instruction of His law (**Gal 3:24**) may be the instrument God uses to bring them into His kingdom (**Acts 17:26-28**)
 - o When aliens wooed the nation of Israel to other gods and were seducing them into immorality - they were punished severely (**Num 25:1-18**)
- c. Government is responsible:
 - o To punish the evil doer (**Rom 13:4; 1 Peter 2:13-17**)
 - o Whether native or foreign-born, evil is to be restrained, and if need be - punished
 - o Those influences that would tend to disrupt peace internally are to be discouraged
 - o Creation of entire subcultures that have different laws (Quebec example)
 - o Large groups that are separate in language and custom (nation forming or in effect colonizing)(Eubonics? Southern accent?)
 - o Not allow a separate legal, economic and political system to exist internally
 - o In effect: prevent Balkanization and ensure a "melting pot" - but with conformance to standards consistent with God's truths and foundational principles the nation was built upon
 - o To ensure there is peace in the land (**1 Tim 2:1-2; Jer 29:4-7**)
 - o Protecting the nation from **external threats** (invasions of various kinds)
 - o Armed force (military; terrorists; militia; vigilante; bandits)
 - o Economic threats to our stability and well being (be self-sufficient; influence other nations for good; not become a debtor nation)
 - o Ensure a different morality does not overwhelm our nation - one based upon pagan beliefs and practices (in reality - government is promoting pagan beliefs here)
 - o Ensuring there is no insurrection from **internal threats**
 - o By force of economically
 - o By being overwhelmed by an alien culture or morality
 - o Large influxes of people from non-democratic nations could endanger the American political institutions and cultural values
 - o To establish criteria for entrance into the land
 - o Those that are "worthy" (hard-workers; those that won't be a drain on our resources) (See studies on Welfare/Homeless)(**encourages initiative**)
 - o Those that are in need (political asylum; medical emergencies; refugees)(**mercy**)
 - o Those that are not a threat to our existence and Christian basis (**God fearing**)
 - o To promote to the world the principles this nation was founded on (Christian truths/beliefs)
 - o Be a light to other nations and foreigners in our midst (**Deut 4:5-8**)
 - o Bottom line principles (my opinion):
 - o Government is to discourage those influences that run counter to our Christian moral, judicial and governmental principles

- o Government is responsible to protect its citizens from evil influences coming in from the outside world (known felons, terrorists; ungodly moral influences; destructive cultural influences)
- d. The church has an important role towards the alien amongst us:
 - o We are to warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with all (**1 Thess 5:14**)
 - o We are to help the worthy poor (**Matt 6:1-4; 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-37; James 1:27; 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18**)
 - o We are to remember that God calls the poor into His kingdom (**1 Cor 26-31**)
 - o We are not to encourage law-breaking (**Rom 13:2**)
 - o We are to love even our enemy as ourselves (**Rom 12:20**)
- e. Individual citizen responsibilities (my opinion):
 - o In our nation, we have shared responsibility of governance (elections, voting...)
 - o We are to ensure wise and effective establishment of immigration laws
 - o Consistent with those traits we want to encourage
 - o Not to destroy the Christian base in our society
 - o To keep troublemakers away (those after a free lunch or are criminal)
 - o To show compassion for those truly in need
 - o We are to ensure equal protection under the law for aliens in our midst
 - o Resist the weakening of English only requirements (wisdom issue)
 - o We are to minimize inappropriate governmental aid (welfare; AFDC; etc.) and allow local churches to meet the "true" needs (same applies to native borns)
 - o We are to call for strict enforcement of immigration laws as with all laws
 - o We are to encourage grass roots efforts in other countries to reform their nations from a Christian worldview perspective
 - o Lobby for immigration approach complementary to our heritage, and assimilate other belief systems very slowly

4. Some Final Practical Considerations

- a. Should the United States accept immigrants that are forced out of other countries due to economic problems, or help force changes in these other countries?
 - o Anyone that comes into our home must abide by the rules - otherwise they must leave
 - o Government should be supportive of immigrants that positively enhance our Christian foundation, and skeptical of those that detract from it
 - o Any support to other nations to help them should be at the lowest level, not through a corrupt governmental system - the best way to do this is through church ministries
 - o As our government becomes more antagonistic to our beliefs, the less I desire them to try and influence other nations
- b. What criteria should be used to determine who can legally enter (and stay) in this country?
 - o Skills possessed?
 - o How much they will contribute to the economy?
 - o Whether they have AIDS or not?
 - o Whether they have a criminal record or not?
 - o Whether they are Christian or not?
 - o English proficiency?
- c. Most immigrants are more conservative and family oriented than native borns (but don't vote)
 - o "...the cultural problems currently being faced by America and the world are emanating from Western culture, with its moral collapse and its postmodern relativism. A jolt of influence from traditional cultures would do us good." (Gene Edward Veith; World Magazine; "Immigrants can be a good influence"; 4 April, 1998)
- d. Should immigration be slowed for a while to mimic the last great wave of immigration which ended in the 1920's, where assimilation was very high? Reason:
 - o Almost all immigrants came from Europe and many English speaking countries
 - o The influx was stopped for a period to permit assimilation into the dominant American culture
 - o The birth rate among native born population was significantly higher than today

- o Requirements set for entry included:
 - o Extensive documentation of good character
 - o Sponsorship for immigration
 - o Financial responsibility
 - o Occupations and skills
 - o What could be added: additional financial responsibility, English language proficiency, ethnicity?

Session #35: Jury Duty (Detailed Notes)

*“Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent - the Lord detests them both”
(Prov 17:15)*

Purpose of Session:

- o Is a jury a Biblically valid approach to justice?
- o What is a Christian’s responsibility relative to serving on a jury?
- o What are current issues that affect the jury process?

Initial Questions:

- o How many have served on a jury? What level?
- o Was it a satisfying experience?
- o What impressions did you walk away with?
- o Do you think justice was done?

Thomas Jefferson said, “I consider trial by jury as the only anchor yet imagined by man, by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution”

Mark Twain called the jury system “...the most ingenious and infallible agency for defeating justice that human wisdom could contrive” (From “Roughing it” (1872))

1. Introduction: Though generally not an issue, some Christians are finding it difficult to serve on a jury for a number of reasons (what are they?)

- a. A conviction that believers should have nothing to do with government, including the courts
- b. Discouragement over the justice of the legal system in this country
- c. An inconvenience that can be ignored if clever enough
- d. Belief that it is not justice that is being sought, but only winning a case at any costs
- e. A fundamental distrust of all governmental activities
- f. A conviction that a believer has no right to judge those outside the church

2. The Biblical Approach to Dispensing Justice in this World

- a. Ultimately, God will judge everyone (**Matt 25:32-46; Rom 2:6-8; 12:19; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27**)
 - o No one will escape God’s judgment (**Ecc 3:17**)
 - o God is the only One that judges absolutely justly (**Psalms 103:6; John 5:30; Rom 2:2; 1 Peter 1:17; Col 3:23-25; Rom 2:11**)
 - o God has provided for justice in this life by raising up judges, kings and others in authority
 - o God’s common grace towards man
 - o Within the church, judgment is exercised by elders (**Heb 13:17; Matt 16:19; 18:15-18**) towards those who call themselves brothers (**1 Cor 6:1-8**)
 - o Within the nation: **Rom 13:3-5** (rulers)
 - o But God also provided judges
- b. In O.T., Judges decided whether one was guilty or not and what punishment or action was appropriate
 - o Moses was the supreme judge under God’s authority during the Exodus (**Ex 18:13-26**)
 - o Appointed judges over 1000’s, 100’s, 50’s and 10’s
 - o Difficult cases worked their way up to Moses to decide
 - o Moses sought council from God directly, he also trained the people (**Ex 18:20**) and selected capable men (**Ex 18:21; Deut 1:15**)
 - o Judges were to be appointed in every tribe & town in Israel (**Deut 16:18**)
 - o Judges stood in the place of God to judge men (**2 Chron 19:5-7; Acts 13:19-21**)
- c. Judges were also prominent in the N.T. era
 - o Jesus instructed his disciples to settle matters quickly before going before the judge (**Matt 5:25-26; Luke 12:54-59; 18:1-8**)

- o Jesus refers to a judge (or arbiter) when a brother wanted his inheritance (**Luke 12:13-15**)
- o Pilot sat in the Judges seat when Jesus was brought to him (**Matt 27:19; John 19:13**)
- d. Are there any Biblical examples of juries? (The word is not used in the Bible!)
 - o Elders played a significant role throughout the O.T.
 - o During the Exodus Moses collaborated with them (**Ex 3:16**)(70 of them - **Ex 24:1**)
 - o They shared the government of the people with Moses (**Nu 11:25**)
 - o Acted as judges in each city (**Deut 19:12**); conducted inquests (**Deut 21:2**); settled matrimonial disputes (**Deut 22:15; 25:7**); heard pleas for asylum in cities of refuge (**Jos 20:4**)
 - o They always appear as a corporate body of community leaders, a council of leading men. This required jointly exercised authority, as a collective body (no first amongst equals)
 - o This could have established a pattern for a group of men to rule on criminal as well as civil problems, basically as judge and jury combined
 - o The mob acted as a jury (kangaroo court) against Jesus (**Matt 27:22; John 18:38-40**)
 - o Others that you can think of?

3. Historical Development of the Jury System (See Handout: Historical Documents Guaranteeing Jury Trial)

- a. Socrates in ancient Greece was tried by a jury of 501 jurors (generally Greek juries were very large)
- b. Magna Carta (15 June, 1215; King John of England at Runnymede)(ref(1))
 - o Addressed many grievances that developed during the feudal system (uprising against the king with the Barons ending up compelling King John to agree)
 - o Established the foundation for the development of the jury system in western societies (it also ensured many other rights: witnesses; right of trial; standard measures; right of justice (not delayed or sold or denied)
 - o Sections that apply (numbering is of recent origin)
 - o (52) "To any man whom we have deprived or dispossessed of lands, castles, liberties, or rights, without the lawful judgment of his equals, we will at once restore these."
 - o (56) "If we have deprived or dispossessed any Welshmen of lands, liberties, or anything else in England or in Wales, without the lawful judgement of their equals, these are at once to be returned to them." (Also see (57))
 - o (59) "With regard to the return of the sisters and hostages of Alexander, king of Scotland, his liberties and his rights, we will treat him in the same way as our other barons of England,...This matter shall be resolved by the judgement of his equals in our court."
- c. Middle ages had several different, developing approaches to juries
 - o Local appointed "accusers" that maintained lists of those known or thought to have committed crimes - tried by the King's judges that traveled through
 - o Accusers could also sit in judgment during the trial
 - o Two juries existed for a time, one up to 30-40 people were the accusers (Grand jury), the one that sat through the trial was the Petit (Petty) jury (12 members). One could be on bot
- d. Rights bestowed by the Magna Carta were generally subscribed to by later kings
 - o However, these were routinely abused when convenient
 - o By 1664 English juries were routinely fined for acquitting a defendant (ref(2))
 - o English situation changed in 1670 with the trial of William Penn
- e. United States
 - o Right of jury trial was specifically defined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights
 - o See **Handout: Historical Documents Guaranteeing Jury Trial**
- f. General jury structure in the United States
 - o Three types of juries:
 - o **Grand Jury** - usually from 16-23 members in most states; 'charging' and 'investigative' types; 'investigative' type can bring an indictment - followed by a Petit jury trial

- o **Petit (Petty) Jury** - a trial jury; in civil cases addresses disputes between 2 or more parties (not family divorce or custody matters); decides criminal cases
- o **Coroner's Jury** - conducts an inquest (study) into the cause of death in cases that involve doubt. Most consist of 6 members

4. Issue: Should Christians allow themselves to serve as Jurors?

a. Arguments against involvement

Tertullian (160-220 A.D.) *"I owe no duty to forum, campaign, or senate. I stay awake for no public function. I make no effort to occupy a platform. I am no office seeker. I have no desire to smell out political corruption. I shun the voter's booth, the juryman's bench. I break no laws and push no lawsuits; I will not serve as a magistrate or judge. I refuse to do military service. I desire to rule [govern] over no one - I have withdrawn from worldly politics [from the life of secular society]! Now my only politics is spiritual - how that I might be anxious for nothing except to root out all worldly anxieties and care"*

- o God has made a distinction between the role of the church and government
 - o The state ministers to the law-abiding part of society by punishing the evil doer (**Rom 13:3-4**)(God's ordained role for them)
 - o The church is to serve God and bring glory to Him (**Matt 28:19-20**) and testify to His manifold goodness and wisdom (**Eph 3:10-11**)
- o Christians are not to return evil for evil (**Matt 5:38-42; Rom 12:18-21**)
- o Christians are to love their enemies not hate them (**Matt 5:43-48**)
- o Christ set the example of not judging the conflicts or affairs of man, we are to do likewise (**Luke 12:14**) ("Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?'")
- o Jesus rebuked the disciples for wanting wrath from heaven to pour on the Samaritans for not welcoming Him (**Luke 9:51-56**), showing He had not come to destroy men but to save them
- o The Christian's citizenship is in heaven (**Phil 3:20**) not in this world, therefore we are not to become entangled in concerns of this world
- o Participating in juries forces us to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers (**2 Cor 6:14**)
- o What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? (**1 Cor 5:12**)
- o Chief proponents: Mennonites; non-resistant Christians; Ana-Baptists

Schleitheim Confession (Anabaptist declaration of faith; 1527 A.D.) *"...The sword is organized of God outside the perfection of Christ...it will be asked concerning the sword, whether a Christian shall pass sentence in worldly disputes and strife such as unbelievers have with one another. This is our united answer: Christ did not wish to decide or pass judgment between brother and brother in the case of inheritance, but refused to do so. Therefore we should do likewise."*

b. Counter-arguments:

- o There is a distinction in roles between the church and government, however:
 - o The church is called to influence all of society (salt & light)
 - o The government does not have a charter to affect the church
 - o Our participative form of government allows us to share the responsibility for governing of the nation (privilege, right, responsibility)
 - o Who will define what the "evil" is that government is to condemn unless believers are involved?
 - o Our government specifically asks us to be involved to make use of our wisdom, knowledge of right and wrong, and to act in a godly way
 - o Christians are the only ones who truly know of the ultimate judgment of God, of which earthly judgment is a mere shadow. As such, we can help ensure it reflects God's ideal for society (justice)
 - o It is correct to say the church (formal) is not to judge the world (usurp the governmental role), but individual believers can be involved (freedom to do so)

- o We are involved by paying taxes, voting, praying for our leaders, praying for justice to prevail, etc., already
- o We can fulfill part of Jer 29:7 "...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you..." This by participating in controlling the evil-doer
- o In so doing we serve a role in protecting the true "innocent" person
- o Christians are not to return evil for evil, however;
 - o This speaks to the fact that we are to love our enemies, not hate them on an individual basis
 - o We do not have the right to punish someone else for the evil done to us, we are to forgive them
 - o Juries do not rule on the harm done to them personally, but on the harm done to another - thus determining whether they were an evil doer or not. This preserves our command to love our neighbor (removes conflict of interest)
 - o There are consequences to sin, this is one of them
 - o In this sense, juries assist the state in taking the proper actions to fulfill their God ordained role
- o Jesus was not an arbiter between the two brothers (Luke 12:14), however;
 - o Could be referring to the fact that Jesus did not come as a judge during this first advent - He came to bring life
 - o Jesus was not given the mantle of judge in the land of Israel, He was a rabbi (teacher), and king (by His own confession), and a prophet by His authority and what He said
 - o This is quite a stretch to make this statement normative for all believers at all times everywhere
- o Jesus rebuked His disciples for wanting to punish the Samaritans; however;
 - o Jesus had not yet come in judgment, so this would be pre-mature
 - o This falls into the category of personal offense being given, and Jesus did not return evil for evil (practiced what He preached)
- o Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20), however:
 - o We are also ambassadors here (2 Cor 5:20), and such represent God's interests to mankind. These include working for the peace and prosperity of the land; representing the truths of God that should govern men's lives for their own good; and being salt (disinfectant) where needed
- o We are not to be "...unequally yoked" (2 Cor 6:14), however;
 - o We are not compelled to make a decision or take an action that violates God's commands.
 - o We are not required to go against our conscience before God as long as we seek His will and obey Him, not man
 - o God has instituted government control and power for our good, to restrain evil and punish it. By participating in this process we are not unequally yoked but are instead fulfilling this call by representing God's righteous standard in judging others
- o We are not to judge those outside the church (1 Cor 5:12), however;
 - o The church (Elders) in its role of exercising authority over others (in the church) is not intended to usurp the authority of the government to punish the evil-doer
 - o We are specifically told to expose evil (Eph 5:11), this can be done through the courts by assessing evil actions and weighing the evidence
- o **Bottom lines:**
 - o No explicit command preventing us from participation
 - o Wisdom would indicate it would be well to do so "...but so that we may not offend them..." (Matt 17:27)

5. Issue: Is Jury Nullification a Valid Biblical Principle?

- a. Definition: **Jury Nullification** - when a jury departs from the judge's instructions on the law and acquits a defendant it believes may have been technically proved guilty
 - o Rationale: The final authority on the validity of the law is the people, this final check on the system prevents and oppressive government from making unjust/offensive laws (veto power of the people on government)
- b. Background
 - o Early example from the Bible? (**1 Sam 14:24-45**) Saul pursuing the Philistines, vowed death to any who eat before sundown - Jonathan eat honey - men did not allow him to be killed
 - o In 1670, William Penn tried for preaching Quakerism to an unlawful assembly. Four of 12 Jurors voted to acquit and were imprisoned and starved for four days. Jurors were fined and imprisoned until they paid the fines. Appealed to Court of Common Pleas - Chief Justice held that jurors could not be punished for their verdicts - major common law development!
 - o Jurors exercised nullification in American Colonies by refusing to enforce forfeitures under the English Navigation Acts (prompted England to extend jurisdiction of the non-jury admiralty courts beyond limits of sea-going vessels)
 - o Zenger Trial (1735) - His newspaper criticized the royal governor of New York. It was a crime to publish any statement (true or false) criticizing public officials, laws or government. The judge ruled that the truth was no defense; the jury acquitted Zenger
 - o The Fugitive Slave Law - 1850. Northern jurors refused to convict abolitionists who had violated this law. In response, judges began questioning jurors to find out if they were prejudiced against the government, dismissing any who were. The law was so obnoxious to a large number of people, a conviction was virtually hopeless
 - o Until mid 1800's, federal and state judges often instructed the juries they had the right to disregard the court's view of the law (ref (4)). In 1895, the Supreme Court ruled that courts no longer had to inform juries they could veto an unjust law
 - o Jury nullification apparently was a significant factor in liquor law trials during Prohibition and contributed to ending alcohol prohibition
- c. Jury nullification appears to be a commonly understood principle until recent times (see **Handout: Selected Quotes on Jury Right to Judge the Law as well as the Evidence**). However:
 - o Current practice is to inform juries that they are only to judge the facts in the case, the judge is the arbiter and interpreter of the law
 - o Jury selection typically entails ensuring the jury has no problem with the law itself
 - o No court official is allowed to inform jurors that they have a right to judge the law itself
- d. Difficulties
 - o Jurors can decide based upon their own concepts of right and wrong (or even their feelings)
 - o Without the potential for nullification, there is no final check on an oppressive government that removes or curtails fundamental rights
 - o Very selective jury process ensures only those supportive of the law, no matter how egregious, will be used
 - o Jury nullification activists with pamphlets, calls, advertisements, etc. can be disruptive of the jury process to fulfill their own vested interests

6. Bottom Lines:

- a. Christians have the freedom and right to participate in governmental functions and serve on juries (**Gal 3:15; 1 Cor 2:15**)
 - o They are best equipped to define what is the evil to be punished
 - o They are the best equipped to represent God's justice in condemning evil
 - o Role of jurors is to be "competent, fair, and impartial", who else can be this than believers?
- b. Christians must obey God rather than man (**Acts 5:29**)
 - o If the law is in conflict with God's law, then it must not be encouraged or supported
 - o We must be careful not to become unequally yoked (by oath) into agreeing to judge the evidence and not the law also (ungodly law)

- o Is the law a clear violation of God's truths, commands? If so, how can we in clear conscience obey it (or encourage it)?
- c. We must be careful to not become so critical of all laws that we effectively remove ourselves from any service (concentrate on the majors, not the minors). Analysis paralysis can prevent our serving as citizens and setting a godly example in judging evil
- d. Practical considerations:
 - o When questioned as to whether we can judge facts and not the law, we could say "yes, to the best of my ability and understanding of the law" or something similar
 - o Perjury is possible if an oath is taken, then gone back on it (at least this is being threatened)
 - o Jury nullification is the final check against a corrupt government imposing unjust laws (we all suffer when this happens). But the assumption is that a moral foundation exists that can judge the merit of the law. If this is destroyed, then special interests and vile actions can be unenforceable (sodomy; bestiality; drug use; prostitution; etc.)
 - o Attend jury trials when time allows - informative and educational
 - o Make sure we understand the law, and its intent as well as we can
 - o Educate ourselves on the development of the Jury system, and its strengths and weaknesses

References:

1. G.R.C. Davis; Magna Carta, Revised Edition, British Library, 1989; Copyright 1997, the British Library Board
2. International Society for Individual Liberty; Benicia CA; www.isil.org
3. General FAQ's on juries: Canada's Schoolnet; "The Jury in Criminal Cases" British Development; www.acjnet.org/youthfaq
4. Barkan, "Jury Nullification in Political Trends, 1983, cited 52 Harvard Law Review, 682-616

Additional Notes:

- o Are punitive awards ever justified?
- o Two or more witnesses
- o Common law affect
- o If we don't judge what evil is, who will?
- o Plea bargaining?
- o Jury selection process - just or not?
- o Jury duty demonstrates the people's rule over the nation
- o It teaches people how to rule
- o It allows them to engage directly in the governance of the nation
- o Jurors cannot be harassed by the judge or punished for their decisions; they may be asked but are not obligated to explain their verdict
- o Verdict by majority (super-majority) vice unanimous vote
- o Jury selection (peremptory challenges; stack the deck to win)
- o 1 Cor 6:1;2-8; Matt 5:25; 5:40
- o Serving as a juror provides and opportunity to witness to the others relative to the existence of a standard that we all fall under (God's standard)
- o Salt and Light issues

Session #36: Hate Crimes (Detailed Notes)

"Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."(Matt 22:37-39)

Purpose of this Session: To Determine if There is any Biblical Justification for the Current Creation of Hate Crime Legislation

- o Is this just a Politically Correct action taken by legislators or is there substance behind it?
- o What is the proper Christian response to these laws and any future ones?
- o What are the implications for Christians, if any, in proclaiming Biblical truths?

