Currents in Political Ideologies:

The Biblical Divine Institutions Contra Post-Fascist Theories

Introduction

The responsibility falls upon the apologist to defend a holistic Christian worldview that addresses socio-political issues. Justin Martyr wrote his first apology in response to the government's persecution of Christians. Tertullian did likewise a generation later with his *Apologeticus* and Lactantius followed suit in *Divinae Institutiones*. In Western Christendom, the Roman Catholic Church would seek authority over governments, while in Eastern Christendom, Orthodox Churches would seek symphonia with governments. The Protestant Reformation raised suspicion of ecclesiastical structures. It revived the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, thus leading to two significant developments, the first being a call for a separation of the church and the state and the second an eventual systemization of dispensational thought as a result of consistent application of literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutics. There is now a uniquely dispensationalist task of developing socio-political thought through the plain interpretation of Scriptures, which is manifested by developing biblically-derived divine institutions as a standard for refuting post-fascist political ideologies as being outside the Christian worldview. These divine institutions are the individual, the family, and the country.

Two post-fascist trends that are prevalent today are leftism and ruscism, both of which have developed as continuations of 20th-century fascist ideology but with key distinctives. Both forms of post-fascism seek to dissolve the individual and the family into the collective (albeit in different ways) and strive for a multipolar future that dissolves countries (albeit through different methods). Christians should be equipped with the divine institutions and able to evaluate political

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ideologies accordingly with hopes that both current and future political heresies will be identifiable as false.

Identification of the Problem

To get to the root of the problem, three sets of currents need attention and will be discussed in the following pages. The first set of currents relates to Christian ideas in socio-political thought. This section will show how the dispensational basis for divine institutions differs from other ideologies that have contributed to socio-political thought under the umbrella of Christendom. The second set of currents relates to the three divine institutions. This section will provide an overview of how other Christian thinkers have thought about the divine institutions of individuals, families, and countries, and it will propose some modifications and clarifications. The final section relates to currents in post-fascist ideology. This section will give a short history of where post-fascist thought originates and will consider two current trends in post-fascist thought (leftism and ruscism). Nuancing these three topics may help Christians build a biblical framework that uses the three divine institutions to refute specific socio-political trends.

Currents in Christian Socio-Political Thought

According to Christopher Cone's model of worldview construction, "There are four major areas of philosophical inquiry that make up the basic components of worldview: epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and socio-political philosophy."[1] The first two components, epistemology and metaphysics, tell how the world is, while the second two components, ethics and socio-political philosophy, tell how the world ought to be. The logical progression would be to begin with how things are and from there develop how the world ought to be. Still, social

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[1] Christopher Cone, *Priority in Biblical Hermeneutics and Theological Method* (Raymore, MO: Exegetica Publishing, 2018), 1.

pressure tends to start with discussions of how the world ought to be, with a pressure to build an epistemology and metaphysics around ethical and political discourse.

A Dispensational Epistemology
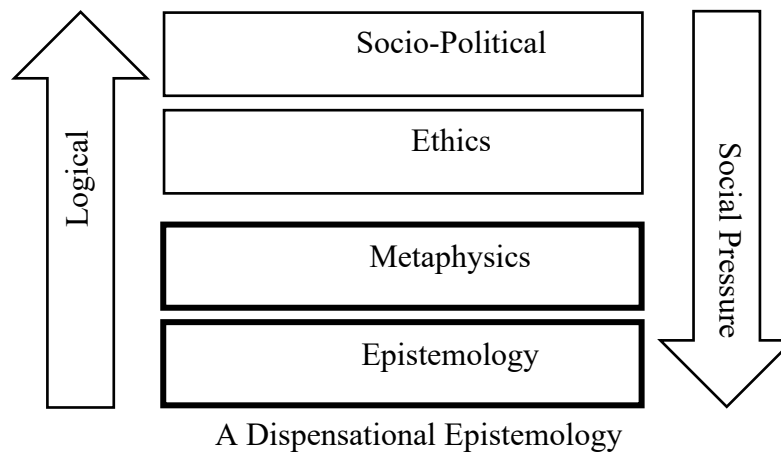
Dispensationalism is a school of thought that results from the consistent application of literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutics throughout the Bible. This hermeneutic is based on some epistemological presuppositions that are worth clarifying as these points will serve as the basis for evaluating other evangelical approaches to socio-political thought. Before moving to some currents in evangelicalism, it is worth bringing out issues related to perspicuity and metahermeneutics.

The doctrine of perspicuity speaks to the clarity of the Bible. That the Bible is perspicuous means it may be read and understood on its own terms and does not rely on additional interpretation from outside. The doctrine of perspicuity is a normative result of proper views of the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures. If God has given a sufficient text to be man's authority, then it is possible for man to read and understand the text.

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox responses to Protestant hermeneutics are often that the doctrine of perspicuity makes the individual the ultimate authority.[2] The difference may

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[2] See, for example, Casey Chalk, "Perspicuity: Protestantism's Achilles' Heel" *New Oxford Review*, 06, (2023): 40–43.

be viewed as a matter of metahermeneutics: is meaning created by the reader or does the author fix it? On an ecclesiastical framework, the Bible could be seen as fluid in meaning with the clergy having the authority to create meaning through interpretation. There would also be the implication that the individual also creates meaning when he reads, but because he lacks the authority of apostolic succession, his created meaning would be flawed.

Reformed perspectives on perspicuity are also problematic. John Frame would be and example of a reformed theologian who allows his Calvinist soteriology to drive his bibliology. He restricts the doctrine of perspicuity to "those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation"[3] (note also that belief is insufficient for salvation because observance is also a requirement). This would be a restriction on perspicuity to content because only certain portions of Scripture would be perspicuous. Frame extends the restriction on perspicuity beyond the content to include restrictions on the audience as he writes, "The clarity of the Word, therefore, is selective. It is for some, not all. It is for those with whom God intends to fully communicate."[4] Frame is advocating here a double-restriction on perspicuity by saying that not every portion of the Bible is clear and not everyone may read the Bible and understand the parts of the Bible that are clear. Robert Letham is a reformed theologian who also restricts the extent of perspicuity to the saving message:

> Not all of the Scriptures is of equal weight or significance. Some things —those necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation— have a strategic significance and shed light on the rest. They are paradigmatic for the whole. Moreover, saving truth is set forth "in some place of Scripture or other," not in every single place. Additionally, these things are set forth so that a "sufficient"— not exhaustive—understanding may result. Nor are they equally intelligible to all.

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[3] John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, ProQuest Ebook Central (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 244.
[4] Ibid., 246.

The reason the saving message is reliable is that the whole comes from God. The Reformed doctrine of perspicuity refers to the saving message of salvation.[5]

Notice how Letham develops his argument against full perspicuity. He is correct that some passages have more significance than others. He is technically correct that the saving message is clear and that proper soteriology sheds light on other issues, though he would disagree in the details of how that works out. Reformed epistemology restricts the perspicuity of Scriptures in content and audience so that the Bible does not speak clearly about non-salvific issues which would inform readers of socio-political thought. The political results of the reformed restrictions on perspicuity include a drift from the Bible to seek truth elsewhere (as will be seen in the example of Abraham Kuyper below).

The dispensationalist holds to a non-restrictive doctrine of perspicuity. The dispensationalist affirms that the Bible's Author fixes meaning, so that the Author is the authority and the interpreter's responsibility is to discern the meaning that the Author conveyed. In the case of the Bible, this is the meaning which God Himself has set. The dispensationalist would also argue against the restricted perspicuity of reformed theology, by pointing out that it is God's intention with the Bible to reveal, not conceal, the information therein. Because God sets the meaning, and because God is perfect, and because God invented human language, and because God endowed man with the ability to use human language, it follows that the book which God wrote should be read using the conventions of language that God invented to find the meaning that God revealed in the text. While it is possible—and indeed common—for a man to misread the Bible, the fault lies on the reader, not on the Author.

A Dispensational Metaphysical Approach

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[5] Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology*, ProQuest Ebook Central (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 199–200.

Returning to Cone's model, "Metaphysics considers four major areas: ontology (the nature of existence), axiology (the nature of value), teleology (the nature of design and purpose), and eschatology (the nature of the future)."[6] A literal-grammatical-historical reading of Genesis 1–11 reveals certain ontological realities with teleological implications that inform an axiology that assigns value to certain aspects of society that should be protected under socio-political philosophy. Such a metaphysical layout would serve as a basis for mankind to appropriately govern himself during the interim period between the end of Genesis 11 and the beginning of the messianic kingdom.

<div align="center">Some Alternative Approaches</div>

Before deriving the divine institutions from the Bible and using these to refute post-fascist ideology, first a word is due to some alternative models that have been developed in other sectors of Christendom. The dispensationalist properly assumes biblical authority, but other models have come from non-dispensationalist forms of Christianity that prioritize experience or eschatological presuppositions.

<div align="center">*Eschatologically-Driven Systems*</div>

Amillennialism and postmillennialism are eschatological schemes that spur from rejections of dispensational epistemology. Dispensational metahermeneutics would see the meaning of the Bible as fixed at the moment of authorship, and the dispensationalist doctrine of perspicuity would have that this single and unchanging meaning of the Bible is discernable today as it was at the moment of authorship. In the dispensational framework, when God promised to establish a literal earthly and Israel-centric kingdom, the proper interpretation is that this is precisely what He will deliver. Because this kingdom has not yet been established, the

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[6] Cone, *Priority*, 11.

dispensationalist concludes that the kingdom is yet future. The amillennialist and postmillennialist disagree with the dispensationalist and would have that the promises made to Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures must be reinterpreted spiritually through the lens of a kingdom establishment in the Greek Scriptures. Amillennialism sees the church as the fulfillment of the kingdom with Christ currently reigning spiritually. Postmillennialism envisions the church building a transformative spiritual kingdom that will culminate in a Christianized world before Christ's return. The alternatives to premillennial eschatology necessitate a spiritualized hermeneutical approach that would not have been evident to the original audience of the Bible and, therefore, reject the dispensational epistemology that spurs from the perspicuity of Scriptures.

The Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church come from amillennial perspectives and are constructed on an ecclesiastical structure that positions clergymen as carrying out the function of a priesthood. The messianic kingdom described in the Bible has political attributes, so a reasonable conclusion would be that the priesthood should be involved in the politics over the land. Despite the eschatological similarity between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, there are several dissimilarities, including ecclesiology. Roman Catholicism submits to a papacy with a single Pope over the entire church, while Eastern Orthodoxy has a plurality of patriarchates with several autonomous churches of equal standing.[7] The amillennial

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[7] One exception would be the Russian Orthodoxy Church, which is the heresy of ethno-phyletism, which restricts true Orthodoxy to the Russian people and culture. Since the religion is supposed to expand, the Russian people and culture must expand without becoming globalist. Teofil Stanciu explains the situation well: "Coming back to ROC [the Russian Orthodox Church], it presents itself as the Third Rome and deploys a whole arsenal of symbolic images evoking the uniqueness and messianism of Russian Christianity, sending the underlying message that the Kingdom of God finds its most appropriate form in Russian civilization. But, by way of the "Christianity defender" rhetoric, it appeals to the Christian sensibilities of the Eastern Europeans: it inflames the Orthodox ego (and aims to profit from all the West-East mentality clashes) and it fuels all the fears that secularism and different forms of progressivism stir in this part of the world, especially in traditional and conservative groups." Teofil Stanciu, "The Unholy War: Heresies and Theological Errors in the Russian Orthodox Church's Support for War," *Bohoslovs'ki posdumy: Skhidnoĭevropeĭs'kyĭ zhurnal bohoslov'ia* (AUG 2023) 21, no. 1 (2023), 13–14.

eschatology positions the church in a position within the state, but the differing ecclesiological structures drive a differing relationship between church and state: the Roman Catholic doctrine of two swords sought to maintain the Pope's authority over political power, while the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of symphonia sought to keep the ecclesiastical and state authorities distinct with neither subordinate to the other. Granted, the two swords doctrine and symphonia are somewhat dated in their most effective expressions, but the doctrines continue today in government relations with Roman Catholicism[8] and Eastern Orthodoxy.[9]

The postmillennialist sees a spiritual kingdom already established that will grow to cover the whole world as Christians increasingly dominate the planet.[10] One form of postmillennial socio-political thought is Christian reconstructionism, which developed in the 20th century as R. J. Rushdoony's relationship with evangelicalism grew increasingly hostile.[11] Christian reconstructionism is on a mission to abolish the constitutional republic and replace it with an unprecedented—and unbiblical—despotism. This Christian reconstructionist despotism is challenging to interact with as the view is underdeveloped. In a counterpoints book on the role of the Mosaic Law, Greg Bahnsen (a representative of the theonomic reformed view) admitted, "As noted previously, much homework remains to be done in interpreting and applying God's laws to our modern world. However, what modern legislators, magistrates, and judges should be concerned to apply and enforce in the state are the precepts of God's law."[12] Another postmillennialist approach is evident from a New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) perspective.

