

The Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ Over All

Report on the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms

Approved by the Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S., 2016

Preface

A new view of social ethics and culture has been proposed in recent years by a number of professors at Westminster Seminary in California. The Two Kingdom viewpoint (2K), comprises a distinctive theology and way of interpreting the Bible, and has gained a certain following due to the influence of Dr. David VanDrunen, Dr. Michael Horton, and others who teach at Escondido. Its broad proposal is that Reformed Christians and evangelicals should make a comprehensive shift toward secularism in their way of interacting with culture, ethics, and politics.

In 2012 the Western Classis of the Reformed Church in the U.S. formed a special committee to study “The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms with specific recommendations on how to respond to this teaching.” In 2014 the Classis voted to continue this committee, giving special emphasis on the role of the Cultural Mandate. In 2015 the committee consisted of Pastors Jim West (chairman), Tracy Gruggett, Paul Treick, Eric D. Bristley, and elder Greg Uttinger. The committee also added an expanded review of the Reformed tradition as represented by Calvin, Reformed Orthodoxy, Ursinus, the Reformed confessions, Kuyper, and Neo-Calvinism. In 2016 the committee’s work was completed so that it was ready to move its recommendations.

The Western Classis met at Grace Reformed Church in Willows, California, for its regular Spring meeting in March, 2016, at which this report was presented. Three motions were made to the Classis: (1) That this report and its conclusions concerning the Scriptural weaknesses and historical/confessional misinterpretations expressed in the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms be commended to the churches of the Western Classis for study and instruction. (2) That this report be sent to the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States for its consideration and action. (3) That Henry Van Til’s book, *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture*, be commended to the officers and churches of the Western Classis as presenting a Reformed alternative to the Two Kingdom doctrine. The first two motions passed with strong support and no dissent. The only modifications were that a few clarifying footnotes be added and that it be published by the Committee on Publications. The third motion was a matter of information and received a typical “take note.”

This report is the result of many hours of study and discussion and is intended to provide the church with an evaluation of the 2K teaching from the Bible, the Reformed confessions, and Reformed church history. Its goal is to summarize and evaluate the 2K theology and not to distinguish the fine differences that may exist between the 2K theologians (there seem to be some). The study is not exhaustive and cannot, due to space limitations, cover all aspects of 2K teaching.

We do not claim to understand the 2K position perfectly, but we believe that the report accurately reflects its views and provides a balanced, biblical perspective that is faithful to our Reformed confessions and heritage. We do not claim that the Reformed Church in the U.S. or the Western Classis is the watchdog of the Reformed faith, but rather we seek to minister to our congregations and sister denominations from what the Lord has taught us. It is sent forth for the instruction of our members and officers, and any who may profit from its concise analysis and statement of the one Kingship of Jesus Christ over all things for the sake of his Church (Eph. 1:20–23).

Footnotes and References

Because of the quantity of citations and especially in the longer excerpts, page number references are embedded in the text after the initial full footnote of that source. In a similar manner all Bible references are given in the text and follow the New King James Version in most cases. A full bibliography follows the report.

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1. ANALYSIS OF THE TWO KINGDOM THEOLOGY

In order to understand and evaluate the Two Kingdom (2K) theology, we need to place it in the broader historical context of Reformed views regarding Christianity, culture, and society. The 2K proposal with its associated commitment to “natural law” has arisen as a reaction to alternative views held among Reformed Christians. Most of these views are in one way or another a continuation of, reaction to, or modification of the views of Abraham Kuyper, the father of Neo-Calvinism.

In the United States, the adherents of Neo-Calvinism were at first associated with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and Calvin College. A major debate in the 1920s, called the Common Grace Controversy, engaged all the major thinkers of the CRC as they struggled, in part, with the question of how to relate Christianity to culture. Some were strongly opposed to many things Kuyper taught while others were favorable. A church split occurred when Herman Hoeksema’s rejection of “common grace” led to the formation of the Protestant Reformed Church. The CRC formulated a church position in its “Three Points of Kalamazoo” (1924), from which we quote: “God through the general operations of his Spirit, without renewing the heart, restrains sin in its unhindered breaking forth, as a result of which human society has remained possible. . . . God, without renewing the heart, exercises such influence upon man that he is enabled to perform civic good.”¹

Men such as Louis Berkhof and R. B. Kuiper agreed with the Synod’s pronouncement and promoted Kuyper’s views while offering correctives. This line of constructive criticism was developed especially by Cornelius Van Til and his nephew Henry Van Til (1906–1961), a graduate of Calvin Seminary, Westminster Seminary, and the Free University of Amsterdam, and professor of Bible at Calvin College. H. Van Til provides one of the best historical discussions united with theological balance in his *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture* (1959). This work, a mainstay among Calvinists for many years, provides a social-cultural program that has served confessional Reformed Christians well. Sadly, many have ignored both his historical analysis and his formulation of a balanced Calvinistic view based on a broad doctrinal foundation of Reformed theology.

Another Calvin College professor, H. Henry Meeter (1886–1963), served as professor of Bible and Calvinism beginning in 1926, whose labors led to the founding of the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies in 1981. His work, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*, provides a companion treatment to that of Henry Van Til. After discussing the fundamental principle of Calvinism and its theology he gives a succinct statement about Calvinism and culture before applying this to social-political matters. Meeter writes, “It is your duty and mine to labor with all our powers on a Christian basis, for Christian ideals, in every sphere where the Lord calls us so that Christ shall be the recognized King, also in the realm of culture. This is the truly inspiring ideal of culture which we as Calvinists have.”²

After WWII, some Dutch Reformed immigrants coming to Canada joined with followers of Dr. Evan Runner from Calvin College to form the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, which promoted views of society and law derived from the teachings of Herman Dooyeweerd and D. H. Vollenhoven in the Netherlands. Since they formed new perspectives not found in Kuyper, it was dubbed as Neo-Kuyperian, or the “Cosmonomic Movement” because of its emphasis on the laws of the cosmos. Exaggerating Kuyper’s concept of sphere-sovereignty, they built a theory in which different aspects of life are governed according to their own internal law, in a way akin to natural law. As the Toronto movement gathered avid followers in the 1960–70s, it had a negative impact on Christian schools and raised debate in many confessionally Reformed churches.³

¹ Quoted in Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), 27, 29.

² H. Henry Meeter, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), p. 67.

³ John Frame, *The Amsterdam Philosophy: A Preliminary Critique* (Pilgrim Press, 1972); 2005 version available online at frame-poythress.org.

A. Principal Two Kingdom Teachers and their Doctrines

Meredith Kline: Dichotomy of Cult and Culture

To understand the 2K theology we must begin with a look at the teachings of Dr. Meredith Kline (1922–2007), arguably the “grandfather” of present 2K viewpoint. Viewed in this light, 2K theology is not wholly new with the teachings of David VanDrunen, or at least Kline is the leading American inspiration for it.⁴ Biographically, he received his A.B. from Gordon College before pursuing theological studies at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia (Th.M.). After studying Assyriology and Egyptology at Dropsie College (Ph.D.), he taught Old Testament at Westminster Philadelphia (1948–1977), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1965–1993), and finally at Westminster, California (1981–2002). An ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, he was well known for propounding the framework interpretation of creation.

Kline spells out his nascent 2K theology in his book *Kingdom Prologue*,⁵ yet he does not often use 2K terminology. He instead articulates the distinction with his version of “two cities”—the holy theocratic city of God and the unholy, common, and profane city of man, which are categorically different according to divine design.⁶ He divides the world after the Fall using a cult/culture distinction and a holy/common distinction. For Kline, “unholy” is not a moral category but rather the objective state of a thing, action, person, or place. The “city of God” is the cultic city and is holy. The “city of man” has to do with the culture and is unholy. Frame summarizes Kline’s cult and culture distinction as follows: “Kline... sets forth a very sharp distinction between cult (formal worship) and culture (man’s other activities, set forth in the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28).”⁷

Kline’s version of the two cities is intrinsic to his understanding of redemptive history and its goals. Basically, God created man to be His prophet, priest, and king, to engage in the Cultural Mandate, which involved advancing God’s holy theocratic kingdom on the earth. The situation of the Garden of Eden was that of a theocracy. Cult and culture were one, structurally and religiously. But with the Fall of man came sin, a common curse, and the expulsion of man from Eden. The Edenic theocracy was no more.

In judging Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, God did not set forth His curse fully but instead instituted His *common grace*. The purpose of this grace was to be a restraint upon the curse. Kline writes: “The positive benefits realized in a measure through this restraint on the effects of sin and the curse are not the eternal blessings of the holy, heavenly kingdom that come to the elect through God’s saving grace in Christ, but they are blessings—temporal blessings that all men experience in common by virtue of their remaining part of the continuing world order.”⁸ Such grace is established for an interim period to mitigate or offset the curse so that God can carry out His redemptive program to save His elect and reestablish His holy theocracy.

Concerning God’s curse, Kline says that “...the Lord pronounced a temporal, common curse rather than an ultimate judgment against the generality of mankind” (Gen. 3:16–19). Common grace counterbalances the curse by giving temporal benefits to all men.

The “Common Grace City”

As an act of this grace God appointed a city, in Kline’s view, a *common grace city* for the general good of mankind. He writes that “it would not be a theocratic, covenant city with an institutional integration of culture and cult.” Built by fallen man, it “would be a common city, temporal, profane, and it would exist under the shadow of the common

⁴ For a more critical analysis of Kline, we direct you to John Frame’s comments in *The Escondido Theology: A Reformed Response to Two Kingdom Theology* (Whitefield Media Productions, 2011) 166–81.

⁵ Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: General Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Wipf & Stock, 1981, rep. 2006).

⁶ Augustine’s view of the City of God and the City of Man will be discussed later in this report.

⁷ John Frame, *Escondido Theology: A Reformed Response to Two Kingdom Theology* (Whitefield Media Productions, 2011), 169.

⁸ Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 95.

curse.”⁹ Complete expression of the common grace city comes after the judgment of the Noachian Flood, in a covenant form as recorded in Genesis 8:21–9:17.

However, the judicial structure of the State was communicated orally in Genesis 4:15. There God says, “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him,” meaning that God’s vow of vengeance would descend on the head of anyone who murdered Cain. For Kline, the vengeance would be exacted by those authorized to do so, i.e., the State. *This verse [Gen. 4:15] establishes an order of justice and becomes the virtual charter for the city of man.* Two verses later the State comes in view when Cain builds a city, the first instance of the city of man (Gen. 4:17).

For Kline, *the city of man is a common grace city and should be viewed positively.* Man may turn the city to evil, but its origins, purpose, and basic structure are meant for good (102–03). This city has a *remedial* role in a fallen world. The original theocratic city (Gen. 1:28) had a variety of functions which remained operative before the Fall. In the postlapsarian situation these functions have been modified for the purpose of curbing or offsetting the evil of man and the curse of God upon that evil. The curse is an exile curse; man is consigned to a life of vagrancy rather than fellowship in the garden city with God and his fellows. But the postlapsarian city offsets this curse, providing now a protective function as expressed by hospitals and welfare; and a corrective function, performed by the government, instituted with Cain as recorded in Genesis 4:15–17.

It should be noted that Kline sees in the original Cultural Mandate the formation and structuring of the city of God. After the Fall, however, *the city of man does not carry out the original dominion mandate.* He writes, “the common culture that is the direct fruit of common grace is not itself identifiable with the holy, Sabbath-sealed redemptive kingdom of God.” Again he says:

Common grace culture is not itself the particular kingdom that was mandated under the creational covenant. Although certain functions and institutional provisions of the original Cultural Mandate are resumed in the common grace order, these now have such a different orientation, particularly as to objectives, that one cannot simply and strictly say that it is the Cultural Mandate that is being implemented in the process of common grace culture.” (156)

After explaining the “common grace” city of man, Kline then compares it to the kingdoms of Satan and of God. The city often takes on a bestial nature, alluding to the Beast of the book of Revelation. Kline means that the common grace city of man is usurped by Satan. Satanic control, however, does not undermine this city’s legitimacy, for it is a “structure founded on the common grace ordinance of the creator” (104). It must not be identified, as some do, with demonic powers that often usurp it, nor can it ever be identified with the kingdom of God. This thought is slightly qualified, however, as Kline means “in an institutional sense.” It is structurally and institutionally common, profane. To attempt to sanctify the city of man at the institutional and structure level is to be involved in a category mistake. For Kline, attempts to do so are very common and constitute serious errors (104), yet Kline does not explain why this is so. He only writes: “In the midst of the threatening world environment to which man is exposed through the common curse, the common grace city offers the hope of a measure of temporal safety, but it does not afford eternal salvation. It should not therefore be identified with the holy kingdom of God, which is the structural manifestation of that salvation.” (105)

There is a *boundary* between the common grace culture and the holy kingdom of God that must be respected. This is a divinely instituted order, as Kline expresses in the following statement:

If we listen to what the Word of God says specifically about the institutions in question, we discover that with the emergence of the religious antithesis, the Lord God, in the interests of His redemptive purposes, sovereignly revised the original structure of things, brings into being within the arena of earthly history an interim world order which involved the holy/common distinction as one of its fundamental features. In particular, He established the institution of the State as a non-holy structure under the principle of common grace. The sphere of the State, though not exempt from God’s rule and not devoid of the divine presence (indeed, though it is the scene of God’s presence in a measure of common blessing), is nevertheless, not to be identified as belonging to the kingdom of God or sharing in its holiness.” (106)

⁹ *Ibid.*, 95, 101.

So the common grace city in the interim before the Fall and the eschaton is not theocratic in terms of status and structure.

In Kline's understanding, in the interim postlapsarian world God has instituted a cult and culture boundary that must not be transgressed either by the State or by the citizenry. In other words, the State does not engage in cultic activity, and the citizenry (including officials of the State) are not to work toward making the State engage in cultic structures or function. This is to mix the holy with the profane. The State belongs to the realm of "culture," to the "common and profane." Yes, all cultural activities are to be carried out in devotion to the Lord from the heart, but to institute the kingdom of God is not the State's job. Kline writes:

[Any] cultic activity on the part of the State, if it is not in confession of the living God, is, of course, idolatrous. But even if it is in acknowledgment of the God of the Christian faith, it is guilty of a monstrous confusion of the holy kingdom of God with the common, profane city of man. . . . The State is forbidden to undertake the cultic function of the covenant community, nor can it execute the discipline of the covenant cultus. It cannot use its power and sanction to compel obedience to the first four commandments of the Decalogue. But it is not to hinder the holy covenant institution in the fulfilling of its peculiar mission." (111)

Concerning the relationship between the common-grace state and the covenant community (*cultus*), Kline argues that "the common state is designed by God to provide a supportive framework for the life and mission of God's covenant people, in keeping with the fundamental purpose of common grace to make possible a general history within which God's redemptive program might unfold" (111). So for Kline, the State does serve a positive purpose, except that it can never be called holy or even Christian. Christians who belong to the heavenly city can serve in those functions that bear the sword.

Evaluation

We cannot commend the distinctive views of Kline to the officers and members of the RCUS and would warn against the reception of his ideas as an alternative to traditional, confessional Reformed interpretation. Among these ideas are the following:

(1) What are we to make of the distinctive role of the nation of Israel and its legislation in God's plan? For Kline, Israel is a holy theocratic kingdom that was typological of the heavenly city. It was a temporary arrangement. Its laws and structure belong to that Covenant situation. It was a holy *cultus*, where cult and culture were united for a period.

But the very existence of Jerusalem and its importance in the history of Israel and in the Psalms points to *more* than an eschatological purpose in God's plan. The City of the Great King indicates that God has always designed covenant faith to be embodied in a civilization and kingdom ruled by God as the King. Instead of being merely future, God's design for Israel and Jerusalem was to serve as a present model for a biblically-directed culture and society.

But according to Kline, God's New Covenant people do not belong to the Old Covenant, the structure of which has been abrogated. However, as with the ancients, *we belong in the common grace realm*. For him, believers have more affinity with the pilgrim people of the early Genesis record than they do with the nation of Israel, *structurally speaking*. The following quote speaks to this issue: "In fact, with regard to the form and function of the redemptive community and its relationship to the world and its institution, that ancient community offers a parallel in some respect closer to the church of our age than does the Israelite whose history . . . stands nearer in time to ours." (100)

We reject this hyper-eschatology and affirm that God's Old Testament Kingdom revealed the fact that God wills that true religion is to be implemented in every area of life, including politics and the State. The laws revealed to Moses were not exclusively for Israel but were designed to reveal God's will for every nation. This explains why God, in the prophets, condemns the nations by the standard of the same law he gave to Israel (Isa. 24:5-6).

(2) What is the standard of the common-grace city? For Kline, the city of man is to be governed by the general regulations of Genesis 9. In addition, Kline argues that the first four commandments of the Mosaic law are *not* to be forced upon the common-grace State. This means that Kline would discourage our enshrining the words "In God We Trust" on our currency and coinage and would conceivably be troubled by the phrase "one nation under God"

in the flag salute. This prohibition would also apply to an oath in a court of law where the name of God is invoked.¹⁰ For Kline there can be no such thing as a *Christian* nation because we would be wrongly conflating the unholy with the holy.

Yet Kline does not speak to the objection that if the civil magistrate's duties are defined in a "cultic" book in Genesis 8–9, where capital punishment on the basis of the image of God in man is commanded (Gen. 9:6), then why could the State not rightly appeal to those chapters as the basis of its civil jurisprudence and justice? Interestingly, we do not find Kline advocating natural law nor criticizing it, for that matter. Indeed, since Kline distinguishes between the first and second tables of the Law, he implies that the second table of God's *inscripturated law may be* enlisted as a judicial norm for all contemporary governments.

(3) Kline's views on common grace are speculative and more optimistic than those represented by such theologians as Klaas Schilder, John Murray, and especially Cornelius Van Til, who wrote about the need to reconstruct common grace: "What needs to be done is to give careful scripture support of our philosophy of culture. ... Only if the idea of common grace is Christ-centered and therefore biblically constructed can it help the Christian apologist...."¹¹ Kline does not properly take into account the reservations addressed by Henry Van Til in the latter's *Calvinistic Concept of Culture*:

Finally, a note of warning ought to be sounded against the abuse and misuse of the doctrine of common grace, as a result of which the consciousness of the antithesis is dulled, the implementation of the confession of Christ's kingship is hamstrung, and the battle cry of the Christian warfare is muted. Thus the concept has gained ground that culture is a neutral enterprise, and the nature of religion as encompassing the totality of life and man's existence is denied.¹²

The Road to Two Kingdom Theology

To rightly understand why the Two Kingdom / Natural Law doctrine arose, it is necessary to understand it as a reaction and alternative to Theonomy and Christian Reconstruction, a movement begun by R. J. Rushdoony.¹³ Says VanDrunen, "Is it any coincidence that in the past couple of generations so many Reformed people have been tempted to embrace the theonomic movement, and the majority that has resisted has offered for the most part only tepid and insipid alternatives?"¹⁴ In mentioning this we are not implying that we uncritically embrace Christian Reconstruction or condone all that was written by its representatives, but simply point out its role as a key factor in the historical discussion.

A disciple of Rushdoony, Greg Bahnsen (1948–1995), studied at Westminster in Philadelphia, where he wrote his Th.M. thesis on "The Theonomic Responsibility of the Civil Magistrate," later developed into *Theonomy in*

¹⁰ The *Heidelberg Catechism* (HC) says in Q101: "But may we swear reverently by the name of God? Yes, when the magistrate requires it, or when it may be needful otherwise, to maintain and promote fidelity and truth to the glory of God and our neighbor's good; for such an oath is grounded in God's Word, and therefore was rightly used by the saints in the Old and New Testaments."

¹¹ Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 264–65; John Murray, "Common Grace," *Collected Writings*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), 93–119.

¹² Henry van Til, *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 245.

¹³ Rousas J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), son of Armenian immigrants, studied at UC Berkeley and the Pacific School of Religion before being ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA. Later he transferred to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. His vision was embodied in *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973), in which he proposed that Old Testament civil law be normative for civil governments today. Its treatment of the Mosaic code formed a broad perspective, combined with a postmillennial expectation, to form the Reconstructionist Movement.

¹⁴ David VanDrunen, "VanDrunen in the Hands of an Anxious Kloosterman: A Response to a Review of *A Biblical Case for Natural Law*," *Ordained Servant Online* (December 2007) http://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=78&issue_id=26. See also Nelson Kloosterman, in *Kingdoms Apart: Engaging the Two Kingdoms Perspective*, ed. Ryan McIlhenny (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 90.

Christian Ethics.¹⁵ Soon Bahnsen's work received a scathing review by Meredith Kline, in which the same themes of cult/cultus dichotomy appear, as well as his unique view of common grace and "intrusion ethics":

Whatever support may be found in the Westminster standards for the Chalcedon theory of theonomic politics, when it comes to assessing it in terms of the church's only infallible standard, that theory must be repudiated as a misreading of the Bible on a massive scale. ... it scrambles the biblical ideas of the holy and the common. The misinterpretation of the Israelite nations in the Chalcedon theory of the State carries with it, along with its contradiction of the redemptive-restorative nature of that nation, a denial of Israel's distinctive holiness as a kingdom set apart by a special redemptive covenant unto the Lord.

The existence of Israel as a holy kingdom with special guarantees of prosperity constituted an intrusive exception within the pattern of common grace nations. But the Israelite theocracy was only a limited, local kingdom, serving as merely a typical model of the ultimate universal theocracy, and hence it did not effect the abolishment of the common grace order. That order with all its common nations was able to coexist with theocratic Israel. But millennial theories that attribute to the pre-consummation stage of the history of the messianic age the fulfillment of the prophecies of the visible, universal, holy, messianic theocratic kingdom do postulate the abrogation of the common grace order prior to the consummation.¹⁶

Kline defines his expansive view of "common grace" as the regular order of history, in which the coming of Israel and the Mosaic institutions are an exception. He calls Israel "a typical model," which means that it is but a picture of a future reality. We would argue that God's purpose for Israel was to be a *moral model* for other nations, for God's Law revealed to Moses is a universal standard, not an "intrusion" of future ethics. For this reason, the concept of "intrusion ethics" prohibits Kline's followers from affirming that Mosaic Law has any regulative relevance outside of historical Israel. This speculative hermeneutic lies in the background of 2K theology.

After Bahnsen replied to Kline in the revised edition of his book (1984), a concerted effort by many in the Westminster Seminary Philadelphia community led in 1991 to *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*.¹⁷ This signaled a general rejection of the theonomic movement by many conservative Reformed seminaries. Many reacted to the Reconstructionist Movement by emphasizing "biblical theology" and key concepts that led to the emergence of the 2K theology: Redemptive-Historical hermeneutic, Pilgrim Theology, and the "Spirituality of the Church."¹⁸

Others from the old United Presbyterian Church (UPC) background who were influenced by John Gerstner, a supporter of Thomas Aquinas and critic of Van Til's presuppositionalism, also embraced these perspectives. Their viewpoints found a voice in the journal *Kerux* and in the formation of Northwest Theological Seminary. Charles Dennison, then historian of the OPC, along with John Muether and Darryl Hart, defined the identity of the OPC as follows:

In contrast to the transformationist vision of other conservative denominations, the OPC, in the words of historian Charles Dennison, "has no cultural or social agenda". ... some of the OPC's evangelical critics have often dismissed the church as "irrelevant" for its want of a social agenda. Seen from another perspective, however, it is more accurate to say that the OPC is committed to the "irrelevance" of the world to the church. As part of the new eschatological order unveiled in the coming of Christ, the church locates its hope in a kingdom that is not of this world ...the OPC abandons aspiration for earthly glory, including a "restorationism" that yearns for a return to Judeo-Christian values, a theocratic state, or Christian civilization.¹⁹

¹⁵ Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977).

¹⁶ Meredith Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error," *Westminster Theological Journal* 41:1 (Fall 1978): 172-89.

¹⁷ *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*, William S. Barker and W. Robert Godfrey, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991).

¹⁸ The modern Biblical Theology movement arose within German Lutheranism and stressed that the Bible is to be understood primarily as a story about Christocentric spiritual redemption. Historic covenant theology should not be confused with it.

¹⁹ Darryl G. Hart and John Muether, *Fighting the Good Fight: A Brief History of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1995), 190-92. See also *History for a Pilgrim People: The Historical Writings of Charles G. Dennison*, Danny E. Olinger and David K. Thompson, eds. (Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2002).

David VanDrunen: Two Kingdoms and Two Laws

David M. VanDrunen, born in 1971, studied at Calvin College (BA, 1992) before going to Westminster Seminary California (M.Div). He received a Th.M. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, a J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law, and a Ph.D. from Loyola University in Chicago,²⁰ writing his dissertation on “Law and Custom: The Thought of Thomas Aquinas and the Future of the Common Law” (2003). He became a licensed attorney in the state of Illinois and was also ordained as a minister in the OPC. He is an adherent, like Kline, to the “framework hypothesis” concerning Genesis. He began teaching at Westminster Seminary California in 2001 and presently occupies the Robert B. Strimple Chair of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics there. VanDrunen is also associated with the Acton Institute, an American research and educational institution, founded in 1990 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by two Roman Catholics and named after an English Romanist.²¹ Although VanDrunen has dismissed the significance of his Roman Catholic association, it appears that it has nevertheless strongly affected his thinking.

Formulating a Two Kingdom Theology

VanDrunen is arguably the 2K’s principal engine and popularizer, having written *A Biblical Case for Natural Law* (Acton Institute, 2006); *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (2010); *Living in God’s Two Kingdoms: A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (2010); and *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law* (2014).

In his popular book *Living in God’s Two Kingdoms*, VanDrunen asks two questions that are at the core of the Two Kingdom controversy. His first is—will our cultural products adorn the eternal city? His second is—will our restorative works be included in “the new heavens and the new earth”? VanDrunen’s unequivocal answer to both is *no*. The negative answer leads him to conclude that contemporary conversations about Christianity and its connection to this fallen world are currently on the wrong track. He argues that Christians ought to realize that our cultural labors in the current world are temporary and will eventually pass away when Jesus returns; however, our spiritual labors in the Church will endure forever. Thus, our labors should be focused on the spiritual needs of the Church rather than on transforming the world. VanDrunen writes, “Our cultural activities do not in any sense usher in the new creation.” Similarly, he states, “Cultural activity remains important for Christians, but it will come to an abrupt end, along with this present world as a whole, when Christ returns and cataclysmically ushers in the new heavens and the new earth.”²²

VanDrunen views the 2K theology as a direct alternative to Neo-Calvinism. For this purpose, he erroneously paints Neo-Calvinism with broad strokes by wrongly associating it with Karl Barth and N.T. Wright, and then considers it to be something of a precursor to two contemporary, albeit problematic, theological movements—the Emergent Church and the New Perspective on Paul. According to VanDrunen, these modern expressions of Neo-Calvinism are to be faulted because they place too much emphasis on transforming the culture of this world. VanDrunen claims that they fail to realize that this world, along with its culture, will inevitably pass away when Christ returns to usher in His heavenly kingdom.

In 2K theology, the Church makes up one kingdom while the world comprises the other; the former is a spiritual kingdom while the latter is a “common kingdom.” Of primary concern is how these two kingdoms relate to one another. The 2K formula is actually quite simple as it contrasts Adam with Christ, the Noachian Covenant with the Abrahamic Covenant, and then draws implications that determine how we ought to live as Christians in God’s two kingdoms.

²⁰ Loyola is one of the nation’s largest Jesuit Catholic universities. Norman Geisler, an evangelical promoter of Aquinas, also obtained his doctorate there.

²¹ It is named after Lord Acton, an English Roman Catholic historian, politician, and writer. Sirico, a Paulist priest, was assigned to the Catholic Information Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and soon thereafter founded the Institute along with Kris Alan Mauren. Stephen J. Grabill (PhD, Calvin Theological Seminary) is the present director of programs at the Institute and author of *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics* (2006).

²² David VanDrunen, *Living in God’s Two Kingdoms: A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 28.

Adam was originally given a mandate which he was supposed to accomplish—to exercise dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26–28). According to VanDrunen, this was a Cultural Mandate. It was commissioned by God and had a reward connected to it. If Adam successfully implemented this Cultural Mandate, then God would have graduated him into a new kingdom; in a sense, Adam’s cultural labors would have earned him a place in that kingdom. This new kingdom would have surpassed the paradise represented by the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall. Tragically, Adam failed in his task and did not complete this mandate. However, Jesus succeeded where Adam originally failed. Not only did Jesus pay the penalty for Adam’s sin, but he also completed Adam’s original task. Thus, Jesus alone is the second Adam.

