

What is Dominion Theology?

by Thomas Ice

But it is dominion that we are after. Not just a voice.

It is dominion we are after. Not just influence.

It is dominion we are after. Not just equal time.

It is dominion we are after.

World conquest. That's what Christ has commissioned us to accomplish.

Dominionist—Reconstructionist

George Grant

Some of the strongest fundamental churches still preach that Christ will return to gather national Israel unto Himself, and I say that is deception and will keep the Kingdom of God from coming to pass! Likewise, those who are waiting for Christ to catch a few people away so God can judge the world are waiting in vain!

Jesus Christ has now done all He can do, and He waits at the right hand of His Father, until you and I as sons of god, become manifest and make this world His footstool. He is waiting for us to say, "Jesus, we have made the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of our God, and we are ruling and reigning in Your world. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Dominionist—Charismatic

Earl Paulk

The 1980's have witnessed the rise to prominence of a unique blend of theology often called Dominion Theology (DT). DT is the product of two major streams of thought. One from the Reformed, Calvinist camp, the other from the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. Before the development of DT, it would have been hard to imagine two more diverse expressions of Christianity. Even though each group has traveled a different path, they have arrived at similar conclusions, at least concerning two major issues. First, their handling of the Old Testament (OT). Second, the common belief that the current age is the full expression of the Kingdom of God, and that Christ cannot return to earth until a certain level of maturity and development is reached by the Church.

DEFINING DOMINION

DT advocates believe that dominion over every area of life has been restored by the first coming of Christ. Since we are now in the Kingdom (this is where the synonym for DT "Kingdom Now" arose), they believe the present task of the Church is to call believers to reclaim the rule of Christ on planet earth by whatever means their particular brand of DT advocates. For Reconstructionists, this is accomplished through the ethical means of obeying the Word (Biblical law). Charismatics often teach that it is achieved through the metaphysical means of confessing the Word. Both believe that dominion is to be taken by Christians (not immediately by Christ, but mediately through believers) over all mankind, before Christ physically returns to planet earth. The major passage which Dominionists believe teach their view is Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

This verse clearly teaches that dominion has been given over the animals and the earth, which mankind has clearly fulfilled and continues to fulfill (Ps. 8:6-8). However,

it does not give justification, as DT teaches, that we are to take dominion over other human beings. The Scriptures do teach that Christ has dominion over all mankind (Jude 25), and that believers will reign and rule with Him (Rev. 5:10), but the question is when. Rule with Christ will take place in the future Kingdom. This is why it is important to understand that the current age is not yet Christ's Kingdom, but the Church Age.

THE DOMINIONIST ERROR

The Scripture teaches that this current age is not Christ's Kingdom. Believers are not yet reigning and ruling with Christ, although it is their future destiny; similar to the way a Crown Prince is born to rule, but does not exercise that rule until a future stage in his life. In fact, Paul rebuked the errant Corinthian Dominionists saying that "you have become kings without us; and I would indeed that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you" (1 Cor. 4:8). Instead he went on to speak of the suffering, humiliation, and persecutions he endured for Christ (4:9-13) as he preached the gospel. Humiliation is the calling of all believers during this present age before the return of Christ. This is seen in Paul's admonition to "be imitators of me" (4:16).

The current Church Age is a time of humiliation for believers as we call people to Christ. This current destiny is similar to the career of Christ. At His first advent, Christ came into a hostile world in order to die, as well as to call out of the world a band of disciples to continue His ministry after He went victoriously into heaven following the resurrection. Christ's humiliation and abasement to the Father's will serves as a stark contrast to Adam's pride and grasping after dominion (Phil. 2:5-11). Since the Church--the Body of Christ--is being prepared as Christ's bride, she too experiences a time of humiliation during the present age as Christ is calling out from among the Gentiles a people for God's name (Acts 15:14) through the Church. Since Christ suffered rejection and hatred in this world, so also His body experiences the same (John 15:18-27). Just as Christ endured to the end and was then glorified (John 17), so rulership will be given to all believers in the future Kingdom as they overcome (Rev. 2:25-27; 3:21).

Modern Dominionists make a mistake similar to those to whom Christ spoke in Luke 24:26: "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" So it is true of His Church. She must first suffer humiliation, during this age, and then she will be exalted and exercise dominion after the return of Christ in His Kingdom.

A major disagreement exists between Dominionists and non-Dominionists over whether or not the Church will be able to achieve millennial conditions during this age before Christ returns. Here we see the error of trying to impatiently reach ahead and prematurely introduce paradise upon earth in a way that is out of sync with God's plan. Even though Dominionists say that they are accomplishing their Kingdom building, not through human efforts, but by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the simple fact is that if the Bible does not teach their view (which it does not) then they are striving in vain by the arm of the flesh. This misguided effort will only lead to a waste of resources and wrong participation with the goals and directives of the world. The question of the timing of the Millennium affects the goals and objectives of believers today. Therefore it is extremely important that we correctly understand Scripture on this important subject.