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[8] For example, see DmytroHoncharenko, "Does the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church Contain the Modernized Elements of the Medieval Doctrina De Duo Gladi?" *Cxià,* no. 1(165) (June 9, 2021): 104–108.

[9] For example, see Ain Riistan, "The Moscow Patriarchate and the Conflict in Ukraine" *Sõjateadlane: Estonian Journal of Military Studies* no. 2 (2016): 206–231.

[10] David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: An Eschatology of Dominion* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1985), 71.

[11] Michael McVicar, *Christian Reconstruction: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 106–141.

[12] Greg L. Bahnsen et al., *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, ed. Stanley Gundry (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 1996), §77.

This scheme sees the world under Satanic dominion but with current apostles on a mission to deliver the world from evil spirits.[13] One form of NAR socio-political thought is Seven Mountain Dominionism, in which Christians are called to transform seven spheres of society: family, government, arts and entertainment, media, business, education, and religion. These spheres are not derived biblically but come from an alleged revelation given to Bill Bright and Loren Cunningham in 1975.[14] The charismatic influence emphasizes the demonic realm, replacing legitimate biblical evidence with ongoing revelation, thus leaving the movement vulnerable to conspiracy theories at the whims of current events.[15]

Abraham Kuyper's Sphere Sovereignty

Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901–1905) and developed a philosophy of politics, which he gave two names in his 1876 manifesto words, "either antirevolutionary or Christian-historical, whether you focus on what we oppose or on what we wish to promote."[16] The antirevolutionary context would be responsive to what was embodied in the French revolution and the Christian-historical context would be a development of the Dutch reformed tradition.

A key development of Dutch reformed political thought for Kuyper was sphere sovereignty. Calvin's context of the reformation developed several ideas as responses to Roman Catholicism; among the topics was the relation of church and state. Corruption was exasperated in the Roman Catholic Church (and indeed in Eastern Orthodox neighbors) when the church tried

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[13] John Eckhardt, *Moving in the Apostolic: How to Bring the Kingdom of Heaven to Earth* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books: 2017), ch. 8.

[14] Sears, Brian C. "Power, Prophecy, And Dominionism: The New Apostolic Reformation Goes To Washington." *Fides Et Historia* 54, no. 2 (Summer, 2022): 95–96.

[15] Damon T. Berry, *The New Apostolic Reformation, Trump, and evangelical Politics: The Prophecy Voter* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 43–46.

[16] Abraham Kuyper, *Our Program: A Christian Political Manifesto*, trans. and ed. Harry Van Dyke (Bellingham, Washington: Lexham Press, 2015), §59.

to maintain a role within the nation's politics, so as reformed thinkers broke away from Catholicism, they also necessarily wanted to decrease the Roman Catholic Church's role in politics, hence a clearer distinction between church and state in the reformed political tradition. Indeed, a similar phenomenon occurred in Kuyper's own life as he led a hundred thousand Calvinists out of the Calvinist state church.[17]

The Dutch term for sphere sovereignty is *souvereiniteit in eigen kring*, which is translated literally as "sovereignty within its own circle,"[18] and sometimes is called *differentiated responsibility*. Another term would be *souvereiniteit in eigen sfeer* "sovereignty in its own sphere," which occurred in 1853 before Kuyper became a relevant figure.[19] The notion is that there are several sectors in life and society, each of which has responsibilities and authorities. A key quote from Kuyper's 19876 manifesto, *Our Program*, that relates to sphere sovereignty is as follows:

> The various entities— human persons first of all— which God called into being by his creative powers and to which he apportioned power, are almost all, in whole or in part, of a moral nature. There is a distinctive life of science; a distinctive life of art; a distinctive life of the church; a distinctive life of the family; a distinctive life of town or village; a distinctive life of agriculture; a distinctive life of industry; a distinctive life of commerce; a distinctive life of works of mercy; and the list goes on.
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> Now then, next to and alongside all these entities and ever so many other organizations stands the institution of the state.
>
> Not above them, but alongside them. For each of these organizations possesses *sphere-sovereignty*, that is to say, derives the power at its disposal, not as a grant from the state but as a direct gift from God.
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> Fathers have power over their children, not as a gift from the state but by the grace of God. The only right the state has at most is to codify the right that fathers

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[17] Dirk Jellema, "Abraham Kuyper's Attack on Liberalism," *The Review of Politics* 19, no. 4 (1957): 476.

[18] George Harinck, "I Look through My Window into Life: Kuyper's Notion of Sphere Sovereignty (1870-1880)," *Journal of Markets & Morality* 23, no. 2 (2020): 265.

[19] J. Glenn Friesen, "New Research on Groen van Prinsterer and the Idea of Sphere Sovereignty," *Philosophia Reformata* 84, no. 1 (2019): 9. He cites page 68 of Doedes, J.I. (1853). Aan de Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk. Ernst en vrede 1, pp. 62–71.

> have received from God and, should a father want to injure the rights that God has also given to the child, to restore the situation as God has intended it.
>
> The state is differentiated from all these other organizations by the fact that government alone has public power, whereas all other organizations in and of themselves are of a private nature.[20]

The concept of sphere sovereignty is an interesting one. The notion is that there are countless spheres with their own attributes, but the mere fact that they are endless shows that spheres may come and go, so they are not individually supported in the Bible. Indeed, George Hanrick concluded that "Abraham Kuyper's ontological notion of sphere sovereignty was not so much the cumulative result of his knowledge of the intellectual history, mainly that of Calvinism, but to a large extent his own invention—he did this by looking out of his window."[21]

As Kuyper himself was a Calvinist, not a biblicist, his sphere sovereignty model did not come from the Bible itself and was easily manipulated to the benefit of anti-biblical ideologies. Kuyper also harbored a racism that could be described as a "full-blown subscription to contemporary European race theory, to which he added a dollop of biblical imagery."[22] He wrote of a superiority of the so-called "Aryan race" (Dutch *Arische ras*) over the so-called "negro population" (Dutch *negerbevolking*)[23] and spoke of Africans as having "a far lower form of existence."[24] Dutch Reformed political theorists in South Africa gave a racially-charged application to Kuyper's sovereign sphere manifesto by demanding an apartness between Black and White South Africans. The policies were called according to the Afrikaans word for *apartness*, which would be *apartheid*, to describe the radical, racial, and reformed ideology of

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[20] Abraham Kuyper, *Our Program: A Christian Political Manifesto*, trans. and ed. Harry Van Dyke (Bellingham, Washington: Lexham Press, 2015), §59.

[21] Hanrick, "I Look through My Window," 277.

[22] James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat*, ProQuest Ebook Central version (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 240.

[23] See Abraham Kuyper, *Varia Americana* (Amsterdam: Höveker & Wormser, 1899), 11–12. Translated by James Eglinton, "*Varia Americana* and Race," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11, no. 1–2 (2017): 75–76.

[24] Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Stone-Lectures* (Amsterdam-Pretoria: Höveker & Wormser, 1899), 34.

separation. These reformed churches of South Africa were not the only ones to radicalize Kuyper into a racial ideology. Allan Boesak (b. 1946) is a South African Dutch Reformed anti-apartheid activist and politician. Boesak builds a case from Calvin and Kuyper for Black liberation theology, for example, in the following excerpt:

> "A just and well-regulated government," Calvin said in a sermon on Psalm 82:3, "will be distinguished for maintaining the rights of the poor and afflicted." Again the call is not for "Christian charity" that would leave systemic injustices untouched. So for Calvin, as it must be for us, what is at stake here are the *rights* of the poor… It is this radical Reformed understanding of the choices God makes that makes Abraham Kuyper say, and he is doing no more than following Calvin in this:
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>> When rich and poor stand opposed to each other, Jesus never takes his place with the wealthier, but always with the poorer. He is born in a stable; and while foxes have holes and birds have nests, the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head . . . Both the Christ, and also just as much his disciples after him as the prophets before him invariably took sides against those who were powerful and living in luxury, and for the suffering and the oppressed.
>
> This is the character of the radical Calvinism that black Reformed Christians made the corner stone of our theological and political understanding of justice and which ultimately decimated the spurious blend of Volk romanticism, pietism, racism, and nationalism that made up the "Boer Calvinism" of white South Africa. Their pretenses of Reformed theology were not durable, nor sustainable… Our hearing and listening to Calvin differently did not just take us on a different path from that of the power structures in the white Reformed churches, the dominant theology that governed their thinking and praxis, and the policies of their government; it set us on a collision course.[25]

An evaluation of Black liberation theology would be outside the scope of this article, but Boesak's ability to repurpose Kuyper for the opposite extreme of apartheid is telling. Both Black liberation theology and the apartheid in South Africa are complex issues that should not be reduced solely to one single issue, much less should Abraham Kuyper take the entire blame for

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[25] Allan Boesak, *Kairos, Crisis, and Global Apartheid: The Challenge to Prophetic Resistance,* 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015), 50. For the blockquote, he footnotes: Abraham Kuyper, in his address before the Christian Social Congress in 1891, cited by Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, 73. See also Boesak, *Tenderness*, 207.

either. However, before accepting fully the Kuyperian sphere sovereignty model, it is worth considering how these two completely contradicting ideologies appealed to Kuyper's ambiguity in supporting their ideas. Kuyper developed his sphere sovereignty model off of a Reformed framework that did not have biblical support. The use and abuse of sphere sovereignty is but a symptom of this deeper authority problem, which is problematic for the Kuyperian model.

Summary on Spheres and Kingdoms

Literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutics is the most logical conclusion to the concept of *sola scriptura* that the reformers hailed. Kuyper's Calvinism starts on the right foot of rejecting Roman Catholicism,[26] but dispensationalism goes a step further by taking a positive step to the Bible. The result is not simply an ever-changing list of sovereign spheres, but rather a short list of divine institutions which are laid out in Scriptures. The concept of Seven Mountain Dominionism is more restrictive than Kuyper's sphere sovereignty, but it still falls short because it lacks biblical support. That said, there may be some benefit to studying sovereign spheres as there can often be an overlap between the experientially-derived spheres and the biblically-derived divine institutions.[27]

The eschatologically-driven systems have undertones of conquest. In the two-sword system, the clergy rises to the position of appointing government; in the symphonia system, the clergy rises to equality with the government; and in the dominionist system, the church overthrows governments with hopes of expanding into a global empire. On a dispensational framework, Christians realize that the world is currently under Satanic influence and will remain such until the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom when Satan will be bound for 1,000

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[26] See for example, Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1931), 28–34.