Why this session?

- o We know the concept of justice emanates from the knowledge there is a just God and that all will stand accountable before Him
- o We also know every country implements laws to provide order and peace in the land (prevent anarchy, punish the evil doer, maintain social order)
- o It's important to understand how justice is being implemented in this country since we play a key part in determining what is "good" and defining the "evil" that is to be punished

1. Introduction: Though Hate has been a Motivating Factor for many Crimes throughout History, the Creation of Hate Crime Legislation (specifically) is a Recent Development

- a. Since the 1960's there have been strong lobbying groups pushing for protective legislation:
 - o Civil rights (equal protection under the law)
 - o Feminist movement (equal pay for equal work)
 - o Anti-Discrimination (race; religion; national origin; disability; age; color)
 - o Homosexuals
 - o Abortion providers
- b. Hate Crime Background - Federal Level
 - o April 23, 1990 - Congress enacted the "**Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990**"
 - o Required the Attorney General to establish guidelines and collect data about crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based upon specific factors (race; religion; sexual orientation; ethnicity)
 - o Responsibilities were delegated to the FBI (Uniform Crime Reporting Program)
 - o See **Handout: Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines Uniform Crime Reporting (URC), FBI; Revised October 1999**
 - o Sept 1994 - "**The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act**" amended the previous Act to add disabilities (physical and mental)
 - o Current pending Congressional legislation ("**Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999**") (H.R. 1082 of March 11, 1999; S. 622 of March 16, 1999)
 - o Makes Hate Crimes a Federal Offense (race; color; religion; nation origin; gender; sexual orientation; disability)
 - o Establishes penalty levels (imprisonment and/or fines)
 - o Intended to supplement State and local jurisdictions in achieving justice by partnering with, or providing assistance in investigations and prosecutions
- c. Hate Crime Background - State Level:
 - o Many states have (or are) enacting Hate Crime legislation.
 - o See **Handout: Pending California Legislation Concerning "Hate Crimes"**
 - o States provide data to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting system (UCR) to allow tracking of incidences nation-wide (see **Handout: Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines - URC**)

d. What are Hate Crimes? Some definitions:

o Federal Level:

VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1994
SEC. 280003. DIRECTION TO UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION
REGARDING SENTENCING ENHANCEMENTS FOR HATE CRIMES.

(a) Definition.—In this section, “hate crime” means a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person. (28 U.S.C. 994 note)

o American Psychological Association (ref (1)): “Hate crimes - violent acts against people, property, or organizations because of the group to which they belong or identify with”

“Hate crimes are message crimes...” - sending a message to a group or person of a group that they are not wanted

o State of California: “A reportable hate crime is any criminal act or attempted criminal act to cause physical injury, emotional suffering, or property damage which is or appears to be motivated, all or in part, by the victim's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability” (ref (2))

o Fundamentally, Hate Crimes are:

o An attempt to identify and punish more severely, violent crimes against selected victims or groups (actual or perceived)

o The primary factors involved in their identification are the victim group itself and the motivation for the crime (bias; prejudice; hatred against this individual or group)

o See **Handout: State of California Guidelines for the Identification of Hate Crimes**

o Vocal opponents of Hate Crime legislation categorize Hate Crimes as:

o “Affirmative Action for Victims”

o “Victim Discrimination Act”

o The instituting of “Thought Police”

e. Are there great numbers of Hate Crimes being committed? What's the big concern?

o See **Handouts:**

o **Selected “Hate Crime” Statistics (FBI Uniform Crime Reports)**

o **Number of Offenses in 1996 by Type**

o 1996: Overwhelming majority (82%) of religious discrimination hate crimes are directed against Jews (1722 events for vandalism, harassment, threat, assault)

o 1996: 4,831 of 7,947 Hate Crimes (61%) racially motivated; with 62% targeting African-Americans (25% against whites; 7% against Asian Pacific Americans; 5% against multiracial groups; 1% against Native Americans and Alaskan Natives)

o There are over **18,000 murders nationwide**. In 1997 only 8 were found to be “Hate Crimes” and only 3 of these were anti-gay

o Of 13.2 million criminal offenses, “Hate Crimes” accounted for under 1/10th of 1%. Also, most “bias” offenses were low-level crimes, including speech perceived as threatening, the most common of which was intimidation

o The majority of American communities reported no “Hate Crimes” at all, even though the public portrayal is that it is epidemic

f. Are the data accurate? Various reasons make them suspect:

o Difficulty in identifying an incident as having been provoked by bias

o Reporting is voluntary by States

o Uneven definitions and guidelines are used (although Federal criteria helps standardize)

o Fear of retaliation or future contact with the perpetrators, as well as reluctance deriving from resulting trauma (Homosexuals: 1/3 of hate crime victims reported the incident, but 2/3's of homosexuals reported non-bias crimes; ref (1))

o Uneven enforcement of what could be perceived as Hate Crimes

- g. Some general patterns that have been observed:
 - o They are not dependent upon the economy (economic downturns do not affect rates)(ref (1))
 - o A large influx of minorities into a homogeneous region can result in surges in hate crimes, once integrated, tends to decrease

2. Justice is the Foundation upon which any Society Exists - When Aligned with God's Standards, Blessings occur, when not - Corruption, Violence and Abuse Follows

- a. The Biblical understanding of Justice addresses at least three fundamental relationships (God & man; man to man; government to man)
 - o Basic definitions: Justice implies a standard, and a willingness to enforce this standard
 - o Hate: To have strong dislike or ill will for; loathe; despise

"Law is organized justice" - Frederic Bastiat

- b. First and foremost is our relationship to God (Vertical relationship)
 - o God is the ultimate judge of all mankind in this life and in the life hereafter (**Gen 18:25; Psalm 58:11; 82:1; 96:13; Eccl 3:17; 11:9; Heb 12:23**)
 - o God demands perfection and complete obedience to His will (**Matt 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16; Lev 11:44,45; 19:2**)
 - o God is the ultimate source of justice, the giver of truth that defines what justice is, and the dispenser of common grace in its application (Man is not the originator of "justice" or of "law" (the standard))
 - o God reveals His righteous standard through several means:
 - o His **special revelation** (Bible)(**Rom 7:7; 2 Tim 3:16; Prov 30:5-6**)
 - o **General revelation** (the creation and natural law)(**Rom 1:20; 2:14-15**)
 - o **Man's conscience** (**Rom 2:14-16**)(I may rationalize stealing from you, but I know you stealing from me is wrong)
 - o Man's laws are a poor shadow of God's perfect requirements
 - o We all fall short of His standard and as such deserve His judgment (**Rom 3:10-13; 6:23**)
 - o There is no one that does any good (**Rom 3:10-18**)
 - o Our righteous acts are but filthy rags (**Phil 3:4-9**)
 - o We have no merit of our own, but stand condemned before God
 - o Our condemnation is just, all our acts deserve the same penalty - death
 - o In this life, God displays His mercy and wrath toward both individuals and nations (**Ex 6:6; Eccl 3:17; 12:14; 2 Cor 5:10**)
 - o God is both just and the Justifier by sending His Son Jesus Christ - the perfect atonement for our sins (**Rom 3:21-26**). Justice is served, God's wrath is appeased, and we are the recipients of His mercy (for His glory)
 - o When Christ returns, God will apply His just standard to all of mankind (**Matt 25:32; Acts 17:31; Rom 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:12**) - there will be no mistakes
- c. Man as he relates to his fellow man (Horizontal relationship)
 - o Jesus Himself set the example of how we are to react to the evil around us
 - o We are to turn the other cheek, give our cloak as well, go the extra mile (**Matt 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-36**)
 - o We are to love our enemies and pray for them (**Matt 5:43-45**)
 - o We're not to resort to physical violence (**Matt 5:38-42; Luke 22:49-52; John 18:36**)
 - o Likewise, the Epistles teach that believers are not to be like the world, but to be like Christ
 - o We are not to conform to this world and act like it (revenge, greed, etc.); instead we are to overcome evil with good (**Rom 12:2; 19-21; 13:8**)
 - o We are to walk like Christ walked (**1 John 2:6**)
 - o We are not to lie, insult, retaliate or threaten (**1 Peter 2:22-23**)
 - o These principles are summarized in the command to love our neighbor (even our enemies) as ourselves (**Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39**)

- o Given the above, where is justice in this life?
 - o Consequences (results) of sin can bring justice
 - o God provided for justice to be dispensed through government by due process (not individual actions)
- d. God instituted government to dispense justice among men (**Gen 9:5-6; Rom 13:1-6**)(See Session #7: **The Role of Government**); specifically:
 - o Government is created by God for man's benefit and to fulfill His purposes (**Rom 13:1**)
 - o Government is to commend the good (**Rom 13:3-4**)
 - o Government is to be an agent of wrath to restrain evil and punish the evildoer (**Rom 13:3-4**)
 - o Government is to maintain peace in the land (**1 Tim 2:2**); specifically:
 - o To protect the individual
 - o To encourage and protect God ordained institutions of home, church and state from anarchy, crime, corruption and harm from without
 - o Although man's laws are an imperfect reflection of God's righteous standard, they serve to define evil, instruct people in what is not acceptable, and inhibit evil actions
 - o However, man's laws are a gift from God
 - o To provide order and peace in the land
 - o To dispense God's common grace to govern society
 - o Only God can accurately judge a man's heart (man can only judge a man's actions) (**Matt 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45**)

3. The Bible Provides many Basic Principles to Govern Justice in this Country (Partial List):

- a. Government is to instill terror in the evil doer by being diligent and appropriate in the dispensing of justice (**Rom 13:3a; Prov 21:15; Deut 19:19b,20-21**). Some attributes:
 - o Visible - the sheer presence of force keeps people obedient to the authorities
 - o Swift (**Deut 25:1-3; Eccl 8:11**)
 - o Impartial (**Prov 18:5; 17:15; 24:23-25; 21:13; 22:22-23; 31:8-9**)
(Statue of the goddess of justice/liberty, blindfolded with a balance scale)
 - o Without pity (**Deut 19:11-13,21**)
 - o Appropriate, not excessive or too light (**Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21**)
 - o Equal protection under the law (Aliens living in the land)(**Lev 24:22; Num 9:14; 15:16**)
- b. Types of punishment dispensed in the O.T.
 - o Capital punishment (See Session #22 **Capital Punishment; Handout: Death Penalty Under the Mosaic Law**)
 - o Restitution; payment to the victim or his family (**Ex 22:9**)
 - o Corporeal punishment?
 - o Banishment (exiling)?
- c. Basic judicial principles found in the Bible include:
 - o Standard of proof for conviction of a crime (two or more witnesses)(**Deut 19:15**)
 - o Due process to resolve guilt or innocence (See Session #31; **Handout: Judicial Principles from the Book of Proverbs**)
 - o Punishing the false witness with the punishment they sought against the innocent party (**Deut 19:18-19**)
 - o Establishing responsibility when accidents due to carelessness occur (**Deut 22:8; parapet**)
 - o Punishing the guilty person, not others (e.g. father, son) (**Deut 24:16**)
 - o Right of appeal: Difficult cases brought before higher authority (**Ex 18:13-27**)
- d. Fundamentally, the Bible shows:
 - o Justice is to be impartially and equally applied (not selectively)
 - o Preferential treatment (unequal protection under the law) is not godly, and is unjust
 - o God judges the heart, man can only judge man's actions (**Jer 17:9**)
- e. Virtually all crime is motivated by "hate" in one form or another, and in effect is already banned
 - o Base level - hatred towards God by breaking His commandments
 - o Personal level -hatred (or indifference) towards the one the crime (sin) is committed against

- o Though an argument can be made that all crimes are motivated by hate, the issue is equal protection under the law, not the motivation of the perpetrator
 - o All laws should be enforced without regard to subjective and irrelevant factors
- f. For further study see **Session #8: The Role of the Law**

4. Major Changes the last 100 Years have Fundamentally Altered how Justice is Viewed & Implemented - Demonstrating a Withdrawal from the Nation's Biblical Foundation

- a. The growth of humanism, evolution, and relativism has removed belief there are "truths" from God that don't change (natural and revealed law)
 - o With no absolute, societal changes drive understanding of law and justice
 - o Man is believed to be basically good, therefore others (people, environment, lack of education) are the source of his problems, not his own sinful nature
 - o Immorality escalates as moral standards are removed from the laws (adultery, sodomy, pornography, etc.)
 - o Laws become agents of social engineering instead of meeting clear standards of justice
- b. The Supreme Court has begun legislation of new "rights" never intended in the Constitution
 - o Court legislative activism permeates the Supreme Court vice Congress being the only legislative arm of national government
 - o View that the Constitution is a living document that needs to be re-interpreted in light of new social issues and conditions and "truths" ("Truth,...is the majority vote of that nation that could lick all others" - Oliver Wendell Holmes (Supreme Court Justice 1902-1932))
 - o "...the Constitution is what the judges say it is" (1907)(Charles Evans Hughes - later a Supreme Court Justice)
- c. Law student training now occurs from a humanistic worldview foundation (*ref (d)*)
 - o No transcendent, personal God
 - o Both the world and man result from evolutionary forces
 - o Societal institutions (family, civil law) have no theistic origins
 - o Theistically ordained absolute standards don't exist for guidance of individuals or institutions
 - o The Bible is false and of no use as a source of guidance for man in his attempt to progress
 - o Man's self effort is the primary, if not sole, tool available to him in his attempt to progress
- d. Bottom lines:
 - o What constitutes justice is constantly changing
 - o What constitutes "evil" that must be controlled (punished and discouraged) is now constantly changing and being redefined
 - o Biblical standards of morality and justice are becoming irrelevant
 - o What is the result of these developments: See below!

5. Major Flaws will be Created in our Judicial System Which will Pervert Justice (The Triumph of Political Correctness over Godly Morality & Justice)

- a. Fundamentally, hate crimes legislation increases punishment of those individuals that can be shown to be motivated by "hate" towards specific categories of individuals or groups
 - o Evidence in a criminal case substantiates whether the individual committed the crime or not
 - o In Hate Crimes, evidence of prejudice, bias, unloving, intolerant attitudes could be used to allow punishing the individual even harsher than the crime would normally warrant
 - o Thoughts and motives are being punished instead of the actual criminal act
- b. This is primarily a victim's discrimination law - certain victims will have less protection than others (in effect, crimes against them are not as serious)
 - o Corruption of our fundamental legal system: equal protection under the law
 - o Discrimination against victims through a hierarchy of protected categories
- c. Hate crimes obviously pander to the "politically correct" thinking to win the approval and support of targeted groups. This could change overnight as new special interest groups emerge
- d. Hate crime laws can and will eventually infringe upon free speech since thoughts rather than the actions themselves will determine the severity of the punishment

- e. The most powerful and vocal group espousing hate crime legislation is the gay lobby - this would elevate crimes against gays to the same status as civil rights issues involving characteristics that cannot be changed (race; national origin; sex; disability; age) or are protected by the First Amendment (beliefs). But sexual orientation is a decision one makes, not an inbred characteristic
- f. Conservative Christians speaking against homosexuality (for example) could be subject to hate crime prosecution
- g. Double jeopardy issues are created as a State prosecutes the criminal act and the Federal government can prosecute the crime as a hate crime. In addition, it creates a strong Federal presence in fundamentally State issues, imposing its will upon the entire nation
- h. Another root issue: "Tolerance" traditionally meant respecting and accepting someone without necessarily accepting their beliefs or practices. The new climate of "Tolerance" means acceptance of someone's beliefs or practices as equally valid to our own
- i. Bottom lines:
 - o Hate crimes constitute legal discrimination against selected victims because of their religious beliefs, race, or any other factor specifically excluded
 - o Violence towards someone is not less offensive if it targets someone at random
 - o Provides greater punishment to perpetrators based upon their motivation, or beliefs
 - o Provides greater protection for specific classes of people over and above others
 - o The pre-cursor to Hate Crimes will be Hate Speech!
 - o Laws set the standard to judge actions, they should not be enforced with regard to subjective and irrelevant factors

James B. Jacobs (law professor at NY University); "Hate Crimes: Criminal Law and Identity Politics"
Oxford University Press, 1998:

"When four subway riders were slashed within 24 hours a few days ago, no underground regular could avoid a shudder. Police assurances that subway assaults have been declining were good to hear, but they did not undo the trauma...Here is the question: When the attackers are brought to justice, should they not be punished twice, once for harming their immediate victim and again for traumatizing two million people who ride subways every day? In a sense they were victims, too. We all know this reasoning is unlikely to carry much weight in the Criminal Courts Building"

6. There are very Significant Implications that Naturally flow from a Hate Crime Mentality

- a. Review: Fundamental approach initially was to:
 - o Provide Federal law protection beyond the State to allow resources (greater) to be applied to supplement State resources if needed
 - o Provide Federal prosecution option should there be a "miscarriage" of justice at the State level (O.J. Simpson example?). Then:
 - o Civil rights issues (race based); feminist issues (equal pay for equal work); and discrimination in general became natural Federal issues to pursue. Now:
 - o Federal imposition has increased dramatically, and covers many "hot political issues" currently (abortion clinics; sexual orientation; etc.) and will continue
- b. Hate Crime acceptance allows Federal and State "social engineering" legislation to be directed at a class of people to win major minority class support
- c. Once accepted as a tenant of law that some crimes are worse because of the motivation and targeted group then the following is almost inevitable:
 - o Tolerance will be taught in the schools (already doing this in many cases) for alternative lifestyles, morals, views of right and wrong - and anyone disagreeing will be "intolerant"
 - o Mandatory training and indoctrination will follow
 - o "Hate Prevention Training" to teachers and faculty
 - o "Hate Prevention Training" to all students
 - o Partnerships between schools, community organizations and law enforcement agencies to gain insight into the home life of students

- o Development and implementation of a “Hate Prevention Policy” for a school, with consequences for incidents (harmful words or actions) that are motivated by bias, prejudice or hate
- o Implementation of a range of corrective actions that will be taken against anyone that violates the Hate Prevention Policy; this can be independent of any law being broken (words, beliefs expressed, etc.)
- o Accumulation of information on incidents on each student to be used to target specific programs, policies and actions however the school decides
- o Awareness training of alternative groups through instruction and/or group/team projects to increase sensitivity and acceptance (e.g. sexual orientation)
- o Free speech and expression of sincerely held beliefs will become unlawful
- o All opposition to depraved sinful acts that are not illegal will be outlawed

Example: Host Katie Couric on the Today Show questioned whether the murder of Matthew Sheppard was in part caused by speech from religious organizations that believe homosexuals can change through the power of Christ

Example: The Board of Supervisors for the city and county of San Francisco publicly stated: “It is not an exaggeration to say that there is a direct correlation between these acts of discrimination, such as when gays and lesbians are called sinful and when major religious organizations say they can change if they tried, and the horrible crimes committed against gays and lesbians”

- d. Hate categories will continue to expand and feed each other:
- o Hate Crimes
 - o In general, legislation addressing violence against specific “targeted” groups primarily because of the group characteristic
 - o Greater levels of punishment given when overall results do not change people’s attitudes
 - o Hate Groups will specifically become targeted (well known organizations that openly discriminate against other groups)
 - o Ku Klux Klan
 - o Neo-Nazi
 - o Christian Identity Groups (unspecified - but implicates: Focus on the Family; FRC; CWA; Christian Coalition; etc.)
 - o Used as one of many criteria to judge whether an event was a Hate Crime
 - o Hate Language will become targeted
 - o Hate group web sites; advertisements; pamphlets; verbal abuse
 - o “Truth in Love campaign” - 15 pro-family groups sponsored - viewed by some as hate language
 - o Eventually, speaking out against abortion or homosexuality will be considered hate
 - o **Billboard: Hate speech harms our gay children**
 - o Ultimately, free speech safeguards will be removed - witnessing (sharing the gospel) will be next!