Much of the difference between Neo-Calvinism and 2K theology centers on the nature of Christ’s redemptive work. Neo-Calvinists believe that Christ’s redemption allows Christians to continue to labor according to the Cultural Mandate that was given to Adam prior to the Fall. They essentially view Christians as new Adams, believing that Adam’s original position in creation has been regained by Christians because of Christ’s redemption.

However, VanDrunen explains that only Jesus regained Adam’s position, certainly not Christians. Furthermore, Jesus completed the labor that was left incomplete by Adam. This being the case, for Christians, creation is not regained in redemption; rather, an entirely “new creation” is gained. Yet this “new creation” is not fully present but is eagerly awaited by Christians at Christ’s return. Adam’s cultural labors would have ushered in the new kingdom, but Adam failed. Yet Jesus fulfilled those labors, thus earning Christians a heavenly citizenship. To put this into a clearer perspective, the nature of two covenantal kingdoms should be explained.

VanDrunen singles out two distinct covenants that correspond to the two kingdoms. The Noachian Covenant corresponds to the common kingdom, whereas the Abrahamic Covenant corresponds to the heavenly kingdom. According to VanDrunen, the Noachian Covenant governs all people (believers and unbelievers alike), while the Abrahamic Covenant has jurisdiction over the Church.

One covenant—the Noachian—is concerned with governing the common kingdom, which is inhabited by both believers and unbelievers. This kingdom is focused on secular things such as education, vocation, politics, etc., things shared by believers and unbelievers, but also things that will ultimately vanish when Christ returns.

The other covenant—the Abrahamic—is concerned with spiritual things (i.e., salvation, etc.) which pertain exclusively to the Church. Since Christians are not expected to accomplish Adam’s cultural mandate and the common kingdom will eventually pass away, Christians should focus their labors in the Church rather than trying to transform the common kingdom.

The 2K view about Adam and Jesus, covenants and kingdoms, has seismic implications for how we as Christians live and interact with the “common kingdom.” VanDrunen argues that it is the life and ministry of the Church which ought to be the focal point of the Christian, not the cultural life and activities of the common kingdom. The affairs of human culture are temporary and provisional. When Jesus returns, the common kingdom and its affairs will cease, but the Church will endure forever. Thus, Christians should not expend energies on culture and politics in the common kingdom. For the “common kingdom” is evanescent and unconcerned with spiritual things; the Christian life is comprised of waiting for Christ’s return, as the Bible even calls us “pilgrims” and “sojourners” in this world.

According to VanDrunen, Neo-Calvinism describes its view of cultural transformation by way of calling its viewpoints and institutions as “Christian.” When the Neo-Calvinist seeks to transform the education system, the workplace, and even politics, he aims to reform the common kingdom to become distinctively Christian. Yet VanDrunen sees no biblical mandate for this Neo-Calvinistic vision of creating a Christian society or culture. But he assures us that this is not to say that a Christian’s labors within the common kingdom are unimportant; they are very important. However, our spiritual labors in the Church are more important, since they will be brought into the heavenly kingdom, whereas our cultural labors in the common kingdom will not. VanDrunen writes: “Therefore Christians are not called to pursue cultural activities as a way of attaining the world-to-come, nor should they expect the products of their cultural labors to survive into the new creation.”²³

²³ VanDrunen, *Living in God’s Two Kingdoms*, 71.

A key text for VanDrunen is 1 Timothy 6:7 which reads, “We brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.” Accordingly, what VanDrunen means by the word “products” seems to be material. He tells us that “our earthly bodies are the only part of the present world that Scripture says will be transformed and taken up into the world-to-come.... Asserting that anything else in this world will be transformed and taken up into the world-to-come is speculation beyond Scripture” (71).

VanDrunen also tells us that Neo-Calvinism “emphasizes the centrality of Christian cultural work as a means of building the kingdom of God and anticipating the new creation” (23). He believes that Neo-Calvinism views redemption as creation regained, meaning that Christians occupy a position (or office) similar to that of Adam’s prior to the Fall. However, VanDrunen thinks that Christ has already accomplished Adam’s original Cultural Mandate; thus, creation has not been regained through redemption, but a new creation has been gained, even a creation that is not yet here in its entirety.

As for how the common kingdom is to be governed, VanDrunen states that it is *not* to be ruled by the canon of Scripture. He boldly writes, “The church attends to the business of the redemptive kingdom and does not trample on the authority of common kingdom institutions. Unlike these other institutions, its authority derives from the Scriptures *alone*” (31).

Yet he maintains that, objectively, “the standards of morality and excellence in the common kingdom are ordinarily the same for believers and unbelievers: they share these standards in common under God’s authority in the covenant with Noah” (31). These “Noachian” standards are those of “natural law.”

Even though VanDrunen stresses that Christians are not called “to take up the original Cultural Mandate *per se*, yet God calls us “to obey the Cultural Mandate as given in *modified form to Noah* in Genesis 9” (164). He does not say much about what this “modified form” of Genesis 1:26–28 includes or excludes. He seems to restrict it to the command to be fruitful and to multiply, that is, “to exercise dominion on earth” in a procreational sense only. Probably his use of the word *dominion* includes the command to exercise the death penalty for murder, too (Gen. 9:6). Yet even though we are to obey the Cultural Mandate in a “modified form,” still the *authority* for other institutions is not derived from the Scriptures.²⁴

To undergird his social ethic, VanDrunen uses what he calls the doctrine of the two mediatorships of Christ.²⁵ Does VanDrunen’s discussion of the “doctrine of the two-mediatorships” imply an acceptance of a functional dualism in the person of Christ?²⁶ He says that Christology is an area that needs further development as part of the 2K program.²⁷ This new ethic requires a new Christology. But we should realize that for Christ to be Mediator of

²⁴ VanDrunen’s extensive views will be considered further in the remainder of this report. John Frame devotes chapter 4 of his *The Escondido Theology* to VanDrunen’s *A Biblical Case for Natural Law*.

²⁵ David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 75–76. “Even after the fall into sin and the Son’s incarnation, according to Calvin, Christ does not exist and operate in the world solely through his human nature in his capacity as redeemer. For over against the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity ... Calvin teaches that Christ’s divine nature is present *etiam extra carnem* (“even outside of his flesh”).²⁵ This gives Calvin categories for affirming that the Son of God rules one kingdom in a redemptive manner and the other kingdom in a non-redemptive manner. In his description of Calvin’s social thought, John Bolt helpfully explains: ‘As mediator, the divine *Logos* is not limited to his incarnate form even after the incarnation. He was mediator of creation prior to his incarnation and as mediator continues to *sustain* creation independent of his mediatorial work as *reconciler* of creation in the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth.’ The doctrine that Bolt alludes to here, that of the two mediatorships of the Son of God, over creation and redemption respectively, was developed by later generations of Reformed theologians and came to serve as crucial foundation for their two kingdoms doctrine.”

²⁶ This is not a minor point in his formulation. VanDrunen bolsters his viewpoint by seeking to find the “doctrine of the two mediatorships” in Calvin (75–76), Turretin (177, 180), and Kuyper (313–14). While it might be said that the author is only treating historical figures, the analysis he gives and the conclusions he draws are by no means neutral observations. We will refer to this matter further in the exegetical and historical sections of this report. In his argument VanDrunen refers to the so-called “extra calvinisticum.” But it is dangerous to uncritically accept a term coined by Lutherans which implies that Reformed theology separates the two natures of Christ. While clearly distinguishing between Christ’s two natures, the Heidelberg Catechism clearly denies any separation of the human nature of Christ from his deity (Q48).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 429–30. “One area concerns the doctrine of the two mediatorships of the Son of God. Reformed proponents of the two kingdoms idea historically grounded the origin and nature of the civil and spiritual kingdoms respectively upon the Son’s

Creation implies an original dualism between Creator and creature. This is clearly contrary to the Reformed understanding of Genesis and Creation.²⁸

Michael Horton: Pilgrim Theology

Michael Horton, born in 1964, did his undergraduate work at the evangelical Biola University. He was one of the early students at Westminster Seminary California studying under Meredith Kline, Robert Strimple, and Robert Godfrey. He received his Ph.D. at Oxford University and did post-doctoral study at Yale Divinity School. First ordained as a deacon in the Reformed Episcopal Church, he was later ordained as a minister in the United Reformed Churches. In 1998 he began teaching at Westminster Seminary California and is now the J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics. He is host of the weekly broadcast, *White Horse Inn* and editor-in-chief of *Modern Reformation* magazine. Horton has written or edited more than twenty books on theological and cultural topics, including the 1,057-page *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. The “pilgrim” motif is central to Horton’s understanding of the Christian in the world.

Dr. Michael Horton has not written extensively on the 2K theology; most if not all of his lectures and articles about the Two Kingdoms are a defense against caricatures of the 2K perspective. He also tries to clarify the issue by disowning that there is such a thing as “Escondido Theology,” even noting that the president of Westminster Seminary California is a Kuyperian Neo-Calvinist. Horton also argues that on the most important points the Kuyperian position and 2K theology are agreed.

Like VanDrunen, Horton affirms that “all things are under Christ’s personal dominion,”²⁹ yet he opposes the idea that a valid civil order must be based on the Bible. He maintains that natural law and common law are complementary, since “the work of the law is written in the heart” of every man (Rom. 2:14–15). This “canon of natural law” is engraved on every human being (152). He says that “God is King in status, but will one day be King eschatologically in all the earth” (540). Most, if not all, of his uses of the word “kingdom” are reserved for the Church, since the Church is both the kingdom of grace now and the kingdom of glory in the future (537).

He interprets the words of Revelation 11:15 which speak about the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ to refer to the ushering in of the kingdom of glory. He also emphasizes that God’s kingdom is “not a kingdom we are building” but “receiving” (543). Pressing the “already–not yet” focus of Scripture, Horton argues that the kingdom is coming, but also has come (544). So, “wherever the King is present, His kingdom is present also” (547), but he seems unwilling to apply the word “kingdom” to the State or any cultural activity outside of the Church. One reason is that “in this era Christ’s kingdom doesn’t overthrow the kingdoms of this age” (973).

One reason that Christians are not transformers is that Scripture identifies us as “strangers and pilgrims.” Horton so presses this metaphor that the cover of his book on systematic theology pictures two pilgrims, shrouded in darkness, making their way through life on blackened soil. In fact, the subtitle of the book reads, “A Systematic Theology for *Pilgrims* on the Way.” Accordingly, 2K theologians depict the Christian as a sojourner, traveling to a religious shrine (“the kingdom of glory”). For Horton, the figure of a sojourner publicizes his theology better than a triumphant king on the earth who “occupies” until Christ’s Second Advent (Luke 19:13). Horton does not balance his emphasis of “pilgrims on the way” with other important New Testament metaphors, such as our being victorious kings and priests who fight God’s battles on the earth (Rev. 5:10).

distinct mediatorship of creation and of redemption. A number of Reformed writers over the past century have rejected this doctrine, however, and along with it a two kingdoms approach to social thought. Though this may seem to be an intimidating and remote topic for non-theologians wrestling with issues of Christianity and culture, those who do wish to give a theologically rich account of these issues will certainly need to wrestle with the two mediatorships idea.” (emphasis added)

²⁸ See the evaluation of the “two mediatorships” by J. van Genderen and W. H. Velema, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. by Gerrit Bilkes and Ed M. van der Maas (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 250–51. For a clear statement about creation see *The Days of Creation: The Report of the Special Committee to Articulate the Doctrine of Creation Reformed Church in the United States*, 1999, which can be found at rcus.org.

²⁹ Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 26.

Dr. Horton refers to all rulers of this world as “secular rulers” (713), which are not to be directed by the Church (896). To prove this, he cites the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Article 32.1–2, which states that the Church must not direct the State “unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary” (889). His conviction is that the Church does not direct “secular affairs” (896). These “secular affairs” are issues that relate to the old Cultural Mandate, not the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Horton states: “Nowhere in the New Testament is the Great Commission fused with the Cultural Mandate. Rather than offer a blueprint for establishing Christ’s kingdom through cultural, political, or social power, Paul’s instructions for daily conduct of believers in civil society seem rather modest” (713).

Again, he writes:

Christians are not distinguished from non-Christians—which is to say, are not holy—because they show love and kindness to their neighbor, defend justice, and care for the environment. These are obligations of the law of creation that Christians recognize in their conscience together with non-Christians. It is only the gospel that marks believers as holy, and it is only the preaching of the Gospel and its ratification in baptism and Communion that generate a city of light in a dark world.” (719)

Again, he maintains that “the calling of the Church is not to witness to its own piety or to transform the world into Christ’s holy kingdom” (868). The impact of the Church upon the State is not supposed to be direct, according to Horton. The era that we live in is the “era of common law measured by equity to which believers and unbelievers are bound in secular friendship” (973). This means that our attitudes toward unbelievers are determined by common grace. Horton writes: “All places are common....” (961). For Horton, this means that Christians are to “influence” the world without transforming the world. The goal of transforming the world is “the heresy of Constantinianism.” As to distinguishing how we are to influence but not to transform, Horton says that “Christians may appeal to general principles of justice and love of neighbor, but not to Israel’s national covenant” (973). Horton even argues that “theology does not provide a normative theory of politics, or even address every area of moral concern” (105).

Yet despite arguing for discretion when the Church does advise the State, Michael Horton tells us that the Bible does *not* speak to all ethical issues, implying that one reason for the silence of the Church is *because the Bible has little or nothing to say*. On the contrary, we wonder if Horton has considered that the Bible has *too much* to say to the State so that the Church would not only be interfering if she made intervention a common practice, but abandon her calling to evangelize and preach the good news of Jesus Christ to an unconverted world.³⁰

B. Two Kingdom Adherents and Promoters

Westminster Seminary in Escondido is the center of the 2K movement though adherents and promoters work in other places, such as Jason Stellman and Matt Tuininga. The radio program *White Horse Inn* and the magazine *Modern Reformation* are strong avenues of its dissemination. Many of the promoters of the 2K theology serve up its fare on various websites such as Darryl Hart’s *Old Life* blog, R. Scott Clark’s *Heidelblog*, Matt Tuininga’s *Christian in America* blog; and Steve Zrimec, Rick Bierling, Jr., and Rev. Todd Bordow’s *Confessional Outhouse* blog.

We should note that one of the three hosts of *White Horse Inn* is a Lutheran. Its website says, “Dr. Rod Rosenblatt is professor of theology at Concordia University in Irvine, California and an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. He was educated at Pacific Lutheran University, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Capitol Theological Seminary, and the University of Strasbourg.”

R. Scott Clark

R. Scott Clark, born in 1961, studied at the University of Nebraska, Westminster Seminary California and the University of Oxford. Since 1997 he has taught at Westminster in California as Professor of Church History and

³⁰ For a fuller picture of Horton’s views see his “In Praise of Profanity: A Theological Defense of the Secular,” in *Evangelicals and Empire*, ed. Peter Heltzel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 252–56; chapter 6 of his *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006). John Frame analyzes Horton’s views in “Christless Christianity,” *The Escondido Theology*, chap. 2.

Historical Theology. Although he has not written a book on 2K theology, his blog gives us a more anecdotal and general justification for it.³¹

Although Rev. Clark's remarks are succinct—he tells us that the Church alone is “the embassy of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven,” which, interpreted strictly would remove everything outside the Church from Christ's sovereign rule. He does not entertain the concept of the Kingdom in the narrow sense (the Church) and the Kingdom in the broad sense (everything else). He also tells us that none of the apostles “prescribed *social* or *civil* remedies. . . . They *never* commented on Nero's abuses or upon Claudius' policies.” If by “commented” he means we have no record of the Apostle's *explicitly* censuring Nero and Claudius, such would be true. Yet, we do well to remember that there are different ways to express a censure.

For example, sin can be condemned by biblical indicatives and imperatives. Jesus Himself prosecuted Herod as “that fox” (Lk. 13:32), and Luke in *The Acts of the Apostles* declared God's judgment against Herod Antipas for not giving glory to God for his secular oration (Acts 12:2–23). In other words, Herod should have *publicly* acknowledged the glory of God in his office as a magistrate. The apostles were always official representatives of the Church when they appeared before kings and magistrates (Acts 9:15). Clearly, Christ censured Pontius Pilate when Pilate made claims to absolute power and authority (John 19:11).

It is also not clear what Clark means when he says that while the Gospel does have social implications, yet the Church as *the Church* should stay clear of spelling out these implications. Ministers should not preach on these subjects nor even publicly pray about them, he writes! Yet, he grants that private individuals may, as long as they are not official spokesmen of the Church. This raises the question as to whether a Christian *as a Christian and church member* can address social and cultural ills? If he can, then what is the precise difference between his intervention and a more official pronouncement of the Church? Can a Christian by definition, as he is always a member of the body of Christ, cease reflecting and representing Christ's church? It is not always clear as to how to resolve this question. Interestingly, Rev. Clark in his blog does not entertain any exceptions that might allow the Church to speak out on *any issue*. This seems opposed to the exceptions that other Two Kingdom theologians allow for. He seems content to say no more than that the New Testament is remarkably silent about cultural and social issues, and leaves it at that.³²

Darryl G. Hart: Promoting A Secular Faith

Hart is a strong promoter and defender of 2K theology. Born in 1956, he received the M.A.R. at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, M.T.S. at Harvard, and his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1988. After serving as a librarian at Westminster Philadelphia, he held a series of academic posts. An elder in the OPC, he along with John Muether, has written a number of books on OPC history, runs the *Old Life* blog, and co-edits the *Nicotine Theological Journal*. His book *John Williamson Nevin: High-Church Calvinist* (2005) contains appreciation of a man who did much damage to the Reformed Church in the U.S.

In his book *Secular Faith: Why Christianity Favors the Separation of Church and State*, Hart defends the thesis of “keeping religion out of politics along the lines proposed by Christian secularism. . . .” (16).³³ His 2K vision is seen in the proclamation that “Christianity is essentially a spiritual and eternal faith, one occupied with a world to come rather than the passing and temporal affairs of this world” (12). He criticizes conservative Christians such as Marvin Olasky, who try to employ their faith in political engagement. Hart's writings show the kind of negative influence that the 2K stance can have on American Christianity.³⁴ John Frame says of Hart,

Hardly anyone has ever gone as far as Hart to discourage Christian influence in politics and culture. . . . The only predecessors he cites are . . . the obscure Stuart Robinson, and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod . . . [He] has

³¹ *The Heidelblog*, June 10, 2015. <http://heidelblog.net/2015/06/the-gospel-is-not-social/>.

³² For more on the views of R. Scott Clark, see John Frame's *The Escondido Theology*, chapter 3.

³³ Darryl G. Hart, *Secular Faith: Why Christianity Favors the Separation of Church and State* (n.p., Ivan R. Dee, 2007), 16.

³⁴ For further analysis of Hart, see Timothy R. Scheuers, “Dual Citizenship, Dual Ethic? Evaluation of the Two Kingdom Perspective on the Christian in Culture” in *Kingdoms Apart: Engaging the Two Kingdoms Perspective*, ed. Ryan McIlhenny (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012).

rejected the overwhelming majority of church teachings over the centuries to adopt an idiosyncratic position held almost exclusively by a few Americans.³⁵

C. Living in the Two Kingdoms: An Inconsistent Ethic

There are several practical implications of the 2K theology revealing the fact that it does not square with biblical ethics. Although the jury may still be out concerning the experiential implications of 2K ethics, it should be noted that some ethical inconsistencies and embarrassments have arisen.³⁶

One practical error of the 2K view of natural law is that it envisions a much rosier outworking in the life of the so-called common kingdom than what the Bible allows. It does this in an almost cavalier appeal to Romans 2:14–15, not factoring in the extent of the sin that suppresses the inward testimony of God’s law in our hearts.

The Belgic Confession states that in the Fall, man “has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof,” which the Confession grants is sufficient “to leave man without excuse” (Art. 14). In short, Romans 2:14–15 must be balanced with the real world of Romans 1:18–32 and Romans 3:10ff., where Paul indicts the whole race for its total depravity and lawlessness. Clearly, natural law can motor civil rulers a little distance before the jalousy of their rule breaks down.

For this reason, natural law *inevitably* throws us back to inscripturated Law as a looking-glass and clarifier. Because men are blinded by sin, natural law is not as perspicuous as God’s written Law. Because of sin, natural law and inscripturated law are *not* equally perspicuous. 2K theologians tend to equate this perspicuity. On the contrary, we would argue that the Church through its preaching and teaching ministry has the duty to address the moral policies of the State, especially when the State becomes an instrument of lawlessness and plunder. The testimony of history is that the natural-law record of success has not been stellar.

Inconsistencies

1. In an open forum in 2011, Dr. VanDrunen was asked what *kingdom* Westminster Seminary California fits into—the common kingdom or Christ’s spiritual kingdom? As Westminster Seminary California is not the official arm of any Church or denomination, the question was to clarify exactly in which kingdom it belonged. Dr. VanDrunen answered:

.... and so in essence I would look at this institution as a common kingdom institution that houses and hosts this very important work the church does through certain ministers set apart for the task... it does not mean that we can always put every single plot of ground here in one kingdom bucket or another. Sometimes it’s more complex than that. ... I would say that a place like Westminster, in and of itself, is part of the common kingdom in that it does not have the promises of the eternal kingdom of God... but I would say that.... in general it’s a common kingdom institution and has all the trappings of a business in a lot of ways....³⁷

In other words, VanDrunen believes that ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are not trained in the Kingdom of God (the Church) but in a common kingdom composed of Christians and reprobates. Since the Church according to VanDrunen is the spiritual kingdom, ministers of the Gospel are trained outside of this kingdom by Christians who (as R. Scott Clark has argued in a differing context) are not official representatives and spokesmen of the Church. Thus the common (profane) kingdom trains ministers for Christ’s spiritual kingdom!

2. A second inconsistency concerns Michael Horton’s opposition to gay marriage, but with the caveat that “although a contractual relationship denies God’s will for human dignity, I could affirm domestic partnerships as a way of protecting people’s legal and economic security.” Again, he says that “the challenge there is that two Christians who

³⁵ Frame, *Escondido Theology*, 271.

³⁶ We would encourage readers to consider the outworking of the 2K doctrine in Lutheranism, discussed later in this report.

³⁷ Footnoted in *Kingdoms Apart*, 266–67.

hold the same beliefs about marriage as Christians may appeal to neighbor-love to support or to oppose legalization of same-sex marriage.”³⁸

This statement is not easy to understand unless we deduce that in *some sense* Michael Horton believes that Christians can accommodate themselves to domestic partnerships/gay marriages on the basis of “neighbor-love.” This would mean that Horton can justify gay marriage for purely legal and economic reasons. For us it is difficult if not impossible to imagine the Apostle Paul affirming domestic partnerships, especially after his censure of their “vile passions” in Romans 1. How can the desecration of holy matrimony have anything to do with “neighbor-love,” when love by definition is the fulfilling of God’s law? (Rom. 13:8–10)

3. A third instance is a Michael Horton lecture in which he tries to distinguish areas where there is no distinction between Christians and non-Christians. He says: “When it comes to childbirth, love-making, disease, tragedies, earthquakes, and famines, there is no distinction between the Christian and non-Christian.”³⁹ Mark the words: “there is no distinction.” While it is true that unbelievers can and do love, it is categorically not true that they can love as the Christian, who is supposed to love “as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34–35; Eph. 5:25).

Again and again we see 2K theologians *dulling the antithesis* between Christians and anti-Christians. Is Horton really serious that the Christian’s love for his wife is the same as the anti-Christian? (Eph. 5:25). He is so anxious to show the mutual ethical standards of Christians and non-Christians in the “common kingdom,” he even argues that for six days a week Christians and pagans live indistinctly, “which is neither holy nor unholy but simply common.”⁴⁰ After reading such statements we wonder, “What has become of the Reformed doctrine of sanctification?”

4. It remains unclear as to whether 2K theologians would discourage *individual* Christians *as Christians* from *regularly* advising the State, especially if these members occupy legal positions of moral influence within the body politic. If so, then how can a Christian *not* be a “salt and light” when his job and political description call him to that very task? Moreover, in the last several years many issues have arisen that the Church itself (not to mention individual members) has a duty to address, publicly pray about, and beseech the civil powers. Some samples are: (1) racism, (2) war, (3) gay “marriage,” (4) disobedience to civil authorities, including *illegal* immigration, (5) abortion, (6) assisted suicide, (7) euthanasia, (8) prostitution, (9) humanism in public education, (10) the failure of civil government to enforce the laws that it swears to uphold, thus violating Romans 13, (11) the codification and regular enforcement of the death penalty, especially for murder, (12) defrauding the American citizen through the bane of monetary inflation, (13) idolatry, especially when it is promoted by the body politic, etc.

In summary, we quote John Frame:

Scripture is God’s word, and God’s word is the foundation of morality. When we want to draw people, believers or unbelievers, to that foundation, we should be unashamed to refer to Scripture. I grant that there are many cultural forces telling us not to refer to Scripture in the public square. But we should not listen to them. The attempt of VanDrunen and others to convince us not to apply Scripture to civil matters is a failure.⁴¹

2. APPRAISAL OF THE TWO KINGDOM THEOLOGY

Our evaluation of the 2K theology is threefold: (1) We first turn to Scripture as our primary standard to survey the Bible’s teaching on the Cultural Mandate and Great Commission while providing exegesis of specific passages. (2) Next we consider our secondary Confessional standards and compare them with the other Reformed Confessions. (3) Finally we evaluate the historical claims of the 2K view by focusing on the views of Calvin, the Reformed tradition, and Neo-Calvinism. We will also summarize the views of others such as Augustine and Luther.

³⁸ Posted on *The Whitehorse Inn*, May 11, 2012. <https://www.whitehorseinn.org/blog/entry/general/2012/05/11/should-we-oppose-same-sex-marriage?>

³⁹ From a lecture given at Westminster Seminary California, June 15–16, 2010.

⁴⁰ Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 11.

⁴¹ John Frame, “Review of David VanDrunen’s *A Biblical Case for Natural Law*,” Frame-Poythress.org. <http://frame-poythress.org/review-of-david-van-drunen-s-a-biblical-case-for-natural-law>.

Our approach demonstrates a different method than that used by the promoters of the 2K. A serious defect in the 2K theology has been a shortage of careful exegesis confirming its central propositions. The burden seems to rest more on defeating “Neo-Calvinism” with what they believe to be the pristine Calvinism of Calvin himself rather than providing substantial Scripture exegesis. With the exception of Kline, the leading 2K theologians began by appealing first to church history.

Recently, VanDrunen has provided a biblical argument for his position in *Divine Covenants and the Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law*. Though his argument is constructed formally along covenantal lines, his method is that of biblical theology, which is often more “theologizing” than exegesis. We would expect VanDrunen to give exegetical treatment of key passages on kingdom, Cultural Mandate, Christology, but instead he focuses on finding Natural Law throughout the Bible. “As I am arguing in this book, the reality of natural law permeates Scripture.”⁴²

Our interpretation of Scripture differs significantly from his. We begin with creation and emphasize its significance for rightly understanding the Law and subsequent covenant revelation. For VanDrunen, Mosaic Law and New Testament ethics are viewed as a republication of “Natural Law.” His stress on “nature” instead of creation evidences how a weak view on creation, due to the framework hypothesis, has ethical implications.

A. Biblical Evaluation

We begin with the Bible in evaluating these recent teachings. If we are to be Reformed in our understanding of God’s revelation, we must first and foremost be biblical, giving proper weight to all relevant texts and teachings. Our response to the 2K paradigm will also provide an alternative narrative of the Bible. We will focus on the biblical covenants and their relationship to the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission, but will also include specific exegesis of certain key passages.

Reformed theology has had a long history of interpreting the Bible covenantally. There have been many variants of covenant theology available in recent years, however. In this matter we are helped by the Reformed Confessions. While not covering every issue, they provide the framework for interpretation.

With the Reformed confessions we strongly affirm progressive revelation and the unity of God’s unfolding purposes. They teach the unity of God’s covenants without ignoring the distinctions between them. The Bible emphasizes that because there is one God there is an underlying unity to His revelation due to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12) are not disparate treaties disjoined from one another but are part of God’s economy to build His one covenantal house (Heb. 3:1–6). The book of Hebrews especially shows us how to relate the Old and New Testaments.⁴³

Creation and the Cultural Mandate

Since 2K theology abrogates the Cultural or Dominion Mandate for the Church today, it is incumbent upon us to explain more comprehensively why this teaching does not properly represent the biblical narrative and its covenant theology.