DOMINIONIST BELIEFS

Like many issues, no two Dominionists believe exactly the same on every point. However, there are specific things which most Dominionists do believe. If I were to say that there were 20 items which characterize DT (I am not saying there are), I would not expect every advocate to hold them all. One might believe 5 items, another 10, while yet another 16. Only a few people attempt to be consistent in what they believe. Most tend to pick up bits and pieces of different beliefs and blend them together. Therefore, we will attempt to inform the reader of overall characteristics so that they will be able to spot even minor influences of DT. First the Christian Reconstruction movement (CRM) will be outlined, followed by the Positive Confession/Manifest Sons of God Charismatics (PC).

RECONSTRUCTIONISM

Reconstructionists believe that Adam lost his God-given dominion over the earth to Satan when he sinned. The God-Man, Jesus Christ, gained this authority back at His first coming and established the Kingdom. Jesus Christ is now at the right hand of the Father mediating this regained dominion through the Church. As the Church evangelizes the world it will gradually expand to cover the whole earth before Christ's return. Gary North has summarized the distinctives of the CRM as follows:

- 1) The sovereignty of God; 2) Cornelius Van Til's Biblical presuppositionalism as a framework for defending the faith; 3) Biblical law or theonomy (lit. Greek: theos means "God" & nomos means "law," thus "God's law"); 4) Covenant Theology; & 5) an optimistic view of prophecy called Postmillennialism.

I have no problem with the way the CRM teaches the first two items, however, the last three points lead Christians away from God's Word.

THEONOMY

Reconstructionist, Greg Bahnsen describes theonomy as follows: "The Christian is obligated to keep the whole law of God as a pattern for sanctification and that this law is to be enforced by the civil magistrate where and how the stipulations of God so designate" (Theonomy, p. 34). This would mean that Christians should seek to directly apply the whole Mosaic Law, except in those instances where the New Testament (NT) explicitly does away with a command. For example, Israel's sacrifices would no longer be required since Hebrews 8 says they are fulfilled in Christ. Or, the Sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday because of the Resurrection. Theonomists insist that Christians should use their influence to restore the death penalty for such OT sins as blasphemy, rebellion to parents, homosexuality, kidnapping, incest, unchastity (adultery), witchcraft, sacrifice to a false god, and propagation of false doctrine. Reconstructionists believe that:

- (1) God is changeless.
- (2) God's law is a reflection of His perfect character.
- (3) God's laws are, therefore, changeless and binding on all human endeavor from the time the laws were given to the present.

Further, they believe that this is supported by Matthew 5:17-19, which reads in part, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law . . . but to fulfill." Bahnsen concludes that

"fulfill" means "confirm," therefore, the OT law is still in force and binding upon all men today.

While all Scripture is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16), and the law is good if used lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8); it does not follow that Theonomy squares with the teachings of the Bible for the following reasons: First, the law was given to Israel and Israel alone. "He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation" (Ps. 147:19-20a). It is true that Christians are wise to gain insight and wisdom from God's revelation of Himself to Israel, but the Church is not obligated to keep the Mosaic Law. The Church is obligated to keep Christ's commandments (John 14:15) and the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

Second, the nations are under the obligation of the Adamic Covenant (Gen. 1:15-17) and its post-flood renewal, the Noahic Covenant (Gen. 8:20-9:17). Paul appeals to this relationship in the NT (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22) as the legal basis for Gentile judgment for their sin. Theonomists are correct to note God's changeless character. However, this does not mean that the details concerning the stipulations of all of His covenants apply to all people. Only those who are party to a covenant are obligated to obey the laws of that covenant. Since all men are party to the Noahic Covenant, then all are obligated to obey rulers (Rom. 13). Those who are believers in Christ are party to the New Covenant and are obligated to obey the Law of Christ.

Third, "fulfill" in Matthew 5:17 does not mean "confirm." Jesus was unlike the Pharisees who made void God's law by their traditions, rather He fulfilled or kept the law. Matthew stresses the fact that Christ fulfilled OT prophecies as can be seen in 4:14-16.

But it is dominion that we are after. Not just a voice.

It is dominion we are after. Not just influence.

It is dominion we are after. Not just equal time.

It is dominion we are after.

World conquest. That's what Christ has commissioned us to accomplish.

Dominionist--Reconstructionist

George Grant

Some of the strongest fundamental churches still preach that Christ will return to gather national Israel unto Himself, & I say that is deception & will keep the Kingdom of God from coming to pass! Likewise, those who are waiting for Christ to catch a few people away so God can judge the world are waiting in vain!