7. We can have Significant Impact upon the Laws in this Land. The Question is: do We Want to, and how do We do it? (Excerpts from Session #8: Role of the Law)

- a. First, we must become knowledgeable of God's laws and how they apply to our society (**Prov 29:18***)
 - o Train our children to apply Biblical principles to everyday issues (**Deut 6:6-9**)
 - o Equip others when opportunity comes (**Col 4:5-6**)
 - o Speak up in public settings (but knowledgeably - do not underestimate the complexity of many issues or the venom that may come back at you)
- b. Secondly, we can become knowledgeable of the fallacies associated with Hate Crimes. See **Handout: Commonly Heard Issues about Hate Crimes**

- c. We can encourage our lawmakers to pass just laws and ensure they are enforced (**Prov 11:1; 21:15**)
 - o Monitor current legislation actions (See **Handout: Pending California Legislation Concerning "Hate Crimes"**)
 - o We can lobby for laws restoring moral standards consistent with Biblical standards of right & wrong (**Prov 14:34**)
 - o Pastor coordination approach used by some churches for both State and National issues
 - o Letter writing
 - o Signed by broad spectrum of denominational church pastors to show widespread support for a position
 - o States what they were for and what they were against
 - o Mailed to every member of the State legislature
 - o Letter personally delivered to the Judiciary Committee
 - o Organized a face-to-face meeting with legislators
 - o Pastors (leaders)
 - o Several different denominations represented
 - o Urged members of the church to call representatives and other legislators to voice their opinion (e-mail and letters also)
 - o Worked with the media
 - o Generated a news release for the media and issued to them
 - o Organized a meeting and invited the media to attend
 - o Must be available for interviews
 - o Submitted an Op-Ed piece to the local newspaper
 - o We can demand laws be applied equally (rich and poor alike)(**Prov 22:22-23; 24:23-25**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied quickly (**Deut 25:1-3; Eccl 8:11**)
 - o We can demand laws be applied fairly (**Prov 16:11; 17:15; 18:5; 20:10**)
 - o We can initiate and pursue referendums to be placed on the ballot (petition drives - DOMA)
 - o We can lobby to eliminate hate crime legislation
- d. We can elect officials that understand Biblical principles, the rule of law, and the need for justice
 - o Research their previous voting records and public statements (positions)
 - o We can recall officials that do not act in an acceptable manner (local through state)
- e. We can research records of judges in dealings with criminals & understanding of the law (**Prov 28:4**)
 - o Many judges are elected and hence subject to removal
 - o Even Supreme Court Justices can be removed (Constitutionally allowed - never been used)
- f. We can write clearly & often to our elected officials letting them know of our support or concern over pending legislation ("Committee on Moral Concerns" based in Sacramento)(**Prov 11:14**)
- g. We can consider support of those Christ honoring organizations that are attempting to defend our religious liberties in this country ("American Center for Law and Justice"; "Alliance Defense Fund"; "The Rutherford Institute; etc.)
- h. Remember that legislating laws of conscience cannot be done (hate crimes try to do this and fail), laws governing actions and speech can be!
 - o Actions (murder, rape, theft, etc.)
 - o Speech (libel, false testimony, false advertising, vulgarities (??))
 - o Conscience (coveting (stalking can fall into this category), idolatry, blasphemous beliefs, etc.)
 - o Old "Blue Laws" attempted to legislate actions on Sunday, and thus affect thoughts, but the heart cannot be legislated
 - o If the standard is set to the lowest debased level, then no one will think they're doing anything wrong (or sinful)
 - o Paul says in **Rom 7:7-12** that he would not have known what sin was except through the law. The principle applies to people in general, when they become aware that something is illegal - they will be more cautious about it (in general)
- i. Remember - justice may or may not prevail in this life, but ultimately, God's justice will prevail:
 - o Those whose sins have been paid by the blood of Christ will obtain eternal life (**Eph 2:8-10**)
 - o Those who remain in their sin and rebellion will receive their reward - eternal damnation

- j. Justice, if executed properly, provides a way to point men to the final judgment and their need for salvation (Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 3:24)
- k. Bottom Line: Study God's word & His law - the more we do, the more we see it applying to this nation

References:

- a. "Legislating Morality - Is it Wise? Is it Legal? Is it Possible?" Norman Geisler & Frank Turek; 1998
- b. "Understanding the Times - The Religious Worldviews of Our Day and the Search for Truth" David A. Noebel; 1994
- c. "Questions & Answers About 'Hate Crimes'"; Coral Ridge Ministries Fact Sheet; 1999
- d. Armstrong, "The Flight from America's Foundations: A Panoramic Perspective on American Law"
- e. American Psychological Association; 1998; "Hate Crimes Today: An Age-Old Foe In Modern Dress" "www.apa.org/pubinfo"
- f. <http://caag.state.ca.us/cjsc/hatecrim.htm/linkmes>
- g. Some material gathered from "Traditional Values Coalition" ("www.traditionalvalues.org") and the on line issue of the "National Liberty Journal"
- h. "Hate Crimes," a FASTFACTS data sheet from the Center for Reclaiming America, an outreach of Coral Ridge Ministries ("www.reclaimamerica.org")

Additional Notes:

- o Jerry Falwell cannot broadcast the same Old Time Gospel Hour messages in Canada that he does in the U.S. He must edit out all Biblical references to homosexuality
- o A Canadian citizen was fined over \$6,000 for buying an ad in his local newspaper where he quoted Leviticus 18:22, stating that homosexuality is a sin. A Canadian city mayor was found to violate a human rights ordinance when she refused to declare a "gay day."
- o The city and county of San Francisco passed a resolution stating that homosexuals cannot change and further stated that there is a "marked increase in anti-gay violence which coincides with defamatory and erroneous campaigns against gays and lesbians."
- o A complaint was filed in a Dutch court against Pope John Paul II for his statement that "homosexual acts are contrary to the laws of nature." The complaint was dropped when the court ruled the Pope's status as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican State afforded him immunity from prosecution. What about priests?
- o "It is strategically advantageous to be recognized as disadvantaged and victimized...the greater a group's victimization, the stronger its moral claim on the rest of society" - James Jacobs and Kimberly Potter, "Hate Crimes: Criminal Law & Identity Politics" (Oxford University Press, 1998)
- o "In any campaign to win over the public, gays must be portrayed as victims in need of protection so that straights will be inclined by reflex to adopt the role of protector...Gays should be portrayed as victims of prejudice" - Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, Ph.D., "After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90's" (New York, NY; Doubleday, 1989)
- o Bumper sticker: "*I hate intolerant people*"
- o Scriptural examples of what would be considered "Hate Crimes"?
 - o Any Biblical passage addressing homosexuality as a sinful act (Lev ; Rom 1:24-32; etc.) (This has already been demonstrated in Canada, and is being implemented in Holland)
 - o "One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy glutton.' This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Example of ethnic vices? (Titus 1:12-13)

Session #37: Multi-Culturalism (Detailed Notes)

*"...for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"
(Gal 3:27-28)*

Purpose of this Session: To characterize the implications of the multi-cultural movement to the Biblically based, Christian culture that was the foundation of this nation. Specifically:

- o What is the multi-cultural movement?
- o What are the implications of multi-culturalism?
- o What principles from the Bible are applicable to this issue?
- o What should we as believers be careful of in this development?
- o What, if anything, should be do?

Question: Are all those that oppose multi-culturalism racist? Are they Bigoted?

Question: Are we becoming Balkanized? Or just colonized?

I. Background: The development of a Multi-Culturalist environment in this nation stretches over several centuries, with increasing influence most recently

- o For a treatment of Illegal Aliens and related information on immigration issues recently, see **Session #34: Illegal Aliens**
- o Definitions:
 - Culture**: "the ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc. of a people or group, that are transferred, communicated, or passed along, as in or to succeeding generations; b) such ideas, customs, etc. of a particular people or group in a particular period; civilization; c) the particular people or group having such ideas, customs, etc."
 - Practical Manifestation**: Languages; arts; cultural mores; religions; deities; clothes; worldview; historical heroes; societal expectations; music; holidays; etc.
- o Cultural Pride Awareness as exercised and encouraged in the public and private domain can include study and/or celebration of:
 - o Race (other than white)
 - o Holidays (other than Christian traditional - Easter, Christmas, All-Saints Day)
 - o Diversity (not oneness under the authority and rule of Jesus)
 - o Perverse sexual behavior - homosexuality (not heterosexuality)
 - o Religions (other than Christianity)
 - o Women (not men)
 - o Indigenous cultures and races (not new ones)
 - o Languages (other than English)
 - o Cultures (other than European)
 - o Slogans and concepts advertised: Mosaic Ethnicity; Diversity; "Diversity is our Strength"
- o A quick historical perspective
 - o See **Handout: United States Immigration Patterns**
 - o See **Handout: United States Limitations on Immigration**
- o Does the national motto: "*e pluribus unum*": out of many – unity, still describe our nation?
- o Two dominant themes seem to under-gird much of multi-cultural policy formulation:
 - o That we must be neutral and tolerant of all aspects of all human cultures (no one culture is superior over others)
 - o White, European, Christian heritage is inherently the source of all current societal and global problems (by inference, inherently evil)
- o Must look at this issue, like all others, from a Christian worldview perspective

2. Biblically, Individuals, the Church, and the Government each have their Responsibilities as concerns Aliens (or alien influences) in the land

- a. How did this start? God originally created the existence of different language (ethnic) groups (**Gen 11:1-9**)
 - o The fall of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages resulted in the scattering of people over the face of the earth
 - o Nations grew up separately, identifying themselves separately from all others
 - o Even to this day language is a large barrier between different groups, keeping them separate
 - o Even though there are different "races" of man, they all have the same ancestry (**Acts 17:26**)
 - o Nations separated from each other develop different standards, customs, and cultures, increasing the distance between them and other nations
 - o Would different cultures and languages have occurred if God had not confused languages at the tower of Babel?
- b. In O.T. Israel, God provided for the aliens amongst them
 - o The Lord loves the alien, shows mercy to them (**Deut 10:17-19**), and commanded the Israelites to do the same
 - o Aliens (rabble) left Egypt with the fleeing Israelites (**Ex 12:37-38**)
 - o Mercy was shown to them
 - o They were not excluded from their midst, even though the Jew was not to intermarry
 - o Though they became an instigator of grumbling amongst the Jews that resulted in judgment (**Num 11:4-34**), they were not completely destroyed
 - o They were not to be mistreated or oppressed since the Jews knew what it was like to be oppressed (**Ex 22:21; 23:9; Jer 7:6**)
 - o Aliens living amongst the Jews were to be treated as one of the native-born (**Num 15:15**)
 - o They were to be loved as themselves (**Lev 19:34**)
 - o They (aliens and temporary residents) were to be helped if poor or unable to support themselves (**Lev 25:35**)
 - o Cities of Refuge were intended to protect the innocent Jew as well as the alien in their midst (**Num 35:15**)
 - o They were not to be denied justice (**Deut 27:19**)
 - o If an alien sinned defiantly, or blasphemed the Lord, like a Jew he was to be cut off from his people (**Num 15:30-31**)
 - o Aliens were to be instructed in God's law, learn from it, be obedient to it (**Deut 31:12**)
 - o Aliens could:
 - o Participate in the Passover, but only in accordance with its rules and regulations - they were to be followed in the same manner as the Jews (they did not have to participate, however)(**Num 10:14**)
 - o Make an offering by fire before the Lord - but it must be done exactly the way the Israelites did (**Num 15:13-16**)
 - o Be covered by the offerings made to cover unintentional sins (**Num 15:26**)
 - o Be included in the ordinance relating to the water of cleansing (**Num 19:10**)
 - o Though aliens had tremendous privileges & freedoms, they were separate (not to intermarry)
 - o It is not unreasonable to assume aliens that lived amongst the Jews followed different customs and kept their cultural heritage as much as possible
 - o **Bottom line principles (which apply to us?). Given there will always be aliens in our midst:**
 - o Aliens are to be treated the same as native born (compassion, mercy, love)
 - o Aliens are to be taught our ways as they reflect God's pattern of righteousness
 - o Aliens are to be obedient to the same laws as native born (no preferential treatment, ensure equal access and application of justice)
 - o They are to conform to us and we're not to embrace their ways if they run counter to God's desires and commands
 - o When aliens wooed the nation of Israel to other gods and were seducing them into immorality - they were punished severely (**Num 25:1-18**)
 - o We have great freedom in Christ in many areas, including cultural issues, as long as in expressing our freedom we do not sin (**Gal 5:13**)

c. Government is responsible:

- o To punish the evil doer (**Rom 13:4; 1 Peter 2:13-17**)
 - o Whether native or foreign-born, evil is to be restrained, and if need be - punished
 - o Those influences that would tend to disrupt peace internally are to be discouraged
 - o Creation of entire subcultures that have different laws (Quebec example)
 - o Large groups that are separate in language and custom (nation forming or in effect colonizing)(Eubonics? Southern accent?)
 - o Not allow a separate legal, economic and political system to exist internally
 - o In effect: prevent Balkanization and ensure a "melting pot" - but with conformance to standards consistent with God's truths and foundational principles the nation was built upon
- o To ensure there is peace in the land (**1 Tim 2:1-2; Jer 29:4-7**)
 - o Protecting the nation from **external threats** (invasions of various kinds)
 - o Armed force and economic threats
 - o Ensure a different morality does not overwhelm our nation - one based upon pagan beliefs and practices (in reality - government is promoting pagan beliefs here)
 - o Ensuring there is no insurrection from **internal threats**
 - o Economically
 - o By being overwhelmed by an alien culture or morality
 - o Large influxes of people from non-democratic nations could endanger the American political institutions and cultural values
- o To establish criteria for entrance into the land
 - o Those that are "worthy" (hard-workers; those that won't be a drain on our resources) (See studies on Welfare/Homeless)(**encourages initiative**)
 - o Those that are in need (political asylum; medical emergencies; refugees)(**mercy**)
 - o Those that are not a threat to our existence and Christian basis (**God fearing**)
 - o Government should be supportive of immigrants that positively enhance our Christian foundation, and skeptical of those that detract from it
- o To promote to the world the principles this nation was founded on (Christian truths/beliefs)
 - o Be a light to other nations and foreigners in our midst (**Deut 4:5-8**)
- o **Bottom line principles (my opinion):**
 - o Government is to discourage those influences that run counter to our Christian moral, judicial and governmental principles
 - o Government is not to neglect those legal, political, and cultural distinctives that are consistent with our Christian heritage
 - o Government is responsible to protect its citizens from evil influences from the outside world (known felons, terrorists; ungodly moral influences; destructive cultural influences)

d. The church has an important role towards the alien culture around us:

- o We are to love even our enemy as ourselves (**Rom 12:20**)
- o We are to remember that God calls His people from among every nation, tribe, people and language (includes different cultures)(**Rev 5:19; 7:9**)
- o We are to evangelize those with a different culture bias whether they are in this nation or another one (**Matt 28:18-20**)
- o We should be very careful not to impose legalistic requirements on believers that are not specifically grounded in scripture (**Gal 5:13**)
- o Cultural norms relative to modesty should be observed as the Lord leads (set the example with a higher standard of purity)(**1 Peter 3:3-5**)
- o We are to warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with all, independent of their national backgrounds or cultural customs (**1 Thess 5:14**)
- o We are to help the worthy poor, where ever or how ever we find them (**Matt 6:1-4; 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-37; James 1:27; 2:14-17; 1 John 3:16-18**)
- o Paul was "...all things to all men.." (**1 Cor 9:19-23**), but not free from God's law (vs 21)

- e. Individual citizen responsibilities (my opinion):
 - o In our nation, we have shared responsibility of governance (elections, voting...)
 - o We are to ensure wise and effective establishment of immigration laws
 - o Consistent with those traits we want to encourage
 - o Not to destroy the Christian base in our society
 - o To keep troublemakers away (those after a free lunch or are criminal)
 - o To show compassion for those truly in need
 - o We are to ensure equal protection under the law for aliens in our midst
 - o Resist the weakening of English only requirements (wisdom issue)
 - o We are to minimize inappropriate governmental aid (welfare; AFDC; etc.) and allow local churches to meet the "true" needs (same applies to native borns)
 - o We are to call for strict enforcement of immigration laws as with all laws
 - o We are to encourage grass roots efforts in other countries to reform their nations from a Christian worldview perspective
 - o Lobby for immigration approach complementary to our heritage, and assimilate other belief systems very slowly

3. *There are a Number of Basic Flaws (Assumptions) that Permeate the Current Attitude Towards, and "Political Correctness" of Multi-Culturalism:*

- a. All cultures, their practices, religions and morality are of equal importance, value and correctness, or stated conversely:
 - o No one cultural outlook or worldview is true or superior to all others
 - o However, most world cultures view themselves as superior to all others
- b. Truth is relative, there is no absolute right or wrong – we're not to judge someone else's culture or customs
- c. What may be ethically sound (moral) in one cultural setting may be totally inappropriate in another
- d. Christianity, as a set of principles, beliefs, and practices, cannot claim any exclusivity ("judge not that you be not judged..." Matt 7:1-2)
- e. All people are basically good, noble and loving
- f. Since human beings are born basically good, social circumstances, education, upbringing, religion, friendships and the environment around us are what causes some to become racists, violent, evil etc.
- g. Exposure and appreciation for other cultures (without a moral compass) will always be enriching
- h. We must be neutral and tolerant of all aspects of all human culture
- i. All cultures in the world should be preserved, studied, and respected no matter how pagan or alien
- j. All dead, white European males (and the women who love them) are inherently evil and the source of virtually all modern societal and global problems
- k. By removing moral standards from the public school arena, the "neutrality" of secular schools is non-existent. Christians are no longer allowed to call sin, sin (goes unchecked and unchallenged)
- l. Some major results of the above: Gradual dismantling and weakening of:
 - o Christian foundation/Biblical authority
 - o Western Christian heritage
 - o Male leadership

4. *There are a Number of Societal Implications of Multi-Culturalism that are both Profound and Subtle. Some Examples:*

- a. Cultural mores and customs become equally valid - but within bounds, this may not necessarily be completely bad
 - o Many things are not critical to our faith and are permissible within God's moral will (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23)
 - o We have great freedom in Christ, but we are not to indulge the sinful nature (Gal 5:13)
 - o We are not to purposefully offend others when not necessary (Col 4:5-6)
 - o There is a significant difference between many matters of preference and those areas that are directly addressed by God's moral standard (1 Cor 9:19-23)

- b. Being a “Democratic” republic, the greater the number of those that do not share our Christian legacy or common cultural background, the greater the diminishing of its continued dominance or influence
 - o Without a shared history, religion, or cultural tradition (i.e. with cultural diversification), it is exceedingly difficult to articulate common values
 - o Where do you draw the line?
 - o Christianity becomes the “intolerant” one
- c. Tolerance for different customs or practices becomes encouraged and eventually mandated
 - o Acceptance of a culture’s interesting and non-threatening aspects can lead to greater acceptance of other aspects not highlighted (yet) - Examples: homosexual practices; abortion; Mormonism; nature worship; reincarnation; etc.
 - o Indiscriminant tolerance will lead to intolerance of views that do not accept certain practices that may be morally questionable and spiritually destructive
 - o What becomes the line between what is acceptable practice and unacceptable?
 - o What standard is the one that will be applied?
 - o Moral relativism will predominate (no moral absolutes or objective truth)
- d. Tolerance (acceptance) of things inconsistent with a Biblical worldview eventually become required
 - o Studying and appreciating other gods, false religions become the politically correct thing to do
 - o Christian standards become relative, one of many, and since “restrictive” the intolerant one
 - o Deviant sexual practices becomes a practice and choice
 - o Those that oppose “multi-culturalism” indoctrination become known as: racist, sexist, bigoted, intolerant, etc.
 - o Stressing the differences at the expense of common aspects can breed divisiveness
 - o Others?
- e. To prove the equal value (or superiority) of non-western, non-Christian cultures:
 - o Selective history begins to be taught in schools (Significant implications for home-schoolers with different curriculum when standardized testing is used to judge a students awareness and “tolerance” understanding)
 - o Major shortcomings (or downsides) are overlooked or rationalized
 - o Christianized cultures are demonized by stressing perceived or actual aberrant actions (Christopher Columbus example)
 - o The rationale to justify this approach is that the dominant culture does not have to be taught since it is already known and understood (false assumption since each generation needs to be taught anew)
- f. With a perceived equality of beliefs and value systems, there is a natural watering down of fundamental Christian beliefs and influence in a culture
 - o Thesis (Biblical truths) - Anti-thesis (non-Christian beliefs and practices) – Synthesis (melding)
 - o The World Council of Churches “big tent” approach attempts to minimize any differences in belief systems, particularly those that claim there is only “one way”
 - o Eventual globalization issues begin to take effect to force perceived “intolerant” or “absolute” views to be condemned
- g. Ultimately, the replacement of the Bible as the “moral authority” in this nation, which already has had profound implications on:

o Abortion	o Gay rights	o Affirmative action
o Public school education	o Authority of parents	o Child care
o The arts	o Who our leaders are	o Role of government
o Divorce	o Euthanasia	o Other?
- h. Some implications for this Country - Comes down to our view of this country
 - o If this nation reflects God’s truths - and is a laboratory to demonstrate Biblical wisdom, truth, and principles then anything that detracts from that should be objectively addressed and discouraged
 - o If Christian’s maintain a hands off approach to these national issues, then the environment will naturally become more hostile to our beliefs and involvement at any level