[27] For example, see Abraham Kuyper, *Pro Rege: Living under Christ's Kingship*, John H. Kok and Nelson D. Kloosterman, eds., Albert Gootjes, trans. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

years. As such, a dispensational approach to socio-political thought will not necessitate a current conquest. A dispensational approach would anticipate that achievable goals are laid out in Scripture in the form of commands that God has given to the entirety of the human race, hence the divine institutions.

The divine institution model usurps eschatologically-driven socio-political thought by reframing the discussion onto a dispensational framework sufficient for a holistic worldview while restricting the sovereign sphere model to the specifics of what the Bible has prescribed for the entire human race.

Currents in Divine Institutions Studies

For the purposes here, the term *divine institutions* shall be defined as follows:

> Divine institutions are absolute social structures which God announced to all of humanity at their founding and which He designed for the benefit of mankind, both believers and unbelievers alike. The divine institutions are: the individual, the family, and the country.

This definition and identification of divine institutions align well with previous thinkers' contributions, but there are a few nuances and clarifications in the above definition that stand apart from others.

Thomas Ice and Ed Hindson write, "The first divine institution is *responsible dominion* (Genesis 1:26–30; 2:15–17; Psalm 8:3–8). It is the sphere in which an individual is responsible to God for the decisions he makes."[28] The term *the individual* is preferable as it removes the word *dominion* and its connotations of postmillennial dominionism that both Ice and Hindson reject. Also, dominion is not a social structure as the individual is, so calling the first institution *the individual* will be more harmonious with the social structure motif.

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[28] Ed Hindson and Thomas Ice, *Charting the Bible Chronologically: A Visual Guide to God's Unfolding Plan* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2016), 26.

A significant thinker in the history of the discussion around divine institution verbiage has been R.B. Thieme, Jr. (1918–2009), who codified four divine institutions as: "The individual, under the authority of his volition," "Marriage, under the authority of the husband," "Family, under the authority of parents," and "The national entity, under the authority of government."[29] For Thieme, each divine institution has an authority, so marriage and family could be independent institutions as they have different authorities. The idea is not invalid, but for this project, the family will be positioned as the divine institution and marriage will be considered a part of family.

It is common to distinguish between a divine institution of the government and another institution of the distinct nation.[30] Joe Griffin uses the term "The divine institution of nationalism."[31] Today the word *nationalism* has become loaded beyond Griffin's intentions, but Griffin's understanding of the term would certainly align well with Thieme's:

> **nationalism** (a) God's design that organizes the world into multiple sovereign entities for the purpose of maintaining order and perpetuating the human race; (b) deference to the principles that ensure the endurance, prosperity, and virtuous function of the national entity, the fourth divine institution.[32]

With this working definition of *nationalism*, the term itself should not be too frightening as it is God's method for maintaining order rather than some men's false assumptions of racial superiority, as is often thought of *nationalism* today. Still, the word *nation* and its derivatives fall short of describing this divine institution as *nation* refers to people regardless of land. Another

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[29] R.B. Thieme, Jr., *Thieme's Bible Doctrine Dictionary* (Houston, TX: R.B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2022), s.v. divine institutions.

[30] For example, Charles A. Clough, *A Biblical Framework for Worship and Obedience in an Age of Global Deception, Part II: Buried Truths of Origins* (Bel Air, MD: Bible Framework Ministries, 1995), 39; E Dane Rogers, "Dominion: A Survey of the Mediatorial Kingdom," in *Grace & Truth: Theological Essays for the Edification of the Saints*, eds. Bradley W. Maston and E Dane Rogers (Vashon, WA: True Grace Books, 2023), 85–92.

[31] Joe Griffin, *Know What God Thinks: The Threads of Doctrine* (St. Charles MO: Joe Griffin Media Ministries), 22.

[32] R.B. Thieme, Jr., *Thieme's Bible Doctrine Dictionary* (Houston, TX: R.B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2022), s.v. nationalism.

proposed term has been *tribal diversity*,[33] but the *tribe* verbiage can have more restrictive connotations than *nation*. While the protection of the people of the distinct country is the reason for the divine institution, the country's land is irreducible from the equation. The Romani diaspora is an example of a single people group or nation being spread around the world and often maintaining its national identity. Because the Romani nation is dispersed across many countries, each member of the nation is held accountable to the country in which he lives; likewise, the country is obligated to protect every Romani in the land (though often to great failure!).

<div align="center">The Individual</div>

The divine institution of the individual is multifaceted. It includes the doctrine of human exceptionalism, the mandate for productive labor, and personal accountability.

The doctrine of human exceptionalism speaks of the human as a unique creation. Nothing else besides the human was created in God's image according to His likeness. There is much controversy over the nature of the likeness of God and the soteriological ramifications of the image and the fall, but the image of God is the key to human exceptionalism. In the words of Lewis Sperry Chafer, "…the *image* of God, whatever may be true relative to the term *likeness*, is transmitted by physical generation and describes that which is true of all in the human family."[34] The image of God serves as the basis for the eventual establishment of human government (Gen. 9:6) and is relevant to all of mankind. All humans, believer and unbeliever alike, are bearers of God's image, so the universal nature of a divine institution is by definition relevant to the individual.

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[33] Jennifer Gan and Amos Kwok, "Lesson 7: Fill The Earth," notes for the course "Interlocked," Alberta: Anchored International, 18–20.

[34] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary Press, 1947), II.167

One of the ramifications of man being created in the likeness of God is that God rightfully put him above nature. The creation account informs the reader: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" (Gen. 1:26). Later, David would write, "You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet" (Ps. 8:6). The English term "have dominion" occurs in both verses, but the Hebrew has two different words. The Genesis account uses the verb רדה, which has the connotation of bringing something into subjection, while the Psalm uses the verb מֹשל, which has more of a connotation of administration. The command for humanity to rule the world in the רדה sense applied to both man and woman (Gen. 1:28), and after the fall, God tells Eve that her husband shall "rule over" her using the verb מֹשל rather than רדה (Gen. 3:16).

Work was part of the pre-fall world, and therefore, it is good (albeit susceptible to corruption after the fall). Work was not toilsome until the fall, when God said, "In the seat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen. 3:19a). The mandate for productive labor is evident in God's command for man to work before the fall (Gen. 2:15). In addition to assigning Adam to work the ground, God tasked Adam with naming the animals, which would be a further implication of Adam's headship over the animal realm. The text divides the animals that he named into three categories: "So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field" (Gen. 2:20a). The three categories are "cattle," "birds of the air," and "beast of the field." The category of birds is self-explanatory, but the other two are more

nuanced. The cattle are probably domesticated livestock,[35] while the beasts of the field are probably the animals that live in the wild. The livestock were domesticated prior to man being allowed to eat meat (Gen. 9:3), which leaves a few options for their purpose, including the potential to have them as beasts of burden. That Adam and Eve had animals designated to assist them in work before the fall would indicate that part of man's administration of the animal world includes his authority to use the created world to work the creation.

The personal accountability aspect of individual responsibility is evident in the Garden of Eden through God's command regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil and God's response to the violation of the command. The command is found in Genesis 2:15–17:

> [15] Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. [16] And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:15–17)

In this passage, God gives Adam the command not to eat of the forbidden tree with the consequence that Adam will die if he disobeys. The construction translated "you shall surely die" is the qal infinitive followed by the yiqtol מוֹת תָּמוּת, which Arnold Fruchtenbaum explains:

> According to this statement, death was to come on the very same *day* as the violation. Therefore, this cannot refer to physical death since Adam did not die physically on *the day* he partook of the tree; but de did die spiritually on *the day* that he ate. Spiritual death means "separation from God." The Hebrew form is a special construction, *mot tamut*, using the same Hebrew root together twice to make it emphatic, which is why it is translated, *you shall surely die*. Literally, it reads, "dying you will die," but the meaning is emphatic, *You will surely die*.[36]

That the punishment falls on the responsible party is a theme carried through the Mosaic Laws of *lex talionis*. The *Code of Hammurabi* says that if a building collapses and kills a man's son, then

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[35] "This word is not restricted to bovines, but includes all domesticable animals such as sheep." Jonathan Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1–11*, 2nd ed. (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Ministries International, 2015), 236.

[36] Arnold Fructenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*, 3rd edition (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2019), 81

the builder's son should be put to death,[37] but the Mosaic Law's prescription of an eye for an eye (Exod. 21:24)[38] puts the father and son on ontologically equal standing, which is appropriate as they are both God's image-bearers.

The individual is the first divine institution and the only institution of a sole party. This is a society's most fundamental building block, and differing attitudes toward the individual will likely align with varying attitudes toward all other institutions.

<div align="center">The Family</div>

The family is also a multifaceted divine institution. In an ideal scenario, the family consists of a marriage and includes the children from the marriage. As a result of the fall, there is the potential for families to be more complex with deceased spouses, divorces, children out of wedlock, and so forth.

Marriage is a designated relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. Man is designed for monogamous marriage and every culture has had a way of designating legitimate marriages, often with an acceptance of illegitimate marriages as well. Marriage is instituted in Genesis 2:

> [18] Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." [19] Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. [20] The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. [21] So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. [22] The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. [23] The man said,
>
> "This is now bone of my bones,
> And flesh of my flesh;

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[37] *Code of Hammurabi*, 229–230.
[38] See discussion at *b. Bava Kamma* 83b–84a.

> She shall be called Woman,
> Because she was taken out of Man."

> [24] For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (Gen. 2:18–24)

Some preliminary observations should be taken from this passage. First, the state when man was alone was not good. Adam had every creature before him and this was before the altering relationship between man and nature at the fall (Gen. 3) and after the flood (Gen. 9); moreover, Adam was in fellowship with God Himself and this did not suffice to meet the need for fellowship that is found in a wife. Second, the institution of marriage trumps the institution of family into which a man is born (Gen. 2:24), while not exempting a spouse from the mandate to honor his or her parents (Mark 7:1–13). Third, the husband and wife are considered one flesh. As is developed in later texts after sin enters the world, homosexuality is a sin. It follows then that polygamous marriage is also sinful because man and woman are made one flesh in marriage, so introducing another woman into the one flesh would theoretically make two women one flesh with each other and therefore in homosexual violation.

Some thinkers keep marriage as a separate divine institution from family. In the two-institution framework, Thomas Ice and Ed Hindson put it well, "Family is the institution responsible for continuing each family legacy by being responsible for education and wealth. Even if a family chooses to use surrogate teachers, it is still responsible for seeing that a child is properly educated."[39] In the Thieme/Griffin scheme, the boundary between marriage and family is somewhat blurred. Joe Griffin writes, "Marriage is Divine Institution Number 2. This union of man and woman forms the basis for an organization called the home."[40] This blurring may be

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[39] Ed Hindson and Thomas Ice, *Charting the Bible Chronologically: A Visual Guide to God's Unfolding Plan* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2016), 27.
[40] Joe Griffin, *Does He Hear My Prayer? The Process And Procedure* (St. Charles, MO: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2010), 49.

beneficial and deserves to be punctuated in the ongoing discussion of identifying and naming divine institutions.

Griffin's statement is brief and made in passing, but it carries a rather profound implication beyond the marriage/family dynamic. In cultures built around the mantra "it takes a village to raise a child," the organization of the home is being dissolved in favor of a collective village. Shifting the marriage's responsibility to a collective responsibility tarnishes the divine institution of family.

<div align="center">The Country</div>

Like the previous institutions, the country has multiple facets. Unlike the others, the divine institution of the country is the only of the three institutions to come about after the fall.