We begin with the creation account in Genesis 1. God first created the cultural environment in which man was to live and serve God. God created the heaven and the earth, created light, separated the waters from the waters and the land from the sea, placed light bearers in the heavens, filled the seas with fish and the skies with fowl, and the

⁴² David VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants and the Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 232.

⁴³ To help us in our interpretation we refer the reader to more comprehensive treatments by O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980); and Gerard van Groningen, *Creation to Consummation*, 3 vols. (Dordt College Press, 1996). See especially chapters 3 and 4 in Robertson’s work on the unity and diversity of the divine covenants. A more popular work by S. G. DeGraaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, 4 vols. (Paidea Press/Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977–1981), conveys the general covenantal approach. In the course of our survey we will be quoting from John Frame’s review of VanDrunen’s book, *A Biblical Case for Natural Law*, cited previously.

land with cattle, beast, and creeping things. Then He created man in His very image (Gen. 1:26–27) in order that man might be like him in His creative work. To man He entrusted the work of managing all He had made.

Man's role of vicegerent⁴⁴ of creation is, then, not incidental to the plan of God. The whole of Genesis 1 moves toward the creation of man and his role as steward of creation under God. The creation of man in God's image and the gift of dominion are distinct but intimately related things. God made man like Himself to exercise dominion over the earth (Ps. 8).

When God issued the Cultural Mandate He did so within the broader context of a Covenant of Creation, distinguishing man from all else by making him in His own image.⁴⁵ The mandate therefore presupposes man's nature as God's image-bearer. It is part of a larger covenant, including what has been called the Covenant of Life or Works. In fact, the command is preceded by the general blessing of God on them as male and female. And the command has a number of aspects.

1. It begins with a command to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth" (v. 28). It is in the context of the covenantal grant of dominion that God insists on human procreation. While it is true that God consecrated the first marriage before He issued the Dominion or Cultural Mandate, God had already assigned Adam the task of dressing and keeping the Garden (Gen. 2:15). God associates marriage and children with man's task of dominion. After all, two persons cannot rule a whole planet. God's plan for man's dominion required mankind to fill the whole world. Marriage and children, then, are integral to man's task of dominion and are for that reason an essential part of the Mandate itself. It provides for the formation of human society with all of its eventual institutions and associations. Marriage therefore cannot be simply a matter of "natural law" but was given by the command of God as a creation ordinance.⁴⁶ And it can be maintained only in obedience to Him when it is used for His glory, done by faith, and in accord with His commandments.

2. The first couple and their descendants were to geographically "fill the earth" through exploration and settlement. In so doing, their task was to "subdue" the earth through scientific discovery and understanding (Gen. 2:19–20). It was to include managing the environment and bringing out the hidden wealth and potential of the earth, and all of this for God's praise. Man was to give order to the earth in a manner that followed God's design. Subduing the earth is described in 2:5 as cultivating the ground (cf. v. 8).

To provide what they needed to accomplish this great task, God gave to man the plants which bear seed and the trees which bear fruit for food. Man's initial culture was agriculture (Gen. 2:15) Thus, two words describe man's work in relation to the ground: (1) cultivate, serve, or work it; (2) keep or guard it. God loves his creation and calls man to be His servant and caretaker of His world. Man was to care for the earth, not abuse or exploit it for selfish purposes. This was given by divine command and was not to be understood as a matter of "natural law," for God is the Lord of work and the Sabbath rest. All work was designed by Him to serve His glory; it was never given as a generic common task to be maintained independently of serving God.

God's labors set a pattern for man: the six-day creation week anticipated man's six-day workweek. In like manner, God rested on the seventh day as an example for mankind. In fact, as we see in the later fourth Commandment given at Mt. Sinai, God sets the example of man's cultural work and rest (Ex. 20:8–11). God could have issued a command at the beginning, but He set an example. Together, God's six days of labor and one day of rest set a pattern for man's work of dominion. This means that the very concept of a Sabbath, or a day set apart for rest and worship, presupposes man's cultural activities of work and rule.

3. God gave to man the command to "rule over" or have dominion over the fish, birds, and animals of the earth. Thus man's dominion is not absolute, but limited. David described this more expansively, "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen— even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas" (Ps. 8:5–8).

⁴⁴ A person exercising delegated power as an earthly representative of God.

⁴⁵ Apparently the term "Cultural Mandate" was coined by Klaas Schilder. See Robertson, chapter 5, "The Covenant of Creation."

⁴⁶ See John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1957), chapters 2–3.

Here the term “dominion” is used along with the phrase “put *all* things under his feet.” This shows that the directive was not limited merely to animals but included all the works of God’s hands. And the task was to be done for the glory of God (vv. 1, 9). Again, this is a matter of divine ordinance, not natural law.

Thus the Cultural Mandate set before our first parents had an amazing goal: they and their children were to explore, develop, and enhance God’s beautiful, unfallen world. They were to construct a culture and build a society to the glory of God. The task would require them to become scientists, artisans, mechanics, inventors, scholars, musicians, artists, and politicians. They would have to become proficient in agriculture, animal husbandry, metallurgy, shipbuilding, commerce, and communication. The mastery of these skills would require a deep understanding of physics, chemistry, and biology. The mastery of these sciences in turn would require an ever-growing mastery of mathematics. In short, godly dominion would necessarily produce an intricate and complex culture with roots in mathematics and the sciences, and fruit in literature and the arts.

Dr. John M. L. Young, a Reformed Presbyterian missionary and missiologist, remarks,

Does not God’s first covenant with man also rightfully include what we have been calling the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:28, God’s first proclamation to men, His first pronouncement of His mission for men, stipulating His will for men? Is not the cultural task God imposes on man as his mission in life a basic element of the covenant of life in which man is shown not only the way to avoid death and maintain life (perfect obedience) but also the way to live, that is, what that obedience entailed by way of a goal and task?

The historical situation is that man must now be informed by his Creator of the purpose of his creation (to be God’s image-bearer to reflect God’s glory) and the nature of his task as God’s vicegerent. Three stipulations detail the nature of the cultural task. The God of creation (Maker of servants by His creative Word), of providence (by His all-pervasive administration), and of universal sovereignty (by His powerful dominion), calls upon His image-bearer, analogously, to produce servants for God, to administer all things for the service of God, and to exercise dominion over the creatures. By these means man discharges the responsibility of his threefold office.⁴⁷

Understood in this way, how could true culture or a just society be conceived as a “common” matter that is not connected to true religion? It is a truncated view of creation that imagines that man can *rightly* fulfill the Cultural Mandate in a kingdom apart from Christ. This is not the view of Genesis.

In the context of his life on the new earth, the first Adam was in regular, verbal contact with God and lived by every word that proceeded from His mouth: revelation and moral law. To understand the law, man was not called to look inward to his own reason or conscience, or outward to creation, but to obey what had God revealed by faith. Law was revelatory of the will of God.

What has been called the Covenant of Works, the command given by God to Adam not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, was also inextricably wrapped up with the Cultural Mandate. Culture was dependent on true religion (cult). Writes Herman Bavinck, “But man can fulfill this calling over against the earth only if he does not break the bond of connection which unites him with heaven, only if he continues to believe God at His word and to obey His commandment.”⁴⁸ For the Tree was an opportunity for man to live by every word of God precisely because it was the word of God. Adam was called by God to submit his mind, will, and heart to the authority of His verbally revealed Word in order to properly carry on the larger and far more long-term work of dominion over the whole earth. The Cultural Mandate and the Covenant of Works are therefore part of a broader Covenant of Creation made by God with Adam and include everything that makes up true religion.

Nowhere do we see any evidence that God called man to live by the Law of Nature or Reason. Man was to live by revelation and not find another standard in himself or in the world. Man was called to discover God’s amazing works, but he was never given the task of discovering moral right and wrong by his own understanding. John Frame writes:

In Gen. 1-3, it is clear that Adam’s moral character was not *sufficient* to tell him God’s will. Adam received direction from supernatural divine words directed to him . . . In the following narratives, there is a regular pattern

⁴⁷ John M. L. Young, “The National Church and Foreign Mission,” *International Reformed Bulletin: The Christian Message to a Changing World* 35 (October 1968): 62–77. See also “The Place and Importance of Numerical Church Growth” *Theological Perspectives on Church Growth*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Nutley, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1976).

⁴⁸ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 187.

of divine words and human responses (in obedience or disobedience). ... This is not to deny that human beings gain some knowledge from their created nature. ... My problem, therefore, is not with VanDrunen's assertion that the human conscience provides us with moral knowledge. It is rather with VanDrunen's omission of any significant role for God's supernatural commands informing his conscience. God designed us to gain moral knowledge, not by either supernatural or natural revelation alone, but by an organic combination of the two, in which by reason and conscience we apply God's supernatural revelation to our lives. VanDrunen entirely ignores the dialogue between God's speech and man's response that serves as the essential framework of the biblical story.⁴⁹

Man, then, was given the Cultural Mandate within the framework of a broader Covenant of Creation, and the rule by which he was to live was the revelatory Word of God.

God's Curse on Human Culture and the Promise of the Gospel

When man rebelled against God, he ate from the forbidden Tree which brought sin, misery, and death into human life, society, and culture. He corrupted his own nature and thereby distorted his conscience and understanding of God's law. Though he was still necessarily and inescapably the image of God, that image and conscience was now marred by sin. Now his impulse to be fruitful, have dominion, and rule was either perverted by a lust for power to abuse God's world or blunted into sloth to neglect culture.

God responded to man's sin with a promise of both judgment and salvation. God cursed the Serpent and predicted his destruction. He established the "antithesis" between two "seeds" or societies of men. The seed of the Serpent would persecute the seed of the woman. But He did not abandon His creation nor consider it only an object of eschatological judgment that would pass away.

Other aspects of the Cultural Mandate were not rescinded, but cursed in the light of human depravity. God placed curses upon the ground and upon man's own body. Thus man would labor toward the fulfillment of the Cultural Mandate but find frustration, futility, and misery as he encountered thorns, sweat, disease, and death. God's curse came also on the social mandate: marriage was to be marked by a struggle for power, and "fruitfulness" would be marked by pain in bearing children. The curse on religion meant that mankind no longer had access to God's presence.

God sent Adam and Eve, still man and wife, out into a cursed earth and hostile wilderness to till the ground in away from His presence, the source of true culture. But at no point did God turn aside from His original program for man and the earth. *The promise of the Messiah no more revoked man's task of culture and dominion* than it did away with marriage and family or a weekly day of worship. God did not yield the victory to Satan and abandon His original program for His creation, but he did commit Himself to a *much grander* program. Christ would overcome sin and death. He would redeem to Himself a reborn seed. He would deliver the earth from the bondage of corruption (Rom. 5:15, 17, 20).⁵⁰

God's love of the world and His kindness toward man brought a new initiative, the Covenant of Grace. Dr. Young writes,

This new response of man to God's covenant called for a new response of God to man if God's plan was not to be frustrated. God had made man to serve Him as His image bearer, to accomplish His purpose, to do His will for His glory. Now, if this was to be continued, an extension of God's covenantal arrangement in a new direction was necessary to provide for man's return to the service of his Lord. A new expression of the covenant of life, to meet the new condition of man's sinful rebellion, was therefore proclaimed to men in the form of a covenant of grace or redemption. The principle of salvation by substitutionary atonement, with pardon and restoration to God's fellowship and service, of men of God's choosing, was introduced and gradually revealed through covenantal enactments.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Frame, "Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law."

⁵⁰ See Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, "The Covenant of Commencement," chapter 6.

⁵¹ Young, "National Church," 66.

In the centuries following the expulsion from Paradise we see the decline of man and his culture into one marked by depravity and rebellion. John Frame writes,

The existence of a Cainite society, separate from the people of God (4:26) was an evil. VanDrunen, by calling this society a “realm,” intends to confer some sort of legitimacy on it. But the development of societies in opposition to God is, according to Scripture, profoundly illegitimate. ...

Clearly it is wrong to say that God authorizes or approves the development of culture antagonistic to him, or even culture that claims neutrality. There is no neutrality, as Cornelius Van Til constantly emphasized. Everything we do is either for the glory of God or it is not (1 Cor. 10:31). It either comes from the wisdom of God or the wisdom of the world, and these are antagonistic to one another (1 Cor. 1:20–21). Unbelieving culture exists, and it exists by God’s decree and permission, but not by his precept. He does not approve it.

VanDrunen never considers this sort of argument, and this omission greatly weakens his case for the two kingdom’s view. He seems to think that natural law is sufficient to generate societies of sweet reasonableness and peace. Scripture’s view is very different.⁵²

God’s Preservation of Culture in the Noachian Covenant

It is necessary to give some extended consideration of the Noachian Covenant due to the important role it plays in the 2K theology.⁵³ In the history after the Fall, the human family further apostatized and filled the earth with corruption and violence, “but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). The word *covenant* first appears in Scripture here (Gen. 6:18). Chapter 6 must be connected to chapter 9 because it shows that the context of the Noachian Covenant was a manifestation of grace and salvation for Noah’s family. The Apostle Peter emphasized this fact: “... when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:20–21). Since the New Testament must guide our interpretation of the Old, we may not disregard the emphasis placed by the Apostle on God’s longsuffering grace as well as the salvation of Noah’s family.⁵⁴

This covenant was to be made with Noah’s family and his descendants. God’s terms are even expanded to include all the animals and the earth as well. The eight souls in the Ark who were saved by the Flood were the Church, because the Flood symbolized the waters of Christian baptism. Thus the original composition of the so-called common kingdom of believers and unbelievers did not become truly “common” until the succeeding generation apostatized (perhaps beginning with Ham and his wickedness). Before that time, Noah was the covenant head of the race for 350 years (Gen. 9:29).

While the ark floated above the submerged earth, it held all the living covenant community in the presence of God. For God called Noah and his family *into* the ark and later *sent* them out of the ark (7:1; 8:16). So the ark held the Church of Jesus Christ while the earth remained buried in water. And it was to this covenant community that God entrusted (again) the care and stewardship of the planet when the waters were abated. In this way God’s covenant with Noah was a covenant *with the Church*. The later apostasy of the human family did not alter this Christological fact. As John Calvin confirms:

Now, the sum of this covenant of which Moses speaks was that Noah should be safe, although the whole world should perish in the deluge. For there is an understood antithesis, that the whole world being rejected, the Lord would establish a peculiar covenant *with Noah alone*.⁵⁵

The religious character of Noah is an integral part of the story, for God said, “because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation” (Gen. 7:1). Noah became “a preacher of righteousness” both before, during,

⁵² Frame, “Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law.”

⁵³ See Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, “The Covenant of Preservation” chapter 6; and Van Groningen, *From Creation to Consummation*, vol. 1, “The Revelation Concerning Kingdom and Covenant in the Noachic Epoch,” chapter 7.

⁵⁴ It signified and served as a type of NT baptism, as the prayer in our baptismal form indicates, “Almighty and eternal God, You punished the unbelieving and impenitent world by the flood according to Your severe judgment, yet saved believing Noah and his family in Your great mercy.”

⁵⁵ John Calvin, commenting on Genesis 6:18, *Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), emphasis added.

and after the Deluge. The Flood did not wash away the sin of the human race. On the contrary, the Flood revealed that “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth,” proving that punishment is not an elixir that washes away our sins (Gen. 8:21). So, there was just as much need for preaching after the Flood as before. Noah was a patriarchal preacher and father for 350 years to all mankind.

There are several factors that make us question whether God’s covenant with Noah is as Christless as Dr. Kline and Dr. VanDrunen would have us believe. While it is true that this covenant is “between Me and the earth,” so that it is an “everlasting covenant,” this does not *per se* discount its Christological or typically redemptive features (Gen. 9:9ff). God portrays Noah as standing as a new Covenant head in the place of Adam. The Noachian covenant would include the characteristics of the original Cultural Mandate as modified in Genesis 3. Through Noah and his family God planned to bring blessings on the earth and not merely give impetus to some common culture.

It was part of God’s unfolding purpose of bringing the “seed of the woman” into the world, for Noah stood in the line of Christ. And Noah exhibited the character of saving faith: “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Heb. 11:7). Following the flood, we see the formal enactment of God’s covenant with Noah as a covenant renewal. Says W. J. Dumbrell,

Genesis 9:1–2 had begun the post-flood era with the renewal of the mandate given to man in 1:28. The remainder of the covenant renewal material of Genesis 9 has been concerned to guarantee the order over which man will exercise his mandate. . . . The refusal of the Creator to permit the divine purposes to be frustrated, either in regard to man himself or his world, must necessarily therefore have redemptive consequences which will concern not only man, but finally this world as well. For the redemption of the creature will involve nothing less finally than the redemption of all creation and we are well aware that this the goal towards which biblical revelation progressively moves.⁵⁶

God promised His covenant with Noah before the Flood and expanded its details once the Flood was over. But it is most certainly the same covenant, begun in grace and faith, and issuing in covenant man’s renewed dominion in a new world. It was preceded by an act of redemptive religion: Noah worshiped God with sacrifice (8:20). God accepted this sacrifice as a type of the redemption to come in Christ; He modified the terms of the curse by further establishing what has been called “common grace.” Common grace is therefore to be rooted in God’s future redemptive grace in Christ. His atoning blood is the foundation of all of God’s promises; it is the fountain of “common grace” as well as special grace. For Jesus is the only Savior, and so truly is “the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe” (1 Tim. 4:10). There is *both* common grace and special grace in God’s covenant with Noah.

God then promised that He would never curse the ground in the same way nor would He destroy man through a global flood. This sustaining of the seasons of the earth by common grace was essential to man’s task of dominion, though they would not guarantee a divinely approved culture apart from His grace. Given the miraculous nature of the Flood, man might well question whether dominion would even be possible in this new world. So God chose to assure man that it would.

But God’s provision for regularity of seasons with sunshine and rain for man’s cultural activity did not indicate another line of purpose for a “common kingdom.” When God said “while the earth remains,” He indicated that common grace is not an end in itself but serves God’s covenant plan to redeem man and renew the earth. In fact, the whole picture of Noah on a dramatically changed earth is a type of the new creation. The earth is not eradicated nor is the cultural command dismissed, but God continues His purpose through grace.

When we read the actual terms of the Covenant we see that God blesses Noah and his sons and repeats the command given to Adam, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”; it becomes a part of the post-fall and post-flood experience. “Blessing” is a covenant term which shows that grace has been given. God does not mention the phrase “subdue” the earth probably because it is implied in the phrase and because the earth has been cursed due to human sin. The command to rule over the animals is modified to include the new element of fear and terror as well as some indication that man will dominate them (9:2). As with Adam, God also provides the means for Noah and his sons to fulfill this cultural task, which would now include meat for food. But God adds verbal commands to this Covenant

⁵⁶ W. J. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Paternoster, 1984), 33.

concerning the killing of human life and man's killing of animals. These are not matters of natural law but of revelation, and are repeated in the Ten Commandments and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:19–20).

God's promise to preserve the world from another flood and His authorization of capital punishment (Gen. 9:6–7) are Messianic in focus. Their goal is the preservation of human society for the sake of Messiah *and His Church*. The sixth commandment is clearly in view as much as the seventh was in view in Genesis 2. The reason given for the sacredness of life is that man is made in the image of God, a parallel to the description of man in Genesis 1.

What became the common law of the time was revealed by God that "whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, *for in the image of God He made man*" (Gen. 9:6). The judges of the day no doubt appealed to God to justify their mandate to execute murderers. So the foundation of the death penalty is theological, not sociological, not natural. During Noah's time, the warrant of the death penalty for murder is based on special revelation, not natural law.

Thus "common grace" serves "special grace." This covenant is made not only with Noah but with "your seed after you" (Gen. 9:9). God establishes His covenant not with a "common kingdom" but with Noah and his sons as the covenant family. The sons of Noah play an important part in the narrative because through them the earth was to be renewed and populated. But it was also through them that Noah became the ancestor of the coming Messiah. The genealogies place Noah in the Messianic line (Luke 3:36). Everything else in the covenant is preparation for the coming of Messiah and His kingdom.⁵⁷

Thus the command to be fruitful and multiply was reissued not just to propagate a destroyed human race but to ensure the birth of the Messiah who would propitiate God for the sins of the whole world (Gen. 9:1, 7; 1 John 2:2). This command to be fruitful was issued to Noah's three sons and fulfilled through the seed of Shem (Gen. 9:26), who was an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Luke 3:36). The prophecy of the *Protevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 must be sustained by Noah's posterity so that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the Serpent and bring salvation to mankind. John Frame concludes:

Indeed, God's covenant with Noah is religious through and through, even on the narrowest definitions of "religion." ... No doubt that as time progresses the promise also benefits nonbelievers. In that sense it is common grace. For that matter, all of God's covenants bring blessing to the world in general. Believers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13–16). God's bringing the elect to repentance delays the judgment on the wicked and thereby benefits them (2 Pet. 3:9).⁵⁸

The correct understanding of Genesis 9 must be linked with chapter 6. This yields not a discontinuity between the Covenant of Creation (Gen. 1–2), the Covenant of Grace (Gen. 3), and the Abrahamic Covenant, but a continuity which integrates all previous covenant concerns, including the cultural/social mandates. Says Mark Strom, "On a wider scale, the Lord was keeping alive his purposes for the whole creation. The two great affirmations of this purpose came through God's dealing with Noah and Abraham."⁵⁹

The Abrahamic Covenant of Promise

No doubt, as fallen sinners still made in God's image, men will continue to attempt to subdue the earth, but for their own glory. In so doing they are not building a true culture according to the will of God, but a false culture. This is not to say that everything man does in a state of sin is to be rejected by believers, but rather that the whole trend of non-Christian culture is ethically antithetical to the Kingdom of God.

Between the time of Noah and Abraham we read about the development of human society that was intent on ignoring God's Cultural Mandate. They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4). Such is not what we should expect from a placid, common kingdom that has been given the Cultural Mandate. But

⁵⁷ Henry Van Til writes, "Common grace has no independent goal apart from the coming of the kingdom of God through Christ, the second Adam. Christ is the key to history and to culture." In *The Calvinistic Concept of Culture*, 237.

⁵⁸ Frame, "Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law."

⁵⁹ Mark Strom, *The Symphony of Scripture: Making Sense of the Bible's Many Themes* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 25.

it is expected from an apostate culture and civilization that is in antithesis to God's covenant. For this reason, Babylon has come to symbolize in Scripture the apostate human city that stands under the judgment of God.

It is in this context that God moves forward his covenant plan.⁶⁰ He calls Abraham out of a secular city to follow Him with the revealed promise that He would bless him and make his name great, and that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:1–3). It has features related to both the cultural mandate and the great commission. The Abrahamic Covenant not only has significance for the totality of human society but also incorporates the commandments of God (Gen 17:9ff.). The covenant of circumcision was given to distinguish the “seed of the woman” from the “seed of the serpent.” Frame writes,

VanDrunen stresses that the Abrahamic covenant is particularistic: not dealing with all people, but separating one family from the others. But the promise of 12:3 shows that this separation has a universal purpose, that all families of the earth will be blessed. VanDrunen emphasizes that this blessing is only for believing families, not for all human beings. However, (1) Noah's covenant also brings ultimate blessing only to believers, those who survive the judgment. And (2) as with the Noachian covenant, the Abrahamic brings blessings on unbelievers in the time before the final judgment. This fact is clear in the stories VanDrunen cites about Abraham's relations with local kings and tribes, and from the principle I noted earlier: that the presence of believers in society brings many benefits to unbelievers.⁶¹

The Mosaic Covenant and Biblical Law

The next great step in God's covenant plan is unfolded in the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. They reveal that God's ethical standard is not based on natural but revealed law. The Mosaic code is given in a covenantal context that presupposes redemption. God brought a type of redemption to the children of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt, a corrupt society and culture that are a type of sin. After receiving a type of baptism in the sea, they also received a type of the Lord's Supper in the Rock from which they drank (1 Cor. 10:1ff.).

It is proper then to speak of the Mosaic Covenant as a further development of the Covenant of Grace, incorporating into itself the provisions of the Creation mandate as modified in the days of Noah.⁶² It was given to prepare the world for the coming of Christ. This preparation was threefold: (1) It showed the need for salvation by exposing sin for what it truly is. (2) It showed the need for salvation by a substitutionary sacrifice through the ceremonial law, which is a shadow of the good things to come in Christ. (3) It showed the kind of moral life, society, and culture that God desires. It was not an “intrusion” ethic of the future breaking into the past (as Kline would have it), but rather the divine revelation of the kind of political and social culture that is to characterize his Kingdom when His people keep His covenant.⁶³

It is significant that the 2K theology, with its dedication to natural law theory, does not have a proper understanding of the reasons for which God gave his Law to Moses. VanDrunen's treatment of the Mosaic Law as a restatement of Natural Law is highly questionable and feeds the recent “republication” controversy.⁶⁴ He also misses the point when he seeks to find the reason for Israel's existence in being a “recapitulation of the creation, probation, and fall of Adam's experience.”⁶⁵ He goes to great lengths to find Natural Law in Moses. And he does so by continuing the effort by some to find the biblical code as similar to other ancient Near East laws. While there are similarities, what is missing is the wisdom expressed in Deuteronomy. 4:8, “And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?”

⁶⁰ See further Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, “Abraham: The Covenant of Promise” chapter 8.

⁶¹ Frame, “Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law.”

⁶² See Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, chapter 10, “Moses: The Covenant of Law,” 171ff.

⁶³ We do not hereby need to endorse the theonomic view of Mosaic Law, but simply point out the general view that God had purposes for giving His law beyond national and soteriological purposes. See Deut. 4:5–9, 1 Tim. 1:8–11, and Rom. 2:17–24. See also the historical section below on the views of Franciscus Junius and Petrus Cunaeus.

⁶⁴ See Andrew M. Elam, Robert C. Van Kooten, and Randall A. Bergquist, *Merit and Moses: A Critique of the Klinean Doctrine of Republication* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

⁶⁵ VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants*, 282.

John Frame protests VanDrunen's use of Kline's "intrusion ethics" to understand the role of the Mosaic Covenant in the history of Israel:

So Israel's conquest of Canaan is not well described as a "setting aside" of a "principle of commonality." As we have seen, there was no principle of commonality enunciated in the Noachic covenant. And peaceful coexistence with unbelievers is generally characteristic of redemptive covenants, except when God says otherwise. ... This observation is relevant to VanDrunen's larger thesis about natural law. The believer's relation to unbelievers is ultimately governed by God's supernatural revelation, not natural law. Natural law is incapable of making the distinctions needed. ... So the situations VanDrunen mentions in which David, Solomon, and others coexist with pagan kings and appreciate their cultures do not require a two-kingdoms view of things. There is one kingdom, and God our king tells us when, where, how, and how much to participate in pagan culture.⁶⁶

In the historical section later in this report, we will show that the Reformed tradition reflects faithfully this biblical emphasis on a clearly revealed divine law and never on a vague, natural law.

The Davidic Covenant and the Messianic Kingdom

God's covenant purposes continue to unfold in the period from Moses to David.⁶⁷ The appearance of David, "a man after God's own heart," was a turning point in OT preparation to NT fulfillment. The Davidic Covenant is established by God in response to David's desire to build God a temple in Jerusalem. God says that He would raise up his seed and thereby establish his kingdom and throne forever (2 Sam. 7:11–16). The reference to "forever" means that this is not ultimately a mere temporal arrangement.

Beginning with national rest, God speaks about building a house for David. God's work in the Davidic dynasty continues His house-building project (Heb. 3:1–6). This house is also called the Kingdom of David. In it, moral standards of discipline are established based upon revealed law. But the key promise is the establishment of a Kingdom—which is not purely spiritual, natural, or common—but a comprehensive one that will endure forever. While some may limit this to Israel or a millennial period, the prophets make known that it will become a vast kingdom that eventually triumph over all other kingdoms and fill the whole earth.

Psalm 2 reflects upon God's Covenant with David. The Kingship of Christ is prophetically described and sets the pattern for subsequent prophetic revelation, which teaches that the Messiah will not only be a real King, but one transcending all previous earthly kingships. God's Kingdom is identified with Zion and is called His "holy hill." The Messianic Son will be the King of kings who will receive the possession (not destruction) of the nations and the ends of the earth.