5. Some Final Practical Considerations that Should be Openly Discussed and Wrestled with

- a. Wisdom issues
 - o What is really significant to be concerned about – those areas that cannot be compromised?
 - o What is the logical outcome of the current trend?
 - o When does celebration of different cultures, and the encouragement of retaining their distinctives cross the line of what is Biblically acceptable?
 - o Cultural variation amongst people groups with a shared Christian background is one thing, cultural variation between people groups with a radically different religious and value system is quite another
 - o How to critically assess the continual transforming of society and culture (where great tolerance can be allowed) while Biblical standards are maintained and encouraged (tight tolerance)
- b. Moral issues
 - o On non-moral aspects (skin color, language, food, music, hair styles), exposure and understanding can be beneficial (**1 Cor 9:19-23**)
 - o On moral issues where the Bible is clear (adultery, homosexuality, lying, theft) there is no room for tolerance
 - o On ultimate issues (basis for salvation, deity of Christ alone on earth, one true God, Bible the one true source of God's revelation in writing) there is no room for tolerance
- c. Legal issues
 - o The most "intolerant" view (Christianity) will be suppressed as much as possible
 - o Jesus: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (**John 14:6**)
 - o Since no view is correct above all others, & all are valid, then Jesus must be a liar since His way is the only way to the Father!
 - o Non-Christian worldviews (cultural approaches to ethnicity and race) will always reflect a non-Christians hatred of the true God
- d. Outreach issues
 - o Missionaries must be sensitive to the culture they are sent into
 - o Not to unnecessarily offend others
 - o Set a high standard for self, but not judge unrighteously
 - o Be careful with converts to ground any changes in cultural practices with clear Biblical truth
 - o Evangelizing in our own country to pockets of sub-cultures separate from the mainstream
 - o Christ knows no bounds of culture; Paul became all things to all men (**1 Cor 9:19-23**)
 - o The gospel transcends every culture, nation, language, tribe, etc. (**Rev 5:9-10**)
 - o We are all one in Christ (**Gal 3:28**)
 - o Cultural distinctives are not necessarily removed
 - o Moral implications remain the same
- e. Political issues
 - o Political advantage can be gained by pandering to ethnically and culturally separate groups, thus continuing to perpetuate the distinctives and accommodating faiths and practices alien to our
 - o No ethnic group should establish a recognized political entity. Although there is nothing that would prevent the formation of a Latino-American political party, generally the two party system, with citizens voting as individuals, has served the entire country well
- f. Some practical issues
 - o Training and educating our children on the history of this nation and the Biblical basis under which it was built is a critical foundation
 - o Study of other cultures is extremely important for a number of reasons:
 - o Better appreciation for our own
 - o Better understanding when encountering them for the cause of Christ
 - o It can force us to consider whether aspects of our own culture are Biblical or not
 - o Push for a correct manner of studying other cultures:
 - o Be well grounded in our own first (Israel, Egypt, Greece, Rome, European)

- o Study other cultures with a healthy perspective of seeing the difference between cultural variation (which can be educational and energizing) and those areas that Biblical teaching does not allow to vary (allows challenging of our Christianity in application)
- o Understanding of other cultures allows us to better understand the application opportunities of Christianity (Biblical truths) in a manner that is meaningful to that people
- o As a nation, we are like **1 Cor 10** (different gifts, but one body), but be aware:
 - o Does something promote divisiveness?
 - o Does something promote racism?
 - o Does something contradict the moral foundation as given in the Bible?
- o Immigration laws have a tremendous impact upon the future of this nation
 - o Most immigrants are more conservative and family oriented than native borns (but generally don't vote)
 - o The birth rate among immigrants tends to be significantly higher than native born
 - o Should immigration be slowed to allow a higher rate of assimilation into our culture?
 - o Almost all immigrants came from Europe and many English speaking countries prior to the end of the 20th Century, it has shifted to Latin America and Asia origins currently
 - o The influx was stopped for a period to permit assimilation into the dominant American culture
 - o Competing factions exist in the U.S. representing from an "Open Borders" approach to drastically curtailing all immigration to protect jobs, the economy, etc.
- g. One minority view:
 - o "...the cultural problems currently being faced by America and the world are emanating from Western culture, with its moral collapse and its postmodern relativism. A jolt of influence from traditional cultures would do us good." (Gene Edward Veith; *World Magazine*; "Immigrants can be a good influence"; 4 April, 1998)
- h. Christian activist possibilities
 - o Lobbying for restricted immigration of those cultures that are destructive to our Christian foundation. Limited numbers allows a greater opportunity to assimilate and evangelize
 - o Encouraging immigration from those areas that share a common Christian legacy with our own
 - o Extend mercy to those that are persecuted to demonstrate the practical mercy we know through Christ
 - o Equip Christians to attend every Naturalization event and evangelize the lost, or at least extend an invitation to church or fellowship groups
 - o Establish outreach programs to the Muslim community
 - o Others?
- i. Bottom lines:
 - o Cultural liberty within a Biblical framework can be energizing and enriching
 - o The gospel of Jesus Christ transcends all cultural barriers

References:

- (1) "Good and Bad Multi-Culturalism - the Myth of Neutrality" by Rob & Cyndy Shearer (www.greenleafpress.com)
- (2) "Immigration to the United States" by Philip Martin & Elizabeth Midgley; *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 54, No. 2, June 1999
- (3) "One From Many: U.S. Immigration Patterns and Ethnic Composition", drawn from "Portrait of the USA", a publication of the United States Information Agency, September 1997

Session #38: Gun Control (Detailed Notes)

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:10-12)

Purpose of this Session: To address from a Biblical perspective one of the hot topics in our nation - how much control should be placed on guns?

- o Biblically, can we defend ourselves?
- o What is the real issue?
- o What is the historical understanding of freedom to bear arms?
- o What do statistics tell us about this issue?
- o Is there a balanced approach we can take?

1. Introduction: What is the issue?

Q: Is your idea of gun control - using two hands?

Q: Who here has ever fired a handgun? How about a rifle? A Bee-Bee gun?

Q: Who believes there should be absolutely no control on what guns a person owns?

Q: Has anyone ever seen a gun drawn with the potential for violence?

Note: Kennesaw, Georgia (part of metro Atlanta) passed a law in 1982 requiring heads of households to own at least one firearm with ammunition. Following the passage, crime rate dropped 89% (compared to 10% statewide). Size: 1998 (14,493); 1990 (8,936). Lowest crime rate of any town its size in the nation. Exceptions allowed: conscientious objectors; mentally and physically disabled, paupers, convicted felons...

- a. Many Christians believe it is a sin to own or use weapons (handguns and the like)
- b. The high level of violent crime in this nation shows that no-one is immune from violence
- c. Statistics concerning gun usage is confusing at best
- d. This is an emotional topic for many because of the perception children are accidentally killing children
- e. Government limitation of our freedoms in this nation is becoming more and more common, this is one more area that is viewed by many as intrusive
- f. If government succeeds in drastically limiting a law abiding citizens ability to own firearms then who will be able to counter illegal weapon usage?
- g. The Bible has been used to support gun control as well as the use of guns - which is right?
- h. See Handout: Selected Litany of Questions Surrounding the Gun Control Debate

2. Biblically, weapons are a common part of scriptural accounts, and are never addressed apart from the person or the use of them

- a. Are handguns, or weaponry in general, intrinsically evil?
 - o Scripture never condemns weapons as evil by themselves, they are things only!
 - o God never bans weapons in scripture - but He does condemn the evildoer who uses weapons for sinful purposes (Cain and Abel; **Gen 4**, God banished the murderer, not the weapon)
 - o Though weapons are not intrinsically evil, the heart that uses them can be!
 - o Weapons are mentioned many times in the O.T. and N.T. for example:
 - o Swords (numerous, over 400 times: **John 18:11**; **Matt 26:52**)
 - o Stones (numerous: **Ex 19:13**; **Num 14:10**)
 - o Club (**Matt 26:55** and other gospel accounts)
 - o Tent peg and hammer (Jael killing Sisera, Cannanite general)(**Judges 4:17-21**)
 - o Sling and stone (David and Goliath)(**1 Sam 17:50**)

- o Spears (Saul attacking David)(1 Sam 19:10; John 19:34)
- o Firebrands (a piece of burning wood)(Prov 26:18)
- o Bows and arrows (Gen 27:3; 1 Sam 20:20)
- o Daggers (2 Sam 2:16)
- o Lions (Dan 6:1-24)
- o Fire (furnace)(Dan 3:16-27)
- o Jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15-17)
- o Poison (Mark 16:18)
- o Hanging (Gen 40:22; Est 2:23; 5:14)
- o Oxbow (Judges 3:31)
- o Saw (Heb 11:37)
- o Weapons were a necessary accessory for war, and protection (self-defense)
- o Like the poor, violent men (and weapons) will always be with us in this life
- b. Weapons are used in scripture to illustrate great spiritual truths:
 - o The word of God is referred to as the sword of the Spirit (Isa 11:4; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 1:16; 2:12,16)
 - o God is a defender of the vulnerable - using a "sword" to punish those that take advantage of widows and orphans (Ex 22:22-24)
 - o God is figuratively referred to as using weapons to vanquish His enemies (2 Sam 22:15; Psalm 7:10-13; 18:13-14; 21:11-12; 77:16-17; 144:5-6)
 - o Direct analogue of a soldier's weapons (sword) with the sword of the Spirit - the word of God (Eph 6:17)
 - o The word of God is likened to a sharp two-edged sword, dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, judging the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb 4:12)
 - o The glorious, risen Christ is seen with a sharp double-edged sword coming out of His mouth (Rev 1:16), showing clear and decisive judgment
 - o The "weapons" we fight with have divine power (2 Cor 10:4), and are not part of this world
 - o Is God a pacifist? (Gen 3:24; Num 22:23; Deut 32:39; Psalm 45:3; Rev 2:12)
- c. Weapons are a sign of the power over life
 - o Exercising justice in this world - governmental authority (Gen 9:6; Rom 13:4)
 - o Government has a proper role in having and using weapons to punish the evil doer
 - o When Peter shared the gospel with the Centurion (Acts 10:1-23) he did not require as a condition of conversion the laying down of his weapons (Roman law was to be enforced)
- d. The weapons of the world are nothing to us who call upon the name of the Lord (1 Sam 17:45)
 - o We have the full armor of God to protect us (Eph 6:10-18)
 - o We are not to fear those that can kill the body (Luke 12:4-5)
 - o The Lord fights our battles against the arm of man (2 Chron 32:8)
 - o David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (Haggai 2:20-22)
 - o Lions' mouths have been closed (Dan 6:1-28)
 - o Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the fiery furnace (Dan 3:16-18) *"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up"*
 - o Though we may die at the hands of armed men, the battle has been won (Heb 11:31-40)

3. Do we have a Biblical right to defend ourselves by lethal means?

- a. Biblically, there are at least four categories of reactions towards the violent evil-doer:
 - o The Lord will avenge all wrongs ultimately, at the judgment and life hereafter, including violent sin (Rom 12:19). He may also choose to punish violent acts in this life

- o **The magistrate**, in this life, has the authority to punish the evil doer and exercise justice (avenge the wrong done to a citizen)(**Rom 13:4**)
 - o Up to and including the taking of the evil doer's life
 - o Establishing those conditions and sins that merit the execution of the evil doer
 - o **The believer**, in this life, has the right of self-defense, but not of personal vengeance towards the evil-doer (**Ex 20:13; Rom 12:19**)
 - o **Just warfare** where deadly force is used to conquer evil
 - o Conquering the Promised Land
 - o David and Goliath (**1 Sam 17**)
 - o Abram to rescue Lot's family from the four kings (**Gen 14:8-16**)
- b. When our lives (or our families) are known to be at risk?
- o The sixth commandment "You shall not murder" (**Ex 20:13**)
 - o Implies a right to defend ourselves against those attempting to kill us (prevent the sin from occurring)
 - o This commandment suggests a responsibility to oppose those whose who forcefully intend to break this commandment
 - o Does not imply that killing is never allowed - see the O.T. punishments for a number of sins! We are not to murder (the taking of innocent life)
 - o Nehemiah, in rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem had the men armed to provide protection
 - o First Nehemiah sought the Lord's will and protection, then took common sense precautions to protect themselves ("But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat" **Neh 4:9**)
 - o "...half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor" (**Neh 4:16**)
 - o "Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked" (**Neh 4:17-18**)
 - o Nehemiah was a godly man, used mightily by the Lord, and also took measures to protect the people vice trusting solely in the Lord to protect (see **Neh 4:13-14** also)
 - o The presence of weapons, implies strongly that they intended to use them if needed
 - o Also - the fact that the Jews were armed deterred the terrorists from attacking them
 - o Abram used physical force to rescue his family (Lot) from the four kings (**Gen 14:8-16**)
 - o Kidnaping was a capital offense (**Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7**)
 - o He did not appear to hesitate in doing so - it was an appropriate response
 - o He did not seek the Lord to perform a miraculous rescue
 - o He was even blessed by Melchizedek (king of Salem) for how God had delivered his enemies into Abram's hands (**Gen 14:18-20**)
 - o David destroyed the Amalekites that carried off his wives and the families of his men (**1 Sam 30:3-20**)
 - o Jesus Himself instructed His disciples "...if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one" (**Luke 22:36**)
 - o Note: "sword" = "machaira" in Greek, meaning "fighting weapon", for self defense. The equivalent for today is a handgun!
 - o This instruction is in direct contrast to the first time Jesus sent out His disciples (**Matt 10:1-42**). Trust in God is the first one, defend themselves against the world is the second one
 - o This was not intended to encourage forcefully attacking someone (would Christ have instructed his disciples today to carry handguns?)
 - o The right to defend oneself (and ones family) in a godly manner was understood, and in the hostile environment the gospel was going into, ones safety was not assured
 - o Living by the sword, or defeating God's clear purpose by violence, however, was condemned by Christ (**Luke 22:49-51; Matt 26:51-52**)

- c. What about when we know of others that are in peril (**Prov 24:11-12**)?
 - o We are responsible to oppose this injustice if we have it in our power to act (**Prov 24:11-12**)
 - o Same principle is implied in **Ex 20:13**, the taking of any innocent life must be prevented
 - o The Lord is the defender of the widow and orphan up to an including killing the oppressor with the sword (**Ex 22:22-24**). God will use human instruments (armed) to accomplish this
 - o Turning the other cheek is for personal offenses, not looking the other way when someone else is in physical peril!
 - o Deadly force is obviously not the first choice unless life itself is imminently, purposely, and unjustly threatened
- d. What about the case of a thief in the middle of the night?
 - o In the New Testament, the thief analogue is used to teach us to be prepared for the Lord's return, not what to do to the thief. It also describes the thief's motivation
 - o **Luke 12:39** "...If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into" - implies locking up the home, securing it, preventing the deed from being done to begin with (**Matt 24:43**)
 - o Beware, though, a thief may be coming to do harm in order to steal "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (**John 10:10**)
 - o "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe" (**Luke 11:21**) - The implication is that a man has peace in his own home from a position of being prepared (and armed - strength)
 - o In the O.T. this specific example is treated: "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; but if it happens after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed" (**Ex 22:2-3**)
 - o Implication is that in the dark, the intent of the intruder is not known, hence lethal means may be employed if believed warranted - assume the worst is intended!
 - o Also, lethal force not justified if during daylight, when theft can be determined to be the motive (can identify the thief, to apprehend later without lethal force)
 - o Another factor is that at night it can be expected that someone is home, thus the intruder is risking a confrontation (higher threat for the occupant - motive-wise);
 - o During the day, the implication is that the thief enters when no one is around - thus safer for himself and murder not the intent
 - o The right to protect oneself & family is established - with innocence of the defender, given the right circumstances
 - o Implication that since a "thief" is mentioned, that protection of property can in some circumstances justify lethal force being used to protect it
 - o Implication of above is that the owner is to take precautions against a thief breaking in, and can defend himself up to and including lethal force under certain circumstances
- e. A well armed militia was critical in O.T. times to protect the land and families
 - o The Israelite army was a militia ready to engage the promised land - they were armed as a matter of course (**Num 1:3**)
 - o The Israelite militia was sent against the Midianites (**Num 31:1-6**)
 - o When David was evading Saul, he told his men: "Put on your swords" (**1 Sam 25:13**)
- f. Are there Biblical examples of consequences when godly men and women are unarmed?
 - o When Saul and Jonathan rose up against the Philistines (**1 Sam 13:19-22**)
 - o "Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, 'Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!' ...So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them." (See also **Judges 5:8**)
 - o The Hebrews were disarmed by the Philistines, specifically to prevent them from defending themselves
 - o Unarmed citizens cannot protect themselves from armed criminals (or government)
 - o The sword of those days is the handgun and rifles of today. The Philistines of that day exercising "sword control" would now be the government taking away our guns!

- o The example of the Lord commanding Israel men to worship at mount... and leave the women and children behind - He would protect them (references?)
- o Unless the Lord protects the house, we have no hope (**Psalm 127:1-2**)
 “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain”
 - o Weapons and might are not the source of our ultimate protection - the Lord is
 - o Watchmen standing guard implies armed protection - wisdom applied!

4. We are not to trust in weapons to bring us victory - Our ultimate trust is in the Lord (Psalm 127:1)

- a. “I do not trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame” (**Psalm 44:6-7**)
- b. “Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them - not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God” (**Hosea 1:7**)
- c. “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (**John 18:36**)
 - o We are not to spread the gospel by the use of weapons to coerce others to “faith”
 - o Physical weapons are not to be used to fight spiritual battles (**2 Cor 10:4**)
- d. Christianity was never intended (or commanded) to be spread by physical force but by the word of God
- e. As we protect our family, God may use the vehicle of a gun to accomplish this - i.e. responsible human action - but we are not to trust solely or primarily in the gun vice God

5. The Biblical foundation to reject gun ownership is weak

- a. “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (**Matt 5:38-42**)
 - o It is virtually universal that the striking of ones cheek is intended to injure one’s pride
 - o Lethal danger (the potential to loose ones life) is not in view here
 - o These are personal offenses, and Christ’s example is to not avenge, but to love our enemies
 - o O.T. “Eye for an eye” was determined in a court of law, while immediate self defense against a violent person was never prohibited
 - o Jesus was teaching His disciples to practice restraint, and not retaliate
 - o Revenge is not the prerogative of the believer, it is relegated to the state (**Rom 13:4**)
 - o Jesus Himself did not practice “turn the other cheek” when He was slapped by an official before the High Priest - He rebuked the act, and showed restraint!
 - o Paul did similarly in **Acts 23:1-3**, where he protested the injustice shown him
 - o By speaking to the crowd “you have heard it said...” he is addressing a confusion of the time, that personal revenge was endorsed, vice civil action to punish an evil doer
 - o Revenge (retaliation) was a gross sin, potentially far beyond the degree of injury originally done (**Gen 4:23-24**; “Lamech said to his wives, ‘Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times’”)
- b. “Put your sword back in it’s place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” (**Matt 26:52**); “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” (**John 18:11**)
 - o Special case of trying to thwart the explicit will of the Father for Jesus
 - o Just prior, Jesus had told the disciples (all with Him) to get a sword (for self defense)
 - o Peter was unjustly assaulting officers of the Sanhedrin that were discharging their duty to arrest a (so claimed) violator of the law
 - o Jesus’ statement applies more generally to men of a violent nature
 - o Those that live by the sword to accomplish their ends will probably die by them
 - o Those that try an accomplish their objectives with power and violence instead of the “weapons” the Lord provides to us will fail

- o Jesus did not tell Peter to get rid of his sword, but to put it in its place - it was to be used at the right time (self-defense), and not to accomplish kingdom work
- o Incidentally, Cornelius (a Centurian) was not commanded to lay down his weapons when converted by Peter (**Acts 10:1-23**)
- c. What about when soldiers asked John the Baptist what they should do to demonstrate fruit in keeping with repentance (**Luke 3:7-14**)
 - o KJV says "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages"
 - o NIV says "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely-be content with your pay"
 - o John was referring to the practice of soldiers to falsely accuse then extort money from people, not to lay down their arms
- d. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.'" (**Matt 5:43-44**)
 - o Nothing in the context speaks to life-threatening physical violence as the situation
 - o Even if persecution as used here includes risk to life, it does not exclude self-defense
- e. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil" (**Rom 12:17**)
 - o Nowhere is self-defense ever described as an evil act
 - o Care must be taken to not use more force than is necessary, or revenge could be the motivation for our actions vice self-preservation for ourselves or our family (**Rom 12:19**)
 - o **Prov 25:26** teaches us not to give way to the wicked
- f. Is owning a gun denying promises of **Rom 8:31-39** and "living in fear"? (Is it not trusting in God?)
 - o Do you not believe in owning a gun, but lock your door at night? Use seat belts?
 - o These verses address our security in Christ for our eternal life, not whether God commands His people to not bear arms for self-defense
 - o Remember the example of Nehemiah (prayer, trust and physical protection)
 - o We trust that God will provide for us, yet we work diligently (**1 Tim 5:8**)
 - o We are not to test the Lord, when He clearly gives us the freedom to take whatever means are necessary to protect our life and our family (**Matt 4:7**)