Jesus Christ has now done all He can do, & He waits at the right hand of His Father, until you & I as sons of god, become manifest & make this world His footstool. He is waiting for us to say, "Jesus, we have made the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of our God, & we are ruling & reigning in Your world. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Dominionist--Charismatic

Earl Paulk

The 1980's have witnessed the rise to prominence of a unique blend of theology often called Dominion Theology (DT). DT is the product of two major streams of

thought. One from the Reformed, Calvinist camp, the other from the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. Before the development of DT, it would have been hard to imagine two more diverse expressions of Christianity. Even though each group traveled a different path, they have arrived at similar conclusions, at least concerning two major issues. First, their handling of the Old Testament (OT). Second, the common belief that the current age is the full expression of the Kingdom of God, & that Christ cannot return to earth until a certain level of maturity & development is reached by the Church.

DEFINING DOMINION

DT advocates believe that dominion over every area of life has been restored by the first coming of Christ. Since we are now in the Kingdom (This is where the synonym for DT "Kingdom Now" arose.), our task is the calling of believers to reclaim the rule of Christ on planet earth by whatever means their particular brand of DT advocates. For Reconstructionists, this is accomplished through the ethical means of obeying the Word (Biblical law). Charismatics often teach that it is achieved through the metaphysical means of confessing the Word. Both believe that dominion is to be taken by Christians (not immediately by Christ, but mediately through believers), over all mankind, before Christ physically returns to planet earth.

The major passage which Dominionists believe teach their view is Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful & multiply, & fill the earth, & subdue it; & rule over the fish of the sea & over the birds of the sky, & over every living thing that moves on the earth."

This verse clearly teaches that dominion has been given over the animals & the earth, which mankind has clearly fulfilled & continues to fulfill (Ps. 8:6-8). However, it does not give justification, as DT teaches, that we are to take dominion over other human beings. The Scriptures do teach that Christ has dominion over all mankind (Jude 25), & that believers will reign & rule with Him (Rev. 5:10), but the question is when. Rule with Christ will take place in the future Kingdom. This is why it is important to understand that the current age is not yet Christ's Kingdom, but the Church Age.

THE DOMINIONIST ERROR

The Scripture teaches that this current age is not Christ's Kingdom. Believers are not yet reigning & ruling with Christ, although it is their future destiny; similar to the way a Crown Prince is born to rule, but does not exercise that rule until a future stage in his life. In fact, Paul rebuked the errant Corinthian Dominionists saying that "you have become kings without us; & I would indeed that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you" (1 Cor. 4:8). Instead he went on to speak of the suffering, humiliation, & persecutions he endured for Christ (4:9-13) as he preached the gospel. Humiliation is the calling of all believers during this present age before the return of Christ. This is seen in Paul's admonition to "be imitators of me" (4:16).

The current Church Age is a time of humiliation for believers as we call people to Christ. This current destiny is similar to the career of Christ. At His first advent, Christ came into a hostile world in order to die, as well as call out of the world a band of disciples to continue His ministry after He went victoriously into heaven following the resurrection. Christ's humiliation & abasement to the Father's will serves as a stark contrast to Adam's pride & grasping after dominion. Since the Church--the Body of Christ--is being prepared as Christ's bride, she too experiences a time of humiliation during the present age as Christ is calling out from among the Gentiles a people for God's name (Acts 15:14) through the Church. Since Christ suffered rejection & hatred in

this world, so also His body experiences the same (John 15:18-27). Just as Christ endured to the end & was then glorified (John 17), so rulership will be given to all believers in the future Kingdom as they overcome (Rev. 2:25-27; 3:21).

Modern Dominionists make a mistake similar to those to whom Christ spoke in Luke 24:26: "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things & to enter into His glory?" So it is true of His Church. She must first suffer humiliation, during this age, & then she will be exalted & exercise dominion after the return of Christ in His Kingdom. A major disagreement exists between Dominionists & non-Dominionists over whether or not the Church will be able to achieve millennial conditions during this age before Christ returns. Here we see the error of trying to impatiently reach ahead & prematurely introduce paradise upon earth in a way that is out of sync with God's plan. Even though Dominionists say that they are accomplishing their Kingdom building, not through human efforts, but by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the simple fact is that if the Bible does not teach their view (which it does not) then they are striving in vain by the arm of the flesh. This misguided effort will only lead to a waste of resources & wrong participation with the goals & directives of the world. The question of the timing of the Millennium affects the goals & objectives of believers today. Therefore it is extremely important that we correctly understand Scripture on this important subject.