In the Garden of Eden, man was both holy and ignorant of evil.[41] He was forbidden from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), and when he ate, he gained a conscience (Gen. 3:7 cf. 2:25). After the expulsion from the garden, this conscience became the guiding principle for humanity resulting in great wickedness (Gen. 6:5). After God destroyed the earth, He made a covenant with Noah and his sons—and therefore with the entirety of humanity—which included several provisions, perhaps most relevant to civil government being, "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:6). From this point onward, man is not only to answer to his conscience but also to other men. With the founding of distinct countries, the people within the borders are expected to formulate governments as a constraint on evil to protect the inhabitants within the borders.

The origin of countries is found in Genesis 11:

> [5] But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. [6] And the Lord said, "Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do

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[41] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, II. 202–203.

will be withheld from them. [7] Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." [8] So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. [9] Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Gen. 10:5–9)

In this passage, mankind had rebelled against God's command to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1b), and so God forces them around the world. Language is the instrument that God used, but language in and of itself is not the defining marker of a country. Isaac, Rebecca, and Laban were seven generations removed from Peleg and Jacob was the eighth generation. Yet, Jacob named the heap of witness in Hebrew. In contrast, Laban named it in Aramaic (Gen. 31:47). Eventually Aramaic would become a lingua franca in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Empires and several chapters of the Hebrew Bible would be written in Aramaic for Israeli readers. Today, several people from the nation of Israel understand neither Hebrew nor Aramaic. Today there are global languages such as English, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic that are spoken across several countries, but it is the border, not the language, that distinguishes when one country ends and another begins. God confused the languages in order to disperse the people, but He performed another act of creating boundaries to form the countries.

The Song of Moses provides insight to the division at Babel:

[7] "Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations.
Ask your father, and he will show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you:
[8] When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations,
When He separated the sons of Adam,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the children of Israel.
[9] For the Lord's portion *is* His people;
Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance. (Deut. 32:7–9)

There is a key textual variant in Deuteronomy 32:8. While the NKJV follows the Masoretic Text with "According to the number of the children of Israel" (לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), there are alternative readings that may be translated "according to the number of the sons of God," which would imply that the boundaries were set according to the angelic realm. The Masoretic Text here is preferable,[42] but it is still true that the angelic realm is divided according to countries.[43]

What then would it look like for the division to occur according to the sons of Israel? Arnold Fruchtenbaum delineates four basic purposes for Israel's election: for Israel to be a kingdom of priests, for Israel to be the recipient of God's revelation and to record it, for Israel to propagate the doctrine of the One God, and for Israel to produce the Messiah.[44] Each of these purposes has a pour-over into the Gentile world. Israel served as an access point for the Gentiles

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[42] David Stevens supports the Masoretic reading, but brings in some good points for why the alternative is popular. He writes that the "sons of God" reading: "…is reflected in the Old Latin, one manuscript of Theodotion, and in the Syro-Hexaplar. However, the Septuagint texts of Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion as well as the Latin Vulgate and the Syriac Peshitta favor the Masoretic text. Both readings are in the Targum. While the Targum Onkelos presupposes the Masoretic text, the Palestinian Targum Pseudo-Jonathan as well as the apocryphal Jewish writings reflect both traditions." Another key variant is found in 4QDeut, which has בני אל. Some weaknesses in the "sons of God" reading are evident. Stevens mentions Patrick Skehan who supported the "sons of God" reading before the publishing of the variant in 4QDeut; however, Skehan takes a view which sees this as a reference to the stars, which is close to some of the problematic approaches that are evident some liberal approaches to the Bible. Some have suggested that the reading "sons of God" would shock the original audience as potentially polytheistic, hence an intentional error in making it "sons of Israel," but the term "sons of God" is found as early as Job 1:6, so this would be an unlikely reason for the exchange. Stevens suggests that a homoioteleuton could explain an easier accidental reduction from ישראל to אל. Following the principle of *lectio difficilior potior* (priority for the difficult reading), the "sons of Israel" reading is preferred as the "sons of God" would be the more likely harmonization to fit into the dispersion context. The more likely reading of "sons of Israel" is less convenient to the development of the divine institutions, but the point still stands that the dispersion resulted in countries that were under specific angelic influence (Dan. 10:13). See David E. Stevens, "Does Deuteronomy 32:8 Refer to 'Sons of God' or 'Sons of Israel'?" *The Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (1997): 134–135; Patrick W. Skehan, "The Structure Of The Song Of Moses In Deuteronomy (Deut. 32: 1-43)." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1951): 153–163.

[43] "Satan also has an impact upon nations and human history. Daniel 10:13 records the incident of a heavenly struggle, lasting three weeks, between an elect angel and the 'prince of the kingdom of Persia,' representing the demonic realm. It became necessary for the elect angel to gain the assistance of a higher-ranking angel, Michael, because he could not handle the prince of Persia alone. This event took place in relation to God's revelation of His plan for Israel and the Gentile nations. Therefore, this angelic conflict affects the affairs of nations upon earth. Revelation 16:13–16 is an example of a similar effect that demons will have in influencing the plans and actions of leaders during the Tribulation." Robert Dean, Jr. and Thomas Ice, *What the Bible Teaches about Spiritual Warfare*, 3rd ed., 132.

[44] Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2020), 526–527.

to understand God, so when God dispersed the nations, He did so in a way sensitive to Israel's distinct role among the Gentiles. What, then, did the setting of the boundaries look like? A common post-flood model would have the ice age occurring due to the catastrophic events of the flood. During this time, there would have been significant changes to the earth's surface as glaciers melted, causing new rivers and rising sea levels.[45] This transitional period likely took centuries and included significant mountain building and volcanic activity.[46] The proposal would be that when God scattered the nations from Babel during the life of Peleg (Gen. 10:25), He used topographical changes to place humanity in separate locations that would include natural boundaries between them but with access to the land designated for Israel.

Returning to the classic model of the divine institution of nationalism, Griffin writes: "God created the boundaries of national entities throughout the world, each with their own indigenous language, so as to restrict the oppressive influence of despotic leaders lusting for power over other human beings."[47] There are three components here: created boundaries, indigenous language, and a restrictive purpose. The model presented here develops the previous model by affirming the restrictive purpose but clarifies the country as a people and government within a boundary regardless of language, ethnicity, or even culture.

<center>A Note on Israel and the Church</center>

God has instituted two more social structures that benefit mankind, but these do not fit the provided definition of divine institution. These are the nation of Israel and the church. The nation of Israel was established with the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12 and takes center

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[45] Henry M. Morris III, *The Book of Beginnings: A Practical Guide to Understanding Genesis* (Dallas: Institute for Creation Research, 2016), 344–350.

[46] Steven M. Gollmer, "A Rapid Ice Age and Transition to Ice Sheet Growth," *Proceedings of the International Conference on Creationism* 9 (2023): Article 9.

[47] Joe Griffin, *One Day at a Time: Overview of Christian Doctrines* (St. Charles, MO: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2013), 75.

stage of the biblical narrative from there. God promised Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3), so Israel is undoubtedly beneficial to all of mankind—believer and unbeliever alike—but because the Abrahamic Covenant was given in private rather than publicly to the entire human race, the nation of Israel does not meet the above definition of divine institution.

The church is another institution God established that benefits believers and unbelievers. The establishment of the church was a local affair in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, so while the coming of the Holy Spirit was a public occasion with many people from many nations present, and while the church is to make disciples of all nations, the church misses the definition of divine institution as it was not implemented before the entire human population.

Currents in Post-Fascist Ideology

A History of Fascism

A historical tracing of leftism and ruscism back to their common roots in the anti-biblical worldview of fascism will help identify some of its errors. The history can be traced from the ideas of Marxism, through the developments of critical theory at the Frankfurt School of the Weimar Republic, to the parallel movements of fascism in Italy and Germany into the 1940. to American developments of intersectionality, and finally from the secular world into liberal Christianity and evangelicalism.

Karl Marx built a worldview that saw the world through the lens of wealth, such that the wealthy *bourgeois* oppressed the poor proletariat. Marx identified certain social structures that he identified as contributors to class oppression. Religion would be one such structure, as Marx

viewed it as a man-made institution that pacified the oppressed as an opiate.[48] Vladimir Lenin

expounds on Marx's sentiment:

> "Religion is the opium of the people" — this statement by Marx is the cornerstone
> of the entire Marxist worldview regarding religion. Marxism always considers all
> modern religions and churches, and all kinds of religious organizations, as organs
> of bourgeois reactions that serve to protect the exploitation and intoxication of the
> working class.[49]

Notice that for Lenin, atheism was irreducible from Marxism since religion, according to

communists, is one of the oppressive institutions against the working class. This worldview of

the oppressors versus the oppressed and social structures that systemize the oppression—with

Christianity being foremost among the oppressive structures—is reminiscent even today in

leftism, which sees the world through the lens of systemic hegemony as well as ruscism, which

sees the world through the lens of national hegemony.

One of the main shortcomings of Marx's work is that he failed to produce a clear and

workable solution for moving the struggling proletariat into a classless society. He saw

revolution as a permanent mission to take state power as the proletariat class enlightened and

organized itself through the generations.[50] Marx did not call for a sudden uprising of the

proletariat against the bourgeoisie because he saw the change as inevitable when the season was

right, but the historical experience was different. No matter how ripe the proletariat class seemed

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[48] See "Introduction" and § 279 in Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right*.

[49] «Религія есть опіумъ народа, — это изреченіе Маркса есть краеугольный камень всего міросозерцанія марксизма въ вопросѣ о религіи. Всѣ современныя религіи и церкви, всѣ и всяческія религіозныя организаціи марксизмъ разсматриваетъ всегда, какъ органы буржуазной реакціи, служащія защитѣ эксплуатаціи и одурманенію рабочаго класса». Vladimir Lenin, "*Ob otnoshenii rabochei partii k religii*" [About the relationship of the workers' party to religion], *Proletarii* [The Proletarian], no. 45 (13/26 May 1909): 1.

[50] Lars T. Lih, "Why Did Marx Declare the Revolution Permanent?: The Tactical Principles of the Manifesto," *Historical Materialism* 28:3 (2020): 39–75.

to be, revolutions did not occur naturally and so some modifications had to be worked into the practice of Marxism.[51]

As the Soviet Union attempted to instill Marxist ideas, some disputes over methodology came to the surface as vocalized in disputes between Russian and Western Marxists. In the months leading up to the German Revolution, Lenin was supportive of the German proletariat, but as the revolution progressed, it became increasingly apparent that the Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) was becoming prominent.[52] During these formative years of the Weimar Republic, Lenin wrote criticisms of the German development of Marxism.[53] To Lenin, it was necessary to instill a dictatorship of the proletariat, but to Karl Kautsky, a democracy that is slowly overtaken by the proletariat would lead to a socialist utopia.[54] In the words of Lenin's famous criticism, "Proletarian democracy is *a million times* more democratic than every bourgeois democracy; Soviet authority is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic."[55] Soviet socialism continued to develop in Moscow's Marx-Engels Institute while the Frankfurt School developed a socialism that broadened Marx's economic theory into a social theory. Though the two schools stayed cordial through the mid-1920s,[56] there were significant developments in Germany as Frankfurt's critical theory sought to identify several critical groups beyond the bourgeois/proletariat dichotomy. Critical theory fits well with Kautsky's model of the

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[51] Dinesh D'Souza, *The Big Lie: Exposing the Nazi Roots of the American Left* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2017), 71–75.

[52] Louis Fischer, *The Life of Lenin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 302–312.

[53] Most notably Vladimir Lenin, *Proletarskai͡a revoli͡ut͡sii͡a i renegat Kautskiĭ* [The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky], *Lenin V.I. Polnoe sobranie cochneniĭ* [Complete Collected Works of V.I. Lenin] volume 37 (Moscow: Politicheskoĭ Literatury, 1969), 237–238.