Calvin explained Psalm 2:10–12 as God's *not* ordering "them [kings and judges] to lay aside their authority and return to private life, but to make the power with which they are invested subject to Christ, that He may rule over all" (*Institutes*, 4.20.5). Rather, kings *as kings* and judges *as judges* would "kiss the Son" and serve the Lord in their respective callings. The thought that their service to Christ should be private instead of public seems foreign to the text.

David wrote **Psalm 8** as a meditation on the Cultural Mandate in Genesis. After listing some of man's subjects—sheep, oxen, etc.—he reminds us that God made man to have dominion over the works of His hands (v. 6). Such is the hymn of praise to God for His marvelous work in making man as the pinnacle of the earthly creation. David does not speak of that work as a pointless thing. He does not lament God's plan for mankind as a tragic failure; rather, he celebrates it and praises God for it. Thus in the Davidic Covenant we have an unambiguous revelation about the continuing significance and validity of the Cultural Mandate, which was revealed to be a part of Israel's life.

Augustine derived the title for his famous book from **Psalm 46**, which is prophetic in its description of the nature of God's kingdom as a city. "City" and "Kingdom" are not two different, valid approaches to biblical ethics; the City of God and the Kingdom of God are the same thing. God's purposes are not only global and cultural but also civic and urban. God's cultural goal is the creation of a culture that is united to temple worship. God's presence is

⁶⁶ Frame, "Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law."

⁶⁷ See Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, "David: The Covenant of the Kingdom," chapter 12.

ultimately with this kingdom, not with some non-descript “common kingdom.” It is God’s own kingdom and God’s own city which He owns and in which he delights.

Psalms 103, written by David, reflects further on the fact that God’s kingdom is not to be divided into sub-kingdoms, but that there is one Kingdom over which one God rules. Set in contrast to the curse on man and those nations which refuse to do homage to the Son (Ps. 2), only those who keep God’s Covenant and commandments will be a part of the enduring Kingdom of God. God’s singular Kingdom is not just a future reality; it is already here because He rules over all in His absolute sovereignty.

Covenant Revelation and the Prophets

The prophets continue to sound the notes begun by David in regard to God’s Messianic and Kingdom purposes. After pronouncing judgment against Israel, God condemns the nations for their breaking of his moral (not natural) law. In contrast VanDrunen says, “God never judges the foreign nations on the basis of the Torah ...but always on the basis of natural moral knowledge common to all human beings.”⁶⁸

However, we read in Isaiah, “The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant” (Isa. 24:4–6). This certainly has a reference to final judgment of the nations based on God’s law. One might reply that it is a reference to Natural Law, but it reiterates the statements of the Psalms that God is coming to judge the earth and its nations with equity and righteousness (Ps. 9:4–20, 67:4, 96:10–13, 98:9). Joel 3 reveals how God’s judgment of the nations follows the path of His own law in regard to recompense for stealing and slavery. Nowhere in the Bible do we find God resorting to “Nature” to discover such standards. It is by His own Law that He will judge not only Israel but also the nations, not only in the future, but also in the past and present.

God also announces new promises which speak of a time of *restoration* for the people of Israel, and then crescendos into a chorus of restoration for the whole earth. It is surprising to see the 2K theology ignore such clear teachings of Scripture.

In **Isaiah 54:5–10**, the prophet Isaiah sings of the covenant mercies of God toward Israel as being similar to those in the days of Noah. God’s Covenant with Creation is the background of God’s commitment to His people. And he assures them that his promise is as certain as it was in His covenant of peace in the days of Noah. Isaiah sees clearly the redemptive grace orientation of the Noachian Covenant.

Later in Isaiah, the prophet speaks of the New Heaven and the New Earth in terms of the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant (Isa. 65:17–23). These blessings move toward the restoration of creation, as Herman Bavinck reminds us that “grace restores nature.” How can one fail to see that this coming restoration is fulfilled in Christ’s redemption unless one takes a dispensational view? While there are those who disagree as to when this prophecy will be fulfilled, two things are clear. First, God restores creation in continuity with Mosaic revelation. Second, this new creation restores all the elements of the Cultural Mandate since it is set in images of the pre-Fall condition—life, labor, and childrearing.

In the prophet **Ezekiel** we find similar descriptions of the coming of the gospel and its restoration of Creation. Because of prophetic foreshortening, these are not seen as two purpose but one. The New Covenant is like the Noachian in that it results in the eventual removal of the curse and the restoration of mankind to God’s garden (Ezek. 34:25–30).

Daniel was given one of the greatest visions of the everlasting Kingdom of God. While living as an exile and pilgrim, Daniel does not acquiesce to the “natural laws” of the Babylonians, but continues to live by the Law of God, and for this he and his friends suffer persecution.⁶⁹ But they are witnesses to the God of revelation who directs the course of history and empires. God sustains the hope of His covenant people by showing to Daniel the ultimate triumph (not peaceful coexistence) of the Kingdom of the Son of Man over all earthly empires (Dan. 2:34–35).

⁶⁸ VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants*, 165.

⁶⁹ VanDrunen, however, only sees that “Daniel and friends serve this king and his empire willingly and loyally” (*Divine Covenants*, 205).

Daniel's vision also magnifies both Christ's deity and humanity; as the exalted God-man He comes in the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days. That His dominion and kingdom are "everlasting" shows that He was given sovereignty to rule over all, so that the history of the cosmos is thoroughly Christocentric. This information makes us question whether this text can be limited to His deity to the exclusion of His true manhood, since it is "the Son of Man" who metes out justice *in time* and in eternity. The phrase "Son of man" is used sixty-nine times in the Synoptic Gospels alone, and on occasion is applied to Jesus' pre-Parousia comings in judgment and glory (Matt. 16:27–28; 24:29–31). Clearly, His human nature shares in the glory of His royal dominion over all.

The New Covenant: Christ's Kingdom and the Great Commission

When we come to the New Testament, we need to examine a number of passages to determine whether the assertions of the 2K theology are true to the Word of God. We give special attention to where Scripture discusses the following topics—the unity of Christ's two natures, the Kingship of Jesus Christ, the role of the law, sanctification and good works, the relation of the church to the world, and the Great Commission. We cannot provide a comprehensive treatment of all relevant passages, but will focus on some key texts.

The Gospels

Starting with the Gospels, we read much about the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. During the temptation of Christ, Satan offered Him all the kingdoms of this world and their glory (Matt. 4:8). Christ could have responded that they were *already* under His common kingship and being run by natural law. These kingdoms would become His in the future but only through the path of redemptive atonement and the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. For the present, Christ's ministry focused on the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven, as in: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).⁷⁰

In the Sermon on the Mount we find a presentation of Christ's Kingdom ethics which, like the OT, are based on revealed not natural law. Christ confirms the relevance of OT Law for the New Covenant, describing how this law-keeping has far-reaching social and cultural implications; He described His disciples as light and salt (Matt. 5:13–16). The image of salt speaks of how the Kingdom of Christ preserves and flavors the culture and society in which it exists. The metaphor of light indicates how this Kingdom is to convey God's truth and practice good works before a watching world. Jesus instructs believers, while living in the "common kingdom" to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (5:16).

In the parables of Matthew 13 we have the fullest presentation of Christ's view of the Kingdom of God. Among these we read, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened" (Matt. 13:33). This indicates that Christ's Kingdom is not to be an insular community waiting for the world-to-come, but rather an active community which influences all of life and culture with which it comes into contact.

In another parable Jesus teaches, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (Matt. 13:31–32). Far from being a small, pilgrim community, the church is destined to be a vast kingdom which is spread over the whole earth. This agrees with the vision revealed in Daniel. Christ does not present a narrowly religious view of the Kingdom, but one that is broad and influential in this world.

The Great Commission and the Cultural Mandate

When Jesus was ready to ascend to His Father's right hand, He announced a program and a command worldwide in scope: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18–20).

Christ has been given legal authority over all the kingdoms, institutions, and forms of authority in this world as a result of His victorious resurrection. Paul echoes this truth further: ". . . He raised Him from the dead and seated

⁷⁰ We commend the work of Geerhardus Vos, *The Kingdom and the Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979) for a sound presentation of the Reformed view.

Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20–21).

When Jesus was resurrected, He was declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4). As the Mediator-King, Christ has assumed the mediatorial reign over everything in the cosmos. Jesus set his sights on the whole world, on all of its nations and peoples. After all, that was exactly what God had promised Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18); it was what the Psalms and the prophets had promised (Ps. 2, 72, 110; Isa. 2, 54, 60; Dan. 2:7).

Christ gave the Great Commission in the days of His flesh, speaking as a real man to His disciples. The 2K teaching that He receives “all authority” by circumventing His flesh cannot be Scripturally sustained, especially when we magnify His resurrection, ascension, and session at God’s right hand “*in our flesh*” (HC Q49). The phrase “in heaven and on earth” reveals the scope of His sovereign rule as the exalted God-*man*. As a result of Christ’s incarnation and resurrection, there is a new order of rule in the cosmos. Hence no earthly institution is outside the scope of His rule as the exalted God-*man*. How could it be?

Christ’s dominion far surpasses what Adam had or could have had (Rom. 5:8–21), for Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. He is eternal deity. *His authority extends over all of creation, over all of human life and culture*. It is imperative to see that this authority is that of Christ as Mediator. This is the authority that Jesus as the God-*man*, the Messiah, the Last Adam, received for His obedience unto death on the cross (Phil. 2:5–11).

There are a number of distinct elements in this Commission that show a similarity to the Cultural Mandate, that are an indication that the two are interconnected. The Great Commission, as part of the New Covenant, is the means by which God renews, restores, and fulfills the cultural/social mandate of Genesis 1–2. The New Covenant takes up not *some*, but *all* the promises of the previous covenants, and the NT shows how they are fulfilled in Christ. God’s plan for the covenantal kingdom of his anointed Son is not dualistic, but unified.

1. The first mandate commanded Adam “to be fruitful and multiply”; likewise, the Second Adam commanded that His disciples should be “fruitful” by going and making disciples of all the nations. Acts later describes how “the word of God grew and multiplied (Acts 12:24). Paul even wrote, “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15). Thus the Great Commission is similar to the Cultural Mandate in regard to fruitfulness. Certainly the Gospel does not produce children by physical marriage but through the marriage of Christ and the church. Paul writes, “but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). The New Covenant thereby provides the way in which the cultural/social mandate is to be fulfilled—by seeing people transformed by the new birth and faith in Jesus Christ. The rest of humanity will gain the benefits of life and temporal blessing (common grace) for the sake of the elect.

2. The global perspective of the Cultural Mandate also has a parallel in the Great Commission. Jesus calls the church to make disciples of “all the nations.” He also says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The subduing of the earth for the glory of God is now to be achieved through global missions, evangelism, and discipleship.

3. The emphasis on discipleship includes teaching them “all things that I have commanded you.” We should not take this to mean only the ‘red-letter’ commands but rather the total ethical system of the Bible, including the Cultural Mandate. This does not mean that every Christian is obligated to accomplish the transformation of the nation in which he lives, but to be obedient to the Lordship of Christ in all areas of his life. In this way, he is a positive influence upon society as salt and light.⁷¹

John 15: Union with Christ and bearing fruit

It seems 2K theology puts more stress on the objective (forensic) relationship of believers to Christ, than the spiritual or mystical union in view in John 15. Viewing the Church as the *body* of Christ seems to be missing in regard to sanctification. By contrast, Christ spoke of a vital connection between believers and Himself which would result in fruit that has cultural significance: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

⁷¹ See Charles H. Dunahoo, *Making Kingdom Disciples: A New Framework* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing 2005).

The 2K theology evidences a more Lutheran than Reformed view of union with Christ. Louis Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology* devotes a whole chapter on the Mystical Union with Christ (*unio mystica*) in which he says, “Reformed theology, on the other hand, deals with the union of believers with Christ *theologically*, and as such does greater justice to this important subject.”⁷² This union, planned from eternity, is realized in Christ in this way: “. . . that intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people, in virtue of which He is the source of their life and strength, of their blessedness and salvation.” For the crowning aspect of that union is “its subjective realization by the operation of the Holy Spirit.” For “by this union believers are changed into the image of Christ according to His human nature.” And, “The mystical union with Christ also secures for the believer the continuously transforming power of the life of Christ, not only in the soul but also in the body” (449–51). If this is true of the believer’s body, which is material, it is likewise true that the believer’s life in society and culture is to be transformational. The 2K theology lacks the full-orbed Reformed understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in this crucial matter.

Paul’s Letters: Romans

Paul’s letter to the Romans provides extensive discussion on the Law of God. In Romans 1 and 2 Paul teaches regarding the nature of the Law of God and its relationship to human conscience. In Romans 2 Paul spells out the difference between the Gentile and the Jew, arguing that both are accountable to God, as both possess the law. However, even though both possess the Law (one has the Law in his heart and the other in his hand), this does not automatically motivate compliance to the Law that confronts them. If the Jews who experienced the work of the law written in their hearts *plus* the inscripturated Law in their hands—if even they disobeyed the things of the Law, then the crying need of “lawless” Gentiles to be further enlightened is underscored (especially in light of the indictment of Romans 1).

While it is true that one purpose of God’s Law is to prosecute the human race and render it guilty before God, so that we might seek Christ, it is also true that God’s inscripturated Law transcends even evangelistic settings, requiring even the unevangelized to “do” His law, even if their doing falls short of a believing, heartfelt obedience. This is proven when Paul also writes that both Jew *and* Greek are also “under” Ten Commandment Law in Romans 3:9–19, for clearly the “law” that renders the world guilty is God’s Law.

God’s law confronts unbelievers continually, which is the meaning of the Pauline expression, “they are a law unto themselves.” The work of the law written in every heart is more than a standard that makes men fully accountable before God’s judgment seat; it is a standard of external obedience, too. Although the unbeliever cannot “fulfill” the law, as the word “fulfill” implies faith and love (Rom. 13:8ff), nevertheless, he may *do* the law. This moral law is more than titular; on the contrary, it is an engine that moves men to external obedience to what God’s law requires.

Paul’s viewpoint also presupposes what he already taught about general revelation in chapter 1. Frame writes,

“... natural law itself is profoundly religious. That is perfectly evident from Rom. 1:18-32, arguably the fundamental text on natural law. There, natural law gives a clear knowledge of God—not just morality, certainly not some secular civil morality—but God himself. Natural law clearly reveals God’s own nature and attributes (v. 20). It even leads to a personal knowledge of God: not just knowing facts about him, but knowing him (v. 20). The suppression of natural law leads to idolatry (vv. 21–25), perhaps the most religious of all sins. That idolatry leads in turn to sexual (vv. 26–27) and every other kind of sin (vv. 28–31). To call this morality “secular” or “merely civil” profoundly misses its intent.

But I think it remarkable that VanDrunen says nothing more in the book about the unbeliever’s suppression of the truth. Certainly that complicates the role of natural law in providing moral knowledge to human beings. If there is a natural law, but man completely suppresses it, then it does not serve as a guide at all. Evidently the suppression is not absolute, because the passage says that natural law serves as an adequate means of removing excuses. So there is a dynamic relation between true understanding and suppression of that truth. To understand the unbeliever’s moral conscience, we must understand not only his exposure to natural law, but also the paradox of his recognizing it while rebelling against it. VanDrunen seems to be entirely unaware of this complication.⁷³

⁷² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 447.

⁷³ Frame, “Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law.”

Some may object that Paul *does* teach that nature is the source of law. Does not Paul say, “Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman” (Rom. 1:27), and teaches that those “who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law” (2:14). Likewise, in 1 Corinthians he also reasons, “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?” (11:14).

Our reply is that Paul does indeed use the term “nature,” but never as the Greeks or Romans used it, in a pantheistic fashion. When Paul uses the term, he places it always in the context of *creation*. In Romans 1 homosexuality is contrary to nature because it contradicts the way in which God created human nature as male and female and his design for marriage. In Romans 2 the Gentiles do by nature the things of the law, but “nature” does not inform them of what they are to do. Paul goes on to say that their behavior reflects the original “work” of God writing His Law on their hearts in *creation*. In 1 Corinthians, Paul’s argument in context is based on *creation*, as he refers to how God created man and woman. Other references follow a similar pattern.

By contrast, VanDrunen sees Romans 1:28–2:16 as a statement about natural revelation and natural law. For him, this passage brings almost all ten of the commandments within the purview of the natural law. Not only homosexuality but also idolatry is prohibited by nature. His implicit endorsement of natural theology and empiricism is a clear rejection of Van Til in favor of Aquinas.⁷⁴

There are additional passages in Romans which contradict the 2K theology. In Romans 4 we discover that the Abrahamic Covenant was cosmic in scope and not a narrowly religious covenant. Romans 4 makes this clear: “For the promise that he would be the *heir of the world* was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13). In Romans 8 Paul teaches the restoration of creation as being deeply joined to the final redemption of Christians, “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:19–21).

Redemption is not an end in itself. Its purpose is to glorify God as our Catechism says, “Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our *whole* life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and that He be glorified through us” (HC Q86). Glorifying God by the fruit of good works includes entering into the task of cultural activity with new motives, goals, and purposes. Paul develops our understanding of union with Christ in Romans 6–7: “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God” (Rom. 7:4).

Union with Christ is at the core of Christ’s soteriological work. But if our understanding of this union is to be Reformed and not merely Lutheran, we must embrace both its objective and subjective aspects. The objective aspect is this: Christ as our Federal Head lived and died vicariously in our place, bearing our sins and thus procuring our justification (Rom. 5:15–19). But this objective aspect corresponds to the subjective: He was crucified, dead, buried, and resurrected *for our sanctification* (Rom. 6:1–11). Christ’s redemption is not only *accomplished* for His elect but is *applied* to them and in them as spiritual blessings. Delineated in such places as Ephesians 1, Christ pours out His Spirit and imparts the benefits of His work.

The objective factor in our union with Christ is federal headship; the subjective factor is the work of the Holy Spirit. Reformed theology in following the Scriptures, especially the Upper Room discourses, has a robust theology of the Holy Spirit. This is reflected in Calvin’s *Institutes*, the Heidelberg Catechism, and a plethora of Reformed books on the work of the Spirit. It seems that the 2K theology is more Lutheran than Reformed at this point, for it emphasizes the objective fulfillment “for us” while neglecting to also emphasize the internal application “to us.”

In Romans 12 Paul does in fact employ a term not adequately considered by 2K teachers: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (*metamorphoō*) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (v. 2). It may not mean all that is indicated by the term in Neo-Calvinist thought, but note how the following chapters describe a distinctive Christian ethic that transforms the believer’s

⁷⁴ VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants*, 226, 217.

role in society and culture. The Christian may not be able to change everything, but he is responsible to be a Christian witness in the sphere of his influence.

For example, in Romans 13 Paul, a Christian teacher, instructs how Christians are to be in subjection to civil government as part of obedience to God's law. He deals with matters of the "common kingdom," which have been placed "off bounds" by some 2K advocates. He says that the civil magistrate in Romans 13:4 is to be considered "the minister of God" for good, the agent of God's wrath to mete out God's justice. Although the word "holy" is not used in Romans 13, Paul's assessment of the civil magistrate squares with Calvin's view that the civil magistrate is "the most sacred, and by far, the most honorable, of all stations in mortal life" (*Institutes*, 4.4; see also Isa. 45:1).

Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians

In the rest of Paul's letters, we find a repeated emphasis on sanctification that has its fruit in good works. For example, he says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). For Paul, this good is to be understood from the commands of Scripture. Believers are to live in the context of society (common kingdom) in a manner that is distinctively Christian and evidencing newness of life.

Paul recognizes the importance of the law in a variety of social contexts and does so in order to serve evangelism. "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; *to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ)*, that I might win those who are without law; ... I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:19–22).

At the end of 1 Corinthians, Paul not only speaks of Christ as the Second Adam but gives an outline of Christ's post-resurrection work in history. While Christ's *redemptive* work was completed at the cross, the work of His *three offices* continues in heaven. Says the Shorter Catechism, "Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation *and exaltation*" (Q23). This is a faithful interpretation of Scripture, for Paul writes, "for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For *He has put all things under His feet . . .*" (1 Cor. 15:25–27). Paul, quoting from Psalm 8, shows that the cultural work of Christ was not over at the cross but only begun. Christ is in the process of subduing now "all His and our enemies," and he does so while building His Church.

Paul also affirms Christ's teaching that while believers are *in* the world, they are not *of* the world (Jn. 17:16). He thereby affirms the ethical antithesis in the believer's relationship to the 'common kingdom': "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14). Paul thereby teaches that there should be no moral common ground between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

Paul does not negate the view that Christians are pilgrims, but he also calls them ambassadors of Christ, based on the fact that they are part of God's new creation. Says Paul, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation ... Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us" (2 Cor. 5:17–20).

Ephesians: The Headship of Christ

One striking statement that refutes the idea of two kingdoms is Paul's teaching on the exaltation of Christ in chapter 1, where he describes "... the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:19–23).

No other passage so explicitly affirms the singular rule of Christ, divine and human, consequent to His resurrection. There is one rule and one dominion, and all are described in terms taken from Psalm 8. The last phrase can be translated to say that God gave Christ as head over all things *for the sake of the Church*, i.e., that His rule of all things has the church's good constantly in view.

One of the challenges of VanDrunen's Christology is to explain texts teaching that Christ as the exalted God-man does in fact rule over all culture. These words proclaim that Jesus is "head" over His Church *and all things for the sake of His church*. Notice—the exalted Jesus does not just rule all things *in* the Church, but all things exterior to the Church and *for* His Church. Or, in the words of A. A. Hodge, God uses civil government to work "... the great ends of redemption in the upbuilding of His kingdom in the world."⁷⁵ Hodge contrasts God as Creator with Christ as the Mediator over all, when he asserts:

God as Creator, as revealed in the light of nature, has established civil government among men from the beginning, and among all peoples and nations of all ages and generations. But in the development of the plan of redemption the God-man as mediatorial King has assumed the government of the universe. Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9–11; Eph. 1:17–23.

As the universe constitutes one physical and moral system, it was necessary that His headship as Mediator should extend to the whole and to every department thereof, in order that all things should work together for good to His people and for His glory, that all His enemies should be subdued and finally judged and punished, and that all creatures should worship Him, as His Father had determined. Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 10:13; 1:6; Rev. 5:9–13. (294)

Christ's universal dominion is for the sake of His Church (Eph. 1:19–23). All that He does is for the sake of His people, for their salvation in all its cosmic totality. He does not maintain two kingdoms, two programs, one for His people and another for the world at large. He rules to subdue the nations to His grace and truth—to make the nations His disciples, citizens of His kingdom, and members of His Church (Matt. 28:18–20; Ps. 72; Isa. 60). He will reign from heaven until He has achieved that goal (Ps. 110; 1 Cor. 15:24–26).

Rightly does the Heidelberg Catechism describe the believer as sharing in the three offices of Christ, for Paul says that Christ, "...made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). The cultural significance of distinctively Christian good works comes into view again when he says that Christians are "...His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

The practical antithesis and spiritual conflict in this world is not a very important part of 2K teaching. However, in this world of sin Christian maturity is always a battle. The child of God must press forward through "many trials, toils, and snares." We can only persevere and succeed in this battle through faith in Jesus Christ, trusting God in Christ for the spiritual power to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. We live our lives on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We must do this not as isolated individuals but as the Body of Christ, as members of one another—joined, animated, and empowered by the same Spirit. Just as each of us needs to grow up in Christ, the Church, too, needs to grow up. It needs to mature. Paul presents this as a real historical goal (Eph. 4:13–16). Until God has completed this process in His people, He is not finished with history.

Building on the Covenant of Creation, the New Covenant aims not merely at a developed earth, but even more at a spiritually mature covenant people who have developed their talents and gifts for the service of God and of one another. The Cultural Mandate, as modified by Great Commission, aims at the Holy City, not first of all as a matter of bricks and steel and cultural artifacts, but as the living Body of Christ that builds itself up in love.

Philippians

In Philippians 2:9–10, we read that "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." These sublime words teach that at the "name of *Jesus*," that is, the Jesus who is both divine *and human*, everything *should* bow. Not only is the human nature of Christ exalted, but so is the responsibility of all men to submit. This includes kings as kings and lords as lords. Because of this regal description of the God-man's rule from heaven, telling all men what they "should" do, the gauntlet of 2K theologians is to explain how Christ's human nature can be wrenched from His exalted rule and dominion. Louis Berkhof expressed the Neo-Calvinistic viewpoint best when he wrote:

This investiture was part of the exaltation of the God-man. It did not give Him any power or authority which He did not already possess as the Son of God; neither did it increase His territory. But the God-man, the Mediator,

⁷⁵ A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), 294ff.

was now made the possessor of this authority, *and His human nature was made to share in the glory of His royal dominion*. Moreover, the government of the world was now made subservient to the interests of the Church of Jesus Christ.⁷⁶

The 2K Christology claims that while Christ as the *Logos* of John 1:1–3 rules, He bypasses His flesh to do so. The justification for this strange thinking seems to be that only His deity is operative because Christ’s ruling as the God-man would mean that He reigns as Redeemer, too; whereas they make the case that He reigns as Messiah and Redeemer only over His spiritual kingdom, which is the Christian Church. The 2K position, especially as formulated by VanDrunen, questions whether there is any historical-redemptive advance from the pre-incarnational rule of Christ to His post-incarnational rule, except in the Church.

Colossians: Cosmic Christology

The whole book of Colossians is a polemic against the Greek philosophical and religious worldview. It includes a critique of corrupt Judaism which accommodated this worldview. In chapter 1 Paul begins by contrasting the two kingdoms that are very different than the ones described in the 2K theology. He makes no mention of a “common kingdom” or anything like it. Instead Paul speaks of two antithetical kingdoms: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13–14).

As Augustine taught, both kingdoms are ethically oriented—one toward loving and serving Christ and the other serving the god of this world. Christians cannot equally be identified with both kingdoms because they have been rescued or delivered (*rhoumai*) from the dominion of darkness. There is no common morality with the “kingdom of darkness” because it is antithetical to the kingdom of light. Another verb describes the process whereby believers become members of the kingdom of light. They are transferred or conveyed (*methistemi*) into the Kingdom of Christ. Both verbs imply a radical change in state and condition. Therefore, the idea that Christians belong to two equally legitimate kingdoms is not an idea taught by the gospel according to Paul.

In addition, the Apostle speaks about the cosmic work of Christ:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:15–20).

Paul speaks here of a unity of the person of Christ acting in both creation and redemption. These two are not unrelated, as if creation is to be destroyed and replaced by the “world-to-come.” Instead the whole context shows that Paul is speaking about Christ *reconciling* (restoring) “all things.” The repetition of this phrase shows that the Holy Spirit describes a cosmic, Christian worldview. There is no hint of a “cult/cultus” or “religious/secular” dichotomy here. The Word of God coordinates the teaching of creation and reconciliation. Christ is not only the means through whom God created the world, but also the one through whom God is reconciling the world to Himself. Paul’s talk sounds very much like the Neo-Calvinists teaching on “redeeming the world.”⁷⁷

This is a decisive refutation of 2K theology. Instead of marginalizing the Christian religion to worship and personal piety, Scripture sees Christ as the sovereign Lord over every area and sphere of life. Nothing is excluded—neither education, vocation, nor politics are outside of Christ’s cosmic sovereignty. He is not simply Head of the church, but He is Lord of creation and the reconciler of “all things.” There is not even the slightest hint of a narrow duality between nature and grace here. Christ is King of culture and the nations because He is King of Creation and Head of the Church.

Paul goes on to elucidate how this Christian worldview is worked out in the area of ethics (chapter 2–3), drawing a sharp antithesis between Christian and non-Christian ethics. He makes what appears to be a striking rejection of

⁷⁶ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 411; emphasis added.

⁷⁷ A. Wolters refers to this passage in his *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 67.

the Greco-Roman concept of “natural law” as found in Stoic philosophy. Says Paul, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles [*stoicheia*] of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8).

There has been much discussion and debate over the meaning of the term *stoicheia*. It means literally a rank, series of items, or the first in that series. Hence it came to mean an element or first principle. In Greek philosophy the term always had reference to the physical world, either the elements of the world, or the heavenly bodies, or the spirits behind them. Paul himself was familiar with the Stoics since he encountered them at Athens (Acts 17:18). The meaning of *stoicheia* is roughly the same thing as the “natural law” theory of Stoicism. Is not the Holy Spirit warning us to avoid this teaching and reject it as part of the philosophy of the “kingdom of darkness?” For Paul’s argument is based upon the sufficiency of Jesus Christ as the Creator-Redeemer. He applies this truth to believers living in this world (the so-called common kingdom), “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:9–10).