DOMINIONIST BELIEFS

Like many issues, no two Dominionists believe exactly the same on every point. However, there are specific things which most Dominionists do believe. If I were to say that there were 20 items which characterize DT (I am not saying there are), I would not expect every advocate to hold them all. One might believe 5 items, another 10, while yet another 16. Only a few people attempt to be consistent in what they believe. Most tend to pick up bits and pieces of different beliefs & blend them together. Therefore, we will attempt to inform the reader of overall characteristics so that they will be able to spot even minor influences of DT. First the Christian Reconstruction movement (CRM) will be outlined, followed by the Positive Confession/Manifest Sons of God Charismatics (PC).

RECONSTRUCTIONISM

Reconstructionists believe that Adam lost his God-given dominion over the earth to Satan when he sinned. The God/Man, Jesus Christ, gained this authority back at His first coming & established the Kingdom. Jesus Christ is now at the right hand of the Father mediating this regained dominion through the Church. As the Church evangelizes the world, & will gradually expand to cover the whole earth before Christ's return. Gary North has summarized the distinctives of the CRM as follows:

- 1) The sovereignty of God; 2) Cornelius Van Til's Biblical presuppositionalism as a framework for defending the faith; 3) Biblical law or theonomy (lit. Greek: theos means "God" & nomos means "law," thus "God's law"); 4) Covenant Theology; & 5) an optimistic view of prophecy called Postmillennialism.

I have no problem with the way the CRM teaches the first two items, however, the last three points lead Christians away from God's Word.

THEONOMY

Reconstructionist, Greg Bahnsen describes theonomy as follows: "The Christian is obligated to keep the whole law of God as a pattern for sanctification & that this law is to be enforced by the civil magistrate where & how the stipulations of God so designate" (Theonomy, p. 34). This would mean that Christians should seek to directly apply the whole Mosaic Law, except in those instances where the New Testament (NT) explicitly does away with a command. For example, Israel's sacrifices would no longer be required since Hebrews 8 says they are fulfilled in Christ. Or, the Sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday because of the Resurrection. Theonomists insist that Christians should use their influence to restore the death penalty for such OT sins as blasphemy, rebellion to parents, homosexuality, kidnapping, incest, unchastity (adultery), witchcraft, sacrifice to a false god, & propagation of false doctrine (Many today think Dave Hunt is demanding, what about Reconstructionists!).

Reconstructionists believe that:

- (1) God is changeless.
- (2) God's law is a reflection of His perfect character.
- (3) God's laws are, therefore, changeless & binding on all human endeavor from the time the laws were given to the present.

Further, they believe that this is supported by Matthew 5:17-19, which reads in part, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law . . . but to fulfill." Bahnsen concludes that "fulfill" means "confirm," therefore, the OT law is still in force & binding upon all men today.

While all Scripture is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, & training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16), & the law is good if used lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8); it does not follow that Theonomy squares with the teachings of the Bible for the following reasons: First, the law was given to Israel & Israel alone. "He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes & His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation" (Ps. 147:19-20a). It is true that Christians are wise to gain insight & wisdom from God's revelation of Himself to Israel, but the Church is not obligated to keep the Mosaic Law. The Church is obligated to keep Christ's commandments (John 14:15) & the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

Second, the nations are under the obligation of the Adamic Covenant (Gen. 1:15-17) & its post-flood renewal, the Mosaic Covenant (Gen. 8:20-9:17). Paul appeals to this relationship in the NT (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22) as the legal basis for Gentile judgment for their sin. Theonomists are correct to note God's changeless character. However, this does not mean that the details concerning the stipulations of all of His covenants apply to all people. Only those who are party to a covenant are obligated to obey the laws of that covenant. Since all men are party to the Noachic Covenant, then all are obligated to obey rulers (Rom. 13). Those who are believers in Christ are party to the New Covenant & are obligated to obey the Law of Christ.

Third, "fulfill" in Matthew 5:17 does not mean "confirm." Jesus was unlike the Pharisees who made void God's law by their traditions, rather He fulfilled or kept the law. Matthew stresses the fact that Christ fulfilled OT prophecies as can be seen in 4:14-16. Christ fulfilled, not confirmed, the prophecy of Isaiah stresses the fact that Christ fulfilled OT prophecies as can be seen in 4:14-16. Christ fulfilled, not confirmed, the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2 by accomplishing what the OT passage predicted. [See Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse? by Thomas Ice and Wayne House, Multnomah

Press, 1988 for more extensive arguments against theonomy and other issues dealt with throughout this article.]

COVENANT THEOLOGY

Covenant is the instrument by which God carries on a relationship with man. All Christians believe that the Biblical Covenants are central to understanding the Bible. However, that branch of theology known as "Covenant Theology (CT)," which the CRM is built upon, believes that the Church replaces Israel within God's plan. It is this feature of CT, often called "Replacement Theology" (RT), which I believe is in error. RT teaches that God is finished with Israel as a special nation and will not one day in the future restore Israel, convert Israel to Jesus as their Messiah, and fulfill the promises made to Israel. They believe that the Church is the "New Israel" or the "Israel of God."