[54] Jukka Gronow, *On the Formation of Marxism: Karl Kautsky's Theory of Capitalism, the Marxism of the Second International and Karl Marx's Critique of Political Economy* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 205.

[55] «Пролетарская демократия *в миллион раз* демократичнее всякой буржуазной демократии; Советская власть в миллион раз демократичнее самой демократической буржуазной республики.» Vladimir Lenin, *The Renegade Kautsky*, 257.

[56] John Abromeit, *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 180–184.

proletariat expanding his influence in politics as the proletariat was no longer restricted to an economic class, but expanded to include members of critical groups. The Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat was competing with the expanding proletariat of Weimar democracy.

Meanwhile, Marxism was developing as fascism in Italy as Italian Marxists responded to the same problems as their Russian and German counterparts. Giovanni Gentile was an influential Italian philosopher who wrote in the same vein as Marx, but with the experience that revolution is not natural, so, as Dinesh D'Souza puts it, "he conceived the struggle not between the working class and the capitalists, but between the selfish individual trying to live for himself and the fully actualized individual who willingly puts himself at the behest of society and the state."[57] The fascist emphasis on the state is evident in Benito Mussolini's words, "Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State."[58]

As Italian fascism seemed to succeed, critical theory advanced to some natural conclusions in Germany. When people view the world through the lens of critical theory, they lose the ability to differentiate and become paranoid as they view the world as being full of people who are bent on their destruction.[59] As the idea of critical theory gained momentum, it continued to identify new oppressors and quickly turned to racism with an anti-Semitic flavor. The Jews were not viewed as a minority in need of protection, but rather as an oppressive group that needed to be exterminated.[60] In Germany, the philosophical background was set for the perfect storm that led to the rise of a new sort of socialism called *National Socialism*. This new

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[57] Dinesh D'Souza, *The Big Lie*, 53.
[58] Benito Mussolini, "The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism," translated by Jane Soames in Benito Mussolini, *My Autobiography: With "The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism,"* EBSCOhost ebook version (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006).
[59] Ehrhard Bahr, "The Anti-Semitism Studies of the Frankfurt School: The Failure of Critical Theory" *German Studies Review* 1:2 (May, 1978): 133.
[60] Ibid.

socialism came to fruition in the German Workers' Party, which drew inspiration in part from Mussolini as it morphed into the National Socialist German Workers' Party.[61]

The Leftist Approach to Government

Leftism is the leftist ideology that is prominent in the West. Within leftism is a school of thought that draws from the Christian tradition. This woke theology is distinct from and competing with biblical Christianity and the divine institutions suffice to refute the worldview. Before providing a definition for woke theology, it is helpful to see how leftism continued to develop as a post-war fascism and how woke theology developed from leftism.

A New Fascism

Socialism has failed every time that it has been tried. While socialism increased suffering in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, some Marxist philosophers in Frankfurt responded by developing Marxist ideology into a system that came to be known as *critical theory*. Critical theory developed Marxism by taking Marx's critique of capitalism to a larger-scale criticism of society. Instead of focusing on the economic struggle, critical theory identified several critical groups that were being oppressed including race and gender.

Critical theory has multiple roots and it must be remembered that the early Frankfurt School philosophers were contemporary with the early Soviet Socialists who were also developing a Marxism of their own, thus making the Frankfurt School and Marxism–Leninism ideological cousins. In 1923, the Institute for Social Research was formed in affiliation with the University of Frankfurt am Main and had cordial relations with the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow through the mid-1920s amidst the problems that were already manifesting in the Soviet

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[61] Robert Payne, *The Life & Death of Adolf Hitler* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1995), 240–243.

Union.[62] In a recent work on the development of critical theory, Malte Frøslee Ibsen noted that the Frankfurt School remains:

> …one of the few living, breathing traditions of social and political thought in which we still find a commitment to the *kind* of large-scale critique of capitalist society and practical emancipation that Marx inaugurated, and which left-wing intellectuals have largely abandoned in favour of the political moralism of liberal theories of justice or postmodern refusals to countenance any such grand narratives.[63]

The Institute for Social Research became the home for the Frankfurt School and critical theory, which is still at large today a century later.

The Marxist–Leninist and critical theory ideas are closely related but still distinct. Consider for example, how the words of Lenin depict religion as a contribution to the economic class struggle:

> A Marxist must be a materialist, i.e., an enemy of religion, but a materialist dialectically, i.e., one who does not put abstractly the struggles against religion, not on notional grounds, purely theoretical, always preaching the same thing to himself, but concretely, on the grounds of class struggles going in practice and educating the masses more than everything else and better than everything else.[64]

Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School applies a similar ideology of resistance against religion, but with a more holistic vision that goes beyond economics:

> The criticism of religion as mere ideology is justified if it reveals that what were previously impulses in religious disguise, such as dissatisfaction with the order on earth, may become effective today in a different form.… These days, Christianity is not primarily used as a religion but as a crude transfiguration [*Verklärung*] of existing conditions. The genius of political, military and industry leaders, and especially the nation, compete with God for the first place.[65]

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[62] John Abromeit, *Max Horkheimer*, 180–184.

[63] Malte Frøslee Ibsen, *A Critical Theory of Global Justice: The Frankfurt School and World Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 15.

[64] «Марксистъ долженъ быть матеріалистомъ, т. е. врагомъ религіи, но матеріалистомъ діалектическимъ, т. е. ставящимъ дѣло борьбы съ религіей не абстрактно, не на почву отвлеченной, чисто-теоретической, всегда себѣ равной проповѣди, а конкретно, на почву классовой борьбы, идущей *на дѣлѣ* и воспитывающей массы больше всего и лучше всего.» Vladimir Lenin, "*Ob otnoshenii*."

[65] Max Horkheimer, Dawn and Decline: Notes 1926–1931 and 1950–1969, trans. Michael Shaw (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 58–59. Quoted by Malte Frøslee Ibsen, *A Critical Theory of Global Justice: The Frankfurt School and World Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 166.

The critique of the "existing conditions," whether they be purely economic or broader to consider an array of critical oppressed groups, is rooted in the worldview of Marx which the world through the lens of the oppressed and oppressor.

Eventually, the Eastern and Western forms of 20th-century Marxism would come to a head. The German Reich eventually moved along from the Weimar Republic period when and where the Frankfurt School was born. The Weimar Republic was succeeded by National Socialist Germany (*Nationalsozialistisches Deutschland*), which called itself the Greater German Reich (*Großdeutsches Reich*), as it took some ideas of critical theory down their natural course. The Jewish Frankfurt School philosophers, Adorno and Horkheimer, "became the victims of their own theory of fascism as the perverted truth of liberalism"[66] as they were forced into exile during the holocaust. With the tendencies of anti-Semitism already present in the Weimar Republic and the critical theorists' emphasis on critical group oppression, the Frankfurt School contributed to the disaster of National Socialism and the founding of the National Socialist German Workers' Party. A weakness in critical theory is that "The individual loses the ability to differentiate, he becomes paranoid and with this false projection he invests the outer world with the contents of his mind and thus perceives the world as being populated by people who, in his opinion, are bent on destroying him."[67] Tendencies toward fascist-like behavior are still evident in modern forms of critical theory as seen in the violent actions of modern groups such as Antifa or the Black Lives Matter Movement.

The Nazi experiment was a failure, as was its Soviet counterpart, but much of the ideology from the two empires has continued to develop as ideological cousins to this day.[68]

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[66] Ehrhard Bahr, "Anti-Semitism Studies," 133.
[67] Ibid.
[68] For an example on the Russian side, the current war in Ukraine is being ideologically supported by the Eurasian political philosophy of philosophers such as Aleksander Dugin, who borrow heavily from Nazi party

Two important developments have come to the surface in the field of critical theory in recent decades. The first development is the identification of certain critical groups that would not have been at the forefront of the original Frankfurt School and are now the focus of mainstream critical theory. For example, gender fluidity has only recently become an agenda that mainstream society is pushing, so Queer theory is currently a hot topic in critical theory that was not at the forefront of the founders' thoughts. Another important topic to emerge in critical theory is environmentalism. Green theory may come as a surprise since "green" is not a critical group per se, but the materialism of Marx went together with the materialism of Darwin, so today's materialistic views of ecology have become integrated with the materialistic worldview of critical theory.[69] The second important development of critical theory is intersectionality. The term *intersectionality* came about in 1989 in an article that Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw wrote to address legal challenges for Black women[70] and since then, intersectionality has grown into a global academic movement that identifies and unites new critical groups that go beyond Black women to include many racial and ethnic groups, genders, nationalities, sexual orientations, disabilities, and so forth.[71] Activism that revolves around this current emphasis on intersectionality as it relates to critical groups is the essence of modern secular leftism.

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members such as Carl Schmidt and Martin Heidegger. Aleksandr, Dugin, *Chetvertai͡a politicheskai͡a teorii͡a: Rossii͡a i politecheskie idei XXXI veka* [Fourth Political Theory: Russia and Political Ideas of the 21st Century] (Saint Petersburg: Amfora, 2009), 23–25, 92–96, 192–194, 198–215.

[69] John Bellamy Foster develops this point well in *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: NYU Press, 2000).

[70] Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, 139–167.

[71] For a history of some important developments through 2013, see Devon W. Carbado, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Vickie M. Mays, Barbara Tomlinson, "Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory," *Du Bois Review* 10:2 (Fall 2013), 405-424.

The ideology of leftism is thoroughly anti-biblical and to be expected of the world, but how does evangelical leftism spur from such a wicked way of thinking? The next step on the journey was the syncretizing of secular leftism into a woke theology among liberal theologians.

Defining Woke Theology

Critical theory today still maintains its deeply anti-Christian historical and ideological roots, but it is penetrating Christian theology nonetheless. Fortunately for the critical theorists who want to undermine Christianity, there is liberalism, which is a heterodox branch of Christianity that parted with orthodoxy in the 1800s but still influences orthodoxy. The history of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy can be traced for centuries, but liberalism's opposition to legitimate Christianity eventually led some Christians to identify five fundamental doctrines: the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, Christ's virgin birth, that Christ's death provides atonement for sin, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the historicity of Christ's miracles. Those who adhered to these fundamentals were called *fundamentalists* and those who did not were called *liberals*. Since liberals reject the inspiration of the Bible, they allow their worldviews to be significantly informed by the anti-biblical world. Since liberalism and critical theory are deeply anti-biblical, the so-called Christian theologians who are most responsible for turning critical *theory* into critical *theology* are theological liberals.

How does the move from critical theory to critical theology flesh out? Critical theories take critical groups and explain how these groups should be viewed through the lens of oppression. Critical theologies take the critical theories and push them onto a framework that uses Christian verbiage, so Black theory (critical theory related to the oppression and liberation of Black people) becomes Black theology, feminist theory (critical theory related to the oppression and liberation of women) becomes feminist theology, Crip theory (critical theory

related to the oppression and liberation of the disabled) becomes Crip theology, and so forth. The late James Cone (1936–2018) was a leading Black theology proponent who summarized his career as a theologian:

> The struggle to make sense of being *black* and *Christian* in white America has motivated all my work as a theologian… It seemed as if a transcendent voice were speaking to me through the scriptures and the medium of African American history and culture, reminding me that God's liberation of the poor is the primary theme of Jesus' gospel.[72]

Notice three things about the critical theory influence in the statement above. First, his motivation is to make sense of the experience as a Black person who lives in White America. The lens of group oppression (in this case, Black people versus White people) is a clear carryover from the Frankfurt school. Second, while he gives a nod to the Scriptures, it is his experience in the critical group that serves as the hermeneutical medium for his interpretation. Finally, he establishes that Jesus' gospel is about liberation here and now as opposed to salvation from eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Cone is an example of moving Black theory into Black theology and similar moves are evident across the spectrum of critical theories. By the time intersectionality entered the discussion, critical theologians needed to fit the new trend of anti-biblicism into their critical theology. As an anti-biblical idea that comes from critical theory, intersectionality fits well on an anti-biblical framework of critical theology as explained by some intersectionality theologians:

> Rather than a call for a single, internally consistent and coherent system, intersectional theology is a call for intentional and deep attention to the ways social location affects theologies, a recognition of the impossibility of universalizing theologies, and an embrace of multiple theological perspectives as necessary and desirable in moving toward more inclusive theologies that capture the breadth and diversity of human encounter with the Divine. An intersectional theology recognizes that each of us exists in differing relationships to power and hierarchy based on gender, race, class, nation, sexual identity, ability, age, and

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[72] James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 154. Emphasis his.

other forms of social difference. We simultaneously experience advantage and disadvantage based on the intersections of these identities within interlocking systems of oppression, and these complex and nuanced distinctions play an important role in how each of us does theology. Our identities and experiences are never removed from the theologies we produce.[73]

Notice the insistence of hermeneutical inconsistency. Because everyone has a unique experience and everyone must produce theology because of his experiential context, there should be as many intersectional theologies as there are intersectional theologians.