VanDrunen, however, paints the picture with different colors. His concern is (a) to identify Mosaic and natural law, and (b) identify both as “protological,” which means that they are intended for the purpose of judgment only. We agree with him that the term *stoicheia* has a predominantly moral meaning, and also that there is a parallel between Mosaic and natural law. But we part ways when he implies that Paul’s primary condemnation of the “*stoicheia*” has reference to the Mosaic Law. We believe it is the opposite. Paul condemns the pagan moral systems of this world because they are not Christian and lead us away from the truth. This would include Stoicism and its ethical teachings on natural law. The similarity that Paul has in mind is that just as Christians are not under the Mosaic Law as a way of salvation, so they should not subject themselves to any non-Christian ethical system, including Stoicism. Instead of dismissing the Mosaic Law, he should have learned that Paul includes in his condemnation the kind of Natural Law system which is favored by Thomism.⁷⁸

Paul’s warning is clear: a humanistic and nature-centered philosophy can deceive Christians, both through its worldview *as well as* its ethical principles. Paul calls them *stoicheia* because they are orderly principles or rules derived from human tradition in humanistic ethics. How then can a Christian live under the same moral standards of this world; “what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14).

If this is true, then the concept of “natural law” receives further rejection later in chapter 2 of Colossians: “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles [*stoicheia*] of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men?” (Col. 2:20–23). It might be objected that Paul is referring merely to Jewish or Gentile legalism, but the polemic is quite broad. His argument is from the gospel and from the believer’s union with Christ. Because of this union, commenced in regeneration and developed through sanctification, Christians are not to subject themselves to the law-systems of this world, to its ethical decrees and regulations apart from the Law of God.

Thus we can say that the phrase “basic principles” is certainly inclusive of the idea of “natural law.” While there will be some debate about the meaning of Colossians as a whole, the Reformed believer must never short-circuit the Word of God in favor of personal theories. The 2K theology fails to account for this and other broad teachings of the New Testament.

Hebrews and the Unity of the Covenants

The unity of God’s purpose in history and in His Covenant of Promise is seen in the culmination of all his covenant promises in Christ. The Cultural Mandate is surely included when in chapter 2 the author references Psalm 8, commenting, “For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:8–9).

Scripture shows that the mandate of Genesis 1 was given to Christ in its application of Psalm 8 to Him. Hebrews 2 interprets the meaning of this psalm concerning the Cultural Mandate in the context of the New Covenant. The

⁷⁸ VanDrunen, *Divine Covenants*, 358–65.

author begins by telling his readers about the excellencies of Jesus the Messiah. He is God's final and complete revelation to man, the heir of all things, the one through whom God created the universe. He is seated on the right hand of God (1:3). He is *Elohim*, *Adonai*, and *Yahweh* (vv. 8–13), and the Lord of the world to come (2:5).

When the writer says that Jesus is the Lord of the world to come (2:5), he speaks of the kingdom of God, the new creation begun in Christ and perfected in the resurrection, a world that we see and lay hold of now by faith (12:22–24).⁷⁹ The writer points out that this new world is not subject to angels and cites Psalm 8 to prove it. His thrust is this: man was created to rule the world. But right now we do not see all things subject to man. Sin has distorted and corrupted man's impulse to dominion, and the curse has made its implementation slow and difficult. But that does not mean that God has withdrawn the Cultural/Dominion Mandate or that man's sin is a valid excuse for his failure to obey it. Man's sinful nature does not excuse him from God's righteous demand for obedience. But if we are to see how God is going to save the world and *restore man's dominion*, we must look past fallen Adam and sinful humanity. We must look to Jesus.

For even though we do not at present see all things put under man, we do see Jesus, "who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (2:9). Jesus wears this crown because He received it *as a man*. The implication is that nothing escapes His control (v. 8). It is the crowned Son of *Man* (we emphasize His humanity) who resides in heaven, whose scepter rules over all, even when His enemies are hurling rocks at His people (Acts 7:55–59).

Book of Revelation

When we come to the last book of the Bible, we read of Christ, "... for He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14; cf. Rev. 19:16). These verses are much more than a superlative, teaching that Jesus is the most excellent of kings; they also teach a singular, not a twofold kingship. He reigns over all monarchs because He is the exalted Man-Child who rules the nations with "a rod of iron" (Rev. 12:5), that is, as the incarnate King who came to redeem. This perspective helps us to receive a famous saying by the Church father Tertullian, who said of Rome, "... I have a right to say, Caesar is more ours than yours, appointed as he is by *our* God."⁸⁰ That keen insight, together with Christ's position as King of kings and Lord of lords, teaches that Christians are *more* entitled to participate in and seek to transform civil governments and other institutions.

When we move further into the book we find an amazing statement, "Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The *kingdoms* of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!' " (Rev. 11:15). In the Greek the word "kingdom" is singular, reading: "The *kingdom* of the world (cosmos) became that of our Lord and of His Christ." This cannot be explained by 2K theology, for Christ already has the kingdom of the world quietly under the control of natural law. But in Revelation we read of great struggle and persecution of the church by Babylon. Here is the antithesis described in Genesis 3 at its terminal point; the "become" of this verse means that the so-called common kingdom becomes Christ's kingdom by His conquering it. In this He is the true, divine, Warrior-King. This text does not appear in the Scripture index of VanDrunen's *Divine Covenants*. Such selective use of the Bible does not only a great disservice to the Church but shows that 2K theology is not fully biblical.

B. Confessional Evaluation

One of the primary historical arguments for 2K theology is that it is a "recovery" of the historic Calvinism of Calvin and Reformed orthodoxy. If it is historic Calvinism, then we would expect such to be reflected in the Reformed Confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Interestingly, most of the confessional references in VanDrunen's presentation are from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* of 1647, with little reference to Continental Reformed theology of earlier years. It is telling that the theories of natural law and two kingdoms were never incorporated into any Reformed confessional documents.

⁷⁹ The "world to come" is not a reference to an other-worldly state disconnected with the present created order, but rather to the reordering of creation in the service of Christ.

⁸⁰ Tertullian, *Apology*, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 33:1–3; emphasis added.

According to VanDrunen, the earlier creeds of the Reformers are not cited as proofs due to his hypothesis that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is an adult document, unlike the immature creedal formulations of sixteenth-century confessions. This interpretation is highly problematic. In fact, we would argue that much of the 2K theology contradicts the earlier Reformed creeds, if not parts of the *WCF* itself.

It is necessary, then, to consider the pertinent portions of the Reformed confessions to test VanDrunen's historical theses with respect to key doctrines. Our presentation will be brief; we are only interested in the historical accuracy of VanDrunen's proposition that Neo-Calvinism is a recent development in Reformed thought. It must also be stated that with respect to creedal history, 2K historians engage in not a little cherry-picking, even leaving themselves open to the charge of chucking the lion's share of the Reformed creeds down the proverbial and convenient "memory hole."

The Unity of the Person of Christ

Is the 2K Christology in or out of sync with the Heidelberg and other Reformed creeds? We are not aware of any Reformed creed that spells out the 2K Christology as it is delineated today. For example, the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession of Faith in no way encourage us to think in 2K terms. They simply declare Christ's ascending into heaven and sitting at God's right hand to rule His Church and all things. There is no duality in the inner person of Christ or in the manner of His rule, but rather agreement with the clear creedal statements based upon those enunciated in the Nicene and Athanasian creeds. They agree with Chalcedon (AD 451) in respect to the two natures of Christ, that we should avoid error, "without dividing them into two separate categories (*adiaretos*), without contrasting them according to area or function (*achoristos*)."⁸¹ The 2K doctrine presents a confusing and defective Christology and thus reveals a fundamental error.

The **Heidelberg Catechism** asks in Question 50: "Why is it added, 'and sits at the right hand of God'? Because Christ is ascended into heaven for this end, that he might there appear as head of His church, *by whom* the Father governs all things" (emphasis added). It also asks, "But are not, in this way, the two natures in Christ separated from one another, if the manhood is not wherever the Godhead is? Not at all, for since the Godhead is incomprehensible and everywhere present, it must follow that the same is not limited with the human nature He assumed, and yet remains personally united to it" (HC Q48). With this the *Westminster Confession* agrees, "Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself..." (chap. 7).

In like manner the **Belgic Confession** teaches concerning "*The Union and Distinction of the Two Natures in the Person of Christ*" thus:

We believe that by this conception the Person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; so that there are not two Sons of God, nor two Persons, but two natures united in one single Person; yet each nature retains its own distinct properties. ... But these two natures are so closely united in one Person that they were not separated even by His death. ... But in the meantime the divine nature always remained united with the human (Art. 19).

The Kingship of Jesus Christ

In regard to the threefold office of Christ, we note that the Reformed confessions stress the one Kingship of Christ over His Kingdom. The **Nicene Creed** describes only one kingdom of Christ, "[he] sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end."

The **Heidelberg Catechism** describes the Kingship of Christ as follows: "Why is it added: 'And sits at the right hand of God'? Because Christ ascended into heaven for this end, that He might there appear as the Head of His Church, by whom the Father governs all things" (HC Q50). Notice the reference to "all things" as part of His one government. In the Lord's Prayer, where we might expect to see a 2K emphasis, there is rather a stress on the unity and universality of the one Kingdom of Christ. "What is the second petition? 'Your kingdom come;' that is, so govern us by Your Word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves to You always more and more; preserve and increase Your

⁸¹ John H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973), 36.

Church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalts itself against You, and all wicked devices formed against Your Holy Word, until the fullness of Your kingdom come, wherein You shall be all in all” (HC Q123).

The Moral Law and General Revelation

The Reformed confessions say little or nothing about the idea of “natural law.” This is strange if indeed it is true that this is an important but lost teaching in the Reformed tradition. One of the purposes of our confessions is to remind us of the central teachings of the Reformed faith. This being the case, the confessions’ emphasis is always on the moral law of God and never on natural law.

The **Westminster Confession** speaks of a divinely revealed law to Adam which is defined not as “natural law” but as a Covenant of Works: “God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it” (chap. 19, “Of the Law of God”). There is continuity between the law given at Creation and subsequent moral revelation (chap. 2). “This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man.” This Law, not another, binds all men, not just members of a “redemptive kingdom.” Again, “The moral law doth forever bind all, *as well justified persons as others*, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation” (chap. 5, emphasis added).

The **Second Helvetic Confession** speaks of “the Law of Nature” that “was at one time written in the hearts of men by the finger of God” (Rom. 2:15), and the finger of God writing “the two Tables of Moses” (chap. 12), but says nothing about “the Law of Nature” as an authoritative guide for the “common kingdom,” that is, the kingdom occupied by believer and unbeliever outside the Church.

Man in the Fall lost a proper understanding and use of the law of conscience inscribed at creation. Says the **Belgic Confession**, “And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and retained only small remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness...” (Art.14).

The **Canons of Dort** (1618) also speak to the question of the insufficiency of natural law due to sin obscuring general revelation. Article IV. 3.4 speaks of “glimmerings of natural understanding” that remain in fallen sinners, “But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright *even in things natural and civil*” (emphasis added).⁸²

Our conclusion: While there is a reference to the “law of nature” in the early Reformed creeds, it is not appealed to as a standard for obedience and mutual cooperation in the “common kingdom.” Rather, it is presented as a criterion for man’s judgment before God’s holy tribunal.

By strong contrast, the *Catechism of Catholic Church* says *much* about natural law:

Man participates in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator who gives him mastery over his acts and the ability to govern himself with a view to the true and the good. The natural law expresses the original moral sense which enables man to discern by reason the good and the evil, the truth and the lie (sec. 1954). The natural law, present in the heart of each man and established by reason, is universal in its precepts and its authority extends to all men. It expresses the dignity of the person and determines the basis for his fundamental rights and duties (sec. 1956). The natural law, the Creator’s very good work, provides the solid foundation on which man can build the structure of moral rules to guide his choices. It also provides the indispensable moral foundation for building the human community. Finally, it provides the necessary basis for the civil law with which it is connected,

⁸² The original Latin reads, “Residuum quidem est post lapsum in homine *lumen aliquod naturæ...*” which has been translated by some as “glimmerings of natural light,” while the RCUS version reads, “the glimmerings of natural understanding.”

whether by a reflection that draws conclusions from its principles, or by additions of a positive and juridical nature (sec. 1959).⁸³

Good Works in Union with Christ

One point emphasized in Reformed theology is the believer's good works. But in the 2K theology there is a noticeable omission of a serious discussion about sanctification and good works, in line with its Lutheran tendency. Why is there a denial of the present responsibility of believers to do cultural and social good works? It is a failure to understand the Reformed doctrine of sanctification and the proper role of good works in the Christian life.

In the **Heidelberg Catechism** we see an emphasis on the broad significance of these Christian works for the culture as a whole, and that the forensic work of Christ does not nullify our obedience to the revealed will of God: "Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works? Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with *our whole life* we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and that He be glorified through us; then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof; and by our godly walk win also others to Christ" (HC Q86, emphasis added).

The **Belgic Confession** clearly connects sanctification and good works when it maintains, "We believe that this true faith, being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit, sanctifies him and makes him a new man, causing him to live a new life and freeing him from the bondage of sin. Therefore, it is so far from being true that this justifying faith makes men remiss in a pious and holy life, that on the contrary without it they would never do anything out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation. Therefore, it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man; for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith which is called in Scripture a *faith working through love* (Gal. 5:6), which excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded in His Word" (Art. 24).

With this the **Westminster Confession** agrees, "These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life" (chap. 16, "Of Good Works").

The assertion has been made by a number of 2K advocates that the actions of believers and non-believers are the same. The **Heidelberg Catechism** describes true good works as distinctively Christian: "What are good works? Those only which proceed from true faith, and are done according to the law of God, unto His glory, and not such as rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men" (HC Q91).

The **Westminster Confession** is in full harmony with this, "Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands; and of good use both to themselves and others: yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God: and yet, their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God" (16.7).

We conclude that the Reformed confessions state the authentic Calvinistic teaching, while 2K theology is akin to Lutheranism on sanctification and good works.

The Doctrine of Civil Government

The Reformed confessions also assign an important place to the civil magistrate that is simply missing in the 2K theology. Why the omission? The following quotes show that the Reformed fathers held to a profound witness to a distinctively Christian civil government, and this should be a model for us today.

⁸³ "The Natural Moral Law" in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), sections noted above.

Zwingli's Sixty-Seven Articles of 1523 teach that "the temporal power...does have power and confirmation in the doctrine and work of Christ" (Art. 35). Moreover, when civil magistrates "are unfaithful and do not act according to the rule of Christ, they may be deposed in the name of God."

The **Geneva Confession of 1536** is outlined by John Calvin and reflects the evangelical principles of the 1536 edition of his *Institutes*. Here Calvin speaks of kings and princes "as also other magistrates and officers, to be a holy thing..." He also speaks of such officers as serving God and following "a Christian vocation" (Art. 21).⁸⁴

The **First Helvetic Confession of 1536** declares that the civil magistrate has the responsibility to punish and root out blasphemy, "and to exercise all possible diligence to promote and to put into effect what a minister of the Church and a preacher of the Gospel teaches and sets forth from God's Word." Moreover, a government shall use "every effort that the pure word of God be faithfully proclaimed to the congregation." "Furthermore, a government should rule the people according to just, divine laws" (Art. 26). These statements are footnoted by Exodus 18:13ff; Isaiah 10:1ff.; Rom. 13:5ff.; Matt. 17:24; 22:21; Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29.

The **Scottish Confession of 1560** declares that "the preservation and purification of religion is particularly the duty of kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates. They are not only appointed for civil government but also to maintain pure religion and to suppress all idolatry and superstition..." (Art. 24).

The **First Confession of Basel of 1534** states that "every Christian government with which we desire to be numbered, should do all in its power to see that God's name is hallowed among its subjects, God's kingdom extended, and His will observed by the assiduous extirpation of crimes" (Art. 8).

The **Second Helvetic Confession of 1566** teaches that the best magistrates are friends and even members of the Church, who benefit the Church and assist it "best of all." The magistrate must be "truly God-fearing and religious, that is to say, according to the example of the most holy kings and princes of the people of the Lord, he promotes the preaching of the truth and sincere faith, roots out lies and all superstition, together with all impiety and idolatry, and defends the Church of God. We certainly teach that the care of religion belongs especially to the holy magistrate." The Confession also enjoins the magistrate to "govern the people entrusted to him by God with good laws made according to the Word of God" (Art. 30).

The **Belgic Confession of 1561** (*unamended*) also echoes the same doctrines spelled out in the above cited creeds. Magistrates are supposed to "protect the sacred ministry, and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of antichrist may be thus destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Gospel everywhere..." (Art. 36).

The **Heidelberg Catechism** speaks of the civil magistrate as having the divine right to wield the sword, especially for murder. While it does not formally address the standard that the magistrate is to employ in making decisions and codifying laws, it never entertains the concept of natural law or a law of nature. Indeed, we need to remind ourselves that the Catechism was in one sense a "government document," conceived and birthed by Prince Frederick III, the ruler in the Palatinate, who was one of its theological proofreaders and secondary authors. That it was the joint effort of the Christian magistrate and the Church in producing the Heidelberg means that 2K theology was in no shape or form a driving force. How could it be when the DNA of the civil magistrate was "smeared" on its pages? Speaking as a Christian civil magistrate, Frederick III even referred to the Heidelberg Catechism as "my catechism."⁸⁵ Using 2K logic and terminology, the Heidelberg Catechism came into existence by "the heresy of Constantinianism."

As for the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, 2K theologians do not give enough weight to the fact that the original WCF of 1647 granted the civil magistrate the right to "to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God" (Art. 33.3). Also, the unamended, original Confession required the magistrate "to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship

⁸⁴ Calvin's theology is the source of statements in the Heidelberg Catechism Q25 and 31, the Belgic Confession Art. 36, and the Canons of Dort, III.4.4.

⁸⁵ In his preface to the Catechism (1563), Frederick prayed that, "...it will please Almighty God also to grant reformation of public and private morals, and temporal and eternal welfare." *Heidelberg Catechism: 450th Anniversary Edition* (The Reformed Church in the U.S., 2014), 16.

and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed” (Art. 23).

It is clear, at least, that the magistrate had a Christian responsibility. 2K theologians will declare that the *Westminster Confession* was the product of more mature thinking than the earlier Reformed confessions, but do not emphasize that the revision to the Confession in the American churches did not begin to be made until at least 140 years after its first adoption in August of 1647.

We are not hereby advocating that the civil magistrate has a right to intrude into the spiritual affairs of the Church, but only to show that the early Reformed confessions do affirm that civil government should be Christian.

In contrast to the 2K view of a “common kingdom”: (1) The Reformed confessions speak of a “Christian government,” which conflicts with the common kingdom spin of 2K theologians. The confessions teach that the “common kingdom” is not supposed to be common, but distinctively “Christian.” (2) The office of the civil magistrate is presented as a “holy” office. This conflicts with the 2K view which presents a dualism between the sacred and the profane. (3) We are instructed that Christians make the best magistrates, so that it is Christians *as magistrates* who are the most fit to rule. It is not just Christians *who are* magistrates, but *Christian* magistrates who are deemed the fittest to rule because they will enact laws that will be distinctively Christian. (4) We hear the confessions saying that the State *ought* to obey both tables of God’s law. This is an unambiguous reference to God’s inscripturated law, not natural law. (5) Both tables of the law are exalted as the standard of civil government, including the command to legislate against idolatry and blasphemy and to protect the true religion. This is a major departure from 2K theology.

Our survey of the Reformed confessions allows us to conclude that the 2K theology is incompatible with historic Reformed theology.

C. Historical Evaluation

David VanDrunen’s 2010 book, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* is subtitled “A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought” and organized around various leading figures, not all of whom are Reformed. After an introduction of his themes, we find Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther named as “Precursors of the Reformed Tradition.” Chapters on Calvin, Early Reformed Resistance Theory among the Huguenots, The Age of Orthodoxy follow. He continues with a discussion of “Theocratic New England, Disestablished Virginia, and the Spirituality of the Church.” Finally, Abraham Kuyper appears as a supposed adherent to the Natural Law and 2K theology. Karl Barth is included in his survey; apparently VanDrunen agrees with those who count Barth as Reformed, contrary to Van Til’s assessment. He concludes with two chapters on The Kuyperian Legacy in (1) Herman Dooyeweerd and North American Neo-Calvinism, and (2) Cornelius Van Til and the Van Tillians. His conclusion is that we need to recover and revive the “Reformed Natural Law and Two Kingdoms Doctrine” and laments “the recent Reformed abandonment of the two kingdoms doctrine.”⁸⁶

The 2K theology, however, is not a *rediscovery* of Reformed social theory but rather an embrace of Lutheran views. Its secondary emphasis on natural law has its roots in Roman Catholic and humanistic theories of law. Sometimes 2K writers do make certain “Reformed” qualifications; other times they do not. But one looks in vain through the history of Reformed theological literature to find *one book* written on the topic of either two-kingdoms or natural law before VanDrunen. Why is this? The 2K historical narrative is not only inadequate—it obscures the historic distinctiveness of the Reformed tradition and blunts its moral and cultural power. As such, the 2K theology is *not* Reformed and leads Christians down the wrong track.

The historical argument found in VanDrunen’s book is a revisionist approach. He searches for side statements and inconsistencies of many Reformed leaders while ignoring the main line development of ethics in the Reformed tradition. As mentioned previously, there is much “cherry-picking” (picking historical figures that agree with his 2K perspective while ignoring others who do not). Of those whom he chooses, he searches for his 2K views by using select quotations while ignoring those to the contrary. Overall, he fails to deal adequately with the broad themes in

⁸⁶ VanDrunen, *Natural Law and Two Kingdoms*, 182.

a writer's thought. To use quotations without placing them in the broader context of a person's view is misrepresentation.

Augustine and the City of God

As the gospel of Jesus Christ went forth from Jerusalem to fill the Roman Empire, not only were many individuals transformed by the Holy Spirit, but Roman life and culture began to experience the effects of the gospel. However, it was not always clear to Christians *how* they should become salt and light to their society. The church struggled from the beginning to understand its proper relationship to a hostile culture, and various answers were given.⁸⁷

When the Roman Empire began to collapse due to internal and external factors, Augustine provided a new model for a Christian society in his classic, *The City of God*, completed in AD 426. This work traced the history of the City of God (Christianity) and the City of Man (Paganism) in regard to their origins, motives, and destinies. His title is taken from Psalm 46, but it is at once a history, an apologetic, and a philosophy of culture.

VanDrunen notes, "A first thing to note is that the Reformed Two Kingdoms doctrine is not the same thing as Augustine's Two Cities paradigm."⁸⁸ This is correct, for the two are indeed very different, yet 2K advocates often seek to identify their approach with that of Augustine. Augustine, however, views the Two Cities as antithetical in their origin, development, and destiny. He traces the topic primarily in Scripture and then interprets history in its light. VanDrunen acknowledges the antithetical stance of Augustine but cites a letter by Diognetus in an effort to make the two cities correlative. He concludes that "there is a strong strand of commonality between Christians and the world alongside of the fundamental antithesis dividing them."⁸⁹ This, however, falls far short of Augustine's vision, a vision that would be embraced by Calvin and Kuyper.

Augustine's vision for society, based upon Scripture, began to be realized during the Middle Ages in the development of Christendom. While we cannot condone everything that was done in the name of Christ, we acknowledge the fact that Christianity became the dominant religious and cultural force in Europe. One example of this is the Justinian Code, which revised Roman law to bring it more in line with biblical law.

But there already existed another law system that was part of Roman culture. Its roots lay in the speculations of Stoic philosophy, but it was adopted by such Romans as Seneca and Cicero. Eventually, some Christians began to interact with this non-Christian tradition. John Frame writes:

Natural law as a concept in ethics goes back to ancient Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotelian and Stoic. These philosophers believed that there are natural laws, moral principles that can be discovered in nature (particularly human nature) by reason and conscience. Of course, Aristotle and the Stoics were not concerned about the role of Scripture in ethics. But early, medieval, and Reformation Christians, seeking to integrate Greek philosophy with the Bible, asked how natural law and Scripture are related in our ethical decisions.⁹⁰

Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition

Because many aspects of Greek philosophy and Roman culture were not fully Christianized, they became a leaven working against the gospel. The advocate of combining these two was Thomas Aquinas, who built a great scholastic edifice joining Christianity with Greek philosophy in a synthesis of nature and grace. Greek philosophy was to rule the lower realm of Nature. This was to be supplemented by Grace, a supernatural substance. One of the key pillars of his program was natural law, which provided an autonomous basis for ethics on which society was to be built. But as the pagan element eventually increased, the biblical element decreased in both philosophy and ethics.

⁸⁷ H. Richard Niebuhr in *Christ and Culture* (New York, Harper & Row, 1951) identified five views: Christ *against* Culture (Anabaptist, Tolstoy); Christ *of* Culture (Gnosticism, Liberalism, Ritschl); Christ *above* Culture (Roman Catholicism, Aquinas); Christ *and* Culture *in Paradox* (Lutheran); and Christ the *Transformer* of Culture (Augustine, Maurice). Niebuhr's viewpoint was critically discussed in D.A. Carson's *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁸⁸ David VanDrunen, "The Two Kingdoms and Reformed Christianity: Why Recovering an Old Paradigm is Historically Sound, Biblically Grounded, and Practically Useful" *Pro Rege* 40, no. 3 (March 2012): 32.

⁸⁹ VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 30.

⁹⁰ Frame, "Review of Biblical Case for Natural Law."

VanDrunen realizes that the literature on natural law and Aquinas is immense. One wonders why there is, in contrast, such a paucity of discussion of natural law in the Reformed tradition. The reason is that natural law, in many ways, is mediated to modern times through Roman Catholicism and modern humanism.

Thomas defines natural law thus: “The light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light.”⁹¹ Natural law in the Roman Catholic worldview is discoverable by reason: “*Whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man’s good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided.*”⁹² In the end, Aquinas promotes a humanistic view of law since human beings “participate” in the eternal law. It is no wonder that Cornelius Van Til is degraded for his thoroughgoing critique of Aquinas.

A point often ignored is that the concept of natural law is vague and ambiguous and has never been clearly defined by its advocates. Aquinas’ “whatever” is a moving target because it has never been codified. Ironically, in his recent book *The Divine Covenants and Moral Order* (2014), VanDrunen finds the best statement of natural law in the Mosaic code: “The terms of the unwritten natural law were displayed in concrete forms in the Law of Moses.”⁹³

It is our conviction that the term “natural law” may be used in either a true or false way. Natural law should be placed within the context of a biblical-creationist worldview that sees man as the image of God. It should not be placed in the context of a naturalistic worldview that sees man as unfallen or partially fallen.

In 2010 Robert A. Morey published *The Bible, Natural Theology, and Natural Law: Conflict or Compromise?*⁹⁴ A few excerpts from his study will give us a better perspective on natural law:

Natural Law theorists have *always* defended the *status quo* in society. They have to do so because they have already declared the *status quo* as self-evident, intuitive, necessary, absolute, and universal. If they admitted that they were wrong and that “nature” now dictates the opposite view, how can they escape the charge of arbitrary natural law? They can’t change because it would nullify the entire premise of natural law itself.

He shows how the Reformation rejected the Thomistic natural law theory in general, but with some inconsistency:

It is thus no surprise that at times they lapsed into the language of Natural Law and Natural Theology by way of habit and education. Their motto “Always Reforming” clearly indicated that they understood that they did *not* have the time to root all Catholic teaching out of their thinking. It was left to their heirs to continue to purify theology of Catholic heresies.

It is this inconsistency which VanDrunen uses to build a Thomistic edifice with a Reformed nameplate on it.

Morey then speaks about how the concept is being revived by Roman Catholics today:

The Roman Catholic Acton Institute in Grand Rapids, headed by Father Sirico, has played a major role in the modern revival of Natural Law theory in Protestant circles. It funded various Protestants as well as Catholics to write books in defense of Natural Law. It also sponsored seminars introducing Natural Law in many Protestant schools. Stephen Grabill’s work, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics*, is an example of the influence of the Acton Institute.