6. What should be the Christian Citizens response to Gun Control?

- a Weapons are an instrument of the magistrate to enforce laws and protect citizens by exacting punishment on the evil doer (measured, just revenge)(**Rom 13:4**)
- b. Historically, the United States has protected the rights of citizens to protect themselves with weapons from enemies local, governmental and foreign
 - o The Second Amendment to the Constitution:
 - "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed"**
 - o Tyranny from the government was specifically in view - citizens were guaranteed the right to bear arms and form into militia for their own protection
 - o The assumption is that this would be necessary if the government no longer upheld the law but abused it to the harm of the people
 - o Incidentally, there is no Constitutional right to police protection:
 - "There is no constitutional right to be protected by the state against being murdered by criminals or madmen. It is monstrous if the state fails to protect its residents against such predators but it does not violate the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, or, we suppose, any other provision of the Constitution" (note 1)(Bowers v. DeVito, U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, 686F.2d 616 (1982)**
 - o That being said, who has the weight of responsibility to protect themselves? (citizens themselves!) - guns are the "Great Equalizer"
 - o God has given us the right and responsibility to protect ourselves, and uphold the law - this includes freedom to have guns for personal use

- o Incidentally: some of the strongest advocates of the Second Amendment are Jews
 - o Strong belief they must be armed to protect themselves (mostly from governments, historically)
 - o History demonstrates the ruthlessness that governments can unleash when the populous is dis-armed (Nazi Germany)
 - o Jews view “Righteous Gentiles” that own guns as natural allies
- c. Who should have limited access to guns?
 - o Felons - those who have demonstrated they misuse weapons to injure or kill others
 - o Juveniles - just as driving a car is limited to those mature and skilled enough to handle the responsibility, so weapons should be
 - o The mentally unstable - those who are infantile in their thinking and cannot demonstrate maturity and skill in handling weapons
- d. Should only police officers have guns?
 - o There is no Constitutional right to police protection - there is no legal duty of the government to protect the average citizen (*note (1)*)
 - o The civil government in **Rom 13** is not to provide protection of citizens from criminals or prevent crimes from occurring, but to punish the evil doer
 - o Police are an extension of the government, and as such can be used to implement a tyrannical governments demands
 - o Police cannot be everywhere to prevent a crime from being committed, and can be time late after the fact, thus not acting as a deterrent
- f. What about the protection of children
 - o This is a common angle (based upon emotional appeal and logic) used to justify the infringement of many liberties we have
 - o Parents have the responsibility of protecting their own children, and if they do not, they are to suffer the punishment due for irresponsibility leading to tragedies
 - o If weapons are in a home, the parents have the responsibility to train and equip their children to handle and respect them
- g. What about trigger locks?
 - o These have been shown to be able to be circumvented by children - thus ineffective
 - o The greater the difficulty required to secure a gun, the less effective the gun will serve as a deterrent to life threatening situations
 - o Though this sounds (in theory) like a good measure to prevent accidental killings by children especially, it runs the risk of providing false assurance the child is protected from himself
- h. Are there “objective” data available to provide insight into the results of gun usage?
 - o See Handout: Selected Statistics and Facts
 - o See Handout: Excerpts from “More Guns, Less Crime - Understanding Crime and Gun-Control Laws”

7. Bottom Lines

- a. God has never outlawed weapons (Cain and Abel)
 - o God did, and does, punish the murderer/evil-doer
 - o God judges the heart, not the weapon used
 - o Weapons are not intrinsically evil, the heart of man is
- b. We do not violate God’s commands:
 - o If we use lethal force to defend ourselves from lawlessness ones trying to do us harm
 - o If we choose not to defend ourselves from lawlessness, though this would appear to at best be unwise and at worst irresponsible
 - o However, there is a responsibility to be wise in providing for, and protecting, our family (we lock the doors at night, presupposing the possibility of an intruder; we lock our cars likewise; same with seat belts)
 - o We are to be careful that in the exercise of our freedom we do not become a stumbling block to the weak (**1 Cor 8:9**)

- c. In protecting our family:
 - o Proper training and respect for weapons must be instilled in all family members at all ages
 - o Reasonable safeguards need to be implemented to keep weapons out of the reach of immature family members, just like home poisons
 - o The government has no right to remove our ability to protect ourselves from the evil-doer
- d. There is no pleasure in using weapons to defend ourselves (up to and including lethal force)
 - o For the believer, the use of weapons is for self-defense, not retribution or revenge!
 - o The magistrate has the responsibility to repay the evil done (**Rom 13:4**)
 - o Our personal exercise of self defense falls into the category of a small "just war"
 - o "It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord" (**Rom 12:19**)
 - o Vengeance is never justified for the believer (repaying evil for evil)
 - o However, self defense is not vengeance, it is stopping the commission of a horrible act of sin and preserving life
- e. We are called to live by faith, but to be wise in the outworking of our lives
 - o As believers we are to trust in God for protection, but we are still to take precautions (wisdom)
 - o In our decisions, we must not test the Lord (**Matt 4:5-6**)
 - o Christ Himself authorized his disciples to arm themselves (**Luke 22:36**)
 - o Nehemiah had his people work diligently and also arm themselves (**Neh 4:16**)
 - o By arming ourselves against potential violence, we do not demonstrate a lack of trust in God
 - o However, each should be convinced in their own mind that what they do is pleasing to the Lord and consistent with the clear teaching of scripture
- f. Be aware of gun control legislation, and voice your opinion based upon moral principles and facts
(See **Handout: Misc Information Relating to Gun Control**)

References:

1. Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, Inc. (www.jpfo.org)
2. "Self Defense and the Bible" by Rev. Anthony L. Winfield; St. Gabriel Possenti Society, Inc.; <http://www.possentisociety.com/>
3. Larry Pratt, Executive Vice-President, Gun Owners Foundation; www.gunowners.org; Jan, 1995
"What Does the Bible Say About Gun Control?"
4. Dan Peters, D.Min.; Guest Editorial The Biblical Evangelist; Volume XXIX, Number 3; May/August 1998; "Should Christians Have Guns? The Biblical Basis for the Second Amendment"
5. "Gun Control: A Realistic Assessment" by Don B. Kates Jr.; www.rkba.org/research/kates/gun-control
(61 page assessment, circa 1990)
6. Gary Kleck, *Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America* (Aldine de Gruyter, 1991) p. 149
7. *Bowers v. DeVito*, U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, 686F.2d 616 (1982)

Additional Notes:

- o Oddity: St. Gabriel Possenti Society; dedicated to promoting public awareness and recognition of Possenti, including his Vatican designation as **Patron of Handgunners**, and the study and exposition of the historical, philosophical and theological bases / *9 for the doctrine of legitimate self-defense (www.possentisociety.com)

Session #39: Stem Cells (Detailed Notes)

“Why not say - as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say - ‘Let us do evil that good may result?’ Their condemnation is deserved.” (Rom 3:8)

1. Introduction: Like so many other issues, the debate over the use of stem cells has split Christians as well as the rest of the country

- o Does this pit potential medical breakthroughs against religious and moral opposition?
- o Does the end (potentially significant breakthroughs in curing major diseases) justify the means (destroying embryos)?
- o “Is it a life? Or is it a mere piece of property to be disposed of as its master chooses?” Senator Sam Brownback, R-Kansas (Methodist)
- o Stem cells have already provided incredible medical benefits. Example - Savannah Jantsch
 - o Four year old (Bellingham, WA) had leukemia and a rare blood disorder.
 - o Early recipient of stem cells from the umbilical-cord blood of a newborn
 - o The cells built an entirely new blood-cell system, now a healthy 9 year old (ref (e))
- o If Christians are divided over the sanctity of life, and when life truly begins, what hope is there that the ungodly in corporate America, unbelieving scientists, and compromising politicians will make the right decision?

2. Historical Backdrop - How Did We Get Here?

- o 1978 - first “test tube” baby by British doctors (“*in vitro* fertilization”)
- o 45,000 births in the US alone by “*in vitro*” fertilization
 - o Doctor induces superovulation in a woman - a condition in which she matures many eggs in a single month (instead of one)
 - o The doctor extracts and fertilizes the resulting eggs with either a partner’s or donor’s sperm
 - o This process produces as many zygotes as possible
 - o The cells divide for a few days, prior to embryo transfer - with a few of the resulting embryos implanted in the woman whose eggs were fertilized
- o Left over embryo’s are stored for future use (storage life of frozen blastocytes is approx. 5 years). The final disposition of these “*in vitro*” produced embryos can be:
 - o Never used, and eventually they die
 - o Some are destroyed outright since they are not needed any longer
 - o Some are donated to science for research
 - o Some may be implanted into another woman to bring about a pregnancy
 - o Few, but some could be implanted into the original mother should the prior attempts fail, or if additional children are desired while they remain viable
- o Approximately 100,000 embryos are currently stored
- o In 1998, two separate U.S. teams successfully isolated and cultivated human stem cells obtained from embryos and fetuses
- o Since embryonic stem cells have not differentiated yet, they have the full potential to become virtually any cell type found in the body - unlike (supposedly) adult stem cells that have differentiated
- o Approximately 60% of Americans supported federal funding of stem cell research prior to Bush’s speech (note 2)

3. What exactly is a Stem Cell?

- o Stem Cell definition: A cell, capable of both indefinite proliferation and differentiation into specialized cells, that serves as a continuous source of new cells for such tissues as blood and testes
- o Stem cells are “pluripotential” in nature, with embryonic stem cells able to differentiate into all types of human tissues
- o All 210 different types of human tissues develop from embryonic stem cells

4. Back to Basics: God is the Giver of Life, and has given Special Provisions for its Protection (taken from Session #27: Abortion)

- a. God has given a sanctity (holiness; sacredness; inviolability) to human life that manifests itself in numerous ways
 - o Man is unique in all of the created order, being made in God's image (**Gen 1:27; 2:7; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9**)
 - o He possesses unique characteristics (**Psalm 8:4-6**)
 - o He has a unique dignity and worth (compared to animals **Matt 6:25-26**)
 - o He is uniquely precious to God (rest of creation was created by God's commands using the impersonal third person)(**Gen 1:26-28**)
 - o We are truly "fearfully and wonderfully made" (**Psalm 139:14**)
 - o In our finite nature we cannot fully understand all things, yet God has set eternity in our hearts to be able to marvel at God and His majestic way (**Ecc 3:11**)
"Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering" - Saint Augustine
 - o There are eternal issues associated with human life that differ from the rest of creation (There will be a new heavens and a new earth, but man is immortal)
 - o Life (though fallen) has continued on in an unbroken line since Adam and Eve (**Gen 1:28**), God has sustained it even though the wickedness of man has tried to destroy it
 - o When are we not in God's image?(though in our fallen nature, a poorer representation!)
- b. God is the ultimate giver and taker of life
 - o We existed in God's mind before one of our days came to pass (**Psalm 139:16b; Jer 1:5**)
 - o Our days on earth are numbered by the Lord (**Psalm 139:14d; Job 14:5; Heb 1:3; Ecc 8:15; Acts 17:26; Matt 6:27; Psalm 31:15**)
 - o God puts to death and brings to life (**Deut 32:39; Heb 9:27**)
- c. God has made special provision to protect human life
 - o All mankind is accountable for the taking of life (shedding of blood) (**Gen 9:5-6**)
 - o God specifically reveals His will relative to murder (**Ex 20:13**)
 - o Capital punishment reinforces the sanctity of life and the need to protect it (precious)
 - o Commands to not take life implies the right to defend life, unless the Lord intervenes
 - o You may defend your own life if innocent
 - o The magistrate is given authority to take the life of an evil doer!
- d. When does human life begin Biblically?
 - o God forms the child within the mother (**Job 10:8-12; 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Ecc 11:5**)
 - o David in **Psalm 139** uses a personal reference, implying he existed from conception, there was not a time he was an "it" vice himself ("...when I was made...")
 - o The unborn child has a sinful nature from the point of conception (**Psalm 51:5; 58:3**)
 - o This nature is inherited from Adam in an unbroken chain of humanity (**Gen 5:3**)
 - o If the child was just flesh, and not a human being from the beginning, it would not be sinful by nature until it became a "person"
 - o David is speaking to his very nature that was always sinful, as far back as his coming into existence (**Psalm 51:5**)
 - o "...I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me..." (KJV)
 - o "...I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me..." (NKJV; NAS)
 - o "...I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me..." (NIV)
 - o God uses the same word to describe the child inside and outside the mother
 - o O.T. example:
 - o "...and her children shall belong..." (**Ex 21:4**)
 - o "...strike a woman with child..." (**Ex 21:22**)
 - o N.T. examples (**Luke 1:31,41-42;44; 2:16; 18:15; Acts 7:19**)("brephos")
 - o No material difference is attributed to the baby other than location

- o God brings judgment on those who harm the unborn
 - o Ex 21:22-24
 - o An accidental miscarriage is to be fined (manslaughter?) or born safely?
 - o Premature birth with serious injury is to be punished life for life, etc.!
 - o Pregnant women were ripped open (assumed the child was killed) as a sign of severe punishment (2 Kings 8:11-12; 15:16)
 - o When was Jesus Christ not both human and God after Mary conceived?
- e. God loves & calls His servants from before birth (Isa 44:2,24; 49:1-2; Jer 1:4-5; 20:17; Gal 1:15)
- f. The Biblical case is strong that life begins at conception, not some unknown time later

5. We are called to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves

- a. We have a responsibility to defend and stand beside those that are powerless to defend themselves (Prov 31:8-9)
 - “Speak up for those who cannot speak of themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*
- b. As Christian citizens, we can legally do a great deal to speak for the unborn in this nation
 - o Voice our opinion anywhere
 - o We can lobby for righteous laws and lawmakers
 - o We can affect the “informed consent” laws of this land
 - o We can demand open and full discussion on the ethical issues associated with life and implications
- c. Don’t forget James 4:17 “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (James 2:15-17)

6. It is never justifiable to commit evil to bring about good (Rom 3:8)

- a. If we believe that life begins at conception, and
- b. If we believe life is precious, and
- c. If we believe that we are to protect life consistent with God’s will, and
- d. If the use of embryonic stem cells kills the embryo, then
- e. Embryonic stem cell research should be stopped immediately
- f. Remember, the key justification for using embryonic stem cells for research is the “hope” of “potential” medical breakthroughs in the future.

7. The President’s Speech of 9 August, 2001 did a superb job of highlighting the various competing interests

- a. Tutorial: Generic approach to any complicated issue (not necessarily in priority order). Self test, determine how many President Bush appeared to use
 - o Determine what kind of moral issue is involved and its importance (personal, public, etc.)
 - o Become as knowledgeable as possible about the specific issue, knowing that there are limits in time and resources to pursue exhaustively (Prov 19:2)
 - o Isolate the specific or related moral issues that frame the overall question (split up; Eccl 7:27)
 - o Separate fact from rhetoric and emotion as much as possible (2 Tim 2:23; Titus 3:9)
 - o Remember that advocates of a particular position are not going to necessarily represent the opposing side accurately (Prov 18:17)
 - o Find the specific and general admonitions from scripture that apply (principles, if no specific command addresses directly)(2 Tim 3:16-17; Acts 17:10-11)
 - o Seek counsel from a wide range of trusted sources and experts (Prov 15:22; 18:15; 9:20)
 - o Seek the Lord’s wisdom often (James 1:5-8; 1 Thess 5:17)
 - o Identify potential ramifications (fallout) and the influence these may have upon a decision (may or may not be determinative in a decision)(2 Cor 2:11b; Col 4:5-6)
 - o Ask some foundational questions:
 - o What would the Lord have you do?
 - o Do you have a clear conscience before the Lord with this decision?

- o Does this decision bring glory to the Lord? If so, how? (Col 3:17)
- o State clearly what your decision is, and the rationale (ground it in as many absolutes as possible)
- b. Background to President Bush's speech on Embryonic Stem Cell Research
 - o President Bush apparently opposed this type of research during the presidential campaign
 - o He sought a diversity of advisors (which are the most valid from your perspective?):
 - o Scientists o Scholars o Bio-Ethicists o Religious Leaders
 - o Doctors o Researchers o Congressmen o Cabinet Members
 - o Friends o Letters o Prayer o Reflection
 - o It was well known that President Bush did not take this decision lightly, but that he did indeed seek the counsel of many different people with different perspectives
 - o However, what about:
 - o Personal Bible reading (?) o Christian Leaders (?)
- c. Ethical issues President Bush touched on (are there others?):
 - o **Are frozen embryos human life and therefore something precious to be protected?**
 - o This is not limited to frozen embryos
 - o The issue is not whether it is human (it's not a fish), or life (it's not dead), but whether it is a person
 - o If it is life, it is precious - excellent! Role of government is to protect life
 - o **If human embryos are going to be destroyed anyway, shouldn't they be used for a greater good, for research that has the potential to save and improve other lives?**
 - o This implies future destruction of embryos and becomes a utilitarian argument
 - o False assumption is stated, since the question of destruction is the issue
 - o Life is not to be destroyed to help other life
 - o **Juxtaposition of the need to protect life in all of its phases with the prospect of saving and improving life in all its stages**
 - o At the surface level, these are compatible goals
 - o The difficulty comes when one life (deemed of lesser value) is exchanged for another life (deemed of greater value)
 - o Implication is that healthy (but unwanted) life is destroyed early on to allow improvement in an unhealthy (but wanted) life
 - o Fundamental issue is the value of a life, regardless of its condition
 - o Is it ever justified to kill one life to save another? No!
- d. Encouraging aspects
 - o He affirmed strongly that this is a moral issue, and not just a utilitarian issue (secularist view)
 - o Many advisors sought out, representing a variety of views, vested interests. By doing so he recognizes that incredible variety of aspects to the problem
 - o President Bush continues to show himself as a principled man, and one of prayer and thoughtfulness
 - o He affirmed human life as a "sacred gift" from our "creator"
 - o Affirmed that ends do not necessarily justify the means
 - o Affirmed that science may not be the solver of all problems
 - o Affirmed the potential for alternative approaches to obtaining stem cells for research that do not result from the destruction of embryonic stem cells
 - o He stated his intent to protect life and not fund the destruction of embryos
- e. Discouraging aspects
 - o Scriptural foundation (uniquely Christian) not mentioned or brought to the foreground
 - o Though the majority of the nation is at least nominally "Christian", this aspect is not directly drawn from - "religious leaders" covers a wide range of beliefs without offending any one directly. Implicitly implies equal worth and/or credibility
 - o Only addresses federal funds and research, private funding goes unabated (?)
 - o By allowing research on stem cells harvested from destroyed embryos he can be viewed as tacitly approving the original destruction of the embryos (different views on this)

- o Fallout included strong differences of opinion even amongst Christians
 - o Potential next steps relative to Congressional action to prevent private harvesting not discussed
 - o Reference to human embryos “that have at least the potential for life” confuses two key points, the argument about “potential” life only being in the fetus at some time after conception, (thus justifying destruction of embryos and early pregnancies) and the fact that the embryo is at risk of destruction or death unless means of preservation are taken - thus it “potentially” can be brought to fruition by medical means
 - o Though he will not support the destruction of further embryos for research purposes, he did not condemn the destruction of the embryos for the “60 genetically diverse stem cell lines” that already exist
 - o The inevitable argument will be made that the 60 lines are not enough, and pressure will mount to create more
 - o In establishing a President’s Council to monitor stem cell research he listed a tacit priority of stakeholders, with “theologians” next to “others” in implied importance
 - o Scientists; doctors; ethicists; lawyers; **theologians**; others
 - o Again, Christian influence is relegated to “religion” - one amongst many
- f. Do you think Bush went against his previous commitment?

8. Other Selected Ethical Issues

- a. Is the research on already destroyed embryos in itself wrong?