This errant view ignores or mishandles the scores of OT passages teaching future & final blessing for God's elect nation, as well as Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11. Paul brings his argument to a climax as he demonstrates in Chapter 11 that even Israel's current state of partial rejection is not final, but only temporary. In answering the question he raised in 11:1 as to why God has not rejected His people (Israel), Paul gives the following response:

- (1) There is a present election, which proves that God has not cast off Israel (1-10).
- (2) There will be a future reception (11-24).
- (3) There will be a future & final salvation of Israel (25-32).

The best way to understand the teaching of Scripture concerning the relationship of Israel and the Church is that both have a special place within God's master plan. CT is correct to note that Israel is under God's discipline for rejecting Jesus as Messiah and that God has established a new work with the Church. However, I believe that God has given a special place to both the Church and in the future, His restored people--Israel--during the Millennium. The CRM believes that almost all prophecies have already taken place, in contrast to most Christians who have for 2,000 years understood these events to await future fulfillment. Now let's look at the Postmillennialism of the CRM.

POSTMILLENNIALISM

Postmillennialism believes that Christ established His Kingdom at His first coming. However, the glory of the Kingdom has yet to reach its climax. Therefore, as the Church preaches the gospel and is faithful in applying Biblical law, then the Kingdom expands to gradually fill the whole earth. The CRM believes that Deuteronomy 28--the blessings and cursings given to Israel--explains both personal and institutional success and failure in terms of how well the people of the world obey its commands. This is the means by which disease and death will be all but eliminated before Christ returns to earth at the end of His rule, which the CRM says will have been mediated through the Church.

Before I look at other features of the CRM's Postmillennialism, let's look at their misuse of Deuteronomy 28. First, the text clearly says that it is given to Israel (29:1). How could God scatter the "Church" among the nations (28:64), since the Church has always existed among the nations? This is but one example of how the language of the passage does not fit into the role and calling of the Church.

Second, Israel was given this blessing and cursing scheme following their redemption from Egypt as a "cause/effect" mechanism for blessing the nation. This "obey in order to be blessed" approach is not the one given to the Church in the NT. Ephesians 1:3 says that NT believers have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. This approach is not a "cause/effect" basis for motivation, rather it is a "caused/effect" appeal. Throughout the NT we are told to "walk in a manner worthy of our calling in Christ" (Rom. 12: 1-2; Eph. 4:1; Col. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 4:1). The New Covenant (NC) approach appeals to our love and gratitude for the blessings Christ has already given as the motive to obey His commandments. The Old Covenant (OC) functioned differently; "you will be blessed if you obey." Reconstructionists are motivating believers with an OC imperative, ignoring the gracious advancements of the NC.

Third, the NC speaks only of changing individuals during the current age, while the OC dealt with both individuals and institutions. Institutional change will occur in the future Millennium, building upon the foundation of individual change of the present age. Since the CRM understands the present age to include the Millennium, therefore they misplace the timing of God's plan for changing institutions.

PRETERIST INTERPRETATION

The preterist (Latin for "past") approach to interpreting prophecy believes that about 95% of the events which most Christians understand to be future, were fulfilled in the past, between A.D. 30 and A.D. 70. This is the viewpoint of the CRM.

Reconstructionist, David Chilton, has said concerning the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25; Mk. 13; Lk. 17 and 21) and the Book of Revelation the following:

. . . is not about the Second Coming of Christ. It is about the destruction of Israel and Christ's victory over His enemies . . . the word coming as used in the Book of Revelation never refers to the Second Coming. Revelation prophesies the judgment of God on apostate Israel; and while it does briefly point to events beyond its immediate concerns, that is done merely as a "wrap-up," to show that the ungodly will never prevail against Christ's Kingdom (Days of Vengeance, p. 43).

If the above statement is true, then the CRM has taken away all of the passages in the NT which teach the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. They would have no passages from the Bible which teaches the Second Coming. The CRM does believe in the Second Coming, however, they cannot support their belief from specific passages in the Bible. Reconstructionists are eager to place all of the "coming passages" into the past, so that they can hopefully cast a different light upon Scripture which would teach views different than their Postmillennialism.

One Reconstructionist observed that the Preterist approach places an emphasis on the middle of history, rather than the end of history. Theologians have labeled the study of prophecy "eschatology" (from the Greek word *eschatos* meaning "last"), since most have traditionally believed that the Bible places these events at the end of history. Perhaps Reconstructionists should label their view of prophecy middleology, to give a more accurate impression of their position. The following explanations of specific items demonstrate how the CRM's middleology differs from eschatology.