By way of contrast, he lists evangelicals who have rejected the idea:

Evangelical scholars such as Schaeffer, Henry, Clark, Ellul, Van Til, Berkouwer, etc., followed the lead of the Reformers in rejecting Natural Law and Natural Theology. They taught that God, instead of man, was the Origin of truth, justice, morals, meaning and beauty; Revelation was the final authority instead of human reason or faith; Jesus is Lord—not Plato, Aristotle, Whitehead, etc. Francis Schaeffer’s comments on Aquinas are representative of the historic Evangelical view of Aquinas. ... Aquinas opened Pandora’s Box when he introduced Aristotle’s dogma of the autonomous reason. It led to the rise of rationalism.

⁹¹ Thomas Aquinas, quoted in David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 44.

⁹² *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁹³ Van Drunen, *Divine Covenants*, 283.

⁹⁴ Robert A. Morey, *The Bible, Natural Theology, and Natural Law: Conflict or Compromise?* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press 2010). Excerpts from chapter 11 are taken from Logos Bible Software version.

The Lutheran Two Kingdom Doctrine

Because of the critical importance of the Lutheran view for understanding the 2K viewpoint, it is necessary to consider it next. By the time of the Reformation, Western society was in a state of crisis as the Thomistic synthesis broke down. Unbelievers returned to ancient paganism in the Renaissance while believers returned to the original scriptures in the Reformation. Since the sixteenth century, both movements have vied for dominance in Western civilization.

The Lutheran Reformation responded by providing a modified version of the Roman Catholic synthesis in reaction to the Anabaptists. Based upon Lutheranism's dichotomy of law and grace, there is a horizontal division between the two kingdoms of Church and State (two reigns). God rules the State by law, while Christ rules the Church by the gospel. This was the original form of the 2K viewpoint, according to the majority of church historians. Yet VanDrunen objects, "A common myth of recent years is that the Two Kingdoms doctrine is not historically Reformed, but is only a Lutheran idea."⁹⁵ To illustrate that this is not myth, we present some extended excerpts from an article by Timothy P. Palmer in the journal *Pro Rege*:

This teaching is first set out in some detail in 1523, in Luther's "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed."⁹⁶ Luther's starting point is the division of two classes of people: "We must divide the children of Adam and all mankind into two classes, the first belonging to the kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world" (LW 45:88). Corresponding to these two kingdoms are two types of government: "For this reason God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that . . . they are obliged to keep still and to maintain an outward peace" (LW 45:91).

The kingdom of God is thus the church. . . . But the kingdom of the world, or the temporal government, is different. Since unbelievers will not listen to the Gospel or the Holy Spirit, God ordained another government, the temporal government: "All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law" (LW 45:90). While the kingdom of God is ruled by the Word of God, the kingdom of the world is ruled by the sword. While the kingdom of God is ruled by the Gospel, the kingdom of the world is ruled by the law.

From the above, it is clear that the kingdom of the world is not the same as the kingdom of Satan. The kingdom of the world is a third kingdom between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. It has an ambiguous status between these two kingdoms.

These thoughts from Luther's 1523 document are expanded upon nine years later. In 1532 the mature Luther published his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount.⁹⁷ At issue is the question as to how to apply Jesus' teaching. For example, should a soldier or a policeman turn the other cheek while on duty? Should the government not resist an evil person, as Matthew 5:39 might suggest?

In response to these issues, Luther said that it is essential to distinguish the "secular and the divine realm" (LW 21:5). So, when Jesus says that the poor in spirit are blessed, this statement refers to the spiritual realm, not the secular or worldly realm. The spiritual realm relates to "how to live before God, and above and beyond the external." But, "having money, property, honor, power, land and servants belongs to the secular realm" (LW 21:12). Again, when Jesus says that the meek will inherit the earth, he is not speaking about a governmental officer, who "must be sharp and strict . . . and get angry and punish"; rather, he is dealing with a Christian in his private relations. Thus, "we have two different persons in one man"—the Christian person and the secular person (LW 21:23).

In the context of these last sayings, Luther makes some incredible statements *excluding* Jesus Christ from the secular realm. Luther says, "Therefore we must not drag [Christ's] words into the law books or into the secular government... *With the secular area [Christ] has nothing to do*" (LW 21:90; emphasis added). On the issue of oaths, Luther again says that "Christ has no intention here of interfering with the secular realm, nor of depriving

⁹⁵ David VanDrunen, "The Two Kingdoms and Reformed Christianity," 32.

⁹⁶ Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed," trans. J. Schindel and W. Brandt, in *Luther's Works* (LW) 45 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962): 81–129.

⁹⁷ Martin Luther, "Sermon on the Mount," trans. J. Pelikan, *Luther's Works* 21 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956): 1–294.

the government of anything. All he is preaching about is how individual Christians should behave in their everyday life” (LW 21:99).

Finally, on not laying up treasures on earth, Luther says that “Christ is giving instructions to the individual or the Christian man and that a sharp distinction must be made between the Christian and the man of the world, between a Christian person and a secular person.” He continues, “Of course, a prince can be a Christian, *but he must not rule as a Christian*; and insofar as he does rule, his name is not ‘Christian’ but ‘prince.’ The person is indeed a Christian, but *his office or his principedom does not involve his Christianity*” (LW 21:170; emphasis added).

From this brief survey, the basic contours of the two-kingdom doctrine are clear. God rules the world through two kingdoms. The kingdom of God is the church, where Jesus reigns by the Gospel. There the Sermon on the Mount, or the rule of love, is normative. Outside of the church is the worldly or secular kingdom. There the prince, not Jesus, rules with justice and the sword. This is the domain of the law, not of the Gospel.

In between the kingdom of God (the church) and the kingdom of Satan exists a large area of life that is not spiritual but is “secular” (*weltlich*). Both areas belong to God, but Jesus Christ is excluded from the “secular” realm. The lordship of Jesus Christ does not extend to this area of life. Instead, the secular realm is governed by reason and natural law. Luther’s two-kingdom doctrine is dualistic. A dualism is established between gospel and law, grace and nature, and the Christian as an individual and in society.⁹⁸

The Two-Kingdom viewpoint envisions a hard and fast separation between the Christian’s conduct in the Church versus his conduct in the world. This might be called “the doctrine of the two persons within a Christian.”

Luther’s doctrine of the two realms has had serious consequences. First, it disassociates the gospel from the law and puts the law almost wholly into the hands of the State. Secondly, the antinomian tendency of Lutheranism leaves Christian ethics vague. Thirdly, it fails to grasp the pointed teaching of Scripture on the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

In time, this perspective made German Lutherans unable to resist the tyranny of the Nazi State. Without a clear understanding of biblical law and the Kingship of Jesus Christ, the State becomes autonomous. Lutheran Robert Benne noted:

Were this version of Lutheran theology taken to its logical conclusion it would deprive the gospel of any intellectual content and the law of any moral content. . . . It would champion a form of Lutheran quietism in the realm of education. Much as German Lutherans in the 1930s separated the two kingdoms... and allowed the Nazi movement to go unchecked by appeal to the intellectual and moral content of the Christian vision, so this approach would allow modern secular learning to go unchallenged by that vision.⁹⁹

Two Lutheran theologians, Eric Gritsch and Robert Jenson, wrote candidly about the internal problems with the 2K ethic:

The political ethic of the Lutheran confessions, based on Luther’s “two-kingdoms ethic,” has caused a painful neuralgia for twentieth-century Lutheranism. . . . The two kingdoms ethic avoids the extremes of institutional Christocracy (ecclesiocracy) and moralistic theocracy (Puritan ethic). But, in his attempt to steer clear of papal authoritarianism and utopian sectarianism, Luther tended to separate the two kingdoms so sharply that their fundamental unity—anchored in the eschatological tension between law and gospel—was obscured. Post-Reformation Lutheranism frequently dissolved the original tension between Luther’s two kingdoms and arrived at an ethical dualism. . . . The history of Lutheranism discloses a tendency on the part of Lutherans to be quietistic rather than revolutionary in the face of political tyranny.¹⁰⁰

A recent book by William J. Wright, *Martin Luther’s Understanding of God’s Two Kingdoms*, shows a quagmire of confusion into which one is led if he adopts the Lutheran 2K viewpoint.¹⁰¹ And it shows that the Lutheran view

⁹⁸ Timothy P. Palmer, “The Two-Kingdom Doctrine: A Comparative Study of Martin Luther and Abraham Kuyper,” *Pro Rege* 37, no. 3 (March 2009): 13–25. Dr. Timothy Palmer is Professor of Theology at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) in Bukuru, Nigeria. His dissertation was on “John Calvin’s View of the Kingdom of God” (University of Aberdeen, 1988).

⁹⁹ Robert Benne, quoted in D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 212.

¹⁰⁰ Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 179, 183.

¹⁰¹ William J. Wright, *Martin Luther’s Understanding of God’s Two Kingdoms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010).

cannot be easily “fixed” because of the legion of interpretations. The erroneous 2K doctrine led to great evils in German Lutheranism.

Thus Luther’s two kingdom theology is an important engine behind the Two Kingdom-Natural Law position. For that reason, the contemporary expressions of 2K theology are often labeled as Lutheran or crypto-Lutheranism, even though some differences may exist between its Lutheran form and the doctrinal formulations of the contemporary 2K theologians who are Reformed.

John Calvin on Christ’s Kingdom and Law

Two Kingdom writers make frequent appeal to the writings of John Calvin to support 2K doctrine, while also honestly acknowledging that Calvin was not always consistent with what they claim he really believed. VanDrunen attempts a number of things in his *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*. First, he tries to show a strong continuity between Calvin and the medieval Roman Catholic tradition of “natural law” in Thomas Aquinas and his followers. Second, he tries to show the similarity between Calvin and Luther in regard to the Lutheran theory of 2K.

We shall consider whether Calvin endorses this recent two kingdom view of society and whether he would subscribe to the recent version of natural law as his ethical system.

Calvin Institutes: Two Kingdoms or Sphere-Sovereignty?

In general, we find that VanDrunen’s assertions are not supported by many experts on Calvin.¹⁰² VanDrunen writes, “Calvin, therefore, could attribute both a wholly negative role and a remarkably positive role to natural law not because of internal inconsistency but because the former was true for the kingdom of Christ and the latter for the civil kingdom,” with the former as the “heavenly” and the latter as “earthly,” understood in an “eschatological” sense.¹⁰³ But Cornel Venema generally assesses that VanDrunen’s “interpretation of Calvin’s view of the respective roles of the natural law and Scripture in the twofold government of believers is especially flawed.”¹⁰⁴

Palmer in an earlier *Pro Rege* article, “Calvin the Transformationist and the Kingship of Christ,” comments:

This essay argues that although Calvin does teach a residual two-kingdom doctrine, the lordship of God and the kingship of Christ are more determinative for Calvin’s theology. The historical transformationism of Calvin and Calvinism is explained largely by Calvin’s theology of the universal rule of God and Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵

For his part, VanDrunen identifies at least two areas of difference between Calvin and Luther’s views of the “2Ks,” but in the end he believes that “Calvin’s 2K theology resembles Luther’s theology of the two kingdoms,” and Calvin has “mostly a Luther-like 2Ks theology intersected by a Gelasius-like two swords theory.”¹⁰⁶ As a result, Calvin and Calvinism cease to have any distinctive view of society, politics, or culture. Calvin’s view becomes but an interesting variation in “the broader Christian tradition,” namely, that the differences between Calvin and Romanism or Lutheranism are but variations on a theme. Apparently the Calvinistic Reformation was only a modest adjustment of Romanism and Lutheranism. History tells us otherwise. Palmer again:

In its earlier stages Calvin’s theology was strongly impacted by that of Luther. ... It is true, though, that a two-kingdom doctrine is present in Calvin. We find it taught explicitly in two places in the final edition of his magnum opus. In *Institutes* 3.19.15 Calvin posits “a twofold government (*regimen*)” in a person, one spiritual and the other political. These two kingdoms may also be called “the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘temporal’ jurisdiction (*iurisdictio*)”; or “the spiritual kingdom (*regnum spirituale*)” and “the political kingdom (*regnum politicum*).” Thus, in a person there are “two worlds, over which different kings and different laws have authority.” It is interesting to note that the emphasis is first of all on governments, or rules, and only secondly on kingdoms. The

¹⁰² VanDrunen does not take into account the historically Reformed assessment of Calvin’s view found in the writings of Josef Bohatec, Henry Van Til, C. Gregg Singer, and W. Stanford Reid.

¹⁰³ VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 114, 111.

¹⁰⁴ Cornel Venema, “The Restoration of All Things to Proper Order: An Assessment of the ‘Two Kingdoms/Natural Law’ Interpretation of Calvin’s Public Theology,” in *Kingdoms Apart*, ed. Ryan C. McIlhenny (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 18.

¹⁰⁵ Timothy P. Palmer, “Calvin the Transformationist and the Kingship of Christ,” *Pro Rege* 35, no. 3 (March 2007): 33.

¹⁰⁶ VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 91, 93.

second explicit reference is at the beginning of *Institutes* 4.20, where again we read of a twofold government (*regimen*), which is later defined as “Christ’s spiritual kingdom (*regnum*) and the civil jurisdiction (*ordinationem*).” We see again that the emphasis is on rule or government; even the word *regnum* can be translated as rule, or authority, and not just realm, or kingdom.¹⁰⁷

How then should we understand Calvin’s statements which seem to support 2K Theory? The reference in *Institutes*, Book 3 is used to support the view that Calvin held to the 2K perspective. The context is significant, however. It is discussed, not in a section on church and state or kingdom, but rather on “Christian Liberty” as a subsection of the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit. After discussing the nature of salvation in Christ before treating an aspect of Christian ethics, Calvin writes primarily to refute the views of the Anabaptists here, who were seeking to throw off civil government because of their misunderstanding of Christian liberty. Calvin explains that our liberty in Christ does not make us free from all human institutions, but is rather a spiritual privilege we have in regard to the law of God, understood as a covenant.

To refute the Anabaptists, Calvin argues that the kingdom of Christ and civil government are not averse to each other, even though Christ’s kingdom is a “spiritual,” “internal kingdom” (*Institutes* 3.20.2). He tells us that civil rulers are supposed to decree justice, as “civil authority is, in the sight of God, not only sacred and lawful, but the most sacred, and by far the most honorable, of all stations in mortal life” (3.20.4). He also argues that civil magistrates are to “kiss the Son” and to rule as Christians (Ps. 2:12). They are not to abdicate; rather, they are patrons of God’s pious worshipers, even the nursing mothers and nursing fathers of the Church (3.20.5). All magisterial offices are “ordinances of God” (3.20.7), no matter what the form of government (3.20.8). Civil magistrates are also *gods* [note: a religious designation], as Calvin cites Psalm 82 (3.20.4).

Calvin draws a general distinction between spiritual and temporal jurisdictions. His first reference to “jurisdictions” is important, for it shows what is foremost in his mind. His statement should be interpreted to mean not two separate terrains of existence but rather two kinds of government—ecclesiastical and civil. This is clear when he delineates the areas of their respective jurisdictions. Venema notes, “It is significant that Calvin primarily uses the terms *regimen* and *iurisdictio* in this passage, and only secondarily speaks of the *regnum* that corresponds to them. It is more accurate, therefore, to speak of Calvin’s doctrine of a “twofold government” or “jurisdiction,” rather than primarily of two separate “realms” or “kingdoms.”¹⁰⁸ The term may properly refer to what has been more aptly called “spheres of authority” and is therefore properly understood as connected to the Neo-Calvinist view of sphere sovereignty.

Calvin does indeed say that these two jurisdictions may be called the spiritual kingdom and the civil kingdom. His focus, however, is *not* to lay a foundation for his social theory in a broad 2K viewpoint construed as spiritual and secular. Venema again comments:

Calvin’s ‘Two Kingdoms’ language does not so much refer to two separate realms or worlds as to a *twofold government* of God over the conduct of believers ... Whereas VanDrunen interprets Calvin’s language of ‘Two Kingdoms’ in spatial terms, as though they were primarily two separate realms of human life and conduct, Calvin’s emphasis is on the twofold way in which God governs the conduct of believers in whom these two jurisdictions coexist.” (14)

For “In Calvin, the spiritual and the civil government of God do not stand independently alongside each other” (16). They are not two hermetically separated domains or realms. W. Stanford Reid maintains, “While Calvin is anxious to preserve the church from political interference, he is at the same time equally convinced that the church should not intrude into the State’s particular area of authority. Christ being both head of the church and king of kings, the spheres of both are subject to Him directly.”¹⁰⁹

Timothy Palmer notes:

Calvin is here describing two types of government in society: church and state, to use contemporary language. Church government is different from civil government. The church rules through the Word; the State rules

¹⁰⁷ Palmer, “Calvin the Transformationist,” 34.

¹⁰⁸ Venema, “The Restoration of All Things,” 14.

¹⁰⁹ W. Stanford Reid, “Calvin and the Political Order,” in *John Calvin: Contemporary Prophet*, ed. Jacob Hoogstra (Grand Rapids, MI: 1959), 251–52.

through civil laws and the sword. Calvin's polity here resembles Abraham Kuyper's sphere sovereignty and the American separation of church and state.

Of course, there is a duality, and even dualistic language, in these passages. However, the two-government, or two-kingdom, theology of Calvin is milder than that of Luther. Calvin does not have Luther's law-gospel dualism; the contrast between the personal Christian and Christian in society is much less pronounced; and most significantly, Jesus Christ in Calvin's theology is not excluded from the political realm. Luther's theology is more dualistic than Calvin's.

If there is a two-kingdom doctrine in Calvin, this doctrine should be taken together with the absolute and universal authority of Jesus Christ over both spheres, or kingdoms. Luther excluded Christ from the temporal kingdom; Calvin put Christ over both kingdoms.¹¹⁰

The Reign of Christ (Regnum Christi)

Palmer goes on to describe a key biblical theme used by Calvin that is not really considered by VanDrunen:

Calvin's view of the reign of Christ has been discussed in many places, but the discussion in Book 2 of the *Institutes* may serve as a summary. Although his resurrection is the beginning of his glorification, Christ "truly inaugurated his *regnum* only at his ascension into heaven." It was then that He began "to rule heaven and earth with a more immediate power." The session at the Father's right hand is directly connected with the ascension. Then, "Christ was invested with lordship [*dominio*] over heaven and earth, and solemnly entered into possession of the government committed to him . . . until he shall come down on Judgment Day." The purpose of the session is that "both heavenly and earthly creatures may look with admiration upon his majesty, be ruled by his hand, obey his nod, and submit to his power."

One is impressed here by the universal nature of Christ's reign. Heaven and earth are ruled by Christ; all of creation comes under his dominion. Of course, the church is the center of his kingdom. However, when the church is called the *regnum Christi*, is the reference to the visible or invisible church? Must this universal reign of Christ be restricted to the institutional form of the visible church? Surely Christ's reign is broader than the visible church. Surely Christ's reign impacts all of life, especially through the lives of Christians both inside and outside the visible church.

For Calvin, the *regnum Christi* is a hermeneutical or exegetical tool for understanding Old Testament prophecies. The *regnum Christi* is the period of time between the first and second comings of Christ when Christ would reign from heaven by his Word and Spirit, regenerating believers and causing them to obey God. The visible church may be at the center of this obedience; but Christ's reign is in no way restricted to this institutional church. The authority of Christ is too big for that.¹¹¹

Calvin on the Moral Law of God

There is no separate chapter on natural law in the *Institutes*. Calvin makes use of the term in the last chapter on *Civil Government* (4.20.1–32), but VanDrunen's emphasis on this concept in Calvin far exceeds the treatment given by the Reformer, and he reads more into it than what is actually there. It is therefore necessary to discuss Calvin's view of law in the context of his doctrine of the State.

Much of what Calvin says is directed against the Anabaptists, who not only despised civil government, but argued that unless the State is governed by the whole Mosaic Law, it would not be a civil government that deserves our obedience. According to them, a civil government without the Mosaic polity is "carnal," and thus by nature at loggerheads with Christ's spiritual kingdom. This does not mean that the Anabaptists campaigned for a restoration of the Jewish polity; it means that for them unless the *exact form* of civil government is spelled out in Scripture, it is invalid, if not unlawful.

In *Institutes* 20.9 Calvin tells us that civil rulers are responsible to enforce "both tables of the law." To accomplish this mandate, rulers must begin with religion and divine worship. He says that "no polity (civil government) can be successfully established unless piety be its first care." He then appeals to the Old Testament, where the king was supposed to "write him a copy of this law in a book" (Deut. 17:16–20).

¹¹⁰ Palmer, "Calvin the Transformationist," 34, 36.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 34–35. Palmer quotes from *Institutes* 2.14–15.

Writing against the Anabaptists, he asserts that there exists the “common law of nations” which is both religious and Mosaic, “for there are some who deny that any commonwealth is rightly framed which neglects the law of Moses, and is ruled by the common law of nations. How perilous and seditious these views are, let others see: for me it is enough to demonstrate that they are stupid and false...” (20.14). His meaning is that we can have a legitimate government without the *inscripturated* law of Moses because such a government would prove its validity by operating according to the “common law of nations” (20.14).

Then Calvin distinguishes between the moral law, the ceremonial law, and the judicial laws of Moses. He explains that the moral law tells us to worship God and to love one another. The ceremonial law is abrogated. And the judicial laws of Moses “are removed” so that “the duties and precepts of charity can still remain perpetual” (20:15). What, then, is the moral law? Calvin answers:

Now, it is evident that the law of God which we call moral is nothing else than the testimony of natural law, and of conscience *which God has engraven on the minds of men*, the whole of this equity of which we now speak is prescribed in it. Hence it alone ought to be the aim, the rule, directed to this aim, and restricted to this end, there is no reason why they should be disapproved by us, however much they may differ from the Jewish law, or from each other (20:16).

Calvin’s definition of “natural law” includes punishments not only for murder, theft, adultery, and false witness, but “idolatry, sacrilege against God’s name, blasphemies against His truth, and other public offences against religion...” (20.3) That these sins should be punished by the State mirrors the common law of the nations. Then, in dealing with the Law of Moses itself, Calvin writes that “the Lord did not deliver it by the hand of Moses to be promulgated in all countries, and to be everywhere enforced...” (20.16). Calvin’s meaning is unmistakable: he teaches that God did not intend for the Law of Moses to be disseminated among the nations to be enforced.

Calvin uses a number of terms that need defining: “moral law,” “equity,” “natural law,” “common law of the nations.” When he speaks of the “law of Moses” it is not always clear as to whether he addresses the inscripturated law of Moses or “the work of the law” written in every man’s heart. But it *is* clear that the Sinai tables of stone and the two tables of law engraved on man’s heart are the same law.

The Anabaptists argued that the Law of Moses extended no further than to the two tables of stone, thus making it the alone distinctive of the Sinai covenant. But Calvin believed that the moral law of God is mirrored in “natural law,” which was the “common law of the nations,” and in what Paul called “the work of the law” in all men’s hearts. It is in this natural law that we discover what Calvin calls “equity,” (although in other writings he cites the Golden Rule as “equity”). The distinction that he makes is the distinction of the Bible-in-the-hand and the Bible-in-the-heart. Thus he taught that the ceremonial laws and the judicial laws of Moses have been “abrogated,” “taken away”—the latter so that “the perpetual duties and precepts of love could still remain” (20.15). So, Calvin opposed a theocracy based on the judicial laws of Moses.

Five points are clear from Calvin that impact the 2K debate: (1) Though the State must operate on the basis of “natural law,” this must be understood within the context of a biblical worldview. Natural law is not a law given by Nature but by God, and it therefore reflects *both* tables of the Ten Commandments. (2) The State should be a “Christian government” that operates on the basis of God’s law. There is no antithesis between the Church and the State, even though the Church is the “spiritual kingdom of Christ,” and the other is not. (3) The purpose of the State is to promote “piety” (20.2). (4) Civil magistrates must “kiss the Son,” as Calvin cites Psalm 2:12 and then comments that civil authorities are “to submit to Christ the power with which they have been invested, that He alone may tower over all” (20.5). If they are Christians, they must not abdicate, but rule as *Christian* monarchs, that is, in the name of the Gospel. (5) Civil authority is “the most sacred, and by far the most honorable, of all stations in mortal life” (20.4). Calvin speaks of civil governors as “vicars” and “deputies” of God,” who occupy a “holy office” (20:6, 9).

Calvin nowhere disparages the use of the “moral law” of the inscripturated Ten Commandments, even though he may emphasize its abiding work in natural law. Whatever the answer, it is clear that Calvin taught that even if natural law *apart* from the Bible was alone the standard of the nations, that such would still include *both* tables, because “the appointed end of civil government is to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church” (20.2).

The 2K proposal cannot be underwritten by Calvin’s theology. Meredith Kline, for example, argued that only the church is holy, but Calvin says that civil authorities are “most sacred” (20.4). Also, in contradistinction to Kline and

other 2K proponents, Calvin advocates applying the first table of the Law to society, that is, the worship of God (which Kline would call “monstrous” and Horton “the heresy of Constantinianism”). He favors punishing not only adulterers and thieves, but also idolaters (20.3). It is clear that he expects the Church to press the claims of Christ upon the State, that is, using 2K jargon, to be “transformers.” And, he also expects civil magistrates to transform the body politic, committing to civil government “the duty of rightly establishing religion,” (20.3) while opposing the idea of allowing men “to make laws according to their own decision concerning religion and the worship of God” (20.3).

Yet Calvin does not specifically tell the Church either to forbid or to press the *inscripturated* Ten Commandments upon the civil authority. Why not? There are various possibilities that have been debated, but we might make a simple statement: Calvin’s thought was a beginning, but not the final conclusion in regard to Reformed social and cultural thought. His views play a crucial initial role, but cannot be considered the end of a Reformed understanding of ethics.

Whatever may be said about Calvin’s views concerning the application of the Law of God, he was absolutely death on all forms of public idolatry. Arguing mainly from the premise of the Gospel, in one of his last letters to the Queen of Navarre in 1563, he wrote:

For all who have any dominion are also enjoined to purge their territories of every kind of idolatry and corruption, by which the purity of true religion is defiled. And when St. Paul commands to pray for kings and all who are in authority, it is not without cause that he adds this reason, “In order that we may live under them in all godliness and honesty.” Before speaking of civil virtues, he enjoins the fear of God, by which he signifies that the office of princes is to see that God be adored with purity.”¹¹²

Another point needs to be stated: Calvin did *not* teach that the God-man mediatorial rule of Christ targets just the Church, excluding all else. Nor did Calvin weaken or gut the Cultural Mandate of its abiding relevance as God’s command for the Christian to implement in the here and now. As for Christ’s heavenly rule as the exalted God-man over *all*, he wrote (in the context of the Lord’s Supper): “And in order to express this in a still more palpable form, I employed the trite dictum of the schools, that Christ is whole everywhere . . . in other words, *in his entire person of Mediator He fills heaven and earth*, though in His flesh He is in heaven...”¹¹³ (emphasis added)

Still again he wrote: “We deny not that the whole and entire Christ in the person of the Mediator fills heaven and earth...” (557–58). And as for the meaning of “fill,” Calvin explains, “Since to *fill* often means to *perform*, it may be so taken here. For Christ by His ascension to heaven entered on possession of the dominion given him by the Father, viz., to rule all things by His power” (558).

In summary, we note that Calvin seeks to develop a biblical doctrine of the State. Due to his background as a lawyer trained in a European and Renaissance context, he interacted with existing theories of law and how to relate biblical law to the Thomistic tradition of natural law.

Calvin’s View of Natural Law

Does Calvin use the term “natural law”? Yes. Does he mean the same thing by it as the ancient Stoics, Thomas Aquinas, and Hugo Grotius? No. It would have been better if the 2K writers had given clear definitions of what Calvin means by natural law and had compared it to a general definition. It is unclear how VanDrunen sees Calvin arriving at natural law when he says that Calvin “identified natural law with the Decalogue,”¹¹⁴ which begs the question, “Is moral law revealed by nature or by revelation?”

VanDrunen rightly notes, “Thomas grounded his explanation of natural law in the reality of eternal law, which is the divine reason or plan of the universe existing in God’s mind. The natural law is human reason’s participation in the divine reason as eternal law” (105). He goes on to say, “Calvin never writes of natural law in this way.” The “eternal law” that is referenced here is not that of biblical law but the Greek concept of law that transcends not only the world but God himself. But this kind of Platonic rationalism is not the worldview framework in which Calvin speaks of natural law. And if Calvin does not accept such a “pantheistic” conception of reason or law, how then can

¹¹² *John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, vol. 7 (Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 291–92.