“Why not say - as we are being slanderously reported as saying and some claim that we say - ‘Let us do evil that good may result’? Their condemnation is deserved” (Rom 3:8)

- o We are never justified in doing evil to accomplish some greater good (Rahab was never commended for lying, only for hiding the spies and sending them on their way; similarly the mid-wives during Pharaoh’s day)
 - o The killing of embryos (human life) to accomplish a (potential) greater good is not justified
 - o Is it wrong to harvest organs from a criminal that is executed (without prior consent?)
 - o Is it wrong to harvest organs from a criminal condemned to die (without prior consent?)
 - o Is it wrong to harvest organs from someone that dies in a hospital (without prior consent?)
 - o Is it wrong to use aborted children’s harvested organs for research or to help someone else?
 - o A plausible approach that could have been taken:
 - o Affirm the sanctity of life at all stages (did do)
 - o Condemn the destruction of embryos for any purpose (did not do)
 - o Condemn the destruction of embryos that resulted in the current “60 genetically diverse lines” (did not do)
 - o Refuse to support destruction of embryos by federal government (did do)
 - o Allow research on the existing stem cell lines (did do) with regret (did not do)
- b. What about “*in vitro*” fertilization?
- o Remaining (unused) embryos are either: implanted, discarded, or used in research (note: the Vatican opposes IVF)
 - o If harvesting stem cells from embryos (killing the embryo) is killing a person, then it has to be admitted that IVF also kills persons
 - o Can a person be pro-life and support IVF, since by its nature many embryos are destroyed in order to obtain the one that is viably implanted into the mother. If so, on what basis?
 - o If embryos are persons, then those that are created by IVF should be implanted into the mother or donated to other couples for implantation at some other time (no other option)
 - o “Excess embryos are orphans waiting to be adopted”

- c. Legally, how is an embryo to be treated when outside the body?
 - o If an embryo is a person, and is taken outside the body of the mother (or formed by IVF), then should it be protected by the full weight of the law (such as an aborted child that lives)?
 - o Unlike abortion, the action taken on an embryo outside of the mother does not entail forceful intrusion into the woman's body (injuring or violating the body integrity)
 - o Who is the rightful guardian of the embryo when there are custody battles? (Parents rights issue just as with a child that has been born?)
- d. Historically established and accepted legal principles that apply if embryos are people:
 - o Informed consent is required before seeking to do potential harm to a patient
 - o The Nuremberg Code, and ethical framework used to govern human research states: "Voluntary consent is absolutely essential" before experimentation on a human being can occur. Since an embryo is a human being, use of its stem cells (whether it causes death of the embryo or not) does not occur with its consent
 - o The Code also prohibits experimentation that causes injury, disability or a person's death
 - o Not one of the human species should ever be required to be subjected to experimentation without consent or an expectation of potential benefit.
 - o Legal guardianship and parental consent
- e. If embryonic stem cells can be harvested without damage to the embryo, should this be allowed?
 - o How would this be determined?
 - o How many attempts would have to be tried to ensure this is successful?
 - o Who is responsible if a death occurs?
 - o How can we be sure there are not latent effects unaccounted for later in the development of the child or into adulthood?
 - o There are no compelling moral or utilitarian arguments that require embryonic stem cells to be harvested
 - o It must be proven that no other alternatives are available, and that the embryo is not harmed in any way throughout its life
- f. If destruction of human life (embryos) can be justified for the "greater good", what limits are there on other purely utilitarian decisions concerning human life?
 - o Euthanasia for elderly people whose "quality of life" has begun to diminish
 - o Infanticide of those that are thought to be malformed, or medically intensive and thus a hardship on their parents or society
 - o Harvesting of "parts" from unborn children that are aborted
 - o Physician assisted suicide
 - o Abortion for any and all reasons at any time

9. As Christians, we should be in the forefront of this battle, defending the sanctity of life and the role of government to protect life in all phases of its existence

- a. Become informed on the technical, political and especially the moral arguments associated with this
 - o Talk to neighbors, those at work, etc.
 - o Write our leaders, newspapers, journalists and express our views
 - o Be careful of misleading slogans or terms (pre-embryo; potential for life)
- b. Remember that it is morally repugnant to kill some persons in order to help others
 - o We don't kill one person to save 1000 other people
 - o We don't take organs from a death row inmate who will eventually be destroyed anyway
 - o Presumption should be that embryos are human life until proven otherwise. In other words, if there is doubt about the presence of human life, we should error on the conservative side to protect it, not on the liberal (utilitarian) side to see it as value only as a "thing"
- c. Remember that destroying embryos:
 - o Destroys a human life and is therefore morally repugnant
 - o Is taking life without due process or consent of the victim
 - o Is unnecessary because there are viable, alternative options

- d. Remember that just because the courts rule that the unborn child is not a person and is not entitled to protection under the law (unless wanted by the mother), does not mean it is not a person (reference the Dred Scott decision on slaves being property and not persons!)
- e. We must stay alert to further developments in government policy that will tend to weaken restrictions on embryonic research
- f. President Bush's policy speech only addressed Federal funds
 - o We should seek a national policy preventing destructive research on embryonic stem cells
 - o We should continue to inform government of its role to protect the weak amongst us and the sanctity of life
 - o We should not rule out a sanctity of life (during all phases) amendment to the Constitution to overturn the increasing culture of death that has taken hold
- g. We should encourage research on adult stem cells (placenta, etc.) that hold great promise vice unsupported promises (potential) attributed to embryonic stem cell research
- h. Bottom line: Embryonic stem cell research is morally wrong, unethical and not necessary

References

- a. *World Magazine*; September, 2001 Volume 16, Number 33; "The Camel's Nose - Today's stem-cell problem started years ago" by Andrea Seu
- b. *ABCnews.com*; 3 August; "Life Support? Stem-Cell Backing Holds at Six in 10"; Analysis by Jesse F. Derris
- c. Letter to Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, Acting Director of National Institutes of Health; Re: Review of NIH's "Guidelines for Research Using Human Pluripotent Stem Cells"; by Eugene Tarne, Communications Director of Do No Harm: The Coalition of Americans for Research Ethics (www.stemcellresearch.org)
- d. *Guidelines for Research Using Human Pluripotent Stem Cells*; National Institutes of Health; 65 Federal Register 51976
- e. *The Seattle Times*; Monday, 20 August, 2001; By Warren King, "High on the future: Already saving lives, stem-cell research may soon be in full swing"

Additional Notes

- o "As to diseases, make a habit of two things - to help, or at least do not harm" Hippocrates, "The Epidemics"
- o The National Bioethics Advisory Commission agrees with human embryonic stem cell research when "no less morally problematic alternatives" were available (www.stemcellresearch.org; DNH Press Release of 9 August, 2001)

Session #40: Slavery (Detailed Notes)

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him." (Eph 6:5-9)

Purpose of this Session: To Address a topic that has been Virtually Ignored by the Modern Christian Church - the Biblical view of Slavery

- o What is the Biblical record?
- o What is the historical record - particularly in the United States?
- o What are the issues relating to slavery in the world today?
- o What we should do, if anything?

Q: How many sermons or Sunday School lessons have you heard that addressed the Old Testament approach to slavery directly?

Q: Did you know that one entire book of the Bible dealt solely with a slave?

Q: Do you think this is a topic that is still germane for today?

Q: Do you know the origin of the phrase "Forty acres and a mule?"

Q: We are all familiar with Paul's admonition that we are slaves of Christ - spiritually (Eph 6:9), but how knowledgeable are we of God's provision for slavery?

Slave: "A human being who is owned as property by, and is absolutely subject to the will of another; bondservant divested of all freedom and personal rights" (Webster's New World Dictionary)

This is not the Biblical definition of a slave, by example or by command!

1. Introduction: Because slavery is almost universally condemned in the modern world, this fact is used to discredit the Biblical accounts that appear to condone it. Is this valid?

- a. Many explanations have been offered up to explain why the Bible didn't explicitly condemn slavery:
 - o **(Irresponsible)** God overlooked this sin just as He did polygamy
 - o **(Relativistic)** The Jewish culture reflected the world around it, slavery was accepted and freely practiced, and not considered wrong
 - o **(Ignorance)** The Bible writers were flat wrong on this account by not condemning an obvious moral evil. In effect, they didn't know any better
 - o **(Non-Authoritative)** The Bible is obviously not inspired by God. If God wrote the Bible He would have condemned slavery
 - o **(Ignorance)** Theology, like science, has evolved over time, we are more enlightened now and hold liberty of people more precious than Old and New Testament writers did
 - o **None** of these explanations are true!
- b. Why is it so important to gain a clear Biblical view of slavery?
 - o First, all scripture is God-breathed (**2 Tim 3:16-17**), is inerrant, and profitable for study
 - o Just because man's sinfulness has perverted God's plan, doesn't invalidate His design
 - o Efforts to discredit Biblical authority in this area allow discrediting in other areas
 - o Many believe there are similar issues in society today, that like slavery, must be corrected: women's rights and gay rights being examples
 - o Residual effects still exist from the time of slavery in this nation: racism, discrimination
 - o Slavery is still practiced in some parts of the world today, what should we do if anything?

- o There is a movement amongst some of the Christian church to restore Old Testament laws into our society - these could include sanctions of slavery according to Biblical principles
- o A proper view of Biblical teaching on slavery will show God is merciful, has provided an ingenious method to address major economic problems, if practiced correctly, and has maintained a person's dignity under severe circumstances

2. The Biblical Record is Quite Extensive in it's Treatment of Slavery in the Old Testament

- a. Men and women could become slaves in a variety of ways
 - o **Captured** in war
 - o The king of Sodom claimed the people captured by Abram while fleeing (Gen 14:21)
 - o Other examples: Num 31:9; Judges 5:30; 1 Sam 4:9; 2 Kings 5:2; 2 Chron 28:8-15
 - o General instructions concerning: Deut 20:14; 21:10-12
 - o **Purchased** from other owners or general merchants (Ex 21:2)
 - o Abram was to circumcise his offspring as well as slaves born in his household (from those bought from foreigners) on the eighth day (Gen 17:9-14; 27)
 - o Joseph was sold by Midianites and Ishmaelites to an Egyptian official (Pontiphar) (Gen 37:36)
 - o Solomon purchased male and female slaves & those born to them were his (Eccl 2:7)
 - o Tyre and Sidon are condemned for selling the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks (Joel 3:4-8)
 - o **Born** to a slave, thus become a "house-born" slave (Gen 15:3; 17:9-14; Eccl 2:7; Jer 2:14)
 - o **Restitution** payment for stealing (Ex 22:3)
 - o **Debt** default payment (2 Kings 4; Neh 5:5-8)
 - o Could be a debtors children sold off to pay for a debt
 - o Could be the debtor himself as well as his wife and family became slaves
 - o **Abduction**: Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, a capital offense (Gen 37:27-28 Ex 21:16; Deut 24:7)
- b. A number of basic Biblical principles concerning slaves can be summarized (See Handout: Old Testament Laws Regulating Slavery)
 - o Two basic categories of sources of slaves: from Hebrews and from foreigners (see above means)
 - o The attitude of the master was to be one of having a hired worker worth his wages
 - o The length of service was strictly limited for Hebrews, and permanent for foreigners
 - o The Hebrew slave's family was not affected by his status
 - o Justice protected the slave from physical abuse
 - o Specific laws governed various marriage situations with slaves, re-selling, and the Sabbath
 - o Runaway slaves had a high degree of protection (Israel did not recognize other nation's enslavement of people – response because of their own enslavement in Egypt?)
 - o Note:
 - o God's commands as concerns the existence and regulation of slavery established a just control and implementation – this was completely contrary to the way the world otherwise used it
 - o Slavery, as practiced in the rest of the world was a judgment on the world
- c. Why was slavery not explicitly condemned in the Old or the New Testaments?
 - o Old Testament
 - o With the special circumstances that existed with property belonging to families in perpetuity, this provided an economic process to pay off serious debts that could not otherwise happen equitably
 - o This only occurred after a Hebrew became poor, but was given tremendous opportunity to recover first (help them; interest free loans; selling food with no profit) (Lev 25:35-38). In effect, a form of debt relief
 - o It provided a means to pay restitution when thieves could not otherwise make amends
 - o Roughly equivalent to working off debt when it cannot be paid (Ex 22:2-3)
 - o Somewhat like imprisonment, but the slave wasn't cut off from society

- o It provided a means of correction towards those that were lazy, allowing a means to learn diligence under strict control, but with a time for it to end (Prov 12:24)
“Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor”
- o It provided a means to handle prisoners of war, but with strong safe-guards similar to those governing Hebrews
- o Bottom lines:
 - o God’ stipulations under which this practice was allowed was intended for man’s good, not evil
 - o God’s laws governing slavery made it as humane as possible - unlike conditions in the nations around them where slaves were property only
 - o Under God’s provision, people were not treated as mere chattel, but retained a level of dignity in difficult circumstances
 - o God’s righteous commands served as a testimony to other nations (Duet 4:5-8) and the alien residing within (Lev 24:22)
- o New Testament
 - o Slavery was practiced virtually universally, it was part of the very fabric of society
 - o The gospel was given to free a man from sin, not to revolutionize the social conditions that existed at the time (same for infanticide; warfare; etc.)
 - o Paul, especially, sought to produce an expression of the kingdom of God in the church, not to reform society. He looked for the soon return of Christ, not to social reform in the meantime
 - o Bottom lines:
 - o The New Testament writings sowed the seeds of social change from the heart outward, eventually changing every society Christianity has resided in
 - o Did Paul believe in slavery? Yes! All Christians are slaves to Christ, and are of equal value before the Lord independent of social standing! (See below)

3. Biblical Authority has been used to Justify the Continuation of Slavery until Relatively Recent Times. For Example (Where are the fallacies):

- a. Gen 9:25-27 “...he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.’ He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave.’”
 - o In these passages, Noah cursed his grandson (son of Ham) and apparently his descendants
 - o Rationale is that the curse continued on throughout the centuries (in perpetuity) with the “black man” continually a target for subjugation
 - o Could be that Canaan exhibited some of the same tendencies/traits that Ham had that created the problem to begin with. Eventual Canaanites did exhibit notoriously deviant sexual behavior prior to God’s judgment upon them
 - o It was (is) believed that the descendants of Ham populated what is now Africa and that he was dark skinned
- However:**
 - o The sons of Ham are generally associated with the following geographic areas (Cush: basically Ethiopia; Mizraim: Egypt; Put: generally taken to be one of the North African countries; Canaan: the country of Palestine/Canaan, not Africa!)
 - o Apparently Noah cursed Canaan and not Ham since God had pronounced a blessing on Noah and his sons (Gen 9:1) and this could not be reversed (ref Balaam, son of Beor; Num 22-24)
 - o The law handed down by the Lord through Moses declared Hebrews could not be slaves in perpetuity (no longer than 6 years); foreign slaves were for life and were obtained from (any) foreigners through war or purchase - not limited to African sources
- b. Ex 21:2-27 “If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years....”
 - o God provided laws to regulate slavery amongst the Hebrews
 - o Not only is slavery condoned, but very detailed regulation is provided, differentiating between a number of pragmatic considerations that would be encountered

o No where does God specifically condemn the practice of slavery, hence the provision remains

However:

- o Hebrew's did not compel other Hebrew's to be slaves - they sold themselves to pay off debts
 - o They could not sell off the land permanently, it belonged to the Lord (Lev 25:23)
 - o For debts that were unable to be paid, the debtor used the only asset he had - his labor
 - o There was a maximum of six years that a person could sell his labor, it was not permanent
 - o No where is a Hebrew slave (servant; maidservant; manservant) addressed as mere property, or treated as such before God
 - o The laws in essence regulated a means of loaning money between Jewish people
 - o An exception is found in Ex 22:3 *"A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft"*
 - o Here, the thief is compelled to provide his labor to pay restitution
 - o The assumption is that the time of Jubilee pertains, but it is not explicitly stated
- c. 1 Cor 7:17-24 *"Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches...Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you - although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to."*
- o Paul specifically uses the example of a slave, and appears to exhort the slave to remain one
 - o Paul also differentiates a believing and non-believing state for the slave, the change is not a condition to justify changing their status

However:

- o The context of 1 Cor 7:17 appears to be the various relational spheres a believer finds themselves in when they come to faith (male-female; married or unmarried (to a believer or not; Jew or Gentile)(see Gal 3:28; and remember the Rabbinic benediction to God: giving thanks that they were not born as a Gentile, a slave or a woman)
 - o Paul affirms remaining in the life situation the Lord has assigned and in which one has been called to faith (John 9:2-3)
 - o Paul also allows contingencies to each of these relational spheres (1 Cor 7:6; 9; 15; 2; 28; 36; 38) - even though he states the general principle in 1 Cor 7:17 - these are not absolute laws, there are exceptions addressed!
 - o The outward circumstances of a person's life neither add to, nor detract from, one's calling into a relationship with God. Paul in 1 Cor 7:21 *"...don't let it trouble you..."*
 - o Affirms that the slaves standing before the Lord is not dependent upon their standing in society (the Lord's freedman)
 - o Affirms the slave's new life isn't denigrated by their life circumstance or social status
 - o Live as a transformed person in this situation that the Lord has placed you
 - o Also, Paul looked to the soon consummation of the age, time may be short, thus live as unto Christ in whatever circumstance you find yourself
 - o Paul in 1 Cor 7:21 *"...although if you can gain your freedom, do so"*
 - o Paul does not give the slave the option of using his new found faith as an excuse to remove himself from the conditions he is in
 - o The implication is, however, that if the slave can obtain his freedom (presumably in a Christ honoring way) that he should attempt to do so (Work for it? Earn it through diligent labor and softening the master's heart toward him? Relatives buy their freedom? Other ways?)
- d. Eph 6:5-9 *"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism"*

with him." (See also **Col 3:22-25** and **1 Peter 2:18-25**)

- o Paul appears to again endorse the continuing existence of slavery and not condemn it
- o There is no hint of anything wrong with the institution
- o By stating the way the slave and master are to exercise their respective positions, Paul is merely providing a Christianized form of slavery

However:

- o This section of the book (chapters 5 and 6) has to do with three foundational relationships:
 - o Wives and husbands
 - o Children and parents
 - o Slaves and masters
 - o In each relationship Paul calls the subordinate person (wife; children, slave) to obedience to the superior person - obedience in this culture was recognized as being a moral virtue
 - o In the culture that Paul wrote, the obedience that was called for in these three relationships was absolute - there was no right of moral decision beyond simple obedience
 - o Paul revolutionized these subordinate relationships by:
 - o Recognizing wives, children, and slaves as moral, fully human beings, capable and called to exercise moral judgments
 - o The obedience demanded by the culture is placed into a wider, higher theological context of obedience unto Christ
 - o In raising up these groups in moral standing before God, he did this without calling for rebellion on their part (e.g. Christ Himself gave up His rights - the spirit of rebellion does not reflect the spirit of Christ)
 - o Social status was not important to Paul, but serving Christ was the issue. Social status was the context within which obedience to the Lord manifested itself
 - o Ultimate rewards were in heaven, not earthly
 - o Paul revolutionized the superior relationships by:
 - o Pointing out their responsibilities to their subordinates
 - o This was revolutionary to point out the moral obligations of a social superior to their inferior (respect; duty; moral accountability before God)
 - o Paul uplifts the social inferior, and abases the social superior and places them in correct relationship before Jesus Christ - the great leveler (**Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11**)
 - o Whichever the position - slave or master, as a slave of Christ the reward was equal
 - o Practical considerations of the day:
 - o Slaves were feared since there were so many of them (forbidden from wearing distinctive clothing in Rome - they may see how many there were and revolt)
 - o Slaves all over the Roman empire were property, totally under their master's control
 - o If Christianity were viewed as subversive (inciting slaves to rebel) it would have been ruthlessly attacked
 - o Calling slaves to obedience reassured Roman society Christians were not insurrectionists, and made the true distinctives clear (rejecting pagan gods; not participating in pagan revelry, prostitution, etc; spiritual equality before God; honesty; virtue; etc...)
- e. Even Jesus used slaves to illustrate timeless truths (**Matt 18:23-35**) or as a backdrop to a parable (**Matt 22:1-14**)
- f. **Bottom Lines:** Though not a key teaching, slavery was never praised in the Bible, and was partially condemned
- o "We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels,...
...adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars..." (**1 Tim 1:9-10**)
 - o Literally, man stealers, slave trade was condemned, unrighteous
 - o "All who are under the yoke of slavery..." (**1 Tim 6:1**)
 - o Slavery was acknowledged as harsh and burdensome
 - o "Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you - although if you can gain your freedom, do so." (**1 Cor 7:21**)(see 3.c *However* above)
 - o Freedom from slavery was a preferred condition to be in

- o Slaves were in effect encouraged to obtain their freedom - but in a godly way
- o Also, there may always be slavery, even until the consummation of the age & Christ's return!
- o "He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which the name of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666" (Rev 13:18)
- o With the appearance of the Rider on the White Horse prior to the Millennium: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, 'Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.'" (Rev 19:17-18)

Additional New Testament Treatments of Slavery

- a. Col 3:22-4:1 "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven."
- b. 1 Tim 6:1-3 "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them"
- c. Titus 2:9-10 "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."
- d. Titus 6:1-2 "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them."
- e. The entire book of Philemon deals with a slave and his master

4. The New Testament used Slavery as a Vivid Illustration of our Spiritual Relationship to Christ and our Old Nature

- a. In our old nature we were described as slaves of sin (John 8:34):
 - o "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died had been freed from sin" (Rom 6:6-7)
 - o "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin which leads to death..." (Rom 6:16)
 - o "I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness..." (Rom 6:19)
 - o "When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness" (Rom 6:20)
 - o "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin" (Rom 7:14)
 - o "So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin" (Rom 7:25)
 - o "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of son-ship." (Rom 8:15)

- o "In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face" (2 Cor 11:20)
 - o "This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves." (Gal 2:4)
 - o Returning to circumcision as a requirement for righteousness and acceptance by God
 - o "So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world" (Gal 4:3)
 - o "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods... ...Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?" (Gal 4:8,9)
 - o Observing special days and months and seasons and years (4:10)
 - o "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures" (Titus 2:3)
 - o "...and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Heb 2:15)
 - o "They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity - for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him." (2 Peter 2:19)
- b. In our new nature we are described as being slaves to God (yet free):
- o "...though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Rom 6:17-18)
 - o "...offer [the parts of your body] in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness (Rom 6:19)
 - o "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life." (Rom 6:22)
 - o "So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin" (Rom 7:25)
 - o "...if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men." (1 Cor 7:21-23)
 - o "So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir" (Gal 4:7)
 - o "Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman" (Gal 4:31)
 - o The slave woman represents the covenant of Mount Sinai (corresponds to Jerusalem), with children born to be slaves (Hagar, maidservant of Sarah)
 - o The free woman represents the covenant of the promise to Abraham with spiritual children (born to Sarah)
 - o Note: Paul described his own personal approach to self discipline by a slave analogy (Matt 20:27; Mark 10:44)
 - o In his freedom that he made himself a slave to everyone else (1 Cor 9:19)
 - o He disciplined his body by making it a slave to his will (1 Cor 9:27)
- c. Before God there is no distinction - we all have equal worth and value in Christ, independent of our social status or standing, our nationality or our race
- o "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor 12:13)
 - o "...neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28)
 - o "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or un-circumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col 3:11)
 - o Also, we can only have one master (Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13)
- d. Bottom line:
- "For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men" (1 Cor 7:22-23)