Materialism as a Marxist and Darwinist idea automatically should be met with skepticism from the Christian community, but such has not been the case. The beginning of modern eco-theology is often traced to a piece that Lynn White Jr. wrote, in which he proposed:

Despite Darwin, we are not, in our hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim… More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one. The beatniks, who are the basic revolutionaries of our time, show a sound instinct in their affinity for Zen Buddhism, which conceives of the man nature relationship as very nearly the mirror image of the Christian view. Zen, however, is as deeply conditioned by Asian history as Christianity is by the experience of the West, and I am dubious of its viability among us… Both our present science and our present technology are so tinctured with orthodox Christian arrogance toward nature that no solution for our ecologic crisis can be expected from them alone. Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. We must rethink and refeel our nature and destiny. The profoundly religious, but heretical, sense of the primitive Franciscans for the spiritual autonomy of all parts of nature may point a direction.[74]

Notice that in this groundbreaking work, White begins not with the Scripture, but with Darwin and anti-biblical interpretations of origins. From there, he pushes Christianity to become more like Eastern philosophy and copy that which he admits is heretical. Several problems come from the Darwinist push against the Scriptures. For example, liberal Darwinist theologians needed to

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[73] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, *Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 41.

[74] Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155:3767 (March 10, 1967), 1206, 1207.

develop a Christology that understood Christ's body as the result of evolution, so theories of deep incarnation emerged, which bred even more problems that they are still trying to sort out.[75] Because the Marxist theories of ecology are antibiblical and liberal theology is antibiblical, it stands to reason that liberal theology is where Marxist and Darwinist eco-theology took root.

Theological liberalism was already in the world and wearing sheep's clothing disguised as Christianity. There should be no surprise that a woke theology developed among liberal theologians. The next step is the most concerning as it is the step from liberalism's woke theology to evangelical leftism.

Neither liberalism nor Roman Catholicism represents Christianity proper, but Evangelicals have historically been less cautious of Roman Catholicism because Catholics affirm the fundamentals of Fundamentalism (albeit with some significant caveats). As a middle ground between the two, Roman Catholicism played a significant role in bridging liberal woke theology into evangelicalism. In 1957, Billy Graham accepted an invitation to do a crusade in New York City that was sponsored by conservative and liberal churches. This 1957 crusade is seen by many as the official splitting point between fundamentalism and a new evangelicalism that is warmer to liberalism and Roman Catholicism.[76] It was around this time that Roman Catholicism underwent some woke developments, so leftism was positioned well to integrate into evangelicalism.

In 1962–1965, the Roman Catholic Church held the Second Vatican Council to discuss ecumenism (among other things). In the concluding documents, the Roman Catholic Church published the decree:

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[75] Michael E. Lee, "Historical Crucifixion: A Liberationist Response to Deep Incarnation" *Theological Studies*, 81:4 (December 2020): 892–912.

[76] Gary Gilley, *The Social Justice Primer: In search of the message and mission of the church* (Springfield, IL: Think on These Things Ministries, 2019), Kindle location 169–195.

> The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.[77]

This move toward ecumenism opened the door for Roman Catholicism to be exposed to liberal theology and it positioned the global Catholic community to influence Protestantism.[78] In the years to follow, Roman Catholicism was marked by the rise of liberation theology, most notably with the 1968 Latin-American Bishops Conference in Medellín, where Gustavo Gutiérrez participated as a theological advisor. Gutiérrez would go on to be a leading figure in liberation theology. In 1978, Gutiérrez authored a formative book on liberation theology. In his context, the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959) was still having its effects. Notice how Gutiérrez seeks an ecumenism that integrates Marxist thought into a theory for Christian missiology:

> ...contemporary theology does in fact find itself in direct and fruitful confrontation with Marxism, and it is to a large extent due to Marxism's influence that theological thought, searching for its own sources, has begun to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of this world and the action of man in history.[79]

> Latin American liberation are most frequently of socialist inspiration; socialism, moreover, represents the most fruitful and far-reaching approach. There is, however, no monolithic orientation. ...only a sufficiently broad, rich, and intense revolutionary praxis, with the participation of people of different viewpoints, can create the conditions for fruitful theory.[80]

Latin America is the main hub where Marxism met Catholicism and then penetrated several Evangelical missions organizations through ecumenical movements such as the Lausanne

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[77] *Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, Decrees, "Decree on Ecumenism: *Unitatis Redintegratio*," 1a.

[78] For an example of Catholic liberation theology penetrating Evangelicalism, see Cas Monaco "Bill Bright's *Four Spiritual Laws* Reimagined: A Narrative Approach to Meaningful Gospel Conversations for an American Twenty-First-Century Secularized Context" PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020, 173–175.

[79] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, trans., eds. (Maryknoll, NY, 1973), 23.

[80] Ibid., 104.

Movement, but the same phenomenon was happening elsewhere. Further east in South Korea

were movements like *Saseon* in 1976–1989 about which it has been said:

> The Protestants and Catholics of *Saseon* believed that participation in social
> movements was missionary work building the Kingdom of God on Earth, and that
> they could set a good example of solidarity with a common goal of social justice
> and a mission for the poor which transcended their theological differences.[81]

Like other woke mission movements, *Saseon* saw the kingdom of God as God's mission to

protect people on earth from the evil of the world. More recently, Gushee and Norred expressed

the opinion of many other Evangelicals in the West when they wrote:

> To the extent that we practice his peace-making, justice-making, community-
> restoring, relationship-healing teachings, we participate in the inaugurated
> Kingdom of God. This is what it means to be a follower, or disciple, of Jesus
> Christ. This is also the primary task of the Christian Church.[82]

More examples of woke Evangelicals will follow, but as a summary, for the woke Evangelical, a

primary task—if not *the* primary task, per Gushee, Norred, et al—of Evangelicalism aligns with

the task of liberal Christianity through the same eschatological reasoning of kingdom-building.

This would be a clear example of man's greatest need, that is, salvation from eternity in the Lake

of Fire, being brushed under the rug as particularistic and irrelevant.

Theological leftism is currently a popular form of Marxist and liberation theology. It is

firmly anti-biblical, but several evangelicals have a distant and distancing relationship with the

Bible as they depart from their roots in the fundamentalist controversy. As the project at hand is

an apologetic for the Christian religion, perhaps it would be most beneficial to focus on forms of

leftism that are syncretizing with Christianity rather than the more secular forms. A series of

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[81] Minah Kim, "Seeking Solidarity between Protestant and Catholic Churches for Social Justice in Korea: The Case of the Korea Christian Action Organization for Urban Industrial Mission (*Saseon*) (1976–1989)," *Religions*, 11, 6:278.

[82] David P. Gushee and Cori D. Norred, "The Kingdom of God, Hope and Christian Ethics" *Studies in Christian Ethics* 31:1 (2018), 6.

quotes from woke theologians are now provided as a sample from which a definition of woke

theology may be derived:

> …there remains a basic difference between the reproductive *rights* movement, concerned with women's and men's freedom to choose their parental roles, and the reproductive *responsibilities* movement, concerned with raising consciousness regarding the universally important small family goal. Perhaps as the environmental crisis continues to deepen and the danger to God's kingdom on earth becomes increasingly evident, these positions will flow together. Both are based, after all, on vastly strengthening women's rights, education, and opportunities around the world.[83]

> Such queer theologies are concerned to unmask allegedly revelatory or natural idolatry not so that personal capitalism may flourish (that you can do what you like if you have the power and resources to do it) but to herald in a new order, the "kingdom of God" or, more simply, a church where women priests can properly represent Christ and Mary. Of course theologians are not able to make this critique from any foundationalist standpoint, replicating the problem that queer theory aims to unmask, but from within a complex tradition which they must both criticize and learn from.[84]

> Through the exegetical work that Glen Stassen primarily undertook, we became convinced that Jesus drew most heavily for his version of 'Kingdom of God' on materials in Isaiah, especially the redemptive/restorationist themes of Isaiah 40–66. In choosing to anchor his preaching mainly in this part of Isaiah, Jesus was authentically connected to his Jewish roots but, perhaps like all prophets, selectively appropriated those aspects of the tradition that he wanted to highlight… Stassen and I identified seven 'marks' of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' preaching, citing passages in the Synoptic Gospels that allude to, cite or parallel passages in Isaiah. These seven purported marks of the Kingdom are deliverance (salvation), justice, peace, healing, restoration of community, the experience of God's active redeeming presence, and joyful human response… To the extent that we practice his peace-making, justice-making, community-restoring, relationship-healing teachings, we participate in the inaugurated Kingdom of God. This is what it means to be a follower, or disciple, of Jesus Christ. This is also the primary task of the Christian Church.[85]

> The corporate presence of the Christian community in the world reflects foundational commitments to social justice, often conveyed through the symbol of the kingdom of God. Christian scholars contend that emulating the passion of Jesus for justice in the kingdom of God involves concrete actions in such areas as

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[83] Carol Holst, "Forging Common Ground on Population Issues" in *Eco-Justice—The Unfinished Journey*, William E. Gibson, editor (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 187–188.

[84] Gavin D'Costa "Queer Trinity" in *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, Gerald Loughlin, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 270.

[85] Gushee and Norred, "The Kingdom of God," 6.

healthcare reform and ensuring access to healthcare for all persons, as well as requiring justice in health-related realms such as environmental and economic justice.[86]

Using a feminist hermeneutic, I argue that the story [in Luke 7:36–50] is an exercise in erotic performance art that intends to liberate readers into a new relationship with Christ that is body- and pleasure-affirming... Jesus' and the woman's amorous performance art signals that excessive desire for the well-being of another's flesh is the grounds for salvation and forgiveness in God's new order of being. "The kingdom of God is among you," says Jesus in Luke 17:21. God's new order is not "out there" waiting to arrive; it is "here and now" as modeled in this parable of erotic intimacy.[87]

May we begin beating our swords into plowshares now, and the kingdom will begin to be not simply something we hope for when we die but something we see on earth as it is in heaven, the kingdom that is among us and within us.[88]

Any constructive theological project that takes seriously women's and genderqueer people's bodies and sexualities is deeply eschatological. That is to say, the vision of how and what the world ought to be and how and what God's future holds forms the basis and inspiration for much of liberated, feminist, queered embodiment. Especially in a colonized context, an eschatological vision is necessary to discern what liberation, decolonization, and hope might look like… eschatology is… about the promised reign of God in all human experience and in all creation… This "here and now" eschatology fits well with a liberation, feminist, and queer understanding of eschatology. It roots our Christian hope in what God is doing to create a more just and liberated world. Nevertheless, precisely because justice is a major part of what we are hoping for, a sense of the timing and pacing of the eschaton is key.[89]

The quotes above show an eschatology of leftism with an underlying soteriology. The eschatology of woke theology sees the kingdom as a current reality that must grow through acts of social and ecological justice. Indeed, acts of justice, which are typically defined in alignment with secular leftism, become the task of the church in this kingdom-building mandate.