¹¹³ *Tracts and Letters*, vol. 2, 515.

¹¹⁴ VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 104.

VanDrunen say, “Calvin in many important respects shared the concern of the Thomistic tradition to find the substantive source of natural law in God’s own nature” (103). Is it really the case that “Calvin’s natural theology exhibits many similarities to that of the medieval traditions, including the realist tradition of Thomas Aquinas”? (98). One’s view of God is basic to everything else. Thomas’ view of God cannot be reconciled with Calvin’s biblical view. Hence the proposal to urge an undefined natural law upon the Reformed tradition is historically dishonest.

We must not conclude that Calvin’s views on natural law are simply to be rejected as a foreign element. While we should not enshrine everything Calvin said, we do see that he was attempting to bring natural law and Mosaic Law together. Although not wholly successful, he paved the way for the later Reformed tradition to emphasize the “creation ordinances” of God. Calvin was not the last word.

It is telling that one of the last works Calvin wrote was his *Harmony of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy* (1563, the year before he died).¹¹⁵ This augments Calvin’s treatment of God’s Law in the *Institutes* and his 200 sermons on Deuteronomy (1555). The 2K promoters have not seriously considered the significance of his final work. The *Harmony* is one of the first attempts to codify the Mosaic laws according to the order of the Decalogue. We believe that this lays a distinctive emphasis for Reformed social thought and ethics by emphasizing not “natural” but biblical law.

We conclude that while Calvin’s view of the State and Law are complex, we see that he is not to be identified with the Thomistic/Roman Catholic tradition; rather, he was seeking to bring the teaching of Scripture to bear on his times. Realistically working within existing social and legal structures, he is a reformer not only of theology but also the social-political realm. Far from being a disengaged observer, many have observed that Calvin was a transformer of both culture and society.

Was Calvin a Transformationist?

Timothy Palmer asks the larger question of Calvin’s overall approach to culture. His conclusions are as follows: “It goes without saying that Calvin was a transformationist. The city of Geneva in his day is sufficient evidence. Through his influence the city was deeply changed. Whether the transformation was for better or worse is still a matter of debate; that it happened is obvious.”¹¹⁶

He cites a number of historical evidences: “John Knox’s commendation is well known. In 1556 he called Geneva ‘the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles.’ Only here were ‘manners and religion....so sincerely reformed.’ Clearly there was transformation” (36).

Evidence is also found here:

Calvin’s letters also reveal a desire that Europe be transformed. His letters to the princes and rulers express his desire for radical change. At the end of his life, he was sober, however, about the possibility of political change. On July 31, 1562, he said from the pulpit that “justice and judgment is a universal rule which applies to everyone. It means governing oneself so as to treat everyone fairly and properly, and it means standing against and resisting evil whenever it is necessary to relieve poor, afflicted people”; however, the princes of his day were too greedy, believing that “they have total license to gobble up their poor subjects” (36).

Palmer concludes,

There is, thus, a decisive difference between Luther and Calvin. Luther’s two-kingdom doctrine led to a conservative attitude toward engaging society; but Calvin’s teaching of the kingship of Christ and sovereignty of God led to a transformationist engagement with society. ... Of course, there is a lingering dualism present in Calvin’s theology and language. However, to restrict Christ’s reign to the visible church and not the State is not to read Calvin correctly. Perhaps we should recognize an unresolved tension between the universal kingship of Christ and the kingdom of Christ as the Church. However, to suggest that the nature-grace dualism is the defining aspect of Calvin’s theology would be to ignore the vast primary and secondary evidence about the centrality of the kingship of God and Christ in his theology (36–37).

¹¹⁵ This is available in four volumes in the English translation.

¹¹⁶ Palmer, “Calvin the Transformationist,” 36. Detailed evidence for this has been documented in J. H. Merle d’Aubigne’s *History of the Reformation in the Times of Calvin*. (8 vols., 1862–1877)

Calvin's Incomplete Viewpoint

A discussion of equally important historic Calvinistic themes is missing in VanDrunen's analysis of Calvin, i.e., the sovereignty of God, the doctrine of historical creation, the fall, covenant, Christology, sanctification, and eschatology. W. Stanford Reid says, "At its very heart lay the revolutionary principle of the triune God's sovereignty...It is not man, nor the church as some of the medieval thinkers would have held, but God Himself, who speaks by His Word and Spirit, who is the foundation of Calvin's state."¹¹⁷

Reid also shows how the Reformed doctrine of Covenant also played a foundational role in Calvin's thought:

Calvin's whole pattern of political thinking is brought together in his concept of the covenant. ... The covenant is in truth the foundation of Calvin's whole understanding of the State. ... Above everything else, the biblical example of Israel's covenant with God, led him to adopt this interpretation. This is borne out by his sermons on 1 Samuel (1561) ... Proper political government is thus a divine-human covenantal relationship... The fundamental law of society, i.e. the constitution...should be, in fact always must be to certain extent, based upon the two tables of the divine law (*Inst.* 4.20.14-15).¹¹⁸

We conclude that the historical argument for the 2K theology comes up short in its appeal to Calvin. And it fails to understand that there is a unique social-political-ethical-cultural perspective that is characteristically Reformed. VanDrunen does not come to grips with the authentic development of Calvinism and falls into the fallacy that there are many authentic versions of the Reformed faith. It is our conviction that the Reformed tradition developed more consistency over time. Gordon Spykman provides a more accurate historical picture of Calvin's views:

We find in Calvin a decisive departure from earlier Constantinian–medieval views of society, based upon the nature-grace dichotomy, and structured along the lines of the principle of sphere-subsidiarity with church and state alternately pressing their sovereign claims on other institutions in society.

But the clock did not stop with Calvin in the sixteenth century. Calvin helped to write a new agenda. But he also left behind some unfinished business. He introduced some new insights into the idea of sphere sovereignty. But a number of ambiguities are there too. Though his thinking on the issue at hand is confined largely to those two societal magnitudes, church and state; and though he viewed them more loosely than we would today, regarding them as two rather sprawling sectors of society, with other institutions clustered like satellites about them; and though we may question his way of delineating their tasks and drawing the lines of demarcation between them and patterning their interrelationships; nevertheless, the rough contours of a biblical Reformed view of communal life emerge in Calvin with unmistakable clarity. Calvin sowed some seeds which already during his lifetime began to germinate and bear their first fruits, making it possible for his heirs to enter more fully into the harvest of Calvin's pioneering labors.

Calvin's beginnings both called for and helped to create a Calvinist tradition which took hold on his ideas, gradually opened them up, and worked them out more clearly. Therefore, we cannot simply identify Calvinism with Calvin. But we cannot disassociate the later Calvinist tradition from Calvin either. He laid foundations, opened the door, and gave fresh impetus to a reforming movement which sent his followers out into new directions. Thus the Calvinist tradition honored Calvin's own commitment to the need for ongoing reformation.¹¹⁹

Reformed Orthodoxy on Christ's Kingdom and Law

In defense of the 2K project, David VanDrunen reasons that if "Neo-Calvinist" views are unfaithful to the Reformer, they should be rejected as un-Reformed. Although we have a profound admiration for Calvin, we believe that God has used a number of His servants to provide illumination, guidance, and direction in matters cultural, social, and political.

¹¹⁷ Reid, "Calvin and the Political Order," 247.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹¹⁹ Gordon Spykman, "Sphere-Sovereignty in Calvin and the Calvinist Tradition," in *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*, ed. David E. Holwerda (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), 185–208.

Beginning with the French Reformed Church and the Huguenots, we can see that there is a certain Reformed trend. This trend is not a 2K Natural Law orientation but rather a developing stress on biblical law and a Christian commonwealth as a constitutional republic. It is clear that the Reformed continued to clarify the distinction (not separation) between Church and State in regard to their distinctive spheres, but nowhere do we see evidence of their embracing the Lutheran two-kingdom duality.

The Reformed wing of the Reformation provided a more thoroughgoing analysis of Romanism and a more radical biblical alternative to Greek philosophy and Roman law theory. While John Calvin was certainly one of the greatest influences in laying the groundwork for a Reformed view of society, culture, and politics, he was not alone. Fellow Reformers such as Bucer, Bullinger, Farel, Viret, Danaeus, Junius, Ursinus, Knox, and others developed a distinctive Reformed view of culture and society that was transmitted to the next generation of Huguenots, Scottish Covenanters, German/Dutch Reformed, and English Puritans, which formed the religious and social-political background in which the United States was formed.

Martin Bucer (1491–1551) was a mentor to Calvin and can rightly be claimed as one of the founders of the German Reformed Church and a powerful influence on the English Puritans. His most important work was a treatment of social ethics, *De Regno Christi* or the Reign of Christ (1551). VanDrunen acknowledges that Bucer does not adopt the 2K language and then looks for some wiggle room to enlist the Reformer for his cause. However, Bucer's book is a powerful witness to the real beliefs of the original Reformed reformers. Wilhelm Pauck notes that Bucer's purpose in writing the book was that all Christian rulers "can and should firmly restore for their peoples the blessed Kingdom of the Son of God, our only redeemer, i.e., renew, institute, and establish the administration not only of religion but also of all other parts of the common life according to the mind of Christ, our Savior and supreme King."¹²⁰

There is no evidence of a 2K perspective here; in fact, we find Neo-Calvinism articulated by a proto-Calvinist (!), showing that Kuyper's views are really authentically Reformed and not those of Aquinas and Luther. Here are some of Bucer's thoughts from this must-read book:

For true kings, who are none other than Christians, know that they hear Christ when they hear his true ministers. ... All true kings have exhibited very many illustrious examples of this holy zeal for the Kingdom of Christ; as David, Hezekiah, and Josiah among the people of the Old Testament, and in the New, Constantine, Jovian, Theodosius, and many others. ... They shall take care, therefore, first of all, that the religion of Christ be administered ... For today the knowledge of the Kingdom of Christ is too much effaced and oppressed. And this is sufficiently proved by the actions of those who want to be regarded as those who know the Kingdom of Christ thoroughly and work for its realization.¹²¹

VanDrunen concludes his chapter on "Calvin and His Contemporaries" by referencing the views of the Italian Reformed theologian, Jerome Zanchius, who did show the influence of Thomism, having been schooled in that tradition. But he overlooks a number of equally important men who stood with Calvin and promoted a distinctively Christian view of society and politics. Cornel Venema speaks of Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) as a chief example of how far the 2K theory was from the Reformed reformers.

One figure passed over by VanDrunen but who is receiving renewed interest is Pierre Viret (1511–1571), a close friend of Calvin, preacher, and Reformer at Lausanne and in France. Guido de Brès, Ursinus, and Olevianus all studied at Viret's Reformed Academy in Lausanne before it was relocated to Geneva. Jean-Marc Berthoud describes Viret's unique contribution as follows:

Pierre Viret must be considered as the finest ethicist and the most acute apologist of the sixteenth century . . . On the question of the extent of the application of the detail of the Mosaic law to our present situation, Viret

¹²⁰ Martin Bucer, quoted in Wilhelm Pauck, trans. and ed., *De Regno Christi in Melancthon and Bucer*, Library of Christian Classics 24 (Westminster John Knox Press, 1969), 384.

¹²¹ Martin Bucer, "What the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdoms of the World Have in Common and What They Do Not," *De Regno Christi*, 188–91.

held a significantly different position than that of Calvin. This is how Linder defines this difference: “Viret, unlike Calvin, was ready to extend openly the authority of the Bible over the State.”¹²²

Strangely omitted from VanDrunen’s study is a thorough treatment of the development of Reformed ethics.¹²³ Following a different trajectory for theology from both Roman Catholic and Lutheran approaches, Reformed theologians developed a distinctive approach. While not a uniform history, the efforts to develop an ethical approach that was fully biblical was the driving force in this important part of the history of the Reformed tradition. Luca Baschera characterizes early Reformed ethics in this way:

Against the background of its history before and after the seventeenth century, the era of orthodoxy can be considered as the apogee of Reformed theological ethics. Reformed theologians brought then to full expression a concern for “practice” which had been present within Reformed Protestantism from the very beginning. Reformed ethics took on disparate forms, being dealt with sometimes as one part of larger systems of theology, as well as in monographs specially devoted to it, and in works on so-called casuistry. Moreover, in all their works on ethics Reformed authors demonstrated a profound knowledge of both classical and medieval ethical theories, drawing at times—though always in a selective and critical way—on contemporary Roman Catholic scholarship. Despite this formal heterogeneity and the many influences from different quarters, all authors stayed true to the principles of Reformed theology, considering moral behavior as a consequence of salvation by grace, and endeavoring to develop a theological ethics that was to have its solid foundation in biblical revelation.¹²⁴

One example in this pattern was Lambert Daneau (1520–1595), who, like Calvin studied law at Orleans and then embraced the Reformation. A good friend and student of Calvin, he became a professor at Geneva in 1581, later teaching at Leyden. “He is best remembered for creating a systematization of Calvinist ethics. Daneau’s work, entitled *Ethices Christianae* (Geneva, 1577) was followed by a work on politics from a Christian standpoint, *Politices Christianae* (Geneva, 1596). These moral writings claimed that the foundations of Roman and Greek moral theories were useless because of the Fall of Adam. For Daneau, moral philosophy instead needed to be grounded in what God had revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai.¹²⁵ Was Daneau passed over because he is a witness against 2K theorists?

Calvin’s immediate fellow-workers and followers also demonstrated a distinctive Reformed political theory. Theodore Beza was very influential in stressing a Reformed approach in his political views. Francois Hotman (1524–1590), a French Reformed lawyer, teacher of law, and colleague of Calvin is another example of the trend. While VanDrunen chooses to look for his theory of natural law among these men, he misses the obvious fact that none of them embraces the idea of a common kingdom nor believes that the social-political order should not be Christian. Why the oversight?

It was previously stated that when Israel kept the Law of God it was a model for the nations. A chief example of such a viewpoint in early Calvinist social-political thinking is Franciscus Junius (1545–1602), born in Bourges, France. A student of Calvin in Geneva (1562), he perfected the Belgic Confession and taught at the German Reformed seminaries at Heidelberg and Neustadt before teaching at Leyden (1592–1602). Junius’ approach has been called “Political Hebraism,” which has been defined by “its advocacy for adapting and applying the Jewish polity to contemporary political situations. Junius’ *Mosaic Polity* ... advocates for the use of the Mosaic law in the Dutch Republic for the common good of society.”¹²⁶ Junius appears in VanDrunen’s study, but only as quoted by John Cotton in a reference to *A Discourse about Civil Government* (1663). The peak of this pattern was the work of the

¹²² Jean-Marc Berthoud, “Pierre Viret and the Sovereignty of the Word of God over Every Aspect of Reality,” in *A Comprehensive Faith*, ed. Andrew Sandlin (San Jose, CA: Friends of Chalcedon, 1996), 97, 101.

¹²³ For example: Voetius, “Select Disputation Concerning Practical Theology” in *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. and trans. John W. Beardslee, III (Oxford University Press, 1965; Baker, 1977), 265–334. Willem Geesink, *De Ethiek in de Gereformeerde Theologie* (1897; repr. Kessinger Publishing, 2010); also as Appendix to *Gereformeerde Ethiek*, vol. 2 (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1931), 463–511.

¹²⁴ Luca Baschera, “Ethics in Reformed Orthodoxy” in *A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy*, ed. Herman Selderhuis (Leyden: Brill, 2013), 519–52.

¹²⁵ <http://www.theopedia.com/lambert-daneau>.

¹²⁶ Franciscus Junius, *The Mosaic Polity* (1602), trans. Todd M. Rester (Grand Rapids: CLP Academic, 2015), xliiff. Junius’ status in early Reformed thought has been growing in recent years; the Junius Institute in Grand Rapids is evidence of this trend.

Dutch Reformed scholar Petrus Cunaeus, or Peter van der Kun (1586–1638), professor of politics and jurisprudence at the University of Leyden until his death. His work typified the social-political ethics of Calvinists in the time of the Synod of Dort. His book *The Hebrew Republic* (1617) is considered “the most powerful statement of republican theory in the early years of the Dutch Republic.”¹²⁷

Zacharias Ursinus on Christology and the Law of God

Already in the Heidelberg Catechism we find the outlines of a Reformed ethic in its third section, but it does so because it is undergirded by a strongly biblical and orthodox theology. One of its authors was Zacharias Ursinus (1534–83), the leading theologian of the Reformed Protestant movement of the Palatinate, who served in the College of Wisdom. In the course of his lectures on the Catechism, he explains the theology while providing a substantial Reformed view of ethics. We will consider Ursinus’ views on Christology and then on the Law of God.

Some significant morsels from Ursinus’s commentary will show that 2K Christology was not the theology of Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus. For example, Ursinus wrote, “in this way that Christ is said to sit at the right hand of the Father: because the Father will govern and rule immediately all things, both in heaven and after His ascension, or it is the highest exaltation of the mediator, in His kingdom and priesthood”¹²⁸

Again he speaks of “the perfection and exaltation of the human nature of Christ, which excellency consists, first, in the personal union of the human nature with the Word. ‘In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily’” (Col. 2:9). Then Ursinus affirms that Christ “is that king by whom God governs all things” in the attainment of “the consummation of His glory.” He concludes,

From what has now been said, we may give a more complete definition of Christ’s sitting at the right hand of the Father: to excel all the angels and men *in His human nature*, both in the number and excellency of the gifts which were conferred upon him, and also in the visible glory and majesty: to declare himself Lord of angels and men, and so of all things which he created: to rule immediately, in the name of the Father, His kingdom in heaven, and the *whole world*, and especially to govern the church in *the same manner by His power*: and, finally, to be acknowledged and praised by everyone as *Lord and head of all*. (255–56, emphasis added)

Ursinus’ *Commentary* tells us that Christ rules over all men as the Mediatorial God-man, as His session at the right hand of God was the highest expression of the honor which the Son obtained in both natures. To argue that God the Father circumvents Christ’s human nature when ruling institutions outside the Church not only posits an unwarranted exception to the intended thrust of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, but demeans the consummated honor that the Son obtained as the Mediator of both creation and redemption. Thus the 2K argument that God the Father bypasses Christ’s exalted humanity when ruling over the State not only declares the State unredeemable, but diminishes the “perfection and exaltation of the mediator, in His kingdom and priesthood.”

Zacharias Ursinus in his commentary does address the matter of natural law. In his exposition of Question 92 he tells us that “God repeated the law of nature which was engraven upon the mind of man ...” He then explains why, mustering three arguments: “1. Because it was obscured and weakened by the fall. 2. Because many things were entirely obliterated and lost. 3. That what was still left in the mind of man might not be regarded as mere opinion or notion, and so at length lost” (491).

Ursinus, in speaking of natural law, does not ascribe to it the sufficiency that 2K theologians do. He confesses that natural law and the moral law are the same in man before the Fall, “when his nature was pure and holy.” But he also

¹²⁷ Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 169, as quoted on Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrus_Cunaeus. Wikipedia notes, “For Cunaeus the Bible was a legal and juridical model for the functioning of an independent state. For Cunaeus ... the Talmud, and the Bible together provided information demonstrating that Hebrew State was of a higher order than the Greek or Roman states. “Because its god was the true God... the Hebrew state could function as an archetype for the ideal republic. Its laws corresponded to natural law, and its social spirit flowed directly from the divine imperative of justice. This state was neither a monarchy nor an oligarchy nor a democracy, but a republic, whose senate—the Sanhedrin—and magistrates, including judges and priests, enforced and executed divinely ordained laws in ordinary civic situations.” Cunaeus’s understanding of the Hebrew State as a federal republic directly influenced the formation of the government of the Dutch Republic.” A modern translation of his work has appeared: *The Hebrew Republic* (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2006).

¹²⁸ Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 255–58).

indicates that a “considerable part of natural law has become obscured and lost by reason of sin, so that there is only a small portion concerning the obedience which we owe to God still left in the human mind.” Since the loss has been catastrophic and pandemic, we must ask how God could explain to man what the natural law is really saying? The answer is that we must interpret natural law by placing over our eyes what John Calvin called the “eyeglasses of Scripture.” Ursinus explains: “It is for this reason that God repeated, and declared to the church the entire doctrine and true sense of His law, as contained in the Decalogue. The Decalogue is, therefore, the renewal and re-enforcing of the natural law...” (492).

Ursinus also addresses *the hard and fast* distinction that is often made between the first table of the law and the second so that the second table is quarantined altogether from the worship of God. He tells us that the First Commandment “must be included in all the rest...” and that “the first table enjoins the duties which we owe to God; the second, the duties which we owe to our neighbor; yet in such a way that the former are referred *immediately*, and the latter *mediately*, to God” (505). Thus the obedience that God commands in the second table is *mediate* worship.

Concerning the question as to whether natural law is sufficient for a true knowledge of God, Ursinus even says in his exposition of Question 93 of the Catechism: “Yet we must hold, respecting these demonstrations which nature furnishes of God, that they are indeed true and in harmony with his word; *but that they are, nevertheless, not sufficient to a true knowledge of God*” (506, emphasis added).

Again he writes about the bankruptcy of natural law to govern us:

Furthermore, although natural demonstrations teach nothing concerning God that is false, yet men, *without the knowledge of God’s word*, obtain nothing from them except false notions and conceptions of God; both because these demonstrations do not contain as much as is delivered in His word, and also because even those things which may be understood naturally, men, nevertheless, on account of innate corruption and blindness, receive and interpret falsely, and so corrupt it in various ways (506, emphasis added).

In the light of Ursinus’ exposition of the Catechism, it is clear that he was not an exponent of 2K theology as it is currently defined. All in all, it seems that the appeal to the Reformers for support of 2K theology relies on selective citations and cherry-picking, skirting the conflicting evidence found in other significant sources, especially the creeds.

The German Reformed Tradition and Ethics

The German-Swiss Reformed tradition made valuable contributions to the formation of a Reformed ethic for personal, social, and cultural life. Among these were works by Amandus Polanus (1561–1610)¹²⁹ and Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633–98). Both evidence the Reformed stress on biblical law, not natural law. This was especially true at Herborn where Calvin’s student Olevianus had taught. There, Wilhelm Zepperus (1550–1607), a German Reformed pastor and theologian, wrote a major work on Mosaic Law and its relation to both ecclesiastical and political matters, which was noted by Voetius.¹³⁰ Why is Zepperus overlooked by VanDrunen?

Johannes Althusius (1557–1638), another German Reformed Christian who studied at Herborn, served in civil government and politics and wrote a major synthesis of Reformed political views in his 1603 work, *Politics Methodically Digested, Illustrated with Sacred and Profane Examples*. “The ideas expressed therein have led many to correctly consider him one of the first true federalists, as the greatest intellectual thinker in the early development of federalism in the 16th and 17th centuries.”¹³¹

VanDrunen discusses him in chapter 5 of *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* but misses the general impact of Althusius for Reformed social and political thought. His federalism was rooted in covenant theology; he was influential in emphasizing societal associations, which became part of the Neo-Calvinist idea of “sphere-

¹²⁹ His viewpoint is reflected in the treatment of good works and the Decalogue by Johannes Wollebius (Wolleb) “Compendium of Christian Theology” in John W. Beardslee III, *Reformed Dogmatics*. (Oxford University Press, 1965), 191–262.

¹³⁰ Wilhelm Zepperus, *Legum Moscarum forensium explanation* (Herborn, 1607, 1614, 1714).

¹³¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Althusius.

sovereignty.”¹³² Because Althusius was a jurist and legal philosopher, not a theologian, he dealt with the legal theories of natural law, but in a biblical manner. John Witte writes that Althusius “regarded the Decalogue as the best source and summary of natural law Biblical moral law is rather a more perfect conformation and elaboration of the natural law ideas and inclinations that are already inscribed on the hearts and minds of everyone, believers and non-believers alike. . . . Biblical moral law has clearer precepts and higher purpose than any other form of natural law.”¹³³

Reformed Orthodoxy in the 17th Century

VanDrunen makes much of Francis Turretin as providing vindication for the 2K Christology.¹³⁴ But is VanDrunen’s assessment accurate? Because we have dealt with the Christological issue elsewhere in this report, we can be concise about this historical claim. When one reads Turretin’s discussion regarding the “Truth of the Incarnation and the Hypostatical Union,” there is absolutely no doubt that he holds to a soundly orthodox view that the Son of God did “join together with himself in unity of person, not a person, but a human nature; not by conversion and transmutation, but by assumption *ad sustentation*, so that the Son of God was made the Son of man and our Mediator and is truly God-man (*theanthropos*).”¹³⁵

Turretin’s views on the Kingship of Christ and His Session are missing from VanDrunen’s treatment. Yet Turretin unequivocally affirms that Christ rules all things in His session at God’s right hand in regard to the unity of His person as God-man. There is no indication of a division according to sphere or function. He says, “sitting at the right hand is not a property of the nature, but a property of the dignity of the person, to wit, the glorious state of Christ’s person and the administration of the mediatorial office, whose works are common to the whole person with respect to both natures. . . . for the subject of power is the person or Christ, the God-man, manifested in the flesh, not the natures simply” (2.370).

When we do look in the seventeenth century for those who promoted natural law theory, we find them, but not in the Reformed camp. The modern father of the natural law theory was not a Calvinist but one of the original supporters of Arminianism, which doctrine was condemned at the Synod of Dort. Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), a strong opponent of leading Calvinist theologians, developed his views as a humanistic alternative to the Reformed tradition also in regard to social ethics. If one includes Aquinas as part of the Reformed tradition, why not add Grotius, unless being Dutch does not necessarily make one Reformed. Interestingly, Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) joined Grotius in his project. He was taught by the Jesuits and revived Stoicism before he “lapsed” from Romanism and taught at the Reformed University at Leyden. Later he was welcomed back to Rome and continued serving their cause.

By contrast, the English Puritans developed a view of the Kingdom of Christ that was influenced by Bucer. A major study of their views on ethics by Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study of Puritan Theology*, is not considered.¹³⁶

¹³² Spykman, “Sphere-Sovereignty.”

¹³³ John Witte, Jr., “Natural Rights, Popular Sovereignty, and Covenant Politics: Johannes Althusius and the Dutch Revolt and Republic,” in *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 591, 581; available online.

¹³⁴ VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms*, 177, 180. “This material alone provides substantial evidence not simply for remnants of a Reformation two kingdoms doctrine in Reformed orthodoxy, but for a well thought out and developed theology of the two kingdoms incorporated into larger questions of Christology. It is worth lingering for a moment and highlighting Turretin’s claims here. Christ rules the one kingdom as *eternal God*, as *the agent of creation and providence*, and *over all creatures*. Christ rules the other kingdom as *the incarnate God-man*, as *the agent of redemption*, and *over the church*. The latter kingdom is redemptive, the former is non-redemptive. The latter is exclusive, the former is inclusive. . . . The clear distinction between the two kingdoms that Turretin and other Reformed orthodox luminaries articulated raises the important yet difficult question of just how, or even whether, Christ rules the civil kingdom (or, more concretely, particular earthly kingdoms). . . . Turretin makes quite clear that Christ rules over the temporal kingdom not as the incarnate mediator but as the Logos, the eternal Son of God, and hence as creator and sustainer but not as redeemer.” (emphasis added)

¹³⁵ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994), 2:313.

¹³⁶ (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976)

Scottish Neo-Calvinism: The Covenanter Tradition

Advocates of the 2K perspective want to isolate Neo-Calvinism and dismiss it as a historical aberration of Reformed social ethics. Yet, there is another Reformed tradition that has much in common with the views of Neo-Calvinism—the Scottish Covenanters. Beginning with John Knox and Buchanan, Samuel Rutherford, the great opponent to Arminianism, in 1644 wrote *Lex Rex: or The Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People* while attending the Westminster Assembly.¹³⁷

VanDrunen discusses Samuel Rutherford but misses the main point that as a pastor and theologian, Rutherford engages the social-political issues of his day and advocates a distinctly Reformed view of civil government. While Rutherford speaks of natural law, he places it within the context of a biblical worldview and sees it as an expression of God’s law in creation. Rutherford, like Calvin, also argues for sphere sovereignty and not a separation of the sacred from the secular. Rutherford’s views are similar to those of Althusius. Instead of leading to the 2K-Natural Law vision, they lay the foundation for a Christian constitutional federalism as a pattern for civil government. Francis Schaeffer believed that Jonathan Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister who signed the Declaration of Independence, carried the views of Rutherford to America.