5. The Historical Record Demonstrates that Slavery has been in the World from the Earliest times up to the Present (a. Through d. below taken from ref (5))

- a. Slavery is attested to from the earliest times throughout the ancient Near East (at least as far back as 3000 BC as recorded in written documents)
 - o Generally, slaves had no legal rights & could be disposed of however the owner wished.
 - o Slaves were subject to the absolute power of the master
- b. Aristotle defined a slave as "living property", "the slave is a living tool and the tool a lifeless slave"
- c. Greeks defined four characteristics of freedom, all of which were denied to slaves:
 - o Right to be his own representative in legal matters
 - o Right to protection from illegal seizure
 - o Right to work where he pleased
 - o Right to freedom of movement
- d. Slaves in Roman Times (around the time of Christ)
 - o Slaves were usually considered to be a "thing" (male or female) owned by another (property)
 - o Slaves resulted from a variety of circumstances:
 - o War/piracy/brigandage
 - o Exposure of a child; sale of a child
 - o Selling oneself to pay off debts
 - o Condemnation in courts of law
 - o Birth to a slave woman
 - o And were obtained from: slave dealers; inheritance; or home breeding
 - o Slaves circumstances varied from privileged imperial slaves to convicts sentenced to the mines
 - o Slaves of the state, townships, and the emperor did the work that would now be considered that of civil service
 - o However, if a slave of a citizen was freed:
 - o They became a citizen (unlike Greece treatment)
 - o Their sons could attain magistracies and priesthood status, although they themselves could not
 - o The Freedman could by skill and hard work become wealthy and advance to important positions (Felix, governor of Judea (Acts 23:26) was a freedman of the imperial household and brother of Palas (one of Claudius' secretaries)
 - o Approximately 1 in 5 of the residents in Rome was a slave
 - o A proposal that slaves be required to wear distinctive dress was defeated in the Senate because slaves would learn how numerous they were
 - o Wages and commissions were given to skilled slaves as incentives
 - o This provided more profit to the owner, and did not undercut the wages paid free laborers (prevented depressing wage rates)
 - o Money (wages) paid slaves technically remained in the possession of the owner, but was available for slaves to use, even to buy their own freedom (manumission)
 - o Manumission (buying freedom) had to be done through an intermediary (or by the owner directly) because the slave had no legal way to enter into a legal contract
- e. The American Experience (See Handout: Race in America: A historical timeline; ref (9))
 - o It has been contended that America was the first country to be founded on the idea of human equality, and the first to publicly recognize the injustice of slavery, which existed across the world in 1776
 - o In his initial draft of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson lists slavery as one of the grievances against King George III; He has "waged cruel war against human nature itself" by violating the "most sacred rights of life and liberty" of Africans. This passage was edited out
 - o According to James Madison, the issue of slavery was the most divisive at the Constitutional Convention. Any hope of forming a united nation required a compromise of some kind to be worked out

- o In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery from spreading to the federal territories, thus attempting to put slavery on the path to “ultimate extinction”
- o Many of the founders of the United States voiced opposition to the practice of slavery:
 - o “Every measure of prudence, therefore, ought to be assumed for the eventual total extirpation of slavery from the United States. I have, through my whole life, held the practice of slavery in...abhorrence” **John Adams**
 - o “There is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it.” **George Washington**
- Contrast:**
- o “[Slavery] was established by decree of Almighty God...it is sanctioned in the Bible, in both Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation...it has existed in all ages, has been found among the people of the highest civilization, and in nations of the highest proficiency in the arts.” **Jefferson Davis**, President, Confederate States of America (ref (2))

6. Current Conditions in the World (See Handout: “Slavery: Definitions & Examples”)

- o Types of “Slavery” that are defined by anti-slavery organizations:
 - o **Bonded Labor:** In debt, with wages (basic food/shelter) therefore unable to pay off the loan
 - o **Forced Labor:** Illegally recruited and forced to work
 - o **Worst Forms of Child Labor:** Exploitive or dangerous conditions, can be full time
 - o **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children:** Kidnapped, bought or forced into sex market
 - o **Trafficking:** Transport or trade of humans
 - o **Early and Forced Marriage:** Women & girls married without choice
 - o **Traditional or ‘Chattel’ Slavery:** Buying & selling of people
- o Question: What should be the United States role relative to slavery in the world?
 - o The US led the world (with England) in the push to abolish slavery in the 1800’s
 - o Shouldn’t the same concern exist now to eliminate this atrocity?
 - o If so, what tools should the US use? (economic; political; exposure?)

7. What about Reparations for Prior Conditions of Slavery - What Should be Done?

- a. Basic definitions
 - o **Redress:** To set right; rectify or remedy, often by making compensation for a wrong, grievance, etc.
 - o **Retribution:** Punishment for evil done
 - o **Restitution:** A giving back to the rightful owner of something that has been lost or taken away; restoration
 - o **Reparation:** A repairing or being repaired; restoration to good condition
- b. California Legislature in July, 2001 passed a resolution regarding slavery
 - o The joint resolution “...acknowledge(s) the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American colonies,” and “...apologize(s) to African-Americans on behalf of the people of the United States for the wrongs committed against their ancestors who suffered as slaves.”
 - o This resolution was the first by a state legislature
 - o It urged Congress to establish a national memorial, a museum, and a commission to study reparations
- c. Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan) has introduced legislation every year since 1989 for Congress to study slavery and consider “appropriate remedies”. The current bill is HR 46 entitled “Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act”. It currently has 48 co-sponsors.
- d. Proposed Reparations and actions:
 - o Anti-Slavery International (headquartered in London)(www.antislavery.org)
 - o States (nations) that have benefited from slavery are to pay those disadvantaged groups and communities most impacted from slavery

- o Full payment of 0.7 % of GNP to development assistance, debt cancellation, reduced tariffs or import duties, technology transfers, or trust funds on a country by country basis
- o Establishment of education programs, memorials and commemorative days
- o UNESCO established an International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (23 August - this date in 1791 marked the start of the first successful slave rebellion on St. Domingue (Haiti))
- o Tony Blair (Britain's Prime Minister) in March 2000 proposed that a Slavery Memorial Day be established each year in the U.K.
- e. In January, 2001, a law came into effect in California requiring insurance companies to disclose any policies issued on the lives of slaves
- f. In 2000, the Democrat Party for the first time adopted a plank endorsing a federal study on the impact of slavery
- e. Examples of Reparations (see **Handout: Examples of Reparation Actions in the Past**)
- f. Biblically, there appears to be no warrant to pay reparations for previous conditions of slavery (See **Handout: Reparations for Slavery (Arguments for and Against)**)

References:

1. "Slavery," *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1986
2. Dunbar Rowland quoting Jefferson Davis in "Jefferson Davis," *Volume 1, page 286*
3. "Hard Sayings of the Bible" by Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Peter H. Davids; F.F. Brice; Manfred T. Brauch; 1996
4. "The New International Commentary on the Old Testament"; Gordon J. Wenham; 1979
5. "Backgrounds of Early Christianity" by Everett Ferguson; 1993; second edition
6. "A Defense of Virginia [and through her, of the South] in Recent and Pending Contests Against the Sectional Party" by R. L. Dabney; 1867
7. The official record from Hansard of the debate initiated by Lord Gifford QC in the House of Lords of the British Parliament on 14th March 1996 concerning the African reparations (www.arm.arc.co.uk/LordsHansard.html)
8. "The legal basis of the claim for Reparations" by Lord Anthony Gifford, British Queens Counsel and Jamaican Attorney-at-law. A paper presented to the first Pan-African Congress on Reparations, Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, April 27-29, 1993
9. "Race in America: A historical timeline"; excerpt from *World Magazine, Special Issue September/October 2001*

Session #41: Prayer in Government Schools (Detailed Notes)

*This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."
(Matt 6:9-13)*

*"...pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus"
(1Thess 5:17-18)*

Purpose of this session: Review the controversy concerning the legalization of prayer in government (public) schools and what a Christian response should be. Specifically:

- o What are the arguments for and against?
- o What is the historical backdrop to this controversy?
- o What legal action is being attempted
- o What position should a Christian take on this issue?

Quote: "...the soft underbelly of the conservative enthrallment with civil religion: at certain times the conservatives reflect the residue of historic, virile Christianity while denying in the most vehement terms any attempt to return the nation to historic, virile Christianity" (ref (2))

Note: Everyone who has taken a test in school knows that you can never remove prayer!

1. Introduction: Like so many issues that face this nation, the question of allowing "prayer" in government schools has split Christians into multiple camps:

- o Those who believe the government should allow voluntary prayer (individually and corporately) in all facets of the governmental school system (even encouraging it – not just allowing it)
- o Those who believe that government run schools are not a place to have any form of prayer since it is purely a secular environment and would violate the "separation of church and state" principle
- o Most Christians appear to reject the government imposing any form of mandatory, state generated prayers to be said by or for students
- o Some Christians believe that if there is to be a Constitutional Amendment permitting prayer in government schools, that it should also acknowledge the "Crown Rights of Jesus Christ in the nation"
- o One of the reasons this is such a divisive area is that it is a very complex area – with many interrelated issues confusing the foundational questions that need to be answered (see Handout: Prayer in Government Schools "Issue Map")
 - o Parental responsibilities verses governmental
 - o The role of the parents verses that of the state to educate children
 - o At least four large areas of controversy associated with this question:
 - o Control issues
 - o Spiritual issues
 - o Societal impact issues
 - o Legal issues
- o We will be concentrating on relevant issues:
 - o Associated with government schools only (not homeschooling or other private schools)
 - o Not whether government schools should exist or not – they do!
 - o Not the spectrum of what constitutes education, but only aspects of it
- o Given government run and controlled schools, what should be a Christian's response to the question:
 - o "Should there be prayer in government schools?"
 - o "If so, what kind?"

2. The legal situation that currently exists in this nation is confused at best, although the trend is very clear in its intent!

- a. The first major removal of religious influence in public schools occurred in 1948, when the Supreme Court struck down religious instruction in public schools (*ref (16)*)
- b. The historic Supreme Court ruling that initiated the eventual massive removal of Christian religious presence in governmental schools was *Engel v. Vitale (1962)*(*ref (1)*)
“Neither the fact that the prayer may be denominationally neutral nor the fact that its observance on the part of the students is voluntary can serve to free it from the limitations of the [First Amendment]...[It] ignores the essential nature of the program’s constitutional defects...Prayer in its public school system breaches the constitutional wall of separation between Church and State”
- c. The prayer found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court was the following:
“Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our Country”
- d. Follow-on rulings (National, State or Federal Courts) that used the 1962 decision as the precedent include the following (majority taken from *ref (14)*):

The Slippery Slope

- o It is unconstitutional for any state or school board to require that passages from the Bible be read, or the Lord’s Prayer be recited, in the public schools of a State at the beginning of each school day (*ref (15)*)(1963)
 - o The freedom of speech and the press are guaranteed to students and teachers, unless the topic is religious, then the speech becomes unconstitutional (*ref (2)*)(1965; 1981; 1991 cases)
 - o If a student prays over his own lunch, it is unconstitutional for him to pray aloud (*ref (4)*)(1965)
 - o It’s unconstitutional for a Board of Education to use, or even refer to, the word “God” in any of its official writings (*ref (8)*)(1976)
 - o It’s unconstitutional for a kindergarten class to ask whose birthday is celebrated by Christmas (*ref (11)*)(1979)
 - o It’s unconstitutional for students to see the Ten Commandments since they might read, meditate upon, respect, or obey them” (*ref (3)*)(1980 and 1981 cases)
 - o A song sung as part of a voluntary extracurricular student activity was struck down since it used the form of a prayer to promote values such as honesty, truth, courage and faith (*ref (5)*)(1982)
 - o An opening or closing prayer at a school graduation ceremony is unconstitutional (*ref (12)*)(1985; 1986; 1992; 1993; 1994 cases)
 - o Public schools cannot require a “period of silence not to exceed one minute...for meditation or daily prayer.” (*ref (17)*)
 - o It’s unconstitutional to have books in a classroom library that deal with Christianity (*ref (7)*)(1989)
 - o It’s unconstitutional for a teacher to be seen with a personal copy of the Bible at school (*ref (7)*)(1989)
 - o Artwork may not be displayed in schools if something religious is depicted, this applies even to classics (*ref (10)*)(1993)
 - o A student that addresses an assembly of his peers is effectively a government representative, and therefore cannot engage in prayer (*ref (6)*)(1994)
 - o It is unconstitutional for school officials to be praised publicly, or to be recognized from the podium, in a community meeting if that meeting is sponsored by a religious group (*ref (9)*)(1995)
- e. The obvious trend is to remove all religious (specifically Christian) presence in the government school environment except under (for now) extremely controlled circumstances

- f. See **Handout: Religion In The Public Schools: A Joint Statement Of Current Law** (circa 1996 by the A.C.L.U.)(*ref (13)*)
- g. The removal of religious expression from schools, and from virtually all other public settings at the local, city, State and national level has created:
 - o A situation where legal precedents have become so pervasive that individual actions will never overcome 20 years of legal decisions with a common sentiment
 - o A belief by many Christians that the Supreme Court decision to remove prayer from government schools was the beginning of a moral decline in the educational system that has devastated society
 - o A widespread sentiment that the only way to halt further destruction of religious speech and expression in the public domain is by a Constitutional Amendment

3. Back to Basics - Biblically, the scriptures provide a wealth of information on the importance of prayer, and how prayer is to be pursued. A partial treatment follows: (See Handout: A Partial Treatment of Biblical Principles on Prayer)

- a. What is prayer?
 - o "You have said, 'Seek my face.' My heart says to you, 'Your face, LORD, do I seek.'" (Psalm 27:8; 63:1)
 - o "I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer." (Psalm 66:17-19)
 - o Prayer is both a gift and a task
 - o It involves our revealing our innermost selves to God, and
 - o God revealing His desires to us (Prov 1:23)
- b. When are we to pray?
 - o When we are alone, in solitude, as Jesus did (Matt 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16)
 - o When giving thanks for food (1 Sam 9:13; Matt 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Acts 27:33-35; 1 Cor 11:23-24)
 - o Early in the morning (Psalm 5:3; 143:8)
 - o When we are lying in bed at night (Psalm 63:1-8)
 - o When believers gather together (Matt 18:20; Acts 2:42)
 - o When men are commissioned to the Lord's work (Acts 12:1-3)
 - o Virtually all the time, we are to have an attitude of prayer to the Lord (1 Thess 5:17)
- c. Who is to pray?
 - o All Jesus' disciples (Matt 5:1-2, 6:5)
 - o Every believer (1 Tim 2:8)
 - o Individually and corporately
- d. What are we to pray for?
 - o Confess our sins before God (Psalm 38:1-4, 18)
 - o Pour out our hearts to God, seek refuge and comfort in Him (Psalm 5:1-3; 34:4; 62:8; Heb 4:16)
 - o When we are anxious and in need of peace, to turn to God in prayer (Phil 4:6-7)
 - o For others (1 Sam 12:23; Eph 1:15-23; Col 1:9-14; James 5:16)
 - o For all the saints (Eph 6:18)
 - o For the lost to be saved (Rom 10:1)
 - o For those that mistreat or persecute us (Luke 6:27-28)
 - o For healing (spiritual and physical) (James 5:15-16)
 - o For faithful workers in the fields ripe for harvest for the Lord (Matt 9:37-38)
 - o For those in authority over us (1 Tim 2:1-4)
 - o See Paul's example in Col 1:9-14 and Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-19
 - o To know the Lord and His love for us better
 - o To know more fully the hope that is ours in Christ
 - o To be filled with the knowledge of God's will

- o To be strengthened with the power and comfort of God
- o Lives that are lived in a manner worthy of the Lord
- o Wisdom (**James 1:5**)
- o To learn *“great and unsearchable things”* (**Jer 33:3**)
- o Whatever is consistent with God’s will (**1 John 5:14-15**)
- o In a real sense, we do not know what to pray for (**Rom 8:26**)
 - “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”*
- e. How are we to pray?
 - o Our condition
 - o Sin removed from our hearts (confessed, sought forgiveness) (**2 Chron 7:14; Psalm 66:18-19**)
 - o Not in a hypocritical fashion before men (**Matt 6:5-8**)
 - o Not in length but in weight (**Matt 6:7-8**)
 - o With thanksgiving to God the Father for everything, in the name of Jesus Christ (**John 16:24; Eph 5:20**)
 - o With thanksgiving for all circumstances that we find ourselves in (**1 Thess 5:18**)
 - o With the expectation that God will answer our prayers (**Matt 17: 20; Mark 11:24; James 1:5-8; Heb 4:16**)
 - “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”* (**Matt 21:22**)
 - o See David’s prayers in the Psalms (**Psalm 61; etc.**)
 - o Faithfully (**Rom 12:12**)
 - o The structure
 - o Adoration (praise); Confession; Petition (supplication) (**Luke 11:2-4**)
 - o Adoration; Petition; Confession (**Matt 6:9-13**)
 - o Adoration; Confession; Thanksgiving; Supplication (ACTS)(**Neh 1:4-11**)
 - o Sometimes with so called “Arrow Prayers” (**Neh 2:4-5**)
 - o Brevity desirable (**Eccl 5:2; Matt 6:7**)
 - o Spontaneity is also
 - o But: prayer should not be limited to a specific structure, particularly if that structure becomes a hindrance to our conversation with God
- f. Does God honor the prayers of non-Christians?
 - o Common belief among the Jews was that God does not listen to sinners (**John 9:31**)
 - o “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (**James 5:16**)
 - o “From the one man he made every nation of men, that they would inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” (**Acts 17:26-27**)
 - o “At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly” (**Acts 10:1-2**)
- g. Bottom lines:
 - o Prayer is to be a constant companion of a believer throughout their lives
 - o Prayer is indispensable to the spiritual health of a believer
 - o Prayer is our most personal means of communicating with God, seeking His comfort and will
 - o Prayer can include elements of: petitions, intercessions, adoration, thanksgiving and confession
 - o Prayer is virtually universally practiced by all who adhere to religious beliefs
 - o Even the United States Supreme Court acknowledged the importance of prayer by stating:

“Prayer is the quintessential religious practice”

4. Historically, prayer has been an important factor of public life well before & after the formation of the United States, but not without Controversy

- a. Prayer was part of the very fabric of the Colonial life and the United States. Examples and illustrations of prayer at key times in the history of the United States are well known:
 - o Our nation's first schools were in churches, and since their inception in the mid 1600's public schools have promoted prayer and used the Bible regularly as a textbook
 - o At the Constitutional Convention Benjamin Franklin (a reputed Deist) gave a speech reminding the delegates "that God governs in the affairs of man" and without His aid their efforts would be in vain. He called for "...prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business:
 - o George Washington's first speech after his election as President stated: "It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect...No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States"
 - o In the 1830's, with the arrival of large numbers of Italian and Irish Catholic immigrants, objections were raised to compulsory readings of the Protestant King James Bible and the recitation of Protestant prayers in most public schools. Riots and bitter conflicts erupted, with the expulsion of Catholic children from public schools, and the burning of convents. Protestant & Catholic riots around Philadelphia in 1843 left 13 people killed after Catholics asked for their children to be excused from mandated religious practices
 - o In the 1950's, with the increase in the religious diversity in this nation (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Atheist, as well as Jewish), many parents objected to Christian practices in public schools
- b. Current vestiges of Christian influence that remain at the national level for comparison:
 - o Our National Anthem specifically addresses our reliance upon God
 - o "Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land, Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation! Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: 'In God is our Trust!'"
 - o Our coinage bears the national motto: "In God We Trust"
 - o In 1864 Congress approved adding "In God We Trust" to the 2-cent coin
 - o In 1908 legislation was passed to place "In God We Trust" on all coins
 - o In 1955 "In God We Trust" became mandatory on all U.S. coins and paper currency
 - o In 1956 "In God We Trust" became the national motto of the United States
 - o Our Pledge of Allegiance declares "...one nation, under God..."
 - o Original Pledge of Allegiance by Francis Bellamy (1892) read: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag, and the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible – with liberty and justice for all"
 - o The first National Flag Conference in Washington D.C. (14 June, 1923) changed the Pledge to read: "...the Flag of the United States..." for clarity
 - o In 1942 Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance
 - o In June 1954 an amendment was made to add the words: "...under God...". President Eisenhower said: "In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."
 - o Every session of Congress and the Supreme Court is opened with prayer, as are State Legislatures (See **Handout: Prayer Given Before the Kansas State Legislature**)
 - o Moses and the 10 Commandments are featured prominently in the Supreme Court building
 - o The President is sworn into office with his right hand on a King James Version Bible indicating that God and His word are the ultimate authority
 - o In 1952 Congress passed an Act establishing the National Day of Prayer to be declared by the President on a day of his choosing. In 1988 Congress enacted, and President Ronald Reagan

- signed, a bill making permanent the National Day of Prayer to be on the first Thursday of May each year
- o State Constitutions reflect acknowledgement of a transcendent power (See Handout: Excerpts from State Constitutions Relating to God)

5. Arguments Relating to Government School Prayer (See Handout: Common Arguments For and Against Government School Prayer)