- The Great Tribulation took place in the Fall of Israel in A.D. 70.
- The Great Apostasy happened in the first century. Therefore, we should expect increasing Christianization of the world, not increasing apostasy.
- The Last Days are a term which apply to Israel only. They occurred between Christ's first coming and the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem.
- The Antichrist is a term to describe the widespread apostasy of the Church prior to the Fall of Jerusalem. The word does not refer to a future person.
- The Rapture is the same as the Second Coming. There is no distinction between the two events.
- The Second Coming will take place at the end of the Millennium or Kingdom. It may not occur for thousands of years or even a million years.
- The Beast of Revelation was a symbol of both Nero and the Roman Empire.
- The False Prophet of Revelation was the leadership of apostate Israel.
- The Great Harlot of Revelation was apostate Jerusalem.
- The Millennium is the present reign of Christians as kings on earth in the Kingdom established by Christ at His First Coming.
- The Thousand Years of Revelation 20 is a large, rounded-off number containing the idea of a fullness of quantity, standing for manyness. Amazingly, the thousand years may require a million years.
- The First Resurrection of Revelation 20:5 is a spiritual resurrection: our justification & regeneration in Christ.
- The New Heaven and Earth has already begun as our salvation in Christ, both now and in eternity.
- The New Jerusalem is the Church, now and forever.
- Armageddon will never be a literal battle, since the CRM says there is no such place. It signifies the defeat of those who set themselves against God.

These snapshots should help the reader get an idea of what it means to view prophecy from a preterist perspective. It should be clear that this approach produces numbers that don't count, people who will not exist, places that do not exist, and events that will not occur. If this allegorical method was applied to all of Scripture, we would have a creation that did not occur, a sinless fall, and a Christ who never came. It is a blessing that the CRM is inconsistent in their application of this approach to interpreting the Bible since they tend to apply this method mainly to future prophetic events.

PEOPLE & PLACES

The founder and leading patriarch of the CRM is Rousas John Rushdoony. Rushdoony's son-in-law, Gary North, is probably the most well-know next to "Rush." It should be noted that these two men, who claim to have the answers to the church's and the world's problems, have not spoken to one another for almost a decade, because of a theological dispute. Greg Bahnsen coined the term "theonomy" for the movement. Other leaders and spokesmen include: David Chilton, Joe Morecraft, Ray Sutton, Jim Jordan, Otto Scott, Gary DeMar, Peter Leithart, Ken Gentry, Michael Gilstrap, John Lofton, Samuel Blumenfeld, George Grant, R. E. McMaster, Joe Kickasola, Francis Nigel Lee, and Jay Grimstead. Others who have been influenced by the movement include: Pat Robertson, John Whitehead, Francis and Frankie Schaeffer, Jerry Falwell, Everett Sileven, Ron Jenson, D. James Kennedy.

The places where the CRM has had its greatest impact would be politics and education. The New Religious Right and Republican politics have had a significant input by the CRM. Christian Day Schools and even more the Home Schooling movement tend to have many who advocate views of the CRM. I will now turn my attention to the Charismatic wing of DT.

THE CHARISMATIC CONNECTION

CRM pastor, Joseph Morecraft, has noted that Calvinists and Charismatics are uniting around the issue of DT. Morecraft said,

God is mixing the light of the Reformed Faith with the heat of the Charismatic Movement. A person can be in the light, & freeze to death. He can also be warm but be in total darkness. It is the mixture of light and heat that bring forth life and growth. ("The Christian Reconstruction Dialogue," p. 7)

The Dominionist heat being generated by Charismatics is often called "Kingdom Now" (KN), because they believe that we are now in the Kingdom. The language of KN often begins with a complaint about how damaging belief in the Rapture is. KN often charges Christians who believe in the Rapture with just sitting around, doing nothing, waiting for the escape of the Rapture. Instead, the Church should be involved in expanding God's Kingdom now, they claim. Now we will look at some of the specific KN teachings which many Charismatics are adopting in part and in whole.

KINGDOM NOW BELIEFS

Basic to KN teaching is the understanding that Christians are now gaining back lost territory forfeited to Satan when Adam fell. In order to be victorious in this spiritual warfare, the Church needs unity and great spiritual power. Those who submit to the special teachings (often received by direct revelation from God) of their leaders (Apostles) will be some of the special Christians called "overcomers." More extreme elements teach that these overcomers will actually be gods or the "Manifest Sons of God" before the resurrection. The following are some of the key teachings of the KN movement.

Anti-Rapture

KN often explain the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17) not as a physical catching up to be with the Lord, but rather a feeling of excitement or rapture when the Lord returns to an earth which has been conquered by Christians. (I have greatly relied upon Albert James Dager, "Kingdom Theology," Part I, Media Spotlight (Vol. 7, No. 2; April-June, 1986) for much of my understanding and many of my explanations of KN.) KN teaches that the Church is spiritual Israel, and therefore God is finished with Israel as a covenant nation. The prophecies in both the OT and NT regarding Israel now apply to the Church. This "Replacement" approach applies the restoration passages, which the Bible intends to refer to Israel, as being fulfilled by the Church.