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[86] Courtney S. Campbell, "Death and Dying" in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice*, Michael D. Palmer and Stanley M. Burgess, eds. (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 572.

[87] Mark I. Wallace, "Early Christian Contempt for the Flesh and the Woman Who Loved Too Much in the Gospel of Luke" in *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity*, Margaret D. Kamitsuka, ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 38, 42.

[88] Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 355–356.

[89] Rebecca M. M. Voelkel, *Carnal Knowledge of God: Embodied Love and the Movement for Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 79–80.

Considering the roots, ideology, and actions of the movement, the following statement will serve as a working definition of woke theology:

> Woke theology is a syncretism of Christianity with the fascism of critical theory that sees the kingdom as inaugurated and seeks to build the kingdom through acts of social and ecological justice as aligned with its secular counterparts.

This definition emphasizes theological forms of leftism in order to keep the scope of this project narrow. There is also an emphasis on fascism, critical theory, and inauguration theology as these points will be refuted on the grounds of divine institutions.

The Ruscist Approach to Government

Ruscism is a worldview that is distinct from and competing with biblical Christianity. To understand the phenomenon of ruscism, it would be beneficial to first come to a definition of *ruscism* and analyze some key concepts in the ruscist political worldview that set it apart from Christianity. The term *ruscism* (Ukr. *rashyzm* рашизм) first emerged in 2008 during Russia's aggression against Georgia, becoming more popular after the beginning of Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014 and all the more mainstream after Russia's escalation into a full-scale war in 2022.[90] The word blends the word *Russia* with the word *fascism* as it refers to a particular form of fascism that is prominent in the modern-day Russian Federation. Before moving to refute ruscism, a survey of literature should ensue to approach a working definition of *ruscism*.

A New Fascism

For ruscism to be a Russian fascism, there must be a clear Russian development of the 20th-century fascism proper. The clearest combination of the two is evident in the writings of Aleksandr Dugin, who is frequently called "Putin's Philosopher" as his political theory of neo-

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[90] Borys Demianenko, and Vira Demianenkom, "Російська військова агресія проти України 2014–2022 рр.: політичні та побутові неологізми називання агресора," Міжнародні відносини: теоретико-практичні аспекти no. 9 (2022) 176.

Eurasianism serves as the basis for Russian expansion into surrounding territory. Dugin's political theory is the worldview of Russian aggression and it relies heavily upon fascist philosophy, making neo-Eurasianism a quintessential ruscist ideology.

Dugin formulated neo-Eurasianism as a fourth political theory that follows and borrows from three previous theories: liberalism, communism, and fascism. Ironically, the rhetoric against Ukraine during the war has been to call Ukrainians "Nazis," while Russia's political theory itself is the one that openly advances fascist thought, seeing the disappearance of fascism in 1945 as "premature."[91] The Nazi verbiage comes from a propaganda push to reframe the current war as an extension of the second world war, so that anyone who opposes Russia is to be called a Nazi.[92] While Russia is right to point out the Nazi roots of Western Leftism, in reality, the fourth political theory is an ideological cousin to the Left through the same ideas revitalized from philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt.

In Aleksandr Dugin's model of prior political theories, "The subject of communism was class. The subject of fascism was *government* (in the Italian fascism of Mussolini) or *race* (in the national-socialism of Hitler). In *liberalism* the subject was *the individual* free from all forms of *collective identity*, from all affiliation (*l'appartenance*)."[93] He continues:

> And finally, we can outline the deepest—*ontological!*—basis of Fourth Political Theory. Here we should turn not to theologies and mythologies but to the deep philosophical experience of the thinker who made a unique attempt to construct a

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[91] Paolo Pizzolo, "Eurasianism: An ideology for the multipolar world" (Ph.D. diss., Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali, 2019), 282.

[92] Taras Kuzio, "Imperial Nationalism as the Driver Behind Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *Nations and Nationalism* 29, no. 1 (2023): 30.

[93] «Субъектом коммунизма был класс. Субъектом фашизма — государство (в итальянском фашизме Муссолини) или раса (в национал-социализме Гитлера). В *либерализме* субъектом выступал *индивидуум*, освобожденный от всех форм *коллективной идентичности*, от всякой «принадлежности» (l'appartenance).» Aleksandr Dugin, *Chetvertaia politicheskaia teoriia: Rossiia v politicheskie idei XXI veka* [The Fourth Political Theory: Russia and Political Ideas of the 21ˢᵗ Century] (St. Petersburg: Amfora, 2009), 12.

fundamental ontology–the most generalized, paradoxical, deep, and shrill teaching about being. That is to say, Martin Heidegger.[94]

Heidegger's ontology of Dasein is as fundamental to neo-Eurasianism as class was to communism or race to Hitlerism.

In the Duginist rearrangement of Heidegger, Dasein goes beyond the government of Mussolini's fascism and the race of Hitler's fascism. Borrowing from Carl Schmitt, who, like Heidegger, was a philosopher and a Nazi Party Member, Dugin sees the world as naturally divided into big spaces. Each big space—in German, *Großraum*—should have a singular Dasein within it and each Großraum should unite into poles so that the world can be a multipolar utopia.[95] Dugin describes the Russian Dasein as distinct from other Daseins as it engulfs the individual into the collective.[96] Dugin's approach to Dasein and multipolarity is inherently evil and expansive and when it is combined with the necessary denial of the existence of a distinct Ukrainian culture and people,[97] it becomes genocidal. In the footsteps of Heidegger's call for the extermination of enemies, anything that stands out as an individual in a collective Dasein is a threat to the Dasein itself and so it is declared an enemy to exterminate.

Defining Ruscism

Ruscism is not only prominent in Russia as the ideology is found across the globe, but before delving into the nuances of the ideology itself, it would be helpful to produce a technical definition of *ruscism*. Several scholars have taken on the interdisciplinary task of defining

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[94] «И наконец, можно наметить саму глубокую — *онтологическую!* — основу Четвертой политической теории. Тут следует обратиться не к теологиям и мифологиям, но к глубинному философскому опыту мыслителя, который сделал уникальную попытку выстроить *фундаментальную онтологию* — самое обобщающее, парадоксальное, глубокое и пронзительное учение о бытии. Речь идет о Мартине Хайдеггере.» Aleksandr Dugin, *Chetvertaia͡ politicheskaia͡ teoriia͡*, 23.

[95] Aleksandr Dugin, *Chetvertaia͡ politicheskaia͡ teoriia͡*, 192–198.

[96] Aleksandr Dugin, *Martin Khaĭdegger: Posledniĭ Bog* [Martin Heidegger: The Last God] (Moscow: Akademicheskiĭ Proekt, 2014), 349–392.

[97] Taras Kuzio, "Imperial Nationalism," 34.

ruscism, so some sample texts will be provided below and a working definition will be derived

for this project.

The political scientist Oleksandr Romanyuk "believes that the conceptual understanding

of ruscism should be carried out within the framework of totalitarian studies, since it is a new

version of totalitarianism."[98] Borys Demyanenko is one of Ukraine's leading scholars on 20th

century totalitarianism,[99] and in a 2018 publication he defines:

> …"ruscism" is the unoffical name of the quasi-ideology and social practice of the
> ruling regime of the Russian Empire at the start of the 21st century, which looks
> like an eclectic mix of imperial neocolonialism, great power chauvinism,
> nostalgia for the Soviet past, religious traditionalism, and behaves as a mechanism
> for identification within a system (recognizing "one's own/another's"), for
> involvement (engaging "one's own"), and for legitimizing parole violators,
> against which all kinds of freedom supporters (which absolutely does not fit the
> style of the secret service) are presenting accusations.[100]

From Demyanenko's totalitarian studies framework, ruscism is a "quasi-ideology" and a "social

practice." According to Demyanenko, ruscism is based on an eclectic mix of ideas that

emphasizes imperial nostalgia with an accent on great power chauvinism and the necessary

distinctions that great power chauvinism entails.

Nazar Rudyi writes from a legal studies perspective:

> …to achieve a clear identification of ruscism, it can be defined as a form of non-
> democratic totalitarian state and legal regime established in the Russian
> Federation in the 21st century based on radical Russian imperial chauvinism,
> fascism, and the practices of the communist regime of the USSR, manifested in

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[98] Oleksandr Romanyuk, "Ruscism as a New Version of Totalitarianism," *The Journal of V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University: Issues of Political Science* 41 (2022): 7.

[99] See for example his monograph, *Tri modeli totalitaryzmu: Porivnîal'nyi analiz fashyzmu, bil'shovyzmu ta natŝional-sotŝializmuv* [Three Models of Totalitarianism: A Comparative Analysis of Fascism, Bolshevism, And National Socialism] Kyiv: Nelen', 2000.

[100] …«рашизм» – неофіційна назва квазіідеології й соціальної практики владного режиму Російської Федерації початку XXI ст., яка виглядає еклектичною сумішшю імперського неоколоніалізму, великодержавного шовінізму, ностальгії за радянським минулим, релігійного традиціоналізму, і виступає механізмом ідентифікації всередині системи (розпізнавання «свій – чужий»), ангажування (залучення «своїх»), і легітимізації умовних порушників, до яких усілякі прибічники свобод (що якраз абсолютно не вписується в стилістику спецслужб) пред'являють претензії. Borys Demyanenko, *"Rashyzm" îak kvaziideolohiia postradians'koho imper-s'koho revanshu* ["Ruscism" as a quasi-ideology of the Post-Soviet imperial revenge], *Studia Politologica Ucraino-Polona*, no. 8 (2018): 35.

the form of the Russian world, violations of international law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, militarism, and the execution of aggressive wars and policies of genocide against the Ukrainian people.[101]

Rudyi's definition positions ruscism as a "regime," which has much of the same qualities as Demyanenko's "quasi-ideology" and "social practice" definition. In theory, a regime change would suffice to end ruscism following Rudyi's definition, but if there was a regime change, would that end the list of problems associated with ruscism? Probably not. As for Demyanenko's twofold verbiage, the social practice is likely the result of the quasi-ideology, so the terms "regime" and "social practice" are less preferable than "quasi-ideology." The term *quasi-ideology* (Ukr. *kvaziideologiia* квазіідеологія) may be confusing. Demyanenko describes *quasi-ideology* as being in the sense of a "'false,' 'imaginary' ideology as an eclectic synthesis of certain postulates,"[102] in other words, ruscism is a false worldview that is internally inconsistent. A difficulty with the *quasi-* prefix is that it may imply that *ruscism* resembles an ideology, but is not truly an ideology. From a social and political psychology perspective, Kateryna Merkotan defines *ruscism*, "'Ruscism' expresses the maniacal worldview of Putin and the Putinish Russia, including the leader cult, censorship, centralized propaganda, and now war."[103] This word *worldview* is preferable over *quasi-ideology* because it evades the potential confusion of whether or ruscism is an ideology or whether it merely resembles an ideology. Another advantage to the term *worldview* for this project is that biblical Christianity itself is a worldview, so recognizing that ruscism is an alternative *worldview* helps to frame the discussion.

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[101] Nazar Rudyi, "Ruscism as a Variant of the Fascist Form of State-Legal Regime," *Social & Legal Studios* 6, no. 2 (2023): 58.

[102] «несправжньої», «уявної» ідеології як еклектичного синтезу певних постулатів Borys Demyanenko, "Ruscism," 35.