6. Bottom Lines (Personal Conclusions):

- a. For most of the history of the nation (and prior), Christianity has been the foundation for morality, education, laws, justice, government, and the rights we value. It has been expressed in a variety of ways at all levels of our nation
 - o This does not imply we are a “Christian nation” but a “Christianized nation”
 - o Public arena expression of religious sentiment does not necessarily imply the person was or is a believer
 - o Public acknowledgement of a divine nature, and the attendant accountability and dependence is an important influence upon the nation as a whole as well as people individually
 - o The nation was not formed to be secular or indifferent to religion – but to allow the free expression of Christian truths, principles and foster a godly foundation for moral and virtuous lives
- b. There have always been those that reject Christianity, and detest its influence in any public setting. Until recently, the legal and general societal support were not in place to make radical changes to eliminate Christian influence from the public domain
- c. The removal of prayer from public schools is symptomatic of a larger corrosion of Christian influence throughout the nation
- d. Putting prayer, per se, back into public schools would be difficult to implement given the current legal and societal environment. However, if it could:
 - o There would at least be an acknowledgement of the existence of the divine
 - o There would be the acknowledgment of a power greater than the world to which our future is tied – individually and nationally
 - o Major questions would exist relative to what prayers; who said them; how implemented; meaningfulness from a Biblical standpoint; etc.
- e. If it was determined that it is meaningful and appropriate to place prayer (voluntary specifically) back into schools, there are at least four options to accomplish this:
 - o The Supreme Court would have to reverse its previous decisions – low probability because of latency in replacing Justices. If possible, this would take a long time
 - o Congress exercising the “exceptions clause” of the Constitution (Article III, Section 2). This would remove jurisdiction authority from the Supreme Court for certain class of laws (Congress exercised this action following the Civil War to not allow slavery to be resurrected). This would not, however, remove the decades of State case laws built upon the Supreme Court original decisions
 - o Re-instatement of the 10th Amendment to limit the federal government and revert this issue, as well as many others, back to the individual States to address. The Bill of Rights have been applied to the States as well as the Federal government by the Supreme Court – not the original intent. Again, case law would be extremely difficult to overcome
 - o Constitutional Amendment. This would abrogate all existing decisions and case law based upon them at the same time (The Dred Scott decision was only overcome by the 13th Amendment) (See Handout: Attempted Constitutional Amendments)
- f. Personal Assessment:
 - o It's not the role of government to remove and destroy all vestiges of Christian influence and exercise from the public arena – including public schools
 - o Government actions at the national and state level still accommodate acknowledgment of a transcendent power, yet try to virtually eradicate any form of it from government schools – this is at its best hypocrisy

- o Government (consistent with the First Amendment) should do what it can to encourage spiritual growth – consistent with our countries founding principles and examples
- o By allowing school prayer, issues of “separation of church and state” will again be addressed, but hopefully with an opportunity to provide a more balanced treatment of the subject vice the current hostile view

7. Homework: See Handout: Prayer in Government Schools Discussion Questions

References:

1. *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962)
2. *Stein v. Oshinsky*, 348 F.2d 999 (2nd Cir. 1965); *Collins v. Chandler Unified School District*, 644 F.2d 759 (9th Cir. 1981); *Bishop v. Aronov*, 926 F.2d 1066 (11th Cir. 1991); *Duran v. Nitsche*, 780 F. Supp 1048 (E.D. Pa. 1991)
3. *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39 (1980); *Ring v. Grand Forks Public School District*, 483 F. Supp. 272 (D.N.D. 1980); *Lanner v. Wimmer*, 662 F.2d 1349 (10th Cir. 1981)
4. *Reed v. van Hoven*, 237 F. Supp. 48 (W.D. Mich. 1965)
5. *Doe v. Aldine Independent School District*, 563 F. Supp. 883 (S.D. Tex. 1982)
6. *Harris v. Joint School District*, 41 F.3d 447 (9th Cir. 1994), affirmed, 15 F.3d 1097 (11th Cir. 1994)
7. *Roberts v. Madigan*, 702 F.Supp. 1505 (D. Colo. 1989), 921 F.2d 1047 (10th Cir. 1990)
8. *State of Ohio v. Whisner*, 351 N.E. 2d 750 (Ohio 1976)
9. *Jane Doe v. Santa Fe Independent School District*, No. G-95-176 (S.D. Tex. 1995)
10. *Washington v. Bloomingdale Public School*, 813 F. Supp. 559 (W. D. Mich. 1993), affirmed, 33 F.3d 679 (6th Cir. 1994)
11. *Flore v. Sioux Falls School District*, 464 F. Supp. 911 (D.S.D. 1979)
12. *Harris v. Joint School District No. 241*, 41 F.3d 447 (9th Cir. 1994); *Gearon v. Loudoun County School Board*, 844 F. Supp. 1097 (E.D. Va. 1993); *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992); *Kay v. Douglas School District*, 719 P.2d 875 (Or. Ct. App. 1986); *Graham v. Central Community School District of Decatur County*, 608 F. Supp. 531 (D. La. 1985)
13. <http://www.aclu.org/issues/religion/relig7/html>
14. “A Constitutional Amendment Protecting School Prayer and other Religious Speech” pamphlet by David Barton, WallBuilders, Inc; 2001
15. *School Dist. Of Abington Township v. Schempp*; 374 U.S. 203 (1963)
16. *McCollum v. Board of Education*, 333 U.S. 203, 212 (1948)
17. *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 72 (1985)

Additional References

- a. *Freedom Amendment web site (www.religiousfreedom.house.gov) maintained by Congressman Ernest J. Istook, representing Oklahoma's 5th District; U.S. House of Representatives*
- b. “Nailing Down the Flap Over School Prayer” by Andrew Sandlin as found at www.natreformassn.org/schpray.html (National Reform Association web site)

Session #42: Near Death Experiences (Session Detailed Notes)

*“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know – God knows. And I know that this man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses”
(2 Cor 12:2-5)*

Purpose of this Session: To address a topic that has dramatically affected many peoples lives and purportedly “proves” the existence of life after death. Specifically, this Session will Address:

- o Definitions of Near Death Experiences
- o Characteristics of NDE’s
- o Biblical understanding of NDE’s
- o Implications of the popularity of NDE information and research

Question: Does anyone remember the movie: “Flatliners”?

1. Introduction: NDE’s are much more common in occurrence and characteristics than most people think – but is this something Christians should be knowledgeable about, or just attribute it to being “New Age?”

- a. Generally, this area is ignored by Christians because:
 - o Many of the highly publicized accounts appear to be contradictory to Biblical understanding and smack of “New Age” theology, hence they are suspect
 - o There is a fear by some that their faith may be shaken by knowing more about these experiences
 - o Some completely discount the reported occurrences as just publicity seeking or only “whackos” (similar to how some approach the topic of extra-terrestrials)
 - o Solid, detailed source data is not available to critically challenge and evaluate
 - o Some view these accounts as demonic in nature, and not something to be looked at any closer
- b. This is an important topic since:
 - o The presumption portrayed is that this is a valid, true foretaste of the “afterlife”. It has been reportedly experienced independent of:
 - o A person’s age, sex, marital status or race
 - o, Religion and/or spiritual beliefs, frequency of attendance at a church
 - o Social class or status, educational level, income level, size of home community or where a person lives
 - o The popular accounts are so convincing and well known that they are taken by the uninitiated almost for granted
 - o The topic is gaining a very large, interested group of sincere people. For example:
 - o The movie “Flatliners” helped propel this into the popular culture
 - o There is a “Journal of Near Death Studies” currently published
 - o There is an “International Association for Near-Death Studies in the UK
 - o The acceptance of these experiences as authoritative is resulting in proposals of using them to help prepare those facing death (gain calm assurance of a peaceful afterlife)
 - o Many believers have naively assumed the “being of light” some encounter is Jesus Christ. This may have sufficient correspondence to Biblical truths that the accounts may be accepted as validating their beliefs vice destructive to them
 - o Without directly addressing (and countering), it would appear Christians have no answer for it other than their own beliefs

- o The message portrayed is distinctly anti-Biblical, and is what people for the most part want to hear (non-judgmental entry into the after life, no lasting consequences to a person's actions or inaction)
- o Popular accounts are not representative of all accounts, and hence very miss-leading
- o A reasoned Biblical approach will help show credibility and an understanding of the principles and issues involved so we will appear informed and have credibility
- c. What are NDE's?
 - o Near Death Experiences are experiences related by people that occur during a time they are believed to be dead (or almost died). Subsequently, these people "regain" life and consciousness and can describe what they experienced
 - o NDE's are experienced by all ages, cultures and religious backgrounds – including Atheists and Agnostics
 - o See **Handout: Common Characteristics Purportedly Experienced during NDE's**
 - o Related area: Thanatology (the study of concerns related to death and dying)
- d. How common are they?
 - o Retrospective studies of patients that have almost died indicate from 10-33% had experienced an NDE (ref (1), (2), (3))
 - o A 1981 poll by George Gallup, Jr. of 1500 people who experienced brushes with death showed one third admitted to having an NDE. This equates to 8 million people in the United States alone that could have experienced an NDE while being close to death (ref (4))
 - o A 1991 poll by George Gallup, Jr. estimated that 13 million Americans (5% of the population) have had an NDE (ref (11))
 - o Incidentally; 1-12% report hellish encounters – which is believed to be a low estimate because of the traumatic nature of these accounts (ref (10))

2. Supposed Biblical Accounts of NDE's Claimed in New Age Writings are not True, nor are they Consistent with Contemporary ones

- a. Paul on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:3-6; 26:12-23**)
 - o Claimed NDE correlations:
 - o Presence of light
 - o Spiritual being encountered
 - o The giving of a message
 - o The changed life – preaching of love as a way of life
 - o Reasons to reject NDE claim:
 - o No indication in the texts that Paul died in this experience
 - o The light blinded Paul and impacted his vision for some time
 - o The "spiritual being" identified Himself very specifically as Jesus Christ
 - o Paul very openly proclaimed what happened to him to others
 - o Paul fulfilled the specific commission given him – to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not a fuzzy "love as a way of life" only
- b. Paul's account of being taken up to the third heaven (**2 Cor 12:2-7**)
 - o Claimed NDE correlations:
 - o Reference to possibly being out of the body (**12:2,3**)
 - o Taken into paradise
 - o Inexpressible things were experienced (**12:4,7**)
 - o Reasons to reject NDE claim:
 - o Paul was not sure if he were in or out of the body (**12:2,3**)
 - o Paul makes no reference to being dead, or close to it
 - o The context implies the Lord granted these visions to Paul as a blessing to him, they did not serve to change his ministry or outlook on life
- c. Biblical accounts of people who were brought back from the dead reveal no insight into what they experienced during their death
 - o The Shunammite boy brought back by Elisha (**2 Kings 4:8-37**)

- o A dead man that was being buried by Israelites was thrown into Elisha's tomb when they saw Moabite raiders. When the body touched Elisha's bones, he came to life (2 Kings 13:21)
- o The ruler's dead daughter brought back by Jesus (Matt 9:18-26)
- o Lazarus brought back to life by Jesus after three days (John 11:38-44)
- o Paul in Acts 14:19-20
- d. Other accounts of visions described by prophets (Isaiah; Jeremiah; Daniel; John; etc.)
 - o Though they may have occurred during times of extreme stress, they were not associated with a death experience
 - o Their visions were consistent with the Biblical record and pointed towards the majestic, sovereign God as well as their own sinfulness – never their own “goodness”
 - o Most typically, Old and New Testament prophets visions are not used by writers to validate NDEs
- e. Jesus' reference to Himself as “the light of the world” (John 8:12)
 - o Jesus is describing Himself as the source of salvation for man – there is no other
 - o The description Jesus uses refers to the spiritual illumination He brings to the world and does not have any reference to a death or near death experience
 - o During NDEs, attention is not focused on Jesus at all, but on the person to love others
 - o NDE accounts do not command one to follow Jesus, such as Jesus Himself commanded “...he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”
- f. Paul's reference to “spiritual bodies” in 1 Cor 15:35-52. These descriptions refer to the bodies that believers will have after they are resurrected
- g. The account of Stephen's stoning (incidentally, his vision was prior to his being stoned) (Acts 8:54-60)

3. Selected NDE Accounts and Messages are Publicized Widely and are at Radical Variance with Biblical Truths

a. The afterlife

- o NDE:
 - o A place full of peace, acceptance and indescribable joy
 - o Typically portrayed as a place of unimaginable love for everyone, independent of their lives or belief background
 - o Hellish accounts are not publicized, while heavenly paradise accounts are constantly in the forefront
- o Biblical:
 - o For the believer, they will be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8); in paradise (Luke 23:40-43; 1 Cor 2:9; 2 Cor 12:4; Rev 2:7)
 - o Believers will be with the Lord forever (1 Thess 4:17)
 - o Believers will be received into the room God has prepared for them in His house (John 14:1-4)
 - o For the non-believer, raging fire (Heb 10:26-27; Rev 20:11-15) and everlasting destruction – shut out from the presence of the Lord awaits them (2 Thess 1:6-10)
 - o Hell is a very real, everlasting place of torment for the unregenerate (Matt 11:20-24; Luke 16:19-31)

b. Judgment

- o NDE:
 - o Virtually no judgment of a person's life or character (universal salvation)
 - o A person is accepted for who they are, independent of what they have done or what their individual beliefs are
 - o The lack of eternal judgment for a person's sin and acceptance of the person on their own merit is virtually universal with non-Christian religions based upon works
 - o Sin in a person is not addressed, nor is repentance or the need for a Savior

- o Biblical:
 - o All will be judged before God (**Rom 2:5-11; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17; Rev 20:11-15**)
 - o The word of God itself will judge us (**Heb 4:12-13**)
 - o Those who are enemies of God will be consumed by raging fire (**Heb 10:26-27**)
 - o It's the narrow path (faith in Jesus Christ alone) that protects us from God's judgment and gives us eternal life – not the broad path of universal salvation (**Matt 7:13-14**)
- c. *Being of Light or spiritual entities*
 - o NDE:
 - o Described as an angel, Jesus Christ, some holy personage, though never identified by name, apparently
 - o Described simply as a being of light (unrecognized)
 - o Any god that a person has worshipped in the past or present
 - o An entity that is accepting of the person, emanating irresistible love and warmth – not Satan or demons
 - o Biblical:
 - o God is a consuming fire (**Heb 12:29**)
 - o Jesus Christ is in His glorified state – like bronze glowing in a furnace (**2 Thess 1:7; Rev 1:12-18**)
 - o Every knee will bow, and tongue confess: “Jesus Christ is Lord...” when we are ushered into His presence (**Phil 2:10**)
 - o Virtually all exposures to spiritual powers are frightening and not reassuring until the person is re-assured by the being (**Rev 1:17-18; Acts 9:3-4; Luke 1:11-12; 30**)
 - o The Bible teaches that to be away from the body is to be with the Lord – not with some “being of light” that is ambiguous at best (**2 Cor 5:6**)
 - o Satan himself can appear as an angel of light (**2 Cor 11:14**)
- d. *The message*
 - o NDE:
 - o Love and compassion for others is the universal attribute needed by man
 - o True meaning in life is found through loving of others
 - o The NDE makes love the all-encompassing attribute for man – do better
 - o One account: “...it is time to live according to your beliefs, whatever they may be, for the end times are upon us”
 - o Biblical:
 - o By their fruit, you will know them
 - o We are to love our enemies, but not to secure our position in heaven, but out of obedience to Jesus Christ, who set the example
 - o True meaning in life is to know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified
 - o The more we understand ourselves, the more we know our sinfulness and need for a Savior.
 - o We are called to evangelize the world through the gospel, not through good works – this is the fruit of our love and concern for others
- e. *Bottom line:* The New Age Connection is very Strong, but not Universal
 - o Many popular writers on NDE's have occult backgrounds, or New Age leanings
 - o Many popular, summary accounts, though caveated, give a strong impression of more consistency amongst NDE's than actually exists
 - o A number of people who have an NDE pursue further contact with spirit beings
 - o However, there are cases where a non-believer, after an NDE, becomes a devoted, committed Christian

4. What Biblical Tests Should we Apply to this Phenomenon?

- a. There are evil spirits, and we are never to seek them out or turn to them (**Lev 19:26, 31**)

- b. The Bible is the final authority on any encounter a person has
 - o The Bible is the one authority that can be trusted to reveal heavenly realities
 - o When extraordinary accounts that go far beyond Biblical descriptions are adjudged as real and authoritative, it functions as extra-biblical revelation – serving to weaken the authority of scripture (**2 Tim 3:16-17**)
- c. The Bible says to test the spirits to see if they are from God (**1 John 4:1-3, 6**)
 - o Does it acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?
 - o Does it acknowledge Jesus at all?
 - o Does it acknowledge the Word of God as authoritative and true?
 - o Satan is a liar and murderer from the beginning (**John 8:44**)
- d. Does the message that is conveyed contradict scripture?
 - o Believers are given the Great Commission to evangelize the lost – where is this re-iterated in NDE accounts? (**Matt 28:18-20**)
 - o Believers are to do all things as unto Christ (**Col 3:17; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 10:5**)
 - o If the message that is given is contradictory to scripture (i.e. a universalist message), then the giver must be concluded to be an evil spirit and not God (**John 14:6; 2 Cor 11:3-4; Gal 1:6-9; 1 Cor 14:37-38**)
- e. What fruit comes from these experiences? (**Matt 7:15-23**)
 - o Only those that do the will of our Heavenly Father will bear good fruit
 - o Those that follow another gospel, who do not need Jesus Christ, bear fruit only for their own destruction
- f. Is the message enticing, but destructive? (**1 Tim 4:1**)
 - o God warns that there are deceiving spirits that will cause some to abandon the faith
 - o The being of light exudes love, joy, peace and universal acceptance – exactly what in our flesh we want to hear, but not what we need to hear (**2 Tim 4:3**)
 - o Satan is the great liar and deceiver, and can appear as an angel of light himself (**2 Cor 11:14**).
 - o His schemes and plans are what man wants to hear – not what pleases God (**2 Cor 2:11**)
 - o The New Age theology that permeates many of the NDE experiences could be the foundation for a universal religion of the Anti-Christ
- g. However, a final note: God can use evil to accomplish good (**Gen 50:19-20; Acts 2:22-36**)

5. Some Final Thoughts & Bottom Lines

- a. Beware of popular writings on this subject – since selective portrayal of experiences, as well as detailed aspects reflect a worldview that is decidedly anti-Biblical
- b. Similarities, and numbers of accounts, tend to support the conclusion that people do experience something separate from themselves
- c. Realistically, there could be a variety of different causes involved. A given account could be the result of one or more of the following (but not all):
 - o **Demonic influence** with a New Age message being the dominant characteristic to degrade the Biblical message. Note:
 - o Individuals are not necessarily seeking these experiences out, thus they are not guilty of divination or spiritism
 - o When those that experience an NDE and then seek out contact with these beings, it does violate God's command to stay away from all evil spirits
 - o **Actual physiological effects** that are a result of chemicals produced by the body when near death, and/or psychological effects that occur at the same time
 - o Just as chemicals can affect a person's mind, so body produced chemicals may induce strong effects
 - o Cannot rule out pure imagination also (**Ezek 13:2**)
 - o **Experience specifically used by God** to lead a person to true faith and salvation
 - o As long as the message was true to God's word, and the experience did not conflict with Biblical teachings
 - o A testimony that glorifies Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior is worthy of our serious consideration as to the source (**1 Cor 12:3**)

- o Could God use an evil spirit to bring a person into His kingdom? Definitely, God could do this as He so choose to use Baalam (Num 22-24)
 - o Pure speculation (fiction). Some accounts may be to gain attention and notoriety
 - o Apparently, one universal theory cannot address or explain all accounts
 - o For a longer list of potential explanations see **Handout: Alternative Explanations Put Forth by Researchers**
- d. The cultural adaptation (with New Age underpinnings) that appears to occur, further substantiates many of the experiences as of Demonic origin
- o Cave paintings (France & Spain) from the Ice Age appear to depict possible life scenes similar to those described in contemporary NDEs
 - o Ancient accounts have reflected “Orthodox” Catholic teachings
 - o St. Bebe (673-735)(“Ecclesiastical History of the English People”) relates a man from Northumbria that died then returned to life several hours later with an NDE (heaven and hell)
 - o Thecla’s vision (furnaces, Promised Land, etc.)
 - o Vision of Gregory (disciple of Saint Basil the New) in 10th Century (toll-houses, good works saves)
 - o K. Ueksuell, in the late 19th Century (evil spirits, angels rescued him)
 - o Indian Hindu’s have had NDE’s with return to life due to administrative errors
 - o Each religion tends to see their own diety as the “being of light”
- e. The overall message is deceptive and spiritually destructive
- o Instead of relying on “human” authority, NDE’s allow a person to claim “divine” authority to justify their (falsely believed) beliefs
 - o “Love” for others, and unconditional acceptance of the person, is a powerful message that mirrors many Biblical teachings – but denies the foundational need for judgment of our sins
 - o With NDE’s there is no fear of death
 - o With NDE’s judgment and hell are non-existent (all make it into heavenly bliss)
- f. The Bible is clear on our calling and our source of comfort:
- o We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves
 - o We are only conditionally accepted by God – through our faith in Jesus Christ alone
 - o Jesus Christ is the only true, authoritative person to come back from a total death experience

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