The Church has Failed

There is much talk about how the Church has failed to really be the Church. Therefore, if Christians would adopt the KN agenda it would revitalize Christianity and bring a great revival which would sweep the world. This would mean that as true

overcomers are faithful in their witness, the sooner the blessings of the Kingdom will flow. "To be a witness means to demonstrate the Kingdom on earth: to take dominion, bringing all things into obedience to Christ" (Dager, p. 15). As the Church increasingly turns failure into success it will see more people walking in divine health and prosperity. Some believe that even death will be eliminated. A dangerous sign is that some within KN believe the Church will have to be purged of those who do not follow their leadership.

Restoration

Since the Church has failed, the true Church is being restored in these last days. Restoration occurs in two ways: personal and cooperate. Personal restoration occurs when one receives the fullness and cleansing of God by being open to "all that the Lord has for His children." Cooperate restoration refers to the time when the Church demonstrates the power and unity which God has planned for her.

Restorationists make at least two major errors in their mishandling of the Bible. First, they make positional terms experiential. Christ's sanctification of the Church (Eph. 5:25-27) is accomplished by His righteousness being credited to Believers. This act gives the Believer a right standing or position because of Christ's substitutionary work. Believers are then to live in terms of their standing, but will never experientially achieve full holiness until the resurrection. KN teaches that the Church will experientially achieve this status of holiness. They wrongly believe that a righteousness of our own is spoken of, rather than Christ's righteousness given to His own.

Second, the KN movement has a habit of taking Scriptures relating to Israel and misapplying them to the Church. The Bible does teach that Israel will be restored one day in the future. This promise is seen in Acts 3:19-21 where Peter is telling Israel that if they will believe in Jesus as the Messiah, then the "times of refreshing" and "the period of restoration of all things" will arrive. This is a reference to a blessing for Israel, not the Church. In a similar way, KN often wants to apply aspects from different time periods to the present. They will take the past, like the blessing and cursing section of Deuteronomy 28, and make it a standard for today. Or, they will reach ahead to the Millennium & say that health and prosperity is a right of a faithful Believer today. While the Bible does speak of restoration, it does not teach about it in the way that KN advocates say.

Five-Fold Ministry

KN teaches that the maturity of the Church will be accomplished through the restoration of the gifted men mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. This viewpoint, received as a new revelation, believes that the 1950's saw the restoration of evangelists; the 1960's the pastor; the 1970's the teacher; the 1980's the prophet; and the 1990's will see a revived office of apostles. The result of this supposed return to first century Christianity will reap the following result:

The restoration of the apostle to full recognition & authority will bring the Church to maturity, unity, & proper Church structure. Signs & wonders will be wrought which will cause the world to look to the Church for answers & miracles needed. Whole nations will turn to God. The Church will become glorious & victorious & cause the glory of the Lord to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. When all five-fold ministries are fully restored, all the saints are moving in their membership ministry, & the Church is unified & perfected, when Jesus can return & set up His Kingdom & establish His eternal reign with His Bride/Church. Planet Earth will be purified to

become the headquarters for Jesus & His Church to rule & reign over His vast domain forever & ever & ever forevermore. Amen! (Bill Hamon, "God's Wave of Restoration for the 1980's," Thy Kingdom Come, (Vol. 9, No. 8; Aug., 1987), p. 11.)

The problem with this application of Ephesians 4:11 is that it is based upon a supposed "new" revelation from God, rather than a proper interpretation of the passage. So many of the important points of KN are based not upon interpreting passages from the Bible which we know are God's Word, instead they require us to trust that these self-proclaimed prophets and apostles speak for God. I am not going to be moved from the stability of God's clear word, to the shaky ground of a human offering by following after these "new revelations." In addition, this view would require those ministries to have been absent from the Church during the past, so that they can now be restored. This is a slap in the face of God who has promised that He will be with us always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20).

Latter Rain

Still another KN teaching proclaims that there will be a great spiritual awakening at the end of the Church Age, right before Christ's return. This revival is often called the "Latter Rain." Once again KN teachers misused Scripture (Joel 2:23 & Jam. 5:7) which applies to Israel and will occur at a future time with this doctrine. The current Church Age is a period described in Scripture as having general characteristics concerning its development and progress (Matt. 13; 24:4-8; Rev. 2-3). It does not have specific prophecy being fulfilled, like a time of great spiritual revival at the end of the Age. On the other hand, Israel does have a great deal of specific prophecy outlining God's program for her. Therefore, it is wrong to misapply Israel's blessing to the Church, as the KN advocates have done with the latter rain teaching.

Some Other Issues

There are many other doctrines related to KN. Many of them are designated by Biblical terms. The context and way in which these terms are used will help Christians discern if they are used with a KN intent. James Dager lists some of the other phrases used to convey KN. They include:

- Word-Faith
- Spoken Word
- Tabernacle of David
- Feast of Tabernacles
- Many-membered man child
- Manifestation of the Kingdom
- Ongoing Incarnation
- Birthing in the Spirit
- Get this into your spirit
- Serpent's Seed or Seed of the Serpent
- God's faith
- Faith in faith
- Kingdom principles
- Elijah Company
- Bride Company
- Perfection of the Body (p. 16)

KINGDOM NOW LEADERS

It would be impossible to name most of the leaders of KN, but some of the more visible ones seem to be: Earl and Don Paulk, Robert Tilton, Larry Lea, James Robison, Rick Godwin, Clark Whitten, Bob Weiner, Dennis Peacocke, Bob Mumford, Richard Hogue, John Mears, John and Anne Gimenez, Bill Hamon, Tommy Reid, Marilyn Hickey, and others.

WHOSE KINGDOM NOW?

Since the Bible does not teach KN, then we need to question whose Kingdom are they really trying to establish? I believe that the KN agenda has more in common with the enemies of Christ, than with Jesus Christ's Kingdom. The power of their Kingdom is not from the Holy Spirit, but very likely from the occult. The coming together in unity is a unity in apostasy, rather than the true unity of Christ. Their doctrine is false, rather than that which reflects the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We are seeing another attempt in history to establish a man-made Kingdom, all in the name of God.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S PROVISION

The KN doctrine denies the sufficiency of God's provision for mankind in two ways. First, the insufficiency of the work of Christ. KN teachers view some believers as "overcomers" while others are not. This denies that salvation, from start to finish is a work of God. It is true that Christians are to respond to God's work, but it is His work. KN teaches that a believer needs a second work of grace in their life to really live the Christian life. Christ's work on the cross was not sufficient, believers need a "power boost" along the way to really handle the problems of life as overcomers.

Unfortunately, the "power boost" is often the false doctrine of KN. The Biblical view of the Christian life is that Christ gave us all at the moment of salvation. Sanctification is the outworking of justification. When one is born physically, they are fully human, so are believers who are born again in Christ. We have to grow and develop by learning the Word (eating) and obeying the Word (exercise), and as we mature we are better able to handle life and serve God. However, KN tells believers that they cannot handle life not because they need to mature or have disobeyed God, but rather they are not a full Christian and need to get all that God has for them. So in this way they teach that Christ's work is lacking.

Second, they imply that the Word of God is insufficient as given in the Bible and needs their new revelations to either understand it correctly or to receive new information. Somehow these modern times need the new revelation of the apostles and prophets within the KN movement. These leaders ignore the clear Biblical teaching that the Scriptures are sufficient for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jude tells us that we have in the Bible a faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints--a fixed faith--for which we are to contend (3). Paul calls this "fixed faith" a deposit which is to be passed down through succeeding generations of believers through faithful men (2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2). Paul gives us a double warning: (1) do not follow after men who base their teaching on extra-biblical revelation like visions (Col. 2:18), and (2) that believers learn to not exceed what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). Instead, the true Apostle, Paul, instructed Christians to bring our thoughts under the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-4), rather than call our speculations about God's Word "revelation knowledge" which overcomers are to follow. God's Word is sufficient for the believer. Those who trust in and delight

in Christ and His Word have found that He meets all of our needs as well as many of our wants.

CONCLUSION

Dominion Theology, with its two elements, the Christian Reconstruction Calvinists and the Kingdom Now Charismatics, are coming together to create what Christian authors Hal Lindsey and Dave Hunt are calling the most dangerous trend within Evangelical Christianity. This appears to be true since the call for Believers to exercise a premature dominion is at the heart of Satan's promise to Eve in the Garden. Since Dominionists are wrong about the timing of the Kingdom (Kingdom NOW), and about the means of establishing the Kingdom (DT believes the Kingdom is established by means of the work of the Church, rather than Christ's through Christ personal return.), therefore they cannot help but be involved, either knowingly or unknowingly, in furthering Satan's Kingdom, to the extent that they apply their deviant theology. Christians are instructed to seek after the things above, to set our minds on the things above (Col. 3:1-2), while we eagerly wait for our Savior's return (Phil. 3:20). Our calling in the present is not to take dominion, but rather to preach the Gospel to the world and to wait for God's Son--Christ--from heaven who will deliver us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10). Then, and only after our Lord's return to earth, will we reign and rule (have dominion) with Christ as overcomers (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21). Maranatha!