[103] ««Рашизм» відображає схиблений світогляд путіна та путінської росії, зокрема, культ лідера, цензуру, централізовану пропаганду, а тепер і війну.» Kateryna Merkotan, "From the Thirst of Power to Moral Impoverishment," *Scientific Studies on Social and Political Psychology* 28, no. 1 (2022): 10.

The Slavist Serhy Yekelchyk notes how *rashyzm* moved from the public sphere to state

communication and academia:

> …the new construct of *rashyzm*, a portmanteau of "Russian fascism," originated
> in the public sphere. But the state quickly embraced it, even to the point of the
> Ukrainian parliament's Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policies
> calling upon world media to adopt the term. President Zelens'kyi has also
> predicted that soon *rashyzm* will enter history textbooks around the world. From
> the very beginning, *rashyzm* was understood not just as a label, but also as the
> sum of Russia's ideology and policies during the post-Soviet period. In addition
> to entering the official discourse, it quickly became the subject of academic
> writing in Ukraine, and Timothy Snyder introduced it (as "ruscism") to the global
> educated readership in his op-ed in the *New York Times Magazine*.[104]

An example of a state publication using the term is evident in a pamphlet compiled by The

Scientific Research Center for Humanitarian Issues of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (a part of the

Ministry of Defense of Ukraine), which defines *ruscism* as follows:

> "Ruscism" is a strange postmodern mix, whence entered the chauvinistic "Great
> Russian" worldview of the long dead Russian Empire, nostalgia for the Soviet
> Union, revanchist attitudes of post-Soviet security forces, Putin's pseudohistorical
> excursions, as well as [Russian] Orthodoxy simultaneously honoring Nicholas II
> and Stalin, and in addition, quotes from the film *Brother 2* put on the Russian
> military's chevrons.[105]

Again, the emphasis on ruscism's "strange postmodern mix" comes into the discussion. There is

agreement that the eclectic nature of ruscism pulls from several aspects of Russian history,

ideology, and propaganda. The Great Russian worldview, which Demyanenko alludes to as

"great power chauvinism" and Nazar Rudyi as "Russian imperial chauvinism" was the idea in

the Russian Empire that Russia was a greater nation than surrounding nations and therefore had

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[104] Serhy Yekelchyk, "Naming the War: Russian Aggression in Ukrainian Official Discourse and Mass Culturem" *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 64, no. 2–3 (2022): 236.

[105] ««Рашизм» – це дивна постмодерністська суміш, куди увійшли шовіністський «великоросійський» світогляд давно померлої російської імперії, ностальгія за Радянським Союзом, реваншистські настрої пострадянських силовиків, псевдоісторичні екскурси путіна, а також православ'я з одночасним вшануванням Миколи II і Сталіна, і на додачу – цитати з фільму «Брат–2», нанесені на шеврони російських військових.» Andrii Romanyshyn, Serhii Cherevychnii, Oleksandr Ostapchuk, Violeta Maraeva, Viktor Vitiuk, Ihor Khrulenko, *Oborezhno, Rashyzm!* [Careful, Ruscism!], (Kyiv: The Scientific Research Center for Humanitarian Issues of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, 2023), 4.

the right to subject Ukraine, Belarus, etc. into the empire. The chauvinism verbiage became a front of Soviet ideology as the communists opposed chauvinism in words, but failed in deeds. Ruscism, then, is a call to that which the Soviet Union opposed while still having a nostalgia for the Soviet Union, "simultaneously honoring Nicholas II and Stalin," hence its status as a quasi-ideology.

A key aspect that the state publication above introduces to the conversation is the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Ruscism is a deeply spiritual worldview. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the concept of *symphonia* is used to describe the cooperation between church and state. In the case of the *symphonia* within Russian politics, the ROC has made it clear from the earliest days of the war that it is an instrument in Russia's war against the West. Ain Riistan, a theologian at the University of Estonia Tartu wrote an article for *Sõjateadlane: Estonian Journal of Military Studies* in 2016 demonstrating that the ROC had ecclesiastical interests in Ukraine, that the geopolitical struggle of the Russian state in Ukraine is inseparable from the theopolitical struggle of the ROC, and that the ROC has been actively involved in creating an Orthodox nationalism regarding the so-called Russian world.[106] In 2022 after Russia escalated the war to full-scale, Demyanenko coauthored with his wife another piece, in which they clarify the spiritual aspect of ruscism:

> In the *spiritual* plan, ruscism is based on fundamentalist [Eastern] Orthodoxy. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Patriarch Kyrill, is trying to realize a clerical variant of ruscism, as evidenced by his concept of a "Russian world." Securitization of the ROC is taking place; the church and political Orthodoxy are becoming not only the foundation of conservative Russian propaganda, but also cultural expansion military occupation centers wherever the ROC is physically present. The fact that the highest hierarchs of ROC refuse to acknowledge the Russian Federation invasion of Ukraine, declaring the need for

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[106] Ain Riistan, "The Moscow Patriarchate and the Conflict in Ukraine," *Sõjateadlane: Estonian Journal of Military Studies* 2 (2016): 206–231.

peace in light of "events" and "military actions" in Ukraine causes quite an alarm.[107]

As Eastern Orthodoxy rejects the Gospel of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, it would be proper to reject Eastern Orthodoxy as a false religion; on top of this recognition, a further demarcation is that Russian Orthodoxy is a cult of Eastern Orthodoxy. According to Patriarch Kirill:

> …the Church is aware that if someone, moved by the sense of duty, the necessity to fulfil his oath, remains faithful to his objective and dies in the line of military duty, that he nevertheless commits an act equivalent to sacrifice. He presents himself as a sacrifice for others. And therefore, we believe that this sacrifice washes away all the sins that the person commits.[108]

To say that a man may wash away his own sins by dying in the war against the West is to reject biblical Christianity. This declaration affirms an interfaith aspect of the ROC which contributes to the complex relationship between ROC and Islam. Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam have long seeped in antisemitism and now the Russian cult of Eastern Orthodoxy is promoting Islamic fronts of the war, including taking sides against Israel and causing civil unrest in Western Africa along the Christian/Muslim division per neo-Eurasian Dasein.

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[107] У *духовному* плані рашизм базується на фундаменталістському православ'ї. Клерикальний варіант рашизму намагається реалізувати предстоятель Російської православної церкви (РПЦ) патріарх Кірілл, що засвідчує його концепція «русского міра». Відбувається сек'юритизація РПЦ – церква й політичне православ'я стає не лише засновком консервативної російської пропаганди, але й осередками культурної експансії й військової окупації всюди, де фізично присутня РПЦ. Викликає неабияку тривогу в середовищі православних вірян той факт, що вищі ієрархи РПЦ відмовляються визнати вторгнення РФ в Україну, декларуючи необхідність миру в світлі «подій» і «військових дій» в Україні. Borys Demianenko and Vira Demianenko, "Ruscism as a Quasi-Ideology of the Post-Soviet Imperial Revenge," in *The Russian-Ukrainian War (2014–2022): Historical, Political, Cultural-Educational, Religious, Economic, and Legal Aspects*, ed. Valentyna Anatoliivna Bodak, Mykola Pavlovych Pantiuk, Mykola Dmytrovych Haliv, Vasyl Ivanovych Ilnytskyi, and Mykhailo Yuriiovych Vikhliaiev (Riga, Latvia: Baltija Publishing, 2022), 886.

[108] «...Церковь осознает, что если кто-то, движимый чувством долга, необходимостью исполнить присягу, остается верным своей цели и погибает при исполнении воинского долга, то он, все же, совершает деяние, равносильное жертве. Он приносит себя в жертву другим. И потому верим, что эта жертва смывает все грехи, которые совершает человек.» Patriarch Kirill, "*Patriarshaia propoved' v Nedeliu 15-iu po Piatidesiatnitse posle Liturgii v Aleksandro-Nevskom skitu*" [Patriarchal sermon on the 15th Sunday after Pentecost after the Liturgy in the Alexander Nevsky Monastery], 25 September, 2022. Available online at http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5962628.html.

Another ramification of the religious attribute of ruscism is the inclusion of the Russian people in the ideological conflict. Oleksandr Levko and Nataliia Kramar are linguists based out of Kyiv who have compiled some examples of the term *ruscist* (Ukr. *rashyst* рашист) as it occurred in Ukrainian religious publications in 2022:

> Allusion to German Nazism and Italian fascism is also conveyed by the neologism *рашизм* "ruscism", which, along with the word *орк* "Orc", is rapidly entering the lexicon of modern European languages. Here is an example of the use of this word in our sample: *На рахунку злочинів рашистів в Україні вже 86 зруйнованих релігійних споруд* "The list of ruscist crimes in Ukraine already includes 86 destroyed religious buildings" (SFU), *Глава УГКЦ відвідав "зранений" рашистами Чернігів* "The head of the UGCC paid a visit to Chernihiv, a city "wounded" by ruscists" (RISU), *Кирил пояснив дії рашистів в Україні тим, що росіяни хочуть миру* "Kirill explained the actions of ruscists in Ukraine by saying that Russians want peace" (RISU), *Сотні лампадок запалили у Львові в пам'ять про невинно вбитих рашистами українців* "Hundreds of lamps were lit in Lviv in memory of Ukrainians innocently killed by ruscists" (RISU).[109]

In these quotes, it seems as though a ruscist is one who is actively involved in the genocide of Ukrainians. While those who pull the triggers are indeed ruscists, the terms *ruscist* and *orc* have rightly received pushback as they could mistakenly exempt ordinary Russians from their responsibilities for the atrocities.[110] A final clarification that needs to come into a definition of *ruscist* must make it clear that the Russian civilian who holds to the Ruscist worldview is also a ruscist even if he is not as politically active as the soldier, mercenary, politician, or priest.

Pulling together the components presented so far, the working definition of *ruscism* for this project is as follows:

> Ruscism is the worldview of Russian fascism, which is characterized by a desire for a few great powers instead of many distinct countries, an emphasis on group

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109 Oleksandr Levko and Nataliia Kramar, "Інтертекстуальність як джерело емоціоналізації дискурсу та мовних інновацій" [Intertextuality as a Source of Discourse Emotionalization and Language Innovations], *Актуальні проблеми української лінгвістики: теорія і практика* [Current issues of Ukrainian linguistics: theory and practice], no. 44 (2022): 79. They also define (on pg. 85) "*RISU* – Religious Information Service of Ukraine [*Relihiino-informatsiina sluzhba Ukrainy*]. URL: https://risu.ua/ (last access: 01.05.2022)" and "*SFU* – Spiritual Front of Ukraine [*Dukhovnyi front Ukrainy*]. URL: https://df.news/ (last access: 01.05.2022)."
110 Serhy Yekelchyk, "Naming the War," 237.

identities over great expanses, and compatibility with the Russian Orthodox
Church's interfaith mission of *symphonia* with the Russian state.

The definition carries several implications that conflict with the biblically-derived divine institutions. The "emphasis on group identities" would conflict with the responsible individual, as well as the distinct responsibilities of the family. The big idea of ruscism is that distinct countries should be replaced with Großraums, each of which is unified by a singular cultural Dasein. As a political ideology, ruscism perverts every divine institution.

Conclusion: Biblical Divine Institutions Contra the Post-Fascist Age

This paper has explored some past ideas in socio-political thought that have spurred from Christendom and argued in favor of a dispensational divine institutions model. In this model, three divine institutions are the individual, the family, and the country. God established these institutions, so a sound political theory should protect them. From there, two currents in post-fascist ideology were considered, namely leftism (and its theological expression of woke theology) and ruscism. Both of these schools of thought are heavily dependent on their fascist roots that bend them away from each of the divine institutions. Christians must reject these political theories and continue to evaluate ideas with the divine institutions in mind.

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