The vision of the Covenanters continued into the nineteenth century with William Symington’s (1795–1862) work, *Messiah the Prince of the Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ*.¹³⁸ His work stands with Kuyper’s *Pro Rege* as one of the great Reformed treatments of the kingship of Christ. His thesis is that Christ as Mediator is the God-appointed Prince over all nations. The kingly office of Christ and his dominion is applied to both the Church and the State. In regard to the latter, he describes Christ’s administration over the nations as well as their duty to Him. For VanDrunen, Symington is not worthy of consideration.

One early proponent of Scottish Neo-Calvinism was Alexander McLeod (1774–1833), born in Scotland and an immigrant to America in 1792. Joining the Reformed Presbyterian Church, he served in NYC and had close relationships with the Dutch Reformed Church and Princeton Seminary. His book entitled *Messiah, Governor of the Nations of the Earth*, published in 1803, was a popular statement of the mediatorial kingship of Christ. Gordon J. Keddie writes of this work, “The effectiveness of carrying out the Great Commission, the actual conversion of lost people to Christ, the satisfaction of Jesus; sufferings and the Lord’s protection of believers and the church, he argues, all depend upon the actual, effectual, sovereign kingship of the risen Christ.”¹³⁹

The Covenanter perspective was advocated in *The Christian Statesman*, a journal of the National Reform Association. John Alexander, its first president in 1864, set out to obtain an amendment to the United States Constitution to acknowledge God’s divine authority and, in doing so, establish a Christian basis for popular government in America. The proposed revised Preamble read as follows: “We, the People of the United States, recognizing the being and attributes of Almighty God, the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, the law of God as the paramount rule, and Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior and Lord of all...”

This viewpoint was not limited to the Reformed Presbyterians but was represented at Princeton Seminary by Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823–86), a member of the National Reform Association. In fact, his chapter on the “Kingly Office of Christ” in *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes* (1890, also called *Evangelical Theology*), gives a strong voice to Scottish “Neo-Calvinism.” While VanDrunen discusses Charles Hodge he omits his son Archibald.

The Scottish Covenanter line continues until today and is advocated in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of N.A. Interestingly, the son of Geerhardus Vos, Johannes Vos, was himself a member of the RPCNA, taught at Geneva College, and shared the Scottish “neo-Kuyperianism.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1982)

¹³⁸ (National Reform Association, 1884; repr., Pittsburgh, PA: Christian Statesman Press, 1999).

¹³⁹ Gordon Keddie, preface to *Messiah, Governor of the Nations of the Earth*, by Alexander MacLeod (Elmwood Park, NJ: Reformed Presbyterian Press, 1992).

¹⁴⁰ This group led a 1987 conference at Geneva College which was published as *God and Politics: Four Views on the Reformation of Civil Government*, ed. Gary Scott Smith (Phillipsburg NJ: P&R Publishing, 1989). A contemporary advocate of the Covenanter line who blends it with the Neo-Calvinistic viewpoint is Richard E. Knodel, Jr. in *LifeStyle: A Biblical/Philosophical Study of Christianity and the Culture It Produces* (ExLibris, 2012).

Abraham Kuyper on Christ's Kingship

Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801–1876) wrote a radical Calvinist critique of the French revolutionary movement in his work *Unbelief and Revolution* (1847). At one time he acted as secretary to William II of the Netherlands. He was not disengaged politically but took a prominent part in Dutch politics, eventually becoming the leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, serving in the Second Chamber of Parliament.

Groen's spiritual successor was Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), one of the greatest formulators of a comprehensive vision for a Christian and Reformed view of personal, academic, social, and political life. His writings and influence held major sway in the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) from its founding in 1879 to Kuyper's death in 1920. Though a pastor and theological professor, he served as a member of Parliament and then as Prime Minister of the Netherlands, 1901–1904. When Kuyper gave his Stone Lectures on Calvinism at Princeton Seminary in 1898, his modern version of a Reformed worldview was formulated in what has been called "Neo-Calvinism." Kuyper wrote,

Calvinism is rooted in a form of religion which was peculiarly its own, and from this specific religious consciousness there was developed first a peculiar theology, then a special church-order, and then a given form for political and social life, for the interpretation of the moral world-order, for the relation between nature and grace, between Christianity and the world, between church and state, and finally for art and science...¹⁴¹

In order to understand more fully what is meant by Kuyperianism or Neo-Calvinism, we will be summarizing part of a previously cited article in *Pro Rege* by Timothy Palmer titled, "Two-Kingdom Doctrine: A Comparative Study of Martin Luther and Abraham Kuyper."¹⁴²

The first question asked by Palmer is whether Kuyper can be included in the dualist camp of the 2K advocates:

When one comes to Abraham Kuyper, it is astonishing to find that David VanDrunen puts Kuyper in the two-kingdom camp. For Kuyper, there is no square inch of reality that is not under the lordship of Christ. How in the world can Kuyper then be in the two-kingdom camp? ... Is not Abraham Kuyper himself the one who taught us that all of life is subject to the kingship of Jesus Christ? ... The following pages will demonstrate that Kuyper does not fit into this nature-grace straightjacket" (16).

One of his first concerns is to understand Kuyper's view of the Kingship and Kingdom of Christ: "It is curious that this crusader of the two-kingdom doctrine when writing of Kuyper seldom speaks of the kingdom of God and never speaks of the kingship of Christ. It would seem that talk of kingdoms would involve talk of Jesus Christ the king, who dominates Kuyper's thinking." So what is the kingdom of God for Kuyper? Palmer shows that Kuyper's view implicitly rejects the 2K thinking:

An essential source in respect to Kuyper's view of the kingdom of God is his magisterial *Pro Rege*, which means "for the King." It is noteworthy that VanDrunen's study of Kuyper's view of the kingdom of God omits this vital source. ... published in 1911 and 1912 in the three-volume *Pro Rege*. The basic structure of this work already shows how foreign a two-kingdom doctrine is to Abraham Kuyper. In broad strokes, Kuyper develops the kingship of Christ over seven areas of life: Christ's subjects, the church, the family, society, the State, science, and art. All of life falls under the kingship of Christ. There is no neutral ground for him (17).

Kuyper's emphasis is to remove dualism from Christian thinking, beginning his book with this sentence: "*Pro Rege* intends to remove the division that exists in our minds . . . between our *church* life and our life *outside* the church" (1.v). In his article, Palmer continues to show the pervasiveness of Kuyper's concern:

In his big work on Common Grace, Kuyper makes the same point. Some dualistic Christians maintain that Christ is exclusively the Expiator of sin. (This is the two-kingdom doctrine.) But Kuyper forcefully rejects this view: "The idea that Christ has no significance but as the Lamb of God who died for our sin cannot be maintained by those who read Scripture seriously." We cannot hold that Christ was given to us only for our justification and sanctification; we should rather follow Paul, who says that Christ is our "full redemption." He continues: "To put it in a nutshell, shall we imagine that all we need is a Reconciler of our soul or continue to confess that the Christ

¹⁴¹ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (1898; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 17.

¹⁴² Timothy P. Palmer, "The Two-Kingdom Doctrine: A Comparative Study of Martin Luther and Abraham Kuyper," *Pro Rege* 37, no. 3 (March 2009): 13–25. Especially helpful is the fact that he translates from the main works of Kuyper in Dutch that deal with Christ and culture.

of God is the Savior of both soul and body and is the Re-creator not only of things in the invisible world but also of things that are visible and before our eyes? Does Christ have significance only for the spiritual realm or also for the natural and visible domain?" (17)

For Kuyper the idea of not calling things "Christian" is contrary to the believer's union with Christ.

Kuyper calls it "one-sidedness" to "think exclusively of the blood shed in the atonement and refuse to take account of the significance of Christ for the body, for the visible world, and for the outcome of world history." Such a posture runs "the danger of isolating Christ for your soul" (CG, 172); "Then the word 'Christian' seems appropriate to you only when it concerns certain matters of faith or things directly connected with the faith—your church, your school, missions and the like—but all the remaining spheres of life fall for you outside the Christ" (17).

In fact, "Kuyper warns against the doctrine of two kingdoms or "two distinct circles of thought: in the very circumscribed circle of your soul's salvation on the one hand, and in the spacious, life-encompassing sphere of the world on the other": Such people claim that "Christ is at home in the former but not in the latter" (17–18).

Instead, "For Kuyper, then, Christ is the redeemer of all of life, contrary to the two-kingdom doctrine and VanDrunen's perception of this. Christ is our "full *redemption* . . . the Savior of both soul and body." One can hardly make the point more clearly. There is no autonomous area of life" (18). Palmer explains,

There is no independent kingdom existing between Christ's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. Kuyper speaks of just two kingdoms: the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan: "*Just as God rules over spirits and humans, over spirit and matter, including all of creation, so also Satan desires to establish his kingdom over against God*" (1.505). The two kingdoms are those of God and Satan: "*Kingdom against kingdom, prince against prince, chief against chief, king against king!*" (1.508) There are only two kingdoms, Christ's and Satan's, and both lay claim on all of life. There is no intermediate kingdom (18).

After showing that Kuyper rejected the Thomistic Nature-Grace dualism, Palmer expands on Kuyper's teaching of the kingship of Christ over all of life, "For Kuyper the kingdom or kingship of Christ is derived from the sovereignty of the Triune God. The original power and sovereignty rest in the Triune God. Kuyper emphasizes the fact that the kingdom of God includes all of reality: "This kingdom of God embraces all things, visible and invisible." This king—God—has power over people, the land and nature: "In short, *everything* is his. *His kingdom is over everything* . . . His kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, of all spheres, of all creatures" (19).

Kuyper says of this kingdom: "it can never be said that this kingdom bears a purely *spiritual* character" (1. 412). This is evident from the three years of Jesus' ministry: "In the few years that the king of the kingdom of God stayed on earth, he revealed the majesty of this kingdom of his in every area of human life" (1.471). Jesus brought regeneration to the soul and physical healing to the body; he impacted all dimensions of society, including the family, the workplace, the government and the poor; and he confronted the evil spirits (1.472–74). Kuyper states, "The idea that the action of Jesus in his kingdom was exclusively *spiritual* in nature seems . . . ever more untenable" (1.475). There is no nature-grace dualism here (19)

In discussing society Palmer notes, "Kuyper reminds the reader that the statements of Scripture about Christ's kingship are all-embracing: "To him is given *all power* on earth and in heaven. *All things* are subject to him. Nothing is excluded." So how can one neglect "this broad terrain of our social life"? (2.8–9). The result is "that the kingship of Christ does not *live* for them." For them Christ is there exclusively for the salvation of their souls but not for the life outside of the church" (3.10–11). (20)

Kuyper identifies three main ways in which Christ rules the State. First, Christ influences and directs political leaders, both pagan and Christian. Examples of the former are Joseph's Pharaoh, Cyrus, and Nebuchadnezzar. But Christ also governs Christian rulers like Constantine, Charlemagne, and the house of Orange. Some of these rulers applied Christian principles in their kingdoms (21).

Palmer concludes by speaking of Kuyper's view of Christ's cosmic kingship,

Since Kuyper does not hold to a two-kingdom doctrine, we must call into question the persistent and ill-advised use of "Reformed two-kingdom doctrine" by VanDrunen. Our dualist delights in pointing to an alleged two-kingdom doctrine throughout the Reformed tradition. . . . The theology of Kuyper in the tradition of Calvin stresses the lordship of Christ over all of life. This is a radical difference from Luther's two-kingdom doctrine. If indeed "there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is

Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: ‘Mine!’¹⁴³ then Christ’s kingdom is broader than the institutional church. His kingdom impacts all of life (23).

Neo-Calvinism and Reformed Ethics

A contemporary of Kuyper, Willem Geesink (1854–1929), is another theologian that should be brought into the discussion, for he wrote two large works about ethics from a Reformed standpoint. The first, *Concerning the Lord’s Ordinances*,¹⁴⁴ over 1,700 pages, treats the sovereignty of God and His ordinances in creation and human nature. He then treats the Lord’s ordinances in the moral world—an exposition of the two tables of the Law. The other major work of Geesink is the two-volume *Reformed Ethics*,¹⁴⁵ one of the most extensive treatments of the subject in modern times, over 1,000 pages. To understand the kind of ethics that complemented Kuyper’s views we need to consider Geesink carefully. He discusses natural law but does so critically. In VanDrunen’s work there is no mention of his name.

The Dutch Reformed churches produced a number of other ethicists, again, none of whom are mentioned by VanDrunen. G. Brillenburg Wurth (1898–1963), professor at Kampen, produced a three-volume work on the Christian life (*Het Christelijk Leven*, 1948–51) in regard to the individual, family, and society. Klass Schilder’s lectures on ethics were made available in printed form, and part of J. Douma’s 15-volume series on ethics was translated as *The Ten Commandments* in 1996.

It is strange that a professor of ethics at a Reformed seminary would write a book subtitled “A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought” that leaves large gaps in documenting the great Reformed heritage. Likewise, we find no discussion of the views of Klaas Schilder on culture except noting that he rejected the distinction between Christ as the mediator of creation and the mediator of redemption. In contrast, Henry Van Til dedicates a whole chapter to Schilder in his book, *Calvinistic Concept of Culture*. The views of culture by H. R. Rookmaaker, art historian at the Free University, are nowhere in sight; nor are the views of Francis A. Schaeffer, although they had significant impact on American Christianity and its approach to culture.

We would hope that this historical myopia would improve when we come to the American tradition of Westminster Seminary, but again find great omissions. While VanDrunen does discuss the views of Cornelius Van Til in this matter, he reaches no firm conclusions and fails to deal with Van Til’s commendation of Henry Van Til’s important book. Nowhere to be found is John Murray’s well-known work on Reformed ethics, *Principles of Conduct*.¹⁴⁶ Its incisive treatment of “Creation Ordinances” is the alternative to the theory of natural law. Although R. B. Kuiper’s work is surely more significant than Stuart Robinson’s, his writings were not discussed either. In fact, Kuiper’s popular lectures, *Not of This World*, is the alternative to VanDrunen’s *Living in Christ’s Two Kingdoms*. That a professor of Westminster Seminary California passes by the ethical Neo-Calvinism of his eminent predecessors while favoring the views of Aquinas, is indeed sad.

The general conclusion of our historical analysis is that the VanDrunen Two Kingdom project, although evidencing much research, is a woefully inadequate representation of the Reformed tradition in its view on ethics, culture, and society. This being the case, how can the 2K theology consider itself to be a repristination of earlier Reformed thought? It not only diverges from Neo-Calvinism but is another ethos. Although wearing Reformed garb, it represents another theology.

¹⁴³ Kuyper, “Sphere Sovereignty,” in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

¹⁴⁴ Willem Geesink, *Van’s Heeren Ordinantien* (Amsterdam: W. Kirchner, 1907–8).

¹⁴⁵ Willem Geesink, *Gereformeerde Ethiek* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1931).

¹⁴⁶ John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957).

3. SUMMARY: AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS

We would be remiss to say that everything that has been written by the 2K men is wrong. We believe that certain of their statements correct excesses and improper statements made by some Neo-Calvinists. However, we strongly reject their view that Two Kingdoms and Natural Law represent the authentic position of the Reformed faith in regard to the Bible, culture, ethics, and society.

The 2K theology is a system of belief and interpretation that vies for the allegiance of Reformed believers. It is not a mere perspective that affects one or two doctrines, but a comprehensive approach to ethics, culture, society, and theology. Because it adds another major option for Reformed believers, it further divides the Reformed movement, thereby making it an ineffective witness to evangelical churches and our secular culture.

A. Summary and Distinctives of the Two Kingdom Theology

Briefly stated, the 2K theology maintains that God rules the secular or “common kingdom” by natural law. On the other hand, He rules the Church by the Holy Spirit through the Ten Commandments. Thus, while Christ is sovereign over all, He rules in two ways in two sharply divided realms. In addition, both the Church as an institution and Christians as individuals are *not* called by God to testify to the inscripturated Ten Commandments to “the secular kingdom,” since it is a mixture of believers and unbelievers. Their claim is that we have no divine command to do this, since natural law is a *sufficient* standard for civil government as well as other institutions outside the pale of the institutional Church. They also claim that the Creation Covenant or Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:26–27 is so fulfilled in Christ that Christians are not called by God to “transform” society or culture. To support this view, 2K theologians rely on a new Christology that functionally separates the human and divine natures of Christ in His heavenly rule. They argue that Christ rules everything that is outside the Church as *God*, but not as the *God-man*.

We believe that the most objectionable teachings of 2K theology are these:

1. It rejects “Neo-Calvinism” insofar as proponents think that the Lord does not call the Church (nor individual Christians) to engage in distinctly Christian cultural and institutional transformation.
2. It teaches a strong contrast between Law and Grace so that the Gospel is disconnected from the Cultural Mandate.
3. It teaches that Christians are *not* called by God to transform the world via the Cultural Mandate of Gen. 1:26–28.
4. It emphasizes that Christians are but strangers and pilgrims, so that they should not emphasize cultural activities.
5. It teaches that the Great Commission and the Cultural Mandate are two different things, such that Christ’s command to teach “whatsoever things I have commanded you” *excludes* the Cultural Mandate.
6. It teaches that the world outside of the Church is governed by the Noachian Covenant of Genesis 8 and 9, and that this Covenant does not have redemptive character and significance for the church.
7. It believes that this teaching saves the Church from interfering with the civil magistrate in the name of dominion, and saves the secular world from self-destruction by emphasizing the preserving character and laws of the Noachian Covenant.
8. It teaches that God’s covenant with Noah and his descendants reinstates the Cultural Mandate, but at best only in a very limited form (i.e., “be fruitful and multiply”).
9. It teaches that neither the State nor anything else outside the Church is the holy kingdom of God, and restricts the concept of the Kingdom primarily to liturgical activities.
10. It ignores the goal Christ gave to His people to transform the State, calling this “the heresy of Constantinianism.”
11. It teaches that only the Church is holy; except for the kingdom of glory, all else is profane and unholy.

12. It teaches that Christ rules everything that is outside the Church by His Godhead; He rules only the Church as the God-Man.
13. It teaches that Christ has fulfilled the first Adam's commission such that the Church today is no longer required to obey that mandate.
14. It teaches that Christ has so fulfilled the Cultural Mandate so that the old creation mandate is in the main, or even totally, obsolete. Thus the "new creation" in which man exercises dominion is "the spiritual kingdom," that is, the Church.
15. It teaches an eschatology in which the people of God are *primarily* characterized as suffering and waiting.
16. It teaches that the Bible and Christian theology do not address every area of moral concern.
17. It teaches that the standard that is to govern the "common kingdom" is *not* God's inscripturated Law, but a *sufficient* natural law.
18. It asserts that the standard that governs both Christians *and* unbelievers in the Common Kingdom, Natural Law, is "ordinarily the same" (*Living 2K*, 31).
19. It teaches that the Common Kingdom is not to be instructed by an appeal to anything in God's national covenant with Israel, including the Ten Commandments.
20. It teaches that if the State acknowledges the God of the Christian faith, she is guilty of a monstrous confusion of God's holy kingdom and the common kingdom.

It causes us grave concern that 2K proponents are not only dogmatic about their positions but give little evidence of modifying their views under criticism. This implies that theirs is not some minor theory, but a comprehensive system that is an alternative to the historic Reformed tradition. For this reason, we believe that the distinctive 2K Natural Law teachings present great potential to further divide the Reformed movement.

B. Affirmations and Denials

We submit the following positive statements of what we believe the Bible and our Reformed Confessions teach in regard to six key issues discussed in this report, and a rejection of what we believe are teachings contrary to Scripture and Confession.

1. The Cultural Mandate remains in force for all men today because it was an integral part of God's Covenant with both Adam and Noah.

We affirm that when God created Adam, He entered into a covenant of life, or works, with him as the federal head of the human race and gave him the Cultural or Dominion Mandate. This Covenant of Creation defines all mankind's relationship to God (religion), other people (society), and the earth (culture).

After the Flood, God renewed this covenant with mankind through Noah, the believer. Though the command to exercise dominion is not repeated, it is not therefore revoked. That God does not repeat a command does not mean that it has been nullified. Because the command to be fruitful implies all that God mandated in Genesis 1, it is a renewal of the Creation Covenant and it reaffirmed man's social, cultural, and religious duties.

This Noachian Covenant of Peace (Isa. 54:9–10) serves redemption and augments the Adamic covenant with new provisions for civil government, i.e., the punishment of evildoers, the treatment of animals, and the promise of the prolongation of history. This common kindness serves special grace by providing societal stability for God bringing Christ into the world to save the elect. Because these covenants have never been annulled by later revelation, the Cultural Mandate is still in force.

We therefore deny that the Cultural Mandate is unrelated to God's redemptive purposes in history. We also reject the opinion that the Noachian Covenant established an independent purpose for a 'common kingdom.'

References: Gen. 1:26–28; 9:1–7; Rom. 13:1–7, 1 Pet. 3:20–21; Gal. 3:19; Rom. 2:4.

2. Human depravity brings God’s curse on human culture and establishes a conflict (antithesis) between Christ’s kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

We affirm that all men fallen into sin are under God’s curse and cannot perfectly fulfill God’s demands for religion, society, and culture. As a result, those who are “in Adam” are at enmity against God and part of the kingdom of darkness, a moral and spiritual society that is ruled by the Prince of this world, Satan. Such depraved men are corporately called “the world,” and they persecute God’s people. This distinction between regenerate and unregenerate man has been called the *antithesis*.

We affirm that despite man’s sin, the Triune God remains the absolute Sovereign, and His one Kingdom rules over all. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ reestablishes God’s reign through the Gospel and the Great Commission. His work of the New Creation begins with those who are born again and confess that He is Lord. These believers are transferred to the kingdom of light, are now citizens of heaven and members of Christ’s body—God’s household, the Church. Christians must therefore be *morally* separate from the world because they are “in the world but not of the world” (Jn. 17:9–19).

We therefore reject the view that Christ rules over two different kingdoms—one redemptive and spiritual, and another common and secular. We also reject the view that Christians and non-Christians, due to “common grace,” are members of a “common kingdom” in which they work together in ways that are not affected by depravity or regeneration.

References: Ps. 103:19; Col. 1:13–20; 1 Cor. 5:9–11; 2 Cor. 6:14–18; Ps. 2; Eph. 2:1–10; 1 Jn. 2:15–17; Rom. 12:1–2

3. God’s revealed moral law is sufficient for every area of human life, society, and culture, and therefore “natural law” is never the basis for Christian ethics.

God created man as a moral being and stamped the work of His moral law on man’s heart. But the Bible nowhere speaks of a law derived *from* “nature” as if it were an independent standard for right and wrong. God’s law was written on the human heart only because he was created in the image of God. This law of conscience is still evident in human life but is insufficient, because of sin, to lead one to salvation or provide a basis for Christian social ethics. Even before the Fall, God gave verbal commands that provided the basis for the creation ordinances of marriage (society), work (culture), and worship (religion).

Though man’s conscience still shows God’s original “work of the law” written in the heart, it is now corrupted by sin as unbelievers habitually suppress general revelation and exhibit moral contradictions. It was therefore necessary for God to reveal His law to Moses in written form. All men, irrespective of their station and calling in life, are responsible to obey this moral law. But as sinners they are incapable of living up to God’s Law in Scripture or conscience. Therefore, we need Christ, who alone fulfilled the entire Law of God. In the New Covenant God writes that Law again on believers’ hearts and makes all things new.

We deny that natural law is a sufficient standard to govern human life or society and minimizes the profound effects of total depravity. Fallen human reason and conscience cannot rightly apprehend a ‘natural law,’ because human nature is totally corrupted. The idea that the Bible does not address every moral concern is contrary to the sufficiency of Scripture. We therefore reject the view that Christ rules over two separate kingdoms through two different but equally valid types of law.

References: Gen. 1–2; Jer. 31:33; Rom. 1:18; 2:1–3, 12–16; Rom. 6:1–7; 2 Cor. 3:7–18; 2 Tim. 3:16–17.

4. Christ’s Kingship is expressed in the unity of His person as He serves as a redemptive Mediator for an elect humanity and restores creation to its original purpose.

The Reformed Church is committed to the historic orthodoxy of the Nicene and Athanasius Creeds, which emphasize the unity of Christ’s two natures in one person. It agrees with Chalcedon (AD 451) that we should not contrast the two natures according to area or function. The 2K theology presents a confusing and defective Christology and thus reveals a fundamental error. It diminishes the majesty and exaltation of Christ’s glorified human nature in His ascension by curtailing His sovereign rule over all things, *in the fullness* of His total person.

God created all things through the Son as the Word. But Christ is Mediator only in regard to redemption, by which He reconciles all things to God as Creator. Christ rules over all things as the one God-man and never circumvents His humanity when ruling from His heavenly, mediatorial throne. Jesus rules as the Divine-human King over all nations and cultures *for the sake of His Church* in order to ensure that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

We deny any view that would separate the two natures of Christ to serve two different functions and thus to deny the unity of the person of Christ as the Son of God. We reject the view that Jesus has two mediatorships—one natural and one spiritual. Christ does not rule over a ‘common kingdom’ or over a ‘redemptive kingdom’ in any way that would imply a division within the one Christ.

References: Ps. 3:19, Jn. 3:5, 1 Cor. 12:3; 15:20–28; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15; Col. 1:13, 19–20; Heb. 10:5–9; Eph. 1:20–23; Phil. 3:20–21; Matt. 28:18–20; Ps. 2:8; Eph. 2:14–18; 1 Tim. 6:13–16.

5. Christ’s work of redemption does not abrogate but restores cultural activity among Christians through their calling to do good works.

Because of His active and passive fulfillment of all of God’s covenant demands, Christ has been exalted above all things and installed as Lord of lords. He is now in the process of subduing all things for the glory of God. An essential part of His work is to subdue the agent of culture, man.

Christ is now applying the benefits of His redemption to believers through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has not only fulfilled the law vicariously *for* our justification, but He also fulfills it *in* us through His Holy Spirit as part of the Christian’s sanctification. He is at work in believers by His Spirit, enabling them to do good works, for Christ “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14).

As part of their restoration in God’s image, believers in obedience to the Lordship of Christ are summoned to be salt and light to culture. The calling of the Christian not only means serving Christ in such mundane things as “eating and drinking,” but in *all* matters. Christians and non-Christians do similar activities, but only the Christian performs true good works. The Christian’s vocation is not only religious, but also cultural and social, i.e., to apply the Word of God in the world to every area of life and thought.

We deny the view that Christ fulfills the Cultural Mandate, sanctification, or good works in our place in a forensic manner so that Christians have only to wait for the eschatological kingdom to appear. We reject the view that ignores the transforming effect of sanctification by the Word and Spirit of Christ. And we reject the view that believers are not required to be distinctly Christian and practice their faith in their social relationships, educational endeavors, political positions, economic decisions, and cultural activities.

References: Matt. 28:18–20; Phil. 2:12–13; Rom. 8:2–4; 1 Pet. 2:24; Tit. 2:11–12; Rom. 3:31; Heb. 2:5–11; 1 Cor. 3:3–10; James 1:27.

6. The Church is to be salt and light in the world, bringing reformation within its sphere of influence through the witness of the gospel, discipleship, and good works.

We affirm that the Church is spiritual because Christ is its spiritual Head. He unites God’s elect to Himself as His Body through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He subdues His elect from among the human race by the Gospel, makes them new creatures, and thus builds His Church. Because it is Christ’s kingdom, the Church is like leaven which will influence and preserve the nations through the gospel.

The Great Commission is not a separate plan but rather a *means* by which the original Cultural Mandate is fulfilled. Accordingly, the mission of the Church is to make disciples of all the nations through evangelism, to form congregations, and to teach the whole counsel of God. This will transform individuals and families and, through them, reform institutions and nations.

The Church is never called to cultural isolation or eschatological speculation but to minister the truth of the Gospel and its implications to the world. There is no distinction between sacred and secular, “for every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4:4–5).

We deny that the Church is spiritual in some eschatological or non-earthly sense. We also reject the view that the Church is to focus exclusively on spiritual, religious, or liturgical activities. We deny therefore that all work believers do outside this “spiritual kingdom” is unholy, “common kingdom” work. The 2K ethic supports a false pietism which is indifferent to God’s field which is the world.

References: Matt. 5:13–16; 13:33, 38; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Cor. 12:12–13; Eph. 1:22–23; Eph. 5:7–14; Col. 3:23–24; 1 Pet. 2:4–10